

**MORPHEUS**

**VOLUME IX**

**META-COACHING  
PERSUASION & CHALLENGING**

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# MORPHEUS — 2017

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**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #1**  
**January 4, 2017**

# **THE PREMIER CONVERSATION IN META-COACHING**

## **Part 1: The Information Gathering Questions**

In Meta-Coaching, we use the WFO *Conversation* as *the* conversation for beginning a coaching conversation. As the first conversation, it is at the same time the most important conversation. It is not just a template for how to start, it is the premier Coaching Conversation itself. That's why we teach it as the first conversation. And it does so many things— by the WFO Conversation, you are able to create a coaching contract with your client, a contract that can be a verbal handshake contract or a written one that you both sign. It enables you to clearly identify the kind of coaching conversation your client wants to have with you *and* establish a solid KPI by which you can measure the value of your coaching and provide convincing proof of the ROI. That's a lot! Yet there is more.

The more is that the WFO Coaching Conversation is an *information gathering tool*. It enables you to find out where your client is, what she needs and wants, and what needs to be done in the coaching session. If you start coaching while you are gathering information, you are highly likely to miss the client's main point, coach the wrong thing, waste time and energy, frustrate your client, miss the leverage point of change, and confuse both yourself and your client. Who wants any of that? What's the solution? Aim to get through the WFO Coaching Conversation *before* you start coaching. Keep reminding yourself that this conversation is designed to flush out the real issue, do a needs analysis with your client, and focus the coaching that you will do.

### **The Four Steps of the WFO Coaching Conversation**

To become skillful with this conversation, you need to know the four sections within the conversation— Subject, Context, Process, Meta-Checks.

- *The Subject* enables you to lock down the theme of the conversation and its importance (questions 1-3).
- *The Context* enables you to set up a time-line (when) for the outcome, establish its domain (where), and specify those involved in working on the outcome (with whom, questions 4-6).
- *The Process* answers the question of what does the client understand now about “how to” achieve her goal. Here the temptation before you will be to grab onto what your client says and “coach” instead of finishing gathering information for the coaching contract (questions 7-15).
- *The Meta-Checks* moves your client to the meta-level to check on ecology, quality, motivation, decision, and convincer (questions 16-18).

To become skillful in using the WFO Conversation, practice each of these four steps. Learn to do step one, getting the subject. Once you can do that, practice locking down the context, then

practice identifying what your client knows about his process, then carry out the meta-checks.

### **It's all about Change**

When you know this coaching conversation, you will be able to quickly recognize *what kind of change* your client wants. Then you'll be able to lock it down, "So the change that you want today is ... Is that right?" If you are unsure, ask. "What kind of change do you want?" To thoroughly learn this, memorize the seven primary coaching conversations: clarity, decision, plan, resource, change, mediation, confrontation and learn their differences. Do you know that? If so, then here is what you know:

- **Clarity Conversation:** A change of mind from confusion or vagueness to the clarity of understanding and comprehension. What could stop a person from experiencing this change is impatience, either/or thinking, over-generalizations, single-answer assumption, over-serious, refusal to exert mental effort. The change will entail the person's unique strategy for understanding, notice his representational systems and how he "knows" something.
- **Decision Conversation:** A change of one's mind and intentions from indecision, confusion, going back and forth, unfocused, etc. to one of focus and decisiveness. Change from non-committed to committed to an outcome. What could stop a person from experiencing this change is fear of commitment, refusal to chose one option, wanting to keep all options open, waiting for "something better to appear down the road," etc. The change will entail discovering the person's strategy for decision-making— how she makes up her mind.
- **Planning Conversation:** A change of one's mind in terms of moving from *not knowing how* to learning the *how-to* create a certain outcome and how to plan for it. What could stop a person from experiencing this change is the driver meta-program of options and perceiver, an addiction to spontaneity, a fear of discipline, structure and procedures. The change will entail finding the person's best way (strategy) for planning and the representation system that best fits the person.
- **Resource Conversation:** A change in mind, emotions, actions, or experience of a person's access to some mental, emotional, relational, or behavioral "resource." What could stop a person from experiencing this change could be fear of experiencing an emotion (whatever emotion a pattern or process would elicit), either/or thinking, seriousness, refusal to practice, to feel incompetent, awkward, uncomfortable, etc. The change will entail identifying the needed resource and the pattern or process that would facilitate developing that resource. The resource development will also depend on the person's learning and development strategy.
- **Change Conversation:** A change in either creating something new or eliminating something that is in the way. If the change is changing vagueness and confusion, then Clarity. If the change is from indecisiveness, then Decision. If the change is understanding the how-to, then Planning. If the change is resourcing for new skills, then Resource. Otherwise the change is inventing and innovating something new and requires a creativity and innovation strategy. Or the change is suspending old meanings, decommissioning an old belief, or eliminating old understandings and these require embracing and re-evaluating. This may entail using patterns such as the Crucible Model, Opening Up Belief Systems, Coaching to the Matrix, Exposing Blind Spots, etc.

- **Mediation Conversation:** A change in a relationship between two (or more) people in conflict moving from misunderstanding, anger, fear, resentment, hurt, etc. to one of understanding, empathy, forgiveness, etc. What could stop persons from experiencing this change would be refusal to engage, to release anger, to resolve the issue, distrust of the process or the mediator, etc. The change here will entail managing state, talking through each person's understandings, listening to each other, adjusting, making amends, agreeing perhaps to respectfully disagree, etc.
- **Confrontation Conversation:** A change from being unconscious about something (a blind spot, an incongruency, irresponsibility, excuses, etc.) to becoming mindfully aware. What could stop a person from this change could be fear of going inside, fear of introspection, fear of self, unwillingness to embrace confusion, ambiguity, feeling strange, etc. This change entails entering into a safe place with another (a crucible) and staying in it until one's ego-strength is strong enough to face things and then adjust to whatever truths that need to be faced.

### **Anticipating the Four Kinds of Responses**

Given that these are the basic Coaching Conversations, when you ask the opening Coaching question, *What do you want?* you may get one (or more) of four answers. 1) You may get a clear presentation of the person's outcome. 2) You may get a clear "I don't want Y." 3) Or a pseudo-knowing wherein the person says "I want success" or some other vague, unclear, and over-generalized (global) answer. 4) Or "I don't know," "I am not sure."

- 1) "*I definitely want X*" shows that the person is clear, so check if the person is focused and decisive, if so then check on if the person needs a plan or has one, has the resources or needs one, or needs to change anything.
- 2) "*I don't want Y!*" shows that the person is clear about what he does *not* want. Using inferential listening, reverse it. "So if you don't want Y, you want X! Is that right?" Get the objective stated in the positive, then you know what your client definitively wants.
- 3) "*I want la-la land.*" The person speaks in vague nominalizations that have no specificity: relaxation, happiness, a good life, an awesome job, etc. Ground that global using lots of clarity, testing, and checking questions.
- 4) "*I don't know*" or "*I'm unsure.*" Here the person is either unconscious, indecisive, fearful, confused, or a mixture of these. Start by validating the response and check, "And you want to know?" "Great! Are you willing to embrace the confusion we may have to go through to find out?" Then ask the person to guess, use the "as if" frame ("If you did, what would you say?"). You can also use any of the other 15 ways to answer "I don't know."

### **Don't Let Your Client Disorient You!**

You can be disoriented from your *What do you want?* question by your client giving you a symptom and/or effect. Beware! This is a tricky one. If he says, "I don't want so much stress in my life," and you ask, "So if we stated in the positive what you want, what is that?" And he says, "I want relaxation." *Do not go after that!* Relaxation is an effect that will result from something else. What is that something else?

In your situation, what do you need to be thinking and doing so that in the context you mentioned you can be relaxed while you are doing it?

If you go after relaxation and start to elicit it, “Think of a time when you were relaxed...” “Sit back and show me relaxation...” You will probably try to transfer it to the person’s situation, yet that may be entirely unecological and ineffective! Don’t be deceived by “I want to be confident...” Ask, “Doing what? Can you do it? Are you competent in doing that now?” Don’t be tricked by “I want to be happy...” Ask, “In what context?” All of these are symptoms or effects of the some future (and as yet unnamed) state. First you have to discover the context, ground it, then find out question seven, “What do you have to do to get what you want?”

Behind the person wanting those effects, the person may *not* want to be doing and experiencing what is required to get those effects. “What changes do you need to make about your beliefs and understandings about criticism so that you can stay relaxed when under attack?” Many want to eliminate the real world event. “I just don’t want to be criticized!” “Yeah, good luck with that one. That probably means that you will do nothing! But even then you will probably be criticized for doing nothing!” “I just don’t want to be angry or have anger.” “Oh so you don’t want to have any fight in you to stand up when your values are being violated? Or someone else’s values or person is being violated? You don’t want any backbone?”

There’s nothing more unhealthy psychologically than trying to eliminate the human emotions. That’s a great way to create “dragon states.” To taboo and forbid certain states ignores that the person creates her emotions via how she thinks (map) and the experiences she has in the world with her skills (territory). As the difference between map and territory, every emotion is important. And we don’t change them directly, but indirectly — by changing the map or changing one’s skills.

Clients who say they want such things are dis-diagnosing what they need. They think they need to get rid of a negative emotion or how some person responds to them. Yet both of these are outside of the person’s control. Here again, you can see the awesome magic of question #7. “What do you have to *do* to get what you want?” The answer to that question informs both coach and client what is needed— even if it is not wanted. So awaken the person to the value of making the required activity his goal becomes another one of the values of the well-formed outcome questions.

<b>Conversation Kind</b>	<b>Kinds of Responses to “What do you want?”</b>			
	<b>1) “I want...”</b>	<b>2) “I don’t want”</b>	<b>3) Pseudo-Knowing</b>	<b>4) I Don’t Know I am Unsure</b>
<b>Clarity</b>	Mind: the What (subject) <b>Cues:</b> “I want to understand, know, figure out...”	Reverse	Unclear, Vague	Guess If you did
<b>Decision</b>	Intention: to get Commitment  <b>Cues:</b> make up mind focus, get on	Focus on what doesn’t want.	--	Indecisive conflicted
<b>Planning</b>	Mind: know-how Strategy, Process <b>Cues:</b> know how to strategy, technique	—	—	—
<b>Resourcing</b>	Experience, expanding Capacity, ability. <b>Cues:</b> experience, practice, confidence, find	Accept and embrace	Specificity	Congruence courage
<b>Changing</b>	Invent– Innovate Create, suspend Eliminate <b>Cues:</b> difference, new, improved, better, find, grow, develop, create	15 kinds of not-knowing	Challenge the false “Knowing”	The self-blindness
<b>Mediation</b>	Social: inter- Personal <b>Cues:</b> better relationship	—	—	—
<b>Confrontation</b>	Unconscious Unknown, repressed <b>Cues:</b> incongruence, don’t know			Blind spots



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #2**  
**January 11, 2017**

# **THE PREMIER CONVERSATION IN META-COACHING**

## **Part 2: Getting Through the Chaos**

Why is the Well-Formed Outcome pattern *the Premier Conversation in Meta-Coaching*? In the last post I mentioned several reasons— reasons that are also the *value* of this conversation.

- It establishes your *coaching contract* with your client.
- It enables you to identify the *kind* of coaching conversation your client wants.
- It offers you a primary *information gathering tool*.
- It enables you to get your client's *subject* so you can establish a *relevancy frame*.
- It enables you to *know strategically where to go* when your client answers, "What do you want?"

Is that enough reasons for you? As you well know, almost every time you begin coaching with a new client, they will send lots of information your way and lots of it will be irrelevant. So as a coach, you have to sort through what is relevant and what is not. If you don't, you will go on "a wild goose chase" that will accomplish nothing of real value for your client. And if you do that, you may induce both yourself and your client into a very strong state of confusion. (Yes, that could be fun, but it won't be effective or efficient as a Meta-Coach.)

Getting the subject that's most relevant to your client and then staying on subject is a critical meta-skill that you need as a coach. How do you do that?

### ***1) Start with the Premier WFO Conversation.***

Review Morpheus #54 and learn to get through all of the questions of the premier conversation before you even think about coaching. That's a skill in and of itself and a critical one as a Meta-Coach. Memorize those eighteen questions, shift your meta-program to "procedure," and ask the questions in sequence. It will make you a highly effective Meta-Coach.

### ***2) Use the 80/20 Rule.***

Assume that the 80/20 rule applies to all of the things that your client says. Namely, that 80% of what's valuable comes from 20% of what is being said. Anticipate that people will say the same thing in different ways, with different words, and from different perspectives. Expect them to redundantly try to make themselves known and understood. That's why you do not have to chase every word, every story, every side-alley of association. Anticipate that 80% of what's valuable in what they are meaning comes from 20% of what they are saying.

### ***3) Focus on the 20% using what's Semantically Loaded.***

What do they emphasize? How does this particular client stress things? With tone, tempo, pause, emphasis, repetition, or what? People do *underscore* and *highlight* things in their speech— but

you have to really watch and listen to catch it. Often they don't even know that they are doing it. Also, listen for semantically loaded words— words, phrases, metaphors that seem especially loaded with meaning to the person. Calibrate to their state when they say something and if you are unsure, ask them to say it again or to explain it. Note the state that they go into. Ask them about that. “How much are you in that state right now?”

#### **4) Keep Summarizing along with Checking and Testing and Meta-Questions.**

At the beginning of the conversation as you are plowing through all of the words, stories, metaphors that are coming your way. Your job is to identify *the most critical subject* that your client wants to address, lock it down, and then use it as your relevancy challenge. To do that, keep summarizing. You can ask, “So your point is...” and leave it blank for them to fill in. Or you can state what you think the subject is and then check, “Do I have that right? I'm not sure, is that the most important subject for today?” Then, if they say yes, test them. “So that is the most important subject to focus on?”

Summarizing is *bullet-pointing*. To do that, you have to be succinct. Briefly state in one sentence *the point*. To check your understanding, as a yes/no question. “Do I have that right?” To test them and their commitment, ask a yes/no testing question. “There's nothing more important than this right now?” “Are you sure?” Here as elsewhere you can also ask meta-questions for even deeper information gathering. “When you step back from that idea, what do you believe that does not let you change?”

#### **5) Use Inferential Listening to bring order to the chaos.**

Clients often come to coaching precisely because they are confused with what they really want and/or indecisive about a choice. In such cases, expect that their thinking will often be incoherent and even chaotic. Anticipate that their language will be vague, confused, disorganized, and self-contradictory. That's why they need you! When the conversation starts off and seems chaotic— it is your job to help them bring some order to it. Do not keep asking them “What do you want?” Only ask that three or four times. Your job is to take the disordered and chaotic mess and with your *inferential listening* feed back what you are hearing. That will begin the process. Never, but never blame them for being confusing! I have heard too many beginning coaches do that. That scores as a “disconfirmation.”

Ask yourself, “What is the core issue at the center of this person's words?” “What is the principle that ties all of these concerns together?” Use the *kinds of conversations* to sort things out? “Do you need clarity?” “Is this about making up your mind and focusing on a single decision?” “Would creating a plan give you a sense of direction?”

#### **6) Use yourself to reflect back possibilities.**

If you are confused, say so. “I'm confused about what we should be focusing on, you have mentioned four things [list them], are these tied together by a particular theme or are they separate items?” Usually you will be confused because of the client's vague terms, this is where you need to ask for the clarity questions, “What are you referring to when you say leadership?” “How are you using the word self-esteem?” Remember, *terms control thinking*. So if your thinking is confused, jumbled up, chaotic, check the terms and make sure you can make a picture or hear a

conversation. If you cannot, then keep inquiring until you can representationally track from the words to your own internal movie of their situation.

***7) Meta-state yourself and your client for their categories.***

Confusion of the mind and chaos of the conversation often occurs because they do not know how to classify their thoughts. They think all over the place. Mentally they lack a classification system that can help them organize their thoughts. This is where meta-stating comes in. It is where your framing skills are most needed.

“Above and beyond the question of your health, what is the larger question you are seeking to answer?” If your concern about X was a member of a class, what class would it be a member of? You are talking about getting Y work done. That is inside of what category? Is it building a company? Is it creating a loving relationship?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
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**January 18, 2017**

# **THE PREMIER CONVERSATION IN META-COACHING**

## **Part 3: Challenging Mis-Diagnosis & Irresponsibility**

I started with description the Premier Conversation in Meta-Coaching, the Well-Formed Outcome Conversation (#1) and then moved to the subject of *how do you get through the chaos* (#2) of a client's confusion and disorientation. Now for another aspect that commonly occurs during the premier conversation—the client's own mis-diagnosis of the situation (the problem and the solution) and the client's need to be challenged and will tend to avoid being challenged.

Sometimes what happens in the opening conversation is that the client is just plain mistaken about what the problem is or what the solution is. What they think is the problem, and/or what they think they need, and what is the solution for their life situation is just plain wrong-headed. It's a mis-understanding. It is based on one or more mis-beliefs and/or myths about some aspect of life. What they need is new new and better understanding or information. But you are a coach, not a consult or teacher. So what are you to do? What can you do?

### ***1) Identify the mis-diagnosis and explore it.***

It is actually very easy and very common to mis-diagnosis a situation. We all do that and we all do it regularly. Accurately diagnosing requires thorough information gathering, critical thinking skills, and accurate reasoning skills. That's asking a lot. Typically, we jump to conclusions as we over-generalize, personalize, see things through over-used filters (meta-programs), emotionalize, are deceived by various cognitive biases, etc. Expect mis-diagnosis in yourself and in your clients. Then stay alert so that you can catch it. Of course, your own blind spots will enter into the process here, so the more you receive coaching and are working on your own blind spots, the more accurate you will be.

I mentioned one of the most common mis-diagnosis in the first article in this series— wanting to get rid of and eliminate a negative emotion. However, tabooing and forbidden what we don't like is *not* a real solution. Typically, it just creates a secondary problem on top of the first. Similarly, confusing symptoms and effects for causes and solutions. When your client offers a diagnosis, that's a pretty significant and semantically-loaded idea. So stop and explore it with the person.

“So you are saying that X is the problem. Is that right? Tell me what leads you to that conclusion? What else? Are you willing to explore the kind of thinking that you've used to draw that conclusion?”

Here I would recommend the Self-Actualization Training, *Unleashing Creativity and Innovation*. That's because in that training we cover the well-formed problem, the well-formed solution, the well-formed innovation. Those processes enable you to have truly effective conversations on these subjects. When you find your client moving to places that are not serving her, your job is to

facilitate her to move in another direction and of course, you do that best by asking questions. What question will you ask that will move the person in a more productive way? Do you have some mind-moving questions ready to go?

## **2) *Invite the person to wrestle with his ideas.***

Ideas are not neutral. Nor are they inconsequential. Further, they can be wrong. When you hear someone's conclusion, diagnosis, solution, etc. and you have the sense that *those ideas could be the problem*, then bring them up as a potential problem and explore them. This is the place for challenge—invite the person to step up and be more, think more, learn more, feel more, do more, give more, etc.

“May I wrestle with you about that idea?” “Let's work that idea over and see how stout it is or whether it will fall apart when it is challenged it. Are you game?” “I have a sense that there's something not right about that idea and that there may be some frames hiding in it that are creating the problem that you're experiencing, may I challenge that idea with you?”

If you get any sense of resistance, then set the frame that you are going after the frame and the idea, not the person. “You are more than what you think and sometimes what stops us is an idea or a frame.” “If we find a problem, you are not the problem, the frame is the problem.”

“Our purpose will be to let the various choice of ideas and frames compete for influence. In that way, the idea that is best, that is most durable, that is most profitable will win out and will give you a new fresh perspective so you can reach your outcome. How does that sound?”

## **3) *Stay alert to the ideas hiding in the background.***

In all of this, you have to be astute and savvy as the Meta-Coach. The client is in your coaching chair because he needs you to wrestle with his ideas and help him gain more clarity about what's really going on in his life. Your job is to make the invisible visible to your client so that she can see herself better and make better choices in life. Recently I heard a client say this:

“The problem is that I have a fear of insomnia. The phobia is the problem. I want to be able to tolerate insomnia better.”

“So you are defining the problem, not insomnia, not the inability to get a good night's sleep, not to sleep through the night. You are defining the problem that you are afraid of insomnia.” She acknowledged:

“Yes, that's right. I am too conscious about sleeping and that's the problem.”

“When you say you are ‘conscious’ of not sleeping and having insomnia, what do you mean?”

She said that when she becomes conscious of it, then she worries, then she says things like, “I'm not going to get good sleep tonight. Now I will be tired tomorrow.” I confirmed that she said such things to herself. Then I reflected, “It sounds to me, I could be wrong, that the problem is not being conscious of not sleeping, but what you say to yourself when you are not sleeping. It is not being conscious, but being hyper-conscious and amplifying your awareness.”

“Ah, yes! That's it. I'm hyper-conscious and worried. I feel stress and the more stress I feel, the more I worry.”

So can we say that the solution is not being aware or conscious, but *the poor quality and kind of awareness* that you access about sleeping? Once we established that, I asked, “What would you say if we made ‘having a good night sleep’ your goal? What if we made, ‘sleeping solidly and waking up refresh and alert’ your objective? Would you like that?” And, of course, she said that would be great.

From: L. Michael Hall  
2017 Morpheus #4  
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## WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO CREATE A COLLABORATIVE TEAM?

Sometimes, for the Assist Team that we put together for *Coaching Mastery* (for APMC), we have a collaborative team. And sometimes we do not. Sometimes the personalities on the team clash, rub each other the wrong way, or on the other extreme—seem to just never connect. And sometimes the chemistry is just right—everybody is there pulling their weight, contributing everything that they can, managing their own state and attitude in a superb way, and creating an atmosphere of learning, contribution, curiosity, fun, and team-spirit. And when that happens, magic can happen. We had that this past December when we ran APMC in Sydney.

What explains that? We don't always have it. Sometimes we almost have it, but then not quite. Nor do not always have it in Sydney, but we did this time. What explains that? *There certainly was preparation*—the team at “The Coaching Room” had run webinars to prepare those on the team. *There was leadership*—Madeleine Robinson was the Director of the Team Leaders and what she did that I thought worked really well was her clear communications, her presence and her availability. When we had challenges, she took it right on and found solutions by involving all those concerned.

Then there was *the authenticity* that occurred on the two days of training that we did prior to the beginning of Coaching Mastery. From the very first, each person brought some really personal, and sometimes raw emotions, into the coaching sessions. They did not hold back. That created a sense of connection between all of us. Funny, isn't it? It is not when we are strong and powerful and perfect that people most connect to us, it is when we are open and vulnerable. It is when you open your heart and let others know what you struggle with—your humanity that people can best relate to you and feel close to you and respect you.

There was another factor. And both James Hayes and Madeleine led out on this one. When we ended a coaching session or when we came to the end of a discussion, both of them helped the group to *reflect on what we had just experienced or learned*. They often invited the group to engage in what I'd call a Meta-Moment. They would call attention to an insight, a learning, a discovery and ask the team to reflect on it. This is what leaders do. This is how to begin to exercise your leadership—enabling people to think and learn together. And we did.

Another thing that creates a collaborative team is *building up the competence of the team*. Mandy Chai leads out in this way. In November she finished three days of benchmark training in Shenzhen China with three Meta-Coaches. She noted that she did this with the intention of using this training to promote higher quality benchmarking of Meta-Coaches in China. “We are demonstrating the collaboration spirit as well for the NS community in China.” This showed up

in the first ACMC that we conducted in 2017 in Hong Kong.

This is also what has been effective in Mexico in the last few years and it is what Emilia Bleck has specialized in. Now if there's anyone who "loves" benchmarking, it is Emilia. [Yes, you can come to actually *love* it!] And many others in Mexico are "falling in love" with it. So they promote the learning and practice of benchmarking year round. That's right — *all year long!*

For new coaches coming into the Meta-Coaching System, the Neuro-Semantic vision and value of collaboration begins right from the beginning. When we can bring it to life with the Assist Team—the amazing thing is that it then spreads to everybody else, even to the teams that we create during the training.

Finally, a collaborative team arises from *intense dialogue*. As you probably know, the book on *The Collaborative Leader* (2016) has just been published. There have only been a couple Reviews in various magazines so far and of those that have, the idea of leaders working together as a team as proven as new and radical as we expected. Off the record, the complaint that I have often heard is that "it takes too long."

"You have to work with everybody on the team and get them all to see the reasons why we're doing what we're doing." "It is so much easier just to tell people what to do."

Yes, command-and-control is faster and easier in that it takes less effort and less time. The downside is that people generally do not like to be told or ordered around. And the use of *conversation*, or more specifically, of *dialogue*, as a leadership strategy and methodology can be very messy. Yet that's how collaborative teams come about.

### Meta-Coaching News

- If you want to write to me and share your views, write to [meta@acsol.net](mailto:meta@acsol.net). Germaine got an email from someone recently trying to reach me.
- When you *renew your Meta-Coach License*, you do **not** have to send us (Germaine, Shawn, David Murphy, or myself) your receipt. It shows up on the Meta-Coach paypal page. To renew, go to [www.neurosemantics.com](http://www.neurosemantics.com) click Meta-Coaching, click Renew License. You can use your paypal account (if you have one, that's what the password is for), otherwise scroll to the bottom and use any credit.
- The Next ACMC will be in Cairo Egypt. Feb. 18-25. If you are interested in coming to re-visit and take a trip to see the Pyramids at the same time, this will be my 4<sup>th</sup> ACMC there. It has always been safe to travel there. Contact Mohamed Tarek; [mohamed@lucidtraining.net](mailto:mohamed@lucidtraining.net). And/or Hossam Aldin Nabil [hossam.meta.coach@gmail.com](mailto:hossam.meta.coach@gmail.com)



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #5**  
**February 1, 2017**

## **DRILLS FOR SKILLS**

One year ago, February 2016, we changed the “project” that we had been doing in *Coaching Mastery* from the Business Project to *Drills for Skills*. Why? For several reasons—we originally focused on the business project as a way to get coaches-in-training to focus on the business model that they would need to be successful in business. Even though we spend time on Day 4 on the Matrix Business Plan, and all of Day 7 on Business, we felt that this was needed. The problem was that the teams spent so much time on the business skills, that we consistently got feedback from the team leaders that it was taking away focus on the coaching skills.

The question then arose: What can we give the teams to do that will keep them focused on the coaching skills? That’s when I got the idea of *drills for skills*. So one year ago I posed this to the team leaders there in Egypt and to Mohamed and Hossam who were co-training with me and we decided to go with it. Since then every *Coaching Mastery* program has engaged in the drills for skills project.

### **The Set Up For Drills For Skills**

Here’s the idea. Take a skill, any skill, and first *identify the pieces that comprise the skill*. What are the parts, the variables, the factors that make up this skill? Once you have all of the pieces, then *identify the order*. What is the best sequence for putting these pieces together? What would be the worse sequence? What sequence would still work, but be clumsy, awkward, and a waste of time?

Of course, these are modeling questions. Frequently, when I go around and listen to the teams working on their skill, I ask them, “Have you asked someone who knows how to do this skill to do it so that you can watch them actually do it?” Sometimes the answer has been “No we didn’t think of that!” Several times I have said, “I’ll do the skill right now, right here.” You watch, see if you can pull apart the pieces of what I’m doing. Sometimes I have said, “Now I’m going to do it poorly. Watch and see if you can see what factor or factors make it poor, or mediocre.”

The next piece we ask of each team is to *define the skill operationally*. If it is framing, pre-framing, empathy, clarity check, challenge, etc., we do not want a dictionary definition, we want a definition that tells you how to *operate doing the skill*. That’s an operational definition. It’s like a recipe: First you do this, then that. My question to the teams and what we ask on Day 5 in the evening is, “Can I read your definition and know exactly what to do?” With an operational definition you make the skill *actionable*.

Next, *set up a practice as a way to drill the skill so that you can learn it*. How could I learn to do testing and checking questions? These are closed-ended *yes—no* questions, one is to check my understanding, the other is to test the person and get a commitment. Once I know what they are

and how to do them, how could I then create some way of *practicing them* so that I can learn them? This is *the drill* part of the skill. Sounds easy. Right? Well, if you were on any of the teams during 2016, you found out that this is much tougher than it sounds.

Finally, we want to *see the team practice the skill and show us how the drill goes*. The challenge here has always been to get the team to **not** think in terms of a show or a skit, but to just *demonstrate the drill*. Even some of the team leaders have had a challenge with this one. We do this on the night of Day 5 and only give the teams seven minutes. By watching them drill the skill, does it look like the drill will enable them to really learn it and develop it so it becomes a natural part of their coaching? Does it look like a drill I'd like to practice? Does it look like it would be fun to do this practice?

### **Why and Really Why?**

One of the hidden reasons behind this is that when you, as a Meta-Coach, learn how to do this, you can then *coach any skill* and enable your client to drill it as part of the tasking that you give. That's because you will know how to ask the critical questions about a skill that your client wants but does not yet have:

- What does this skill do? What does it achieve?
- What are the variables that make up this skill? What else?
- Do you know anyone who can do this and do this well? Are you will to go and observe it?
- What did you learn? What comes first, second, third, etc.?
- If you were to describe this in an actionable way, how would you describe the skill?
- What could you do this week that would enable you to begin to practice this skill?

### **Attachment: The 2016 Drills for Skills**

I have attached to this post a document of 14-pages with 18 Drills. After the teams worked on a skill, I refined what they put together. These are now *ready to be used in the Meta-Coach Foundational Chapter meetings!* With 18 of them, you have 18 weeks wherein you can play around with these drills to deepen your competency with the skills. If and when you can improve any of these drills, please send me an email with your improvements.

This year we will be adding more skills, many more of the sub-skills that are within the seven core skills for coaching, as well as others. Here's to our collaborative efforts in developing new and better drills for skills.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #6**  
**February 7, 2017**

## **HOW TO RUN AN INTRODUCTION SESSION**

Most *Personal Coaches* as well as many Executive Coaches get much of their business by doing an *Introduction Session*.

*Set Your Own Intention:* The purpose of an intro. session is to introduce what coaching is to the client and your unique style and way of doing coaching. Doing that will help qualify whether a particular person is ready and able to enter a coaching relationships. Doing that also helps the person to know precisely what they are buying when they purchase a coaching contract and what they are not buying. For coaches in countries where coaching is still pretty new, this helps them to distinguish coaching from consulting and training.

*Pre-frame the Intro. Session:* “This session is designed so that you can get a sense of what the coaching experience is like. You will learn about my coaching style and together we’ll figure out if we have the chemistry between us to engage in a coaching program. I’ll be explaining the difference between coaching and consulting or training. I will also be asking lots of coaching questions about your goals and dreams for making your life better and about the changes that you want to make.”

“You probably know that I don’t work with everybody, so this intro. session is designed for both of us to determine whether we want to work with each other. You will determine if you want to work with me as your coach. I will be qualifying whether I want to choose you as my client. My concern is that there will be a good fit for us to engage in a coaching contract.”

*Overview the Documentation.* “As I look over the paperwork you sent, it looks like you are not under a doctor’s care, not in psychotherapy, and you are not taking any psycho-active drugs. Is that true? If you are taking any medication, what is that medication and for what?” If the person is under a doctor’s care, ask if you can contact the doctor and ask his or her opinion of the person’s readiness for the challenge of coaching.

*Induce a Robust Motivation State:* Using the Motivation Axis of the Axes of Change Model, ask a series of both *awakening* and *away-from* questions. As you do, follow the person and keep amplifying that dual state of *aversion and attraction*. Notice the person’s use of semantic space and be sure to use your voice to sound like the dual states. Continually calibrate.

What are your dreams for your life? What else? What dreams are even bigger than that? When you get that in just the way you want it, what is higher than that? What results do you want in your health, finances, career, relationships, with your loved one, your spiritual life, sports, hobbies, etc.? What other outcomes do you have that clamors inside your

heart?

What are some of the challenges you are experiencing right now? What else? What's not going the way you want it to? Career, health, fitness, relationships, friends, money, etc.? What costs are you paying for some of these problems? If you don't make a change, what will happen in another year? In another five years? How motivated are you to making those changes?

*Summarize the person's drives:* Using the person's precise words, feedback your summary of the person's desires, hopes, dreams using your voice for state induction and highlighting the values and beliefs that you heard. Take five to ten minutes just giving acknowledgments, validations, and empathy statements. As you do, go for the "Oh my God!" effect. If you do this well, you will have demonstrated the power of coaching— of intense active listening. The person will probably feel that you understand them better than their closest friends and loved ones.

"Let me see if I understand you, what you want in your heart of hearts and what you are working to eliminate or avoid. What I hear that you really want is ... and what you do not want is...." Do I have that right? Have I missed anything?"

*Shift to Consulting about what coaching is:* Be sure to change your tone and tempo as you move into a consulting and teaching style to explain what coaching is and is not. You may want to use some of the diagrams that we use in Meta-Coaching.

"If I choose to work with you as a client in a coaching program, there are several things you need to know. The first is that coaching facilitates you to find your answers. Coaching is not consulting or teaching. That's *not* what I will be doing. Instead my expertise is in asking the kind of searching questions to get you to discover things. Coaching also starts from the premise that you have all the resources you need to achieve your objectives. In coaching my job is to challenge you, to get you to step up, stretch, believe more in yourself, not sell yourself short. At times this will feel uncomfortable.

Coaching focuses on the mental frames in the back of the mind that create our sense of reality; so in coaching, I will be interrupting you to catch those frames when I catch them. We will be exploring your meanings, beliefs, etc.

*Shift yet again to make an offer:* Pull out a sheet of a sample contract and give to your potential client, also a sheet of options and prices.

"If you want to do a coaching program with me, here's how we would proceed. The contract would be 8 sessions every other week. Your investment would be \_\_\_\_\_ and with that you would get the coaching workbook, Coaching to Your Matrix." The total for your investment is \_\_\_\_\_. This price will be held for you for one week and in three days you can call the office to see if I will accept you as a client. We would then work out a time for you to begin the program within a month. Do you have any questions about the program?"

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #7**  
**February 14, 2017**

## **COACHING FLOW**

### **An Experience Your Client Will Never Forget**

*Here's a wild and crazy idea:* What if the way you coach and the very style and nature of your coaching induce your clients into an experience of *flow*? Could you sell that? Would you have clients wanting repeat sessions?

Before you answer, let me remind you what a *flow* experience means. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who created the concept, said it was “an optimal experience” and define it this way.

“[Flow is]... the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it.” (*Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, 1990, p. 4)

“When goals are clear, feedback relevant, and challenges and skills are in balance, attention becomes ordered and fully invested. Because of the total demand on psychic energy, a person in flow is completely focused. There is no space in consciousness for distracting thoughts, irrelevant feelings. Self-consciousness disappears, yet one feels stronger than usual. The sense of time is distorted: hours seem to pass by in minutes. When a person's entire being is stretched in the full functioning of body and mind, whatever one does becomes worth doing for its own sake... It is the full involvement of flow, rather than happiness, that makes for excellence in life. ... the flow experience acts as a magnet for learning, that is, for developing new levels of challenges and skills.” (*Finding Flow*, pp. 31-33)

The *flow* experience is one of those exceptional moments in life of effortless action, a moment that stands out as one of your best moments. What we're talking about is an experience *so engaging* and *so enjoyable* that it orders your thoughts in such a way that you are completely engaged and focused. Great idea, right? Of course this raises the next questions:

What are the factors that facilitate that?

Can coaching be a flow experience? If so, how?

What would I need to do to make the coaching experience a flow experience for my clients?

Fortunately for us, when Csikszentmihalyi (1991) put together the parameters for *the flow state*, he gave us the answers. Here is one of the ways that he simplified flow:

“What counts is to set a goal, to concentrate one's psychic energy, to pay attention to the feedback, and to make certain that the challenge is appropriate to one's skill. Sooner or later the interaction will begin to hum, and the flow experience follows.” (190-191)

Does that sound like coaching or what? Yes. It is also a description of “the genius state” that we use for whenever we need to be completely *engaged in a laser-beam focus state*. So let's look at the features that comprise the flow state which make it such an extraordinary experience:

1) Clear goals: an objective is distinctly defined with clear rules about what to do.

- 2) Immediate and relevant feedback so that you know instantly how well you are doing.
- 3) Opportunities for acting decisively are relatively high, and they are matched by your perceived ability to act. Your personal skills are well suited to given challenges.  
 “Flow tends to occur when a person’s skills are fully involved in overcoming a challenge that is just about manageable.” (*Finding Flow*, p. 30)
- 4) Action and awareness merge; one-pointedness of mind.  
 “Optimal experiences usually involve a fine balance between one’s ability to act, and the available opportunities for action.” (*Finding Flow*, p. 30)
- 5) Concentration on the task at hand: irrelevant stimuli disappear from consciousness, worries and concerns temporarily suspended.
- 6) A sense of personal control.
- 7) Loss of self-consciousness, transcendence of ego boundaries.
- 8) Altered sense of time which usually seems to pass faster.
- 9) Experience becomes autotelic: It becomes worth doing for its own sake.

Hummmm. Isn’t that list also a good description of how we combine *the well-formed outcome questions* with *the genius state* which we use in Meta-Coaching to enable a person to live their lives more intentionally? Think about it.

- 1) Clear goals: Use the WFO questions and the refining questions to create clarity.
- 2) Immediate feedback: Calibration and the monitoring of the goal (WFO question 13).
- 3) Opportunities to act: Tasking, What will you do between now and our next session to make this real in your life? What do you have to do to get what you want? (WFO #7).
- 4) Action and awareness merge: The synergy of meaning and performance.
- 5) Concentration: Intentionality. Why is this important? (Question #3) What is the context for this action? (Questions 4-6).
- 6) Person control: Is this in your control? Can you do it? (Questions 8 and 9)
- 7) Self-transcendence: A natural result of accessing the genius state.
- 8) Altered sense of time: Another natural result of the genius state.
- 9) Autotelic: Enjoying the value of acting for its innate value. (Question #3).

### **Meaning and Performance ---- Challenge and Competency**

The structure and composition of “optimal experiences” according to Csikszentmihalyi involved two factors—*challenge and competency*. These “best moments of your life” are not passive, receptive, or relaxing. No. They require effort, discipline, and focus.

“The best moments usually occur when a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile. Optimal experience is thus something that we *make* happen.”

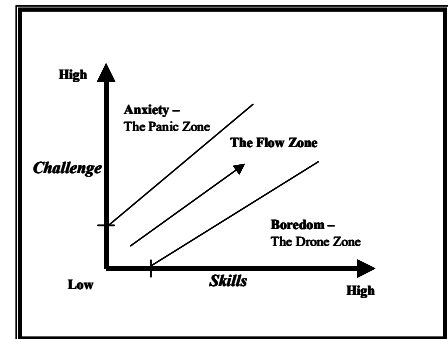
These two axes— challenge and competence— in turn, defined *the flow zone*.

“When all a person’s relevant skills are needed to cope with the challenges of a situation, that person’s attention is completely absorbed by the activity. There is no excess of psychic energy left over to process any information but what the activity offers. All the attention is concentrated on the relevant stimuli.” (*Flow*, p. 53)

“Because optimal experience depends on the ability to control what happens in consciousness moment by moment, each person has to achieve it on the basis of his own individual efforts and creativity.” (*Flow*, p. 5)

So just as you use the self-actualization quadrants which synergize meaning and performance to get to peak performance, in the *flow* state model, Csikszentmihalyi urged a balanced unity of challenge and competency. We would say integrate meaning with performance.

- *Challenge* is what puts you to the test to see what you have, to see what you are made of, to see how you will meet a situation or circumstance. Challenge makes life exciting, validates your learnings and skills, but when it is too much, it creates stress, frustration, anxiety, and then discouragement. *Challenge* speaks about meaning, purpose, vision, and value. We have to feel that the activity is meaningful, that it contributes to ourselves or others, and that it is not too easy. If there's no challenge, then we enter into the drone zone and fall asleep. If the activity is too demanding, instead of going into the flow zone, you go into the panic zone. Too much challenge overwhelms us with anxiety.
- *Skill competency* is learning, growth, and development. As you become more skilled you want more challenges to handle. Your competency level calls upon you to rise up to take on greater challenges, there's a sense of excitement and engagement. This is the foundation for entering into the flow channel. *Competency* speaks about your abilities and skills. *Competency without challenge*, without feeling a call to tap into more resources, to learn more, to discover more, to become more, etc. creates a satisfaction when perpetuated becomes comfort and then apathy. It takes a meaningful challenge to your inner capacities and competencies to step into a flow state of engagement. This is the state where high performers live.



Now for that wild question again. *Suppose that the way you coached*, and the way you facilitated the fierce coaching conversation, induced a meaningful challenge or a competent performance. Imagine that style of coaching! Suppose that the coaching experience you facilitated in the session and the life-style that your clients thereafter created had these qualities— do you think you'd ever lack for clients?

And what if, here's another wild idea, the way you coached was from the flow state itself? That will be my theme next week.

**References:**

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 Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. (1997). *Finding flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life*. NY: HarperCollins, Basic Books.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #8**  
**February 21, 2017**

## **COACHING FROM YOUR GENIUS FLOW STATE**

The *wild and crazy idea* I posed last week was— What if the way you coach and the very style and nature of your coaching induce your clients into an experience of *flow*? Could you sell that? Would you have clients wanting repeat sessions? This week I want to pose another wild and crazy idea— What if you coached from your own genius flow state? Would that revolutionize the way you do coaching? Would that change the experiences your clients have with you? What could you expect?

After developing the genius engagement state in 1994 with the discovery of the Meta-States Model and applying it to myself, I came across the work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's work on the flow state. I immediately recognized that we were talking about the same optimal experience — he called it flow, I called it genius or engagement state. He focused on the quality of that state, I focused on the structure of the higher frames that made the primary state of absolute focus possible. What he did *not* focus on, and what he wrote very little about, was how to access that state. For him it was entirely a matter of the delicate balance between challenge and competency. For me it was about accessing and refining the state and then framing it with multiple meta-states so that you could then trust yourself to go fully into the engagement state and get lost in it.

Some years ago I wrote all of these connections between the genius and the flow state and I noted then that *accessing your personal genius state* was the answer to *how* you could turn on and off the flow state at will. Last week I mentioned the variables that Csikszentmihalyi identified which make up the flow state. Reading these simultaneously provides a description of the genius state.

- 1) *Clear goals*: an objective is distinctly defined with clear rules about what to do.
- 2) *Immediate and relevant feedback* so that you know instantly how well you are doing.
- 3) *Challenges and skills*: Opportunities for acting decisively are relatively high, and they are matched by your perceived ability to act. Your personal skills are well suited to given challenges.
- 4) *Focus*: Action and awareness merge; one-pointedness of mind.
- 5) *Concentration* on the task at hand: irrelevant stimuli disappear from consciousness, worries and concerns temporarily suspended.
- 6) *Control*: A sense of personal control.
- 7) *Loss of self-consciousness*, transcendence of ego boundaries.
- 8) *Loss of sense of time*: Altered sense of time which usually seems to pass faster.
- 9) *Autotelic*: Experience becomes autotelic: It becomes worth doing for its own sake.

Now suppose you got into your *coaching genius state* and you coached from that state? Would your coaching be different? If so, how would your coaching be different? How would it be better?



First and foremost, *you would be completely and totally present to your client*. Now imagine that! You would not be double-tracking, you would be fully in the moment with your client, calibrating, and hearing, detecting patterns, etc. How much better would you be listening? Twice as well? Ten times better? Could this be the answer to the core competency of listening? You would no longer be listening to yourself, your ideas, your advice, your judgments, your worries, etc. By “losing your mind and coming to your senses” in the genius state, the flow state— you would be all there.

This is what you were supposed to have learned and installed in the three-day training of “Coaching Genius” (or APG). Did you? Did you learn how to *access your coaching genius state* at will? Do you need to go back and repeat that? What’s wonderful about this is that when you access your “genius” state, you are in the flow zone and all of the components of *flow* enable you to be much more fully available to your client.

This is what I’ve learned about my own self when coaching and why I often astonish people about how much I can hear. Why? Simple: I’m fully present. I have no agenda except to seek to understand the person on his terms. If I am able to hear so much it is because I’m in my “coaching genius” state. I can hear what I do simply because I am fully engaged in doing one thing—seeking to understand. That’s why everything else has vanished—time, the world, self, others, etc.

Would you like to take your listening skills to a whole new level? Get into your coaching genius state and turn on the flow state so that the meaning of it offers you an exciting challenge to your competency level. Next use the seven distinctions of the flow state to refine your listening skill.

1) *Clear Goal*.

A clearly defined goal: Your goal is to simply gather information and to identify what the person wants. Your goal is *not* to get a good score, impress the client, be right, etc.

2) *Clear Feedback*.

Clear feedback that lets you know how you are doing: when you are in the genius state and fully present, you can use testing, checking, clarifying questions to keep calibrating on what the person wants and is ready to commit to. This keeps you current and focused. Now you can easily keep score as to where you are with your client.

3) *Challenge— Skill Synergy*:

The integration of challenge and skill: As the coach your highest facilitation skills are dependent on the twin-motivations of *compassion* (care, empathy) and *testing* (questioning, challenging). When you have this fully integrated in just the right amounts, then you will be compassionately challenging.

4) *Lazar-Beam Focus*:

A mindful focus on a single thing: Being in the genius state you can focus on getting “just the facts” from the client by using the Well-Formed Outcome questions as well as checking the Kind of Conversation that your client wants to have.

5) *Empowered:*

A sense of personal control. As the coach you have to control only one thing— seeking to give your presence and care to the client in order to understand the client.

6) *Fully in the Moment:*

Being completely in the moment: Being in the genius state, you have “lost your mind and have come to your senses.” You have lost your sense of time, self, and the world. This enables you to “be here now” (to quote Perls). You are in the moment.

7) *Sacred Listening and Responding:*

The experience being *autotelic* which refers to doing what you are doing *for its own sake* and not for some instrumental purpose. You have no purpose except to seek first to understand your client. We call this sacred listening in Meta-Coaching. Here you stand in awe of the mystery of the person and the value of the conversation.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #9**  
**February 28, 2017**

## **THANK YOU FOR YOUR LOYALTY!**

*I begin with a “Thank You!”* Never before in my life have I have received *so many* hundreds of emails and contacts of people who have written to express their loyalty to our shared community. They have written to say a word or two (or sometimes a whole page) that they will be loyal to the Vision and Values of Neuro-Semantics and some have expressed their shock at the disloyalty that a few have expressed. And I appreciate all of those expressions of loyalty! I appreciate it more than words that I can express. I guess there’s nothing like some disloyalty to elicit the loyalty of the silent majority and their need to speak up. And so many have.

*Loyalty is an amazing thing*— it is the very glue that bonds people together. I guess that’s why we make *promises of loyalty* to each other when we enter into the most intimate of relationships— “to honor and cherish till death do us part.” Sometimes we have ceremonies in which we make promises of loyalty to our children, we may use parties or dinners at times to give a “toast” to our friends and express our commitment. We usually use legal means to make a binding commitment to our collaborative partners. In all of these ways, we may a promise.

Yet the promise is just that— a promise. The intention and good will to do right by another person. The next question after the promise is one’s personal integrity: Will the person or persons *live* up to their promise? Will they be as good as their word? Will they do what they have promised and pay the price of loyalty?

If loyalty bonds people, if loyalty is what creates and calls into existence a family, a partnership, and a community, then disloyalty is what breaks the bonds. Disloyalty works as a cancer consuming the health and well-being of our bonds. Disloyalty fails the other person, weakens the bond, calls in question the value of what one said, and creates distrust. “Can I trust you?” “Now that you violated a promise and/or betrayed a trust, how can I trust you?”

When a person’s loyalty is off-and-on, when it comes and goes, when it is “fair-weather loyalty” then it is hardly “loyalty” at all. It is more *convenience*. The person is acting in his or her own interests and doing what serves them and not committed or loyal or trustworthy to the other person who he has pledged loyalty to. The pledge and the promise is actually a lie. Being loyal when things are going great, when there is no challenge, and when there is no price to pay is easy. In those situations, there is no test to the loyalty.

*Loyalty is tested by tough times.* Loyalty is tested when one has to extend himself to be loyal, to be true to one’s word. If a person doesn’t get his way and throws a tantrum and then tries to destroy the loyalty structure of the others, then that person has a deep problem with loyalty and with being trustworthy. Loyalty means staying the course, working through things, and being

tolerant and patient enough to do the work of relating. To be loyal you have to be true to your word and be willing to pay the price to carry out your promises. It is in the tough times that we actually discover who is loyal and who is not. Will they “stand by your side” or will they bail?

All of this shows that loyalty is based on commitment and, in fact, *loyalty is a commitment*. It is support of a vision or values, to a principle or a project that we share together and it shows up as allegiance. When you consider the list of other words which describe this state you have a list of words that indicate a trusted position — faithful, fidelity, devotion, bond, devotion, dependable, trust, trustworthy.

To be *worthy to be trusted* (trustworthy) a person has to say and then do. We call that *integrity*. The congruency of being a person of integrity is what makes you and me worthy-of-trust. When I am loyal to you that means that I have earned the right to be trusted. When you are loyal to me, it means you have earned the right to be trusted. When one is disloyal, when one will not work through differences, will not even consider working through a conflict, when one refuses— then you see a person who is more committed to his own interests. So be careful in trusting that person. He is not showing the integrity of loyalty or making himself worthy-of-trust.

In all of this, you can see that loyalty requires truth, truthfulness, and a commitment to speak the truth even if it might upset someone. And so the biblical injunction, “speak the truth in love.” Conversely, where there is deception, cover-ups, manipulation, and falseness— there will be the treachery of disloyalty.

Now all of these qualities are the very qualities that comprise the Values of Neuro-Semantics. We set them forth at the beginning and said it is through these qualities that we will be taking NLP to a higher level professionally and ethically. And to this day, this is our Vision. That’s why we also set in place from the beginning an accountability structure so that we would apply this to ourselves and hold each other to living up to these standards. To that end we then took a pattern, the conflict resolution pattern, and turned it into a Promise that we made to each other. It is that promise that is the conflict resolution process that every Trainer and every Meta-Coach signs. You have it in your manuals; you have it on the website.

So the promise of loyalty that we ask of people is nothing other than this. And one application of it, one that I personally did not anticipate from the beginning was the loyalty of not supporting someone who is not. After all, if someone is robbing a bank, you would not pat him on the back and say “Well, I might disagree that you should not be stealing, but you have my support.” You would not drive the get-away car, you would not help set up a hiding place for the stolen loot.

So thank you, thank you for the beauty and loveliness of your loyalty! I deeply appreciate it. It is the key to our future!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #10**  
**February 27, 2017**

## **WE HAVE A VISION!**

*We have a Vision ...* and it is an inspiring one, a bold one, and an ethical one. From the beginning of Neuro-Semantics, we set a vision —

To apply what we learn to ourselves, to take NLP to a higher level professionally and ethically, to live with integrity, to give credit to sources, to work together in a collaborative win/win way, to be a good team player, and to build the community.

*Context:* This arose in a context where trainers and practitioners of NLP were doing lots of unethical things to each other and to the public. The charge of “manipulation” was all too often true. When Bandler had a conflict with Grinder, they did not even attempt to sit down and talk, Richard just filed a lawsuit. When he had a problem with Tony Robbins, there was no sitting down to work out the differences, he filed a six-million dollar lawsuit. When Richard was doing cocaine and fell in a cocaine induced coma, when he spent months in jail accused of murder and waiting trial, when he filed the 90-million dollar lawsuit against “the field,” and on and on— there was no way to resolve the conflicts. We had a Vision to do it differently!

Out of that context came the Neuro-Semantic Vision— to put into place a way to resolve conflicts. And that’s what we did. How? Simple. We took a basic NLP communication pattern and turned it into an Agreement that we all promised to follow. Today *the Conflict Resolution Agreement* is a document that every Meta-Coach and every Neuro-Semantic Trainer signs. We also sit up a process for activating it. First, one to one. Each person accepts personal responsibility to *go to the person directly and work things out*. If that doesn’t work, bring a person to *mediate*. If that doesn’t work, go to the leaders (trainers or institute officers) for mediation. Simple. Profound. Transformative.

Our Vision is that we will *apply NLP and Neuro-Semantic principles and guidelines to ourselves*. The agreement reads: I will get myself into a good state, I will gather information, I will assume positive intentions and I will look for them, I will not judge until we have all of the facts. I will apply patience and understanding and compassion for differences. I will accept the mediation even if I don’t get everything I want. A bold vision! An inspiring vision. We have a way to work through conflicts. Great!

The Problem: There is a problem. *This Vision depends on everybody being trustworthy and loyal to their promise*. That’s where loyalty comes in— integrity, being as good as your word. Why? Because if a person agrees only when things are going his way and refuses to do what he promised when he does not get his way— well, the whole thing falls apart. It only works if the persons *work it*. That means personal responsibility. That means being open and vulnerable. That means willing to receive feedback.

This is also part of our Vision— calling, inviting, training, coaching, and uniting men and women from all over the world who will *step up to this kind of personal responsibility*. That’s our value—to be responsible, to be proactive, to be compassionate and caring, to be firm and true to values. So we train Meta-States as our flagship training because then people can learn how to reflexively *apply to self*.

None of this is easy or even “natural.” That’s why it requires personal growth, development in state management, emotional intelligence, and communication maturity. We use the Meta-Model to make our communications more precise and accurate— to stop mind-reading, judging, exaggerating, distorting, etc. We use the communication guideline, “The meaning of your communication is the response you get” to welcome feedback. Then we can check out what people are hearing that we may not intend to be communicating. This is part of our Vision— eliminating mind-reading and judgment as we work through our differences.

*The Vision obviously implies values.* From our vision we can articulate our values— integrity, congruency, honesty, truth, openness, vulnerability, being authentic, working through differences, care, compassion, being responsible, being accountable, etc.

Note what this does to the opposite—to the dis-values. They violate the Vision. *Where there are lies, cover-ups, “games,” manipulation, dishonesty, betrayal, violating of trust, hypocrisy, deception, and so on— the values and the vision of Neuro-Semantics are being violated.* So we invite, “Let’s sit down and work this through.” This is what we did in the recent storm of conflict. We did it repeatedly. We also had others among us who called for that. And with each call, those of us in any leadership role said, “Yes, sure. I’m in!” But it takes two.

Our Vision is big and bold and challenging precisely because those who are not emotionally mature, those who are overly competitive, those who are insecure, those who are afraid of feedback, or afraid of being wrong —often *refuse to do the work*. For whatever reason, they just will not engage. Now it might surprise you—but even that is okay. Why? Because we are not here to impose anything on anyone. It is an association so people can come and go. But what we cannot accept is someone who will not engage and who then turn to *destroy* the very community that nursed and nurtured them. That’s not collaboration, team spirit, or working together!

This is another example of having standards— values— and creating structures that protect the standards. It is not controlling, not being mean, not being inconsiderate. It is standing up for the Vision and Values that brought us together in the first place. Fathers and mothers do the same with their children. They sit values and then protect those values by standing up for them. Every community has to have some way of protecting *why* they are a community (vision) and the *standards* that they seek to live by (values) or the community will not endure.

*We have a Vision!* It is a bold one, an inspiring one, and a protective of our highest dreams and the values that we consider important. When there is a destructive force to that vision and those values, there is a crisis. And if we handle it well, then we will come out of it stronger, more resolved, more resilient, and more able to live out the vision. To our Collaborative Vision!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #11**  
**March 1, 2017**

## **ETHICS AND BUSINESS TACTICS**

Recently I have used the word “fraud” about the behavior of a fellow trainer and a former friend. I do not do that lightly nor without extensive reflection and prayer. It is a harsh word. It speaks about something unethical and unprofessional. Some have written to ask me what it means that I’ve used it, and how I am using it. Here is my answer.

When we established Neuro-Semantics we set *being honest and truthful* as essential to our ethical standards. From the beginning we set *integrity, congruence, and doing right by others, giving credit, acknowledging sources*, etc. as our values. Our vision was to live these values. The back side of this mean that we stand against lying, deceiving, and misrepresenting. We put these in the license as what we promise to each other that we will *not* do. In this way we have said to each other that we would hold each accountable to live up to these values. The opposite is to misled and to engage in fraudulent behaviors.

Here’s an example. Once we had a trainer who claimed to be a “Master Trainer.” He put on his website that he was an International Master Trainer. Several people wrote to me and asked about it. Where did he get that status? What did he have to do to earn it? What competencies did he meet? Who granted it? So I wrote and asked. Three exchanges and he only communicated in a vague way that yes he had it. When I pressed for details, I only got convoluted and ambiguous answers. Eventually it was revealed that he had asked Bob to give him the status, “A Master Trainer.” Being good hearted and naive, Bob did that! No standards, no requirements, nothing. “He asked for it, I gave it” Bob later told me. Being a Christian pastor, that’s what Bob does. He has a big heart and because he has no aptitude for tolerating conflict, he goes along with things that he later discovered were deceptive and fraudulent.

Of course, getting it in that way was not legitimate. Not at all. And presenting it was presenting something false. It was a mis-representation—fraud. While some people may not care about that, I do. Leading a community based on standards and values— that is just not acceptable. For awhile the trainer took that designation down. But he was unhappy with what happened so he left. he could say whatever he wanted about himself and nobody would hold him accountable. A few years alter he wrote an article copying verbatim Patrick Lencioni’s book, *Five Dysfunctions of a Team* giving no credit and presenting it as his ideas! That was again, fraud.

What is fraud? Merriam-Webster’s dictionary say that **fraud** is “deceit, trickery, intentional perversion of truth in order to induce another to part with something of value or to surrender a legal right, an act of deceiving or misrepresenting.” “A fraud is a person who is not what he or she pretends to be, impostor, one who defrauds, cheat, one that is not what it seems or is represented to be.” Examples given of the use of the word:

“The UFO picture was proved to be a fraud.”

“He claimed to be a licensed psychologist, but he turned out to be a fraud.”

We conditioned the Licenses (being a Meta-Coach or a Trainer) on truth and honesty. Because of that, then dishonesty, mis-representations, failure to give credit, etc. is fraud. If it is extensive, then those who leave and then continue use our brand (not their brand) “Neuro-Semantics” then we need to warn people about that fraudulent activity. Why? Because they are presenting a false and untrue image of themselves, they are tricking and deceiving people— behavior that we stand against. We believe in doing better than that.

Much of the bad rap that NLP got from the beginning, the negative reputation, came precisely from this kind of thing. Some went to NLP to get the “master practitioner” certificate and then put in the bio or behind their name, “Master” to mis-represent and to deceive so that people would think they had a Masters Degree in something. Fraud!

Tad James bought a for-profit company, the American Board of Hypnosis and then from that he created a “paper mill” of degrees, even a “doctorate” degree! To get that all you had to do was read 10 books, write book reports, and you get a doctorate! The degree sounds legitimate, but it is not, this is a case of fraud! As misrepresentation, falsehood, and deception, it is not legitimate.

I hope you know that I work hard at giving credit. I seek to “stand on the shoulders of the giants” who give me ideas and understandings. I honor them by quoting them, referencing their books, recommending their books and works and not falsely claiming what I did not come up with. I don’t ask for any special acknowledgment for that. That is what any professional does! But those who come and take from my work, my books, my models and give no credit— who copy and paste and then give no credit— well, instead of learning to be professional, they are being fraudulent. And if they were a part of this community and *then they left so that they take 10 years or more of what they learned and pay no royalties — hmmm, what would you call it?*

I studied Alfred Korzybski in depth from 1989 through 1994 and wrote articles that extended the Meta-Model. I created a training, “The Merging of the Models: NLP and General Semantics,” and out of that came Neuro-Semantics. For 25 years have developed Neuro-Semantics— books about it, models that define it, and a community that lives it. Anyone who uses our brand of “Neuro-Semantics” and the content of what has been developed and not referencing me or the Neuro-Semantic community is stealing and misrepresenting. If they are divisive with people in the community and lie saying they are not, that also is a form of fraud. In speaking up about this, as I have done, I am standing up for honesty, truth, integrity, and loyalty. I am standing up for collaboration and transparency.

**Trickery** mean the acts or practices of one who deliberately deceives. **Deception** may or may not imply blameworthiness, since it may suggest cheating or merely tactical resource <magicians are masters of deception>. **Fraud** always implies guilt and often criminality in act or practice <indicted for fraud>. **Double-dealing** suggests treachery or at least action contrary to a professed attitude <a go-between suspected of double-dealing>. **Subterfuge** suggests the adoption of a stratagem or the telling of a lie in order to escape guilt or to gain an end <obtained the papers by subterfuge>. **Trickery** implies ingenious acts intended to dupe or cheat <resorted to trickery to gain their ends>.



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #12**  
**March 8, 2017**

## **THE POWER OF THE MIRROR**

Imagine a mirror. A literal, physical mirror. A glass that has been designed to provide a reflection and not one of those circus mirrors that distorts one's image. We like the circus mirrors for fun, for laughing at the silly reflections they give off—the sudden image may make us look as wide as we are tall or as skinny as a pole. Those are good for a laugh. But you would not want that kind of a mirror in your bathroom when getting ready for the day.

Mirrors are interesting and with all of the time I spend in so many different hotels and venues, I have noticed numerous differences in mirrors. They are not all equally accurate. There is the factor of light—the kind, amount, and quality of light in a bathroom plays a determining role in the value and accuracy of the mirror. And why do we use mirrors in bathrooms? For feedback! We need information. Does my hair look combed? Are there any zits on my face? Did I wash away the toothpaste? Is my makeup on right?

We use mirrors to get information and the information comes to us as feedback. We cast our image at the mirror and, given the quality of light in the room, the mirror feeds-back to us what it receives. But you have to look. You could walk into your bathroom and cast your image into the mirror and the mirror do its work—casting back the image it received, but if you don't look, if you keep your eyes lowered, if you only glance with no intention to use the information for correction—then the feedback goes to waste. It achieves nothing. You get no information.

Some people are like that. I mean with regard to their physical image. They don't want to look. They fear the image that they would get so they avoid the mirror as much as possible. Some people are also like that emotionally, mentally, and personally—when the eyes of others see them and cast back the image, they do not want to look. They avert their eyes. “No, please no reflections!”

In communication theory and practice, *the secret of success is feedback*. “The meaning of your communicate is the response you get regardless of your intention.” In mirror language, “The meaning of the information you cast at others is the feedback they give you.” Now yes, the perception of some people is so undeveloped and untrained that the information they feed-back is not about the person out there, but themselves. They are projecting and it comes out as mind-reading. Mind-reading is a clue of someone with a distorted mirror.

Through training in sensory-awareness and sensory-details, we can learn to be a mirror to each other. That's what the *receiving* and the *giving* of feedback skills in Meta-Coaching are all about and why we train those two skills with the Assist Team on the two days prior to ACMC. It is not easy. Ask any Meta-Coach who has been on the Team! You really have to release judgment, you

have to de-contaminate your ego-investments, and you have to “lose your mind and come to your senses.”

Now if you can do that, then your eyes, your words, your gestures, and your very presence can operate like a mirror to the other person. This is a valuable and critical skill in coaching and I would say in leadership, in management, in parenting. To do this, put yourself into a neutral state with a touch of care and deep interest ... and *be present* to the other. Receive. Don't try to do anything, give up the need to do an “intervention.” Just be there. Be present as fully as you can. Now just say in sensory-specific words what you see and hear. Use the benchmarks established for a given skill and feed them back.

Now why would anyone fear that? Oh yes, they may hear what they don't want to hear. They may have created some kind of public image and have invested their ego into it, and now they don't allow themselves to be wrong, to be fallible, to be human. So they can't be authentic. They fear getting real. We see this all the time.

In the last year I have seen several people who came to ACMC and after the very first feedback session, they left. Everyone made an excuse about time, business, family, health, etc. Yet everyone that I saw personally, it was because they could not and would not *receive* feedback. Others didn't leave, but they argued day after day after day with the team leaders about the feedback! The amazing thing is that they keep finding that every single team leader who has been trained to give them feedback is equally incompetent!

This also sometimes happens with trainers and people in positions of trust. This is what triggered the recent conflict. It started with feedback. Two of those who left refused to receive feedback. We tried. I tried, many others tried. But to no avail. Instead of listening to what could have been wonderful shaping information from the mirror, they accused the mirror, they mind-read the mirror, they judged the mirror, they ran from the mirror. They accused the mirror of being toxic. Maybe they had a point, who knows? They didn't stay around. They just called names and ran. They avoided any working through the feedback even though invited to do so repeatedly. It is all very sad. The person who lost the most was the person who averted his eyes and refused to work through the information.

Still it is feedback that enables us to grow and to adjust. Yes, it's challenging. Yes it can be tough. Yet who wants to get up and get dressed for a presentation without a mirror? Here's to feedback from clean and bright mirrors! Here's to an openness and authenticity to receive and listen and adjust. Here's to receiving feedback like a pro!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #13**  
**March 15, 2017**

## **COACHING PERSISTENCE**

At the heart of coaching is setting goals in an intelligent way. It is about goals that call upon you and I to step up and begin to unleash our highest potentials. And one of the truly powerful tools that you have as a Meta-Coach is the extensive Well-Formed Outcome Questions. You set a goal when you set out to become truly competent in the Coaching Skills— have you reached that goal yet? Have you sustained that goal?

Reaching a goal is one thing; sustaining it is a very different one. To do that requires *persistence*. Yet it is here that many people fail. The initial excitement of a goal, of reaching it, carries them through to the point that they develop a particular skill, but upon completing it— they quit. They give up. They move on to something else and then all of their hard work evaporates as their skill level deteriorates. Persisting in sustaining your skill development is critical because in that way, by over-learning, the skill eventually becomes incorporated into your automatic responses.

Persistence is also needed for handling defeats, set-backs, plateaus and other temporary blocks to your goal. For that reason we say that “Success is cut from the cloth of persistence.” In other words, the degree of your persistence plays a large part in determining your ability to succeed in any venture. Now given that you undoubtedly know this, here’s the personal question: Do you persist? Do you continue working at what you have started and do you stay with it until the end?

The fact is that failing to persist explains why many people do not succeed in reaching or sustaining their goals. They begin, but they do not continue and integrate their goal so that they sustain it. Many of your clients will be suffering from this ailment of “failing to persist.” As a Meta-Coach, what can you do?

### **The Experience of *Persistence***

First let’s get clear about what persistence is. Persistence is *not* just a positive attitude. While a positive mindset is important, you can be positive and still not persist. In fact, lots of people who are “positive” and “optimistic” are able to be so ... until times get hard. Then they quit. Then while they may be positive thinkers, they are not persistent.

Paradoxically, sometimes having too positive of an attitude actually hinders persistence. Have you noticed that? So why is that? The problem is that often we are over-optimistic to the point of being unrealistic about understanding what it really takes to succeed. Then when a set back occurs, it hits the person really hard. Because the person didn’t expect it, the set back shocks and upsets and completely disorients the person. The over-optimistic person also will have a harder time persuading others to join in with him in a collaborative partnership. The over-optimistic person often strikes others as unrealistic and hence, unreliable and un-trustworthy. And that will scare people off from collaborating.

*For persistence to be robust it requires an inner commitment.* That's because persistence is mostly needed when there are problems, disappointments, and failures. By contrast, there is the "fair weather" person who persists when things are easy. Yet real persistence operates even when things are not easy, and that requires a commitment. Ask yourself or another,

"Have you decided that you will persist regardless of what happens? Are you in it for real?"

If you haven't made a commitment, then when things get touch, when there's a set-back, trouble, unexpected expenses, etc., you will begin questioning whether you should continue. But that's no time for decision-making. The decision needs to be made first. Decide what you want before the storm hits, and then resolve to get through the storm and not to quit.

*Persistence often requires resilience.* Let's say you do have a set-back, now what? Do you throw away your goal? This is where you need resilience—the ability to bounce back after a set back. To persist you have to be resilient—to get up when you are knocked down, to shake off the dust, and to learn whatever needs to be learned, what didn't work, what to do differently, flexibly adjust. Inside of the experience of persisting is being resilient. All great entrepreneurs treat getting knocked down or set-back as just "par for the course." So they just get up, re-assess where they are in the strategy, adjust the strategy accordingly, and continue on.

*Add a good dose of stubbornness to the mix.* Now for a good word about stubbornness—to be persistence you need some stubbornness. You have to make up your mind, put a stake in the ground, and take your stand. Persistence draws its strength from adversity. Those who succeed most treat "adversity" as a learning university and so embrace it, and suck all the marrow of life from it. They do not make it their enemy. This is what success requires—sustained stubborn effort for weeks, months, years, even decades.

In fact, you can pretty much count on this—the greater your vision and dream, the more failures, mistakes, and set-backs you thereby invite. Prepare yourself for this. If it was easy, anybody and everybody would be doing it. But it is not easy. That's why you are doing it. You may not succeed at first, or second, or even in the twentieth time. Success may be delayed again and again. Yet when these things happen, rather than calling them "failure," call them feedback or learning. Treat it as a "Class on Determination, 202." Have you committed yourself to learn something from every defeat? Are you ready to?

If you mentally accept the worst that can happen and work out contingencies Plans B and C, you will free yourself from worrying and running the "what if" tapes that only torment your mind and emotions. Instead, you can now act with flexibility and improvise in the moment as things happen. By accepting that reverses and set backs that occur as factors that are just part of the process, you will be more skilled in releasing them and thereby limiting their influence to discourage you. Doing this prevents you and saves you from running scared of imagined problems.

*Persistence* was the one and single thing that Dale Carnegie found in the billionaires that he studied and interviewed at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. Nothing else, he said,

explained their wealth, their fortunes, their success, *nothing but persistence*. How about that! They found something that they believed in, devoted themselves to, and so they focused on that one thing. That now leads to some personal questions: How persistent are you in your Coaching studies? How persistent are you in practicing the Coaching skills? Do you stay with it? Do you persist through good times and bad? Do you keep inspiring yourself with your vision so that you can stay on your mission?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #14**  
**March 22, 2017**

## WHEN YOU GET NERVOUS

What is this thing about “getting nervous” when you are about to do something important? Does that ever happen to you? Or are there only certain conditions under which it happens to you? When you are before an audience? Or being watched by your peers? Or when someone is benchmarking or assessing your performance?

Obviously, *getting nervous is very much a human thing*— a common human experience. I see it when people brand new to coaching come into the Meta-Coaching System and first experience one of the coaching labs. And even though they are only being watched by two persons (a benchmarker and a meta-person), sometimes a person will experience a very strong state of nervousness. Their *nerves* are activated and mobilized so they fidget around, have a lot of extra energy in their body, the thoughts in their head race and rush around so they find it hard to focus or to remember what they know, and their emotions are doing somersaults and other non-useful things. Did that happen to you?

I also see it in the Team Leaders on our training days when they are practicing coaching and benchmarking. Most of them do not normally get nervous, so sometimes they are surprised about how nervous they get. A common thing that I frequently hear is, “I am usually not nervous, I only get nervous when Michael Hall is watching me.” :)

- So what is this experience called “being nervous?”
- How do human beings make themselves nervous?
- What are the factors that make up this interesting, but mostly unresourceful state?
- And what can a person do to manage the nerves so that the experience does not interfere with the person’s performance?

*Nerves* and *nervous* refers to a state of stress. And *stress* relates to a sense of excitement or threat or a combination of the two. When your nerves are activated to the level that you say you are nervous, you have mobilized your General Arousal Syndrome so that there’s lots of extra energy flowing through your body, energy of your metabolism as adrenalin is racing through your body and you are ready for some action or response. At the mental level, you are entertaining thoughts of excitement and/or the sense of threat.

- So, what are you putting at risk? What is the threat?

More than likely it is not physical or actual, it is psychological, personal, or relational. These questions are designed to enable you to discover *how you are making yourself nervous*. The state of being nervous makes perfect sense when you understand how it operates and how you are a key player in creating it. What feels dangerous to you? Someone’s perception of you? The idea that you are not perfect? The anticipation that you may make a mistake? How much of a threat or danger is this to you? How are you amplifying it and making it bigger than it needs to be? What

cognitive distortions are you using? Awfulizing, personalizing, filtering, over-generalizing, prophesying, etc.?

Getting nervous, and experiencing nervousness, is a function of your mind-body-emotion system. You are the one generating that feeling and that experience. The good news is that when you discover *how* you are doing it, you then have opportunity to know what to do to stop creating it.

Key to that is your ability to reduce the sense of danger and threat that you have created. To do that, explore the worse-case scenario. What is the worst thing that could happen? The strange thing about embracing an emotion in this way is that it reduces the intensity of the emotion and sometimes it will completely reduce the intensity so that the emotion dissipates. The paradox here is that embracing it gives you more management over it.

When you ask about the worse-case scenario, what if there are some possible negative consequences which could occur? Then create contingency plans B and C so that you have a plan in place and will know exactly what to do if that happens. Then you are ready. And being ready, you are less likely to be frightening yourself. Then, if something does go wrong, then rather than being caught off-guard or surprised, you are prepared. You are ready with Plan B and you know precisely what to do to deal with the situation at that point. You have your resources lined up and ready to go.

Next, check out the actual probability. What are the actual odds that the worse-case scenario will happen? Typically, it is very unlikely. If there is some likelihood, then what do you need to do in preparation before you start which will reduce the likelihood? Do you need some extra preparation time? Do you need to have your notes ready to go? Do you need to identify possible things that could arise, questions that someone may ask, a state someone could access, etc. and to have rehearsed what you will do in such cases?

Finally, make sure that you do not *semantically load* the experience of getting nervous so that you make it bigger or more frightening than it needs to be. In fact, make sure that the meanings you give to that experience is appropriate and enables you to be with it comfortably so that you can respond elegantly and charmingly.

- It's just an emotion. It is just being human.
- It is being real and authentic.
- It is being excited and giving me lots of energy so that I can perform at a higher level.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #15**  
**March 29, 2017**

## **WHAT IF ALL OF LIFE WAS A FLOW STATE?**

Imagine this— *your whole life— everything you did all day long— was one flow state after another.* How joyful would your life be? How focused and engaged? You wouldn't have any time for boredom, for feeling like you are wasting your life, or for feeling that you are stagnated, stuck, and blocked from progressing.

Is that too much? Then how about this. What if *you could choose when and where to turn on a state of flow and get lost in that moment?* Would that amplify the joyfulness of your life, give you a sense of being in control, enrich your state of being fully engaged when you want to be and release it when you need to take a break?

That's what Csikszentmihalyi meant by "flow" in his research and books on flow. It is also the purpose and design of what you studied in Accessing Personal Genius. The "genius" state is *the flow state of engagement*—it is a state that you develop and frame so that you can turn it on and off at will. Are you able to do that? If you are a Meta-Coach, you have been through *Coaching Genius* and you have the possibility of stepping into your optimal coaching state with the snap of your fingers. I say "possibility," because you could attend APG and still not have developed that skill. But it is a possibility for you. If you want it. If you will learn and practice it.

[As an aside, most people have to attend that training several times to really develop their personal genius state of flow.]

Far, far too many Meta-Coaches do not seem to have *ready access* to their flow-state of absolute engagement and focus when coaching. If that describes you, go back and revisit APG for the express purpose of creating your coaching genius state. Then you will always be able to call forth your optimal state for connecting, exploring, inducing state, framing, challenging, caring, etc. Then your very experience of coaching itself will be a state of such absolute engaged concentration and you will be *so present*— that afterwards, you will experience the deep joy of having one of the best moments of your life. Interested?

Let's now take this further. What if you could extend that so that throughout the day, whenever you so chose, you access another optimal state of total engagement so that whatever you are doing, you are completely there, fully present with all of your resources available? Do that, and your whole life will take on ever-deeper levels of joy and meaningfulness. Then you will be experiencing the heart and core of what Neuro-Semantics is all about. With the discovery of *how to step in and out of the flow-engagement state at will* using Meta-States, Neuro-Semantics provides a way for you — for anyone — to learn how to develop multiple "genius" states. Now you can turn "flow" on at will. Now you can access a state of intense focus and concentration so that you are fully present with all of your resources fully available.



When I first learned this, I applied it to reading and writing. I created two distinct “genius” states. By developing a genius writing state, I ended the experience of “writer’s block.” That ended in 1994 and I have not experienced writer’s block since. Since then every Meta-Coach Trainer has focused our attention in Meta-Coaching on having every coach develop his or her own “genius coaching state.”

When you take the components of flow and apply them to any given task or to the way you live life—you turn that event, or any event, into flow and enter the flow zone that is simultaneously the self-actualization zone. Here are the steps to do that:

1) *Identify a Challenge.*

Pick a challenge for yourself. What challenge do you want to take on? In what area?  
How do you want to stretch and step up to take on something new and exciting?

2) *Establish a Clear Goal.*

Develop a well-formed and crystal clear goal. A specific activity in a goal will bring order and structure to your consciousness giving your attention a focus. Now the steps of the goal gives you direction that you can concentrate on.

3) *Get Intentional.*

As you have chosen a goal for an inspiring challenge, own it as your choice and intention. Now align your attention to it so that it serves your highest intention.

4) *Get Immediate Feedback.*

With a clear goal, as you take action, you will be able to immediately tell what happens, tell how close you are coming to achieving the next step in your outcome and what adjustments to make.

5) *Integrate Your Skills with the Challenge.*

The smallest actions that you take today in a step toward the goal, eventually become the competent skills that enable you to step up to the ever-increasing challenge of the goal. In this way you can keep moving, bit by bit, in the flow zone toward peak performance.

6) *Focused Engagement.*

As you focus your engagement and act on the challenge, you will become so engaged that you have no extra energy or consciousness for anything else. Becoming fully absorb in this way makes all other thoughts disappear.

7) *Autotelic.*

The meaningfulness of this engagement now becomes “valuable in itself” or autotelic. It becomes an end in itself. Whereas once you might have done it for some external reason, now you find it joyful and meaningful in itself and for itself. Now you are in flow with that activity.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #16**  
**April 5, 2017**

## **COACHING TO MEANING**

*You coach to meaning.* But, of course, you know that. Or do you? If so, what does that mean? As a Neuro-Semantic Meta-Coach, you know that *meaning* is critical in your life and in the life of every person you coach. You know that we emphasize over and over that you coach to meaning, that the Meaning matrix is the most important of all the sub-matrices in the Matrix Model.

Yet what does it mean that you coach to meaning at the moment that you are face-to-face with your client and ready to engage in a coaching conversation?

### ***Meanings<sup>1</sup>***

At its essence it means that you coach to facilitate in the client an accurate and robust *understanding*. This is the first meaning of meaning— *making sense of things*. And this is what everyone of us need and what every one of your clients need. All of us need to make sense of our lives, how to cope with work and relationships, how to understand how we think and feel, how we reason and create wealth, how we stay healthy and fit, all kinds of things. So this is what you first coach to— *meaning in the sense of understanding*.

Yet unlike a trainer or consult, you don't tell, give advice, instruct, lecture, etc., you help your clients *discover* so that the understandings that they create are theirs. This takes patience as you frame and inquire and ask those "juicy questions" that activate the curiosity of your clients. What does your client not know that he needs to understand? She has goals and desired outcomes, but to reach them, she will have to develop broader or richer understandings about certain things. What? And how will you coach to facilitate her to discover those things?

Typically coaching at this first level of meaning, *Meanings<sup>1</sup>* occurs relative to the all of the lower or basic needs. These are the human needs for survival, to stabilize life so it is safe and secure, to connect socially in getting the love and affection we need, and to value oneself as important and worthwhile as a human being. Comprehending how all of that works so that you understand it and it makes sense is the first set of meanings that you coach to.

Doing that in coaching means you are enabling and equipping people to cope well with the basic demands of life— work, love, relationships, health, wealth, etc. Even better is when you challenge them to not merely cope well, but to thrive, even to master these basic needs. Use the Self-Actualization Assessment Scale to both diagnose where a person is and where your client may be stuck. When your client succeeds here, he will have an abundance of energy and that vitality will almost inevitably move him to want to move to the next level.

How much of your coaching will involve this level? I really don't know, but I would guess that it will involve anywhere from 70 to 90 percent of your coaching sessions. Even today most people seek out coaching to figure out the basics of life; it is only the more advanced client who has

already done a good bit of personal development who is ready for the next level, the truly self-actualization level.

### ***Meanings<sup>2</sup>***

The second level of meaning-making that you coach to is the *meaningfulness* of things— of life, of work, of an engagement, of a contribution, etc. This *Meanings<sup>2</sup>* is meaningfulness which speaks about values and significance. Here you coach in order for your client to discover her unique passion in life— her vision and mission. Here you are coaching to intention and intentionality.

While *Meanings<sup>1</sup>* indicates that your client is still working on coping or thriving in terms of the basic needs, *Meanings<sup>2</sup>* indicate that your client is ready for the challenge and inspiration of the higher meanings— the meanings that will uniquely define her in terms of actualizing her highest values and best performances. When you coach to that, your coaching will move beyond merely managing life's everyday challenges. You will move into coaching to the person's sense of meaningfulness— values, legacy, making a difference, making a contribution, etc.

At this level, as a coach, you are coaching people to discover their deepest powers of meaning-making and you are inspiring / challenging them to step up, to not sell themselves short, to be all that they can be. Here you are coaching them in terms of what and how they are to *give* back to life. This is in dire contrast to the first level, where you coach people how to *get* the most out of life.

### ***Meanings<sup>1</sup> and Meanings<sup>2</sup>***

These levels of meaning that you coach to— *Meanings<sup>1</sup>* and *Meanings<sup>2</sup>* are not the same. In recent articles on Neurons (#9, #10, and #11) I have been distinguishing these levels and also providing a set of questions— meaning questions that enable both you and your client to develop a richer and fuller understanding of meaning. As a Meta-Coach it is important to distinguish them because they tell you at what level your client is requesting coaching.

*Yes, you coach to meaning.* You coach to the existence of the person's current meanings, you coach to enable the person to find his inner powers of meaning-making so that he can take charge of his meaning-making. You coach to enable clients to frame the best meanings, reframe troubling meanings, deframe meanings that have definitely reached their end of being useful.

Of course, in all of this you have to recognize and call out meanings. And that requires that you keep pulling back from the content of the stories that you hear to ask about the meanings that your client is attributing to those events. This means going meta— stepping back to see the constructs that are now running the show. And when you can do that, the magic begins. Now you are ready to truly do *Meta-Coaching*. Here's to a magical week of Meta-Coaching!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #17**  
**April 12, 2017**

## **TO COACH EFFECTIVELY, *YOU HAVE TO INTERRUPT***

In the last ACMC, which was in Bali Indonesia, we had a lot of people who *culturally* really struggled with the whole idea of *interrupting*. I think we had more people in that one event who struggled with interrupting than I have seen anywhere else. So session after session, instead of learning how to use the skill of “effectively interrupting” under *Support*, they just let the client go on and on and on and on! Once I caught on that it was due to a cultural frame that “It is impolite to interrupt,” I would interrupt the session and ask the coach,

“Are you going to let this go on and on?”

“Do you think it’s a good time to interrupt?”

“Do you have enough information to ask a question yet?”

Most of the time the coach would explain, “Well, I’m waiting for him to stop.” Or, “I don’t know how to interrupt.” Or, “I’m afraid that if I interrupt, she will think I’m rude.” One time that this pattern occurred, as I was talking to the coach about interrupting and even giving hints about how to interrupt, one client spoke up, “The reason I keep talking is that the coach isn’t saying anything!”

“Oh, so you keep talking because he isn’t interrupting you, and you (directing my words at the coach) aren’t interrupting because she keeps talking. Sounds like we are going to have the unending monologue! So which one of you will bring an end to this nightmare?”

*To be effective as a coach, and especially a Meta-Coach, you have to interrupt.* There’s several reasons. First and probably most important is that the coaching conversation is a dialogue, not a monologue. And the magic of a dialogue (dia-logos) is that it involves *the logos* of both coach and client—that is, *the meanings*, to pass *through* (“dia-”) each other. So if you are not interrupting and establishing the conversation to be a back-and-forth flow of ideas and meanings, passing through each other, then it will not be a *creative collaboration*.

Ah, *the coaching conversation as a creative collaboration*— this is what makes the Coaching Conversation unique, distinctive, one-of-a-kind, and a conversation like none other. It is a conversation in which the interplay of responses back-and-forth facilitate new creative perspectives in the client. And **you** do that as the Meta-Coach by making it a dialogue and *not* sitting there like a bump on a log letting your client go on and on and on. This means that you have to interrupt if you really want to make the coaching one wherein your client gets to be creative in discovering and inventing a new way of operating in the world.

*You have to interrupt in order to stay up with your client.* Sure, there will be times when you will let your client talk for perhaps one or two minutes to finish a story and that’s when you need to do a Summary— a bullet point single sentence to sum up the client’s point. But for the most part, the

conversation should be more like a dance— sentence by sentence you move along with your client as well as keep directing the conversation so that it is in service of the person’s outcome. Let it go too long and you won’t be able to remember all of the semantically-loaded words, the semantic gestures and spaces used by the client, or anything else that happened in that time.

*You have to interrupt in order to keep bringing the client back to the subject.* You can expect that clients— as with all human beings— will engage in self-interruptions. One thing will remind him of another thing and off he will go. Will you then “Chase Words?” If you do, that’s a level-1 action and will detract from the quality of your coaching. As you expect these self-interruptions and side-trips and asides that the client go into, you need to be able to quickly step in and ask, “Where you’re going now— is this related to today’s theme of X?” “I’m confused. How is this related to your outcome?” Do that and you get credited with “Holding the Frame” as a high level supportive skill.

*You have to interrupt if you want to truly be respectful and caring.* After all, how respectful is it to let your client go off on side-trips or go on and on and on? If you *truly care* about that person, then you will step-in (interrupt) to provide the coaching service (staying on target) that the person is paying you to do. Don’t you care that much? Or, are you more focused on yourself— on your frame of mind that equates interrupting with being rude? Isn’t that your ego-investment getting in the way? Who are you concerned about? What you think your client will think about *you*, or you being an effective change agent that facilitates the highest and best in that person?

How do you interrupt? Just speak up. “What was that?” “I’m confused ... how does that fit with what you said earlier?” “Okay ... so you are really frustrated with your manager...” While you do this, your voice and your gesture are important. Let the first word you say be loud enough so it catches the person’s attention, then drop your voice back to normal volume. “**Ohhhh!** So when did that happen?” “**Wow!** That really speaks about your commitment, don’t you think?” Simultaneously *move forward* in your chair or *stretch out your hand* or *raise your hand* or do something unique and visually attention getting.

Still confused? Then set a frame and ask your client.

“Since coaching is a dialogue for your creativity discovery, how would you like me to interrupt so that we keep the conversation going back-and-forth at a quick pace?”

Need to practice? Good! Then at the next MCF chapter meeting, ask someone to practice with you and take turns interrupting until you get the hang of it. Once you learn when and where and how to interrupt, then you can make it more gracious and elegant. Here’s to the elegance of your interruptions!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #18**  
**April 15, 2017**

## **FOR COACHES WHO ALSO WANT TO TRAIN**

Some years ago we had several Licensed Meta-Coaches who wanted to be able to take what they had learned in Meta-Coaching back to their companies. They wanted to be able to train the first two Meta-Coaching modules (*Coaching Essentials* and *Coaching Genius*). While we had never thought about that before, we took the feedback and created what we now call *the Modular Trainer Certification*.

A Modular Trainer is a person who has been through the first three modules of the Meta-Coaching System and who has been through NSTT. The Trainers' Training (NSTT) gives them the platform or presentation skills that are necessary to be able to effectively communicate and train the two basic training that cover the NLP Communication Model and the Introduction to Meta-States. We also incorporated into NSTT another piece— *The Psychology of APG*. This gives all of the trainers a background in the psychology that informs and guides both NLP and Meta-Coaching.

This means that if you want to be able to train and certify people in the first two modules of Meta-Coaching, all you would need us to take the NSTT training. This is a training that we do only once a year somewhere in the world. Two years ago it was Mexico, last year it was Hong Kong, this year Brazil, next year Australia, and after that in Indonesia. What's the reason for that? So that we have a truly international training with people from 10 to 20 countries. That facilitates networking and expanding one's communications cross-culturally.

If later you want to go further and become a Meta-Coach Trainer, you would need to complete the two foundational trainings in NLP (Practitioner and Master Practitioner) and then enter into the internship whereby you would be on the Assist Team, then shadow, then co-train.

### **What will you get from NSTT?**

- First you will get an indepth understanding of *the psychology* behind NLP, Neuro-Semantics, APG, and Meta-Coaching. That's where we begin with three days of going over the basic APG patterns.
- During that same time you will be up and on your feet making short presentations as we do the *flexibility drills* that are both a lot of fun and challenging. They are designed to knock out any anticipatory fear about speaking in public! And they will fully stretch you as you learn to become really comfortable speaking to people.
- You will learn the core competencies of *presenting* and how to perform on stage in a relaxed yet passionate way so that you can influence the minds and hearts of those who are there to learn.

- You will receive in-the-moment feedback and get to do an immediate “take two” of your presentation so that you very quickly put the feedback into practice. There’s no place where you can get this kind of high quality feedback as in NSTT.
- You will get to sit back and enjoying hearing critical presentations in the evenings from Master Trainers and those in the process of becoming Master Trainers. Then you will get to practice the pattern they presented and see and hear them given feedback.
- You will hear interviews with trainers who have and are successfully running a training business, many of them running a training/coaching business and get a chance to ask them questions about how they have done that and what they have learned.
- You get to become part of the international Neuro-Semantic Community, to network with dozens of people from many different countries and to make friends all around the world.

NSTT offers lots of values and because it is a two-week program, 97% of participants will complete all of the prerequisites and be Certified as a Trainer. Interested? There are several articles on the website about this as well as brochures from previous years. If you have more personal questions, contact me at [meta@acsol.net](mailto:meta@acsol.net).

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #19**  
**April 19, 2017**

## **TO COACH EFFECTIVELY, *YOU HAVE TO FRAME AND FRAME AND FRAME***

If I wanted to be mischievous, I would even go so far as to say, *Coaching is all about framing*. And yet if I said that, it would not be too far off. After all, as we say repeatedly in Neuro-Semantics, *The person is never the problem, the frame is the problem*. That might be one frame that you might want to get used to setting in every coaching session. It's one I always use and I'm always ready to repeat it whenever a client seems to be engaging in any kind of self-abuse, self-attack, or self-incrimination. Behavior like that implies that the person must be thinking that he is the problem. And because that is *not* where I want a client to go, I'm going to immediately interrupt and set the frame — “the person is not the problem.”

Now what I've just written is the reason, the structure, and the way to frame. You frame when your client's automatic frame, the frame that she brings into the coaching session, is activated and creating problems for her or could be activated. It is when *something could be mis-understood* that you need to set a frame. The thing that can be mis-understood could be an event, an experience, a word, an idea— something to which the client then frames it in such a way that now he has two problems— whatever the thing is and his frame about it.

Because clients often come into the session assuming that “it is bad to cry or to get emotion,” as soon as that happens, *set a more enhancing frame*.

“Thank you for that response! It means that we are getting close to something that is really significant to you. Thank you for being so open and courageous as to present it.”

Here *the thing* is the tearing up or the activation of the body in getting emotional (sniffing, nervous activity, change in breathing, etc.). To *that thing* you then set a frame— a way of understanding it, a way of interpreting it, meanings about it. “It means you are being open.” “It means we are getting close to a coachable moment.” “It means you are courageous.”

Once you have done that, now direct or redirect the person in a way so that you can make good use of that experience.

“Tell me, what kind of tears are these? Are these tears of awareness, recognition, sadness, discovery, relief, or what?”

“If these are tears of discovery, what are you now discovering? And how will that make a difference in your future?”

“If these are tears of sadness due to a sense of loss, what have you lost? And do you yet know how you will replace that loss with something else?”



All of this is framing and framing and framing. Are you leading? You bet! And ideally, you are leading to where your client has told you that he wants to go. “We lead in coaching?” Of course, you pace, pace, pace and then lead. You enter into your client’s world and experience — match what you see and hear and you do that so that as you co-create with your client a desired outcome, you facilitate your client to get to that outcome.

A caveat: Framing is *not* only about how you get started. It’s true that we have a full page in the APMC Training Manual about some recommended pre-frames that you can set, but that is only the beginning. It is not even the most important or powerful aspect of framing. More critical is the framing that occurs in the coaching conversation *in real time* as it is needed with your client. And to do that requires that you, as a Meta-Coach, have the ability to hear frames.

Do you? Can you *hear* frames as they are presented moment by moment by your clients? To learn to do this, plant some frame-detecting questions in your mind and/or write them as part of your notes so that you remind yourself to deliberately practice this.

What has to be true in the background of understanding or believing for my client to say this or to experience this?

What would I guess my client is assuming to be true and not questioning?

What must be going on in the back of my client’s mind but not being said?

By recognizing that your client is operating from some frame enables you to focus on detecting and flushing out that frame whether it is a belief frame, decision frame, understanding frame, prohibition frame, etc. When you do that, you will be asking those oh-so-easy-to-forget-to-ask meta-questions.

Let me check, what do you believe about adopting a disciplined approach to X?

Have you somewhere in your past made a decision that you will not allow yourself to be embarrassed or to step out of your comfort zone?

*Meta-Questions enable you to flush out your client’s frames.* So if you are not asking meta-questions, you are missing the very structures that are determining your client’s experiences. Without meta-questions, you will be as blind as to the true causes of what your client is going through as will be the client. By asking meta-questions you are able to get to the heart of things—the meanings that are governing your client’s experiences. Ready to step up to Meta-Coaching—then search for frames, ask meta-questions, and flush out the operational frames that’s driving how your client is feeling, talking, and experiencing.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #20**  
**April 26, 2017**

## **HOW DID SHE DO IT?**

### **Secrets for Reaching Competency on Day 9**

Sometimes a person who shows up for Module III, *Coaching Mastery*, has studied *Coaching Essentials* (Module I) and *Coaching Genius* (Module II) and is totally and completely ready for the third module. Sometimes a person enters into the ACCM training and day by day moves from low scores, sometimes even at 0.8 and by Days 5 and 6 is hitting 2.2, 2.4, 2.3, etc. and even some 2.5 so that the end of the training, that person is actually fully ready to sit for assessment. What I wish is that everybody would be able to do that.

Yet most do not. One reason many are not ready for assessment on day 9 is that they first have to do a lot of *un-learning* to take full advantage of all that they learn or could learn during *Coaching Mastery*. If they have one or more old habits of poor listening, they find themselves constantly blocked from *really hearing* their client. Or, they still have not gotten their ego out of the way or their judgment and they are so focused on themselves—how they are doing, how they need to find a solution for the client, etc. —that they are not even fully present during the session.

At the last ACCM in Bali one participant reached competency on day 9. By the last days Ann Kristin Wulf was getting from 2.1 to 2.5 on most of the seven skills. *And the day after the training she sat for assessment and reached 2.5 on the skills.* So the question is, How did she do that?

#### **What was her secret?**

Here's what I observed. First, I saw her paying *intense attention* during the presentations and taking extensive notes. I also observed her re-reading her notes, going over them again and again. I saw her take her training manual with her each evening and reading through it at breakfast. I saw her bring cards with notes written on them into each coaching lab and using them in her coaching. I saw and heard her take “meta moments” from time to time to orient herself to what she was doing and what to do next.

Additionally, I saw her *follow the procedure of the patterns and of the coaching in a very strict way*. If she had an options meta-program bone in her body, I would never know it from what I observed. She practiced the patterns and the sequence of things (like the 18 questions) precisely and rigorously. And at the end of the coaching sessions, she asked lots of questions to understand what she missed and what she could have done better. She was truly “hungry” for that feedback and as one of the persons benchmarking, it was a delight to offer her feedback. There was not the slightest sense that any feedback would offend or hurt, but that each piece was received like a gift.

Now on top of all of that, I heard from others (I did not see or hear directly) that she did extra coaching sessions throughout the eight-days of the training. So when I heard that on Day 9 (!) she

had two sessions and from them she reached *all of the benchmarks*— I was not surprised at all! So to summarize, *how* did she and people like her do it? And *what* would I recommend for anyone who is serious about becoming a professional coach and getting the very most for your money and investment?

- *Treat Coaching Mastery as an intense greenhouse laboratory of learning.* Put yourself into the most passionate learning state that you know ... with the intention that you will squeeze every bit of learning from every experience. Do not leave your training manual in the room. Take it to your room with you. Read it. Study it. Talk about it.
- *Ask great questions.* A great coach asks great questions. So the place to begin is when you are in the learning room. Typically at *Coaching Mastery* we only have 5 to 10 people asking all of the questions. Many people come and never ask a single question. No wonder they are not getting it or reaching competency! Those who do reach competency by the end of the training or soon thereafter tend to be the ones who are asking the best questions. They are really seeking to supplement their understandings. The questions they ask are relevant, precise, and designed to further their skills.
- *Treat the coaching laboratories as a place for extreme experimentation.* The sessions in which you get to coach and be coached and meta-observe are designed to be laboratories for experimentation. But in spite of how much we stress “make interesting mistakes,” sadly, most people are still playing it safe, being conservative, and focused on *not* making mistakes. Consequently, their sessions are uninteresting, even boring. Don’t do that. Use them to experiment. Try out new skills ... tell your supervisor (benchmarker) that you want to play and practice doing empathy statements (or whatever else you’re working on). Then put on your lab coat and experiment like crazy!
- *Get real in what you are coached to.* The ones who get the most from *Coaching Mastery* are the ones who really make themselves open and vulnerable when they are client. They don’t give their coach some simple or easy thing to work on so that they aren’t embarrassed. They open up and ask for something real and authentic.

While there are probably other aspects of *the secret of how to reach ACMC competency*, these are foundational and a great place to start. Identify what you need in the process of learning and integrating the competency.

- What do you need to unlearn?
- What new frames (meanings) do you need to set in your mind?
- What practices do you need to deliberately drill into your thinking and acting so it is automatic and available to you?
- What states do you need to be able to access more readily?
- What learnings do you need to memorize?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #21**  
**May 3, 2017**

## **SO YOU WANT A CERTIFICATE?**

As you know—we *do not give a Certificate when you graduate from Coaching Mastery*. There's a reason for that— actually several reasons. At the heart of these reasons is that we are doing in Module III of the ACMC training is **far too important for that**. Do you know what's *more important* than a certificate?

Far more important than a piece of paper that says you have completed an intense eight-day of rigorous coach training is what you are doing in those eight-days. And what is that?

*You are developing the knowledge and the competencies to be able to coach effectively.*  
And when you develop that— you will be able to facilitate an intense life-changing conversation that enables people to get real and to unleash the potentials clamoring inside them. Now how good is that?

No piece of paper, no certificate can equal that. And just like a degree from a University, when you have the understanding and the skill, *all sorts of doors will be opened to you*. You will be able to do things and to trust that you can do things that goes far, far beyond a piece of paper. The paper, at best, only records what you can do. In itself, it is powerless. In itself, the paper or the certificate doesn't *do* anything. That's one of the reasons that we downplay the certificate and positively encourage you to *not* focus on it.

What we give on graduation night is a record that is designed so you have a **Professional Development Plan** —one that can guide you in completing the prerequisites that are required for getting your ACMC credentials. The *Pre-Certification Record* is designed to let you know where you are and your next steps. It is designed to inspire you to move forward and to not sell yourself short. But that only works if *you are committed to yourself*. Sadly, many are not.

We discussed this recently on the Leadership Team and I like what Aldem Salvana noted. He said that the certificate is similar to going to University in that even if you complete all of the course attendance and paperwork, *if you have not fulfilled all the requirements, you will not be given a diploma*. Nor do you get a piece of paper for each semester or each year at the University. You only get one piece of paper, the diploma, after four years.

Mariani Ng who began her co-training as a Meta-Coach this year, and who has sponsored the ACMC training four times, said that the certificate “*is worth to fight for* and this is what it is about. ACMC Certification is something a person *earns* because of one's competencies, not because of attending the training.” Getting a certificate for attendance really doesn't say much. Who knows if you paid any attention or learned anything. Lots of people are on their iphones or on the internet or doing all sorts of things even though they are getting some attendance points.

The darker side of giving out Certificates is that if that was your focus, then that's what you get, that may be all you get. Shawn Dyer noted that the design is that ACMC participants continue working on their skills and do so until they reach the full certification. "If I was to receive an ACMC *attendance* certificate, I would see it as I have done the work and then I would not value the full certificate as much, regardless of what anyone else would say the benefits are to me doing the work."

That was one of the problems we encountered some years back and why we stopped giving certificates after the eight-day intensive training. Too many felt that the process was now done and over with. They were finished. So they did not keep practicing and learning, and so they never reached competency level. And when they then thought they were fully ready and started coaching, the market quickly put them out of business. They were not ready; they could not make it work.

There may be a profession somewhere that could be learned with just 14 days of training (the minimal days of *Coaching Essentials*, *Coaching Genius*, and *Coaching Mastery*). If there is, I am not aware of it. I have never heard of it. What I know is that most professions require four-years of study just to get people ready. Yes, we offer a much, much more intense and focused approach and it does shorten the time, but *no one is fully competent in 8 days or 14 days or even in the first year*. Let's not deceive ourselves.

In fact, our aim is to hold ourselves to a higher standard than what most of the field of Coaching holds up. We want to lead the field of Coaching in terms of rigorous standards. Are you with us on that? To develop high quality Meta-Coaches around the world, we have established a process for *the ongoing competency development*, and we do that mostly through the MCF chapters. Those Chapter meetings are also designed to build the Meta-Coach Community as *a community* of fellow professionals.

Does this make sense? If not, let me know. Write to me at [meta@acsol.net](mailto:meta@acsol.net).

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #22**  
**May 10, 2017**

## **TO COACH EFFECTIVELY, *YOU HAVE TO BE PERSUASIVE***

When you coach, you *persuade*. The reason you *pace, pace, pace* is so that you can then lead. And as you do, you are *leading* your client to where that person wants (or needs) to go and you do that by using the Well-Formed Outcome process. Doing that, you co-create the place “where” your client wants to go. In essence, your client is paying you to influence him so that he can then, in turn, influence himself.

*Persuasion is built into the very fabric of coaching* inasmuch as it is an inherent part of communication. It is also an inherent part of every relationship. You and I inevitably influence and persuade as we communicate and relate. The choice is not between persuading or not, it is in the kind and quality of persuasion. Is it healthy or unhealthy; it is respectful or manipulative; it is ethical and promotes well-being or it is unethical and creates hurt and pain. It is because of all of this that I wrote the book, *Inside-Out Persuasion: Unleashing your Authentic Powers of Influence* (2017) as the 15<sup>th</sup> book in the Meta-Coaching Series.

That’s because, as a coach, you need to develop and exercise your best persuasion skills. And it begins from the moment you welcome your client into the coaching experience as you set your preframes for the session. Setting frames, after all, is an act of persuasion. In setting the frames that you do, you influence the structure of the session and enable your client to get the most from the experience. Think of it as pre-persuasion.

How are your persuasion skills? What are the skills that you use to express the influence that you want to exert on your client? Do you know them? Because you persuade persons, persuasion skills are relational skills. Your skills of persuasion not only occur in the *relational* context, but you influence others to the extent that you effectively *relate* to others in a persuasive way.

- Actively listening for discovery
- Matching the person’s inner world (or matrix)
- Creating connections through liking and commonality
- Showing empathy for the person
- Showing warmth and charm
- Giving value for what’s important to the other
- Establishing credibility in the other’s eyes
- Seeding ideas
- Evoking collaborative competition.
- Responding to rejection and criticism with un-insult-ability

Persuasion skills influence the coaching skills of setting clear goals about what you want, discovering what the other person wants and expanding the items between you that you need to

negotiate. You persuade in business and in relationship to resolve issues and to create a contract about what you'll do in a collaborative process.

Does all of this sound more like *coaching* rather than *persuasion*? That's because we can easily view the same conversation as either a coaching conversation or a persuasion conversation. Further, as strange as it might sound, you also need authentic and collaborative persuasion skills to relate effectively to yourself. After all, can you influence you? Can you persuade yourself to understand something or to do what you know you need to do to be more effective, healthier, and more ethical? If you can't, you have a problem!

The theme of *Inside-Out Persuasion* is that healthy and authentic persuasion starts from the inside and then goes out. This means that you first have to persuade yourself. If you can't persuade yourself about what to believe, what to value, how to act, how to take initiative to make things happen, how do you think you'll ever persuade someone else?

The fact is, persuasion is everywhere you look and is required for just about everything you do. Whenever you are required to present yourself, your ideas, or what you want, and influence the thinking and feeling of another human being—that is a domain for persuasion. It's easy to see the need for persuasion when it comes to sales, marketing, advertisement, public relationships, media, politics, radio, television, newspaper, etc. If you work in any of these fields, your success depends on becoming as persuasive as you can become. Yet it does not end there. It applies to the worlds of business, finance, and education. It even applies to all relationships— friendships, mating, love, parenting, etc.

Ultimately, your success in coaching depends on your skills of persuasion. Yet knowing this may lead you astray. That's because the more forceful and imposing you are in your persuasion, the more you could slide off into imposing, judging, and controlling.



L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.

### *Inside-Out Persuasion*

For Healthy and Authentic Persuasion

- Do your friends say that you are a highly persuasive person? How persuasive are you? How much better would your life be if you were more persuasive?
- How persuasive are you in *influence* your own thinking, feeling, deciding, and acting so you can do what you want to do?
- How much more persuasive would you like to become in communicating your ideas, causes, products, and services?

*The art of persuasion* suffers from the negative connotations of manipulation and trickery. Yet *persuasion* is what we all do everyday. Whenever you speak and relate, you exert an influence. Whenever you share your ideas, dreams, hopes, visions, values, or plans, you seek to influence minds and hearts. The question is: Are you effective, elegant, charming, and authentic in your persuasion?

*Inside-Out Persuasion* integrates persuasion with personal responsibility to make it ethical, human, and authentic. *Inside-Out Persuasion* de-mystifies persuasion as it details the actual processes of persuasion. The design is so that you can become personally persuasive.

*Inside-Out Persuasion* situates persuasion, not as a tool for getting your way with people, but how to more effectively relate and communicate, with grace and elegance. *Inside-Out Persuasion* positions persuasion as not about manipulating and controlling, but presenting your best ideas in compelling yet respectful ways.

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Inside-Out Persuasion

L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.

NSP

## *Inside-Out Persuasion*

Unleashing Your Authentic Powers of Influence



Meta-Coaching Volume XV

*L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.*

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #23**  
**May 17, 2017**

## **TO COACH EFFECTIVELY, *YOU HAVE TO MATCH AND LEAD***

One of the key concepts from Milton H. Erickson was the idea of “pace, pace, pace, lead.” I don’t know anyone who stressed the importance of *entering into your client’s world* more than Erickson. He even went so far as to say that with each new client you have to invent a new theory of human nature. It was his way of saying, “Drop your assumptions about people, release the judgments that you have spent a lifetime developing, start with a beginner’s mind, meet your client with an attitude of know-nothing.” And when you *lead, you are in the mode of persuading.*

When you do that, then you can start “pacing,” that is, matching your client’s way of being, talking, interacting, thinking, feeling, etc. When you do this, you *enter into* your client’s mental and emotional space so that you can begin to understand that person on his or her terms. You meet them at their model of the world. All of this is designed to *support* the person so he feels safe, *listen* to the person so she feels heard.

With this base, then you can lead. “The coach can lead?” Yes, of course! In fact, that’s why your client has hired you— they need your *facilitation skills* in order to achieve what they want. That may involve getting clear, making a decision, creating a plan, finding and accessing resources, making a change (the first five basic coaching conversations). Your job as the professional coach is to *lead and guide your client by facilitating what the person wants.*

Frequently in the supervision and benchmarking role, I interrupt and ask to the coach, “Are you in charge of this session? Whose leading, you or your client?” Typically I ask this when the coach is “chasing words” and going round and round in circles and the session is not going anywhere. It’s the coach’s job to make sure that the session is going somewhere. Sometimes when I interrupt, I say to the coach, “Are you not going to lock down the subject that your client has given you?”

As a coach facilitating a coaching conversation, what does *leading* mean? It means many things, here are key activities that are involved.

- First *lead* your client to get the subject of the conversation. As amazing as it is, a great many clients will sit in your client chair and *not know what they really want.* They kind of know. They may think they know. But as the conversation begins, they spin around here and there— they do not know! Your leadership is needed at that point.
- Next, once you identify “the subject,” then *lead* by facilitating the client to get a clearly defined outcome of that subject. That’s why the well-formed outcome questions gives you a powerful template. Use it to lead the person to develop an outcome that is well-formed. Do you know those questions by heart? If not, memorize them. Then practice getting



through the questions in 12 minutes. Practice over and over completing them in twelve minutes.

- Along the way, your client will frequently respond in such ways as to sabotage things, not purposefully, but it will happen. Now you have the opportunity to *lead* your client by confronting those things that are interfering. It could be some incongruencies, excuses, blind spots, playing small, etc. here is another place where your client needs your leadership.
- Another aspect of *leading* is by summarizing where the client is. Strange!? Sometimes clients get so caught up in the conversation and internal thoughts that they lose track of where they are and where they are in the conversation. By summarizing and pulling things together for them, you provide an important *leading*.
- Once you have co-constructed with your client a well-formed outcome and you are at the place of doing various interventions— each intervention that you suggest or recommend is another place of *leading*. “In view of you wanting to become the kind of person who does not quit and who does finish what you start, there is a pattern in NLP that might be just the thing. Would you be interested in that?” You *pace* from where the person is and wants and you *lead* to facilitate her to achieve what she wants.

In all of these ways, and many more, as a professional coach, you are in a leadership role and you are paid to *lead your client where your client wants to go*. That statement is not absolute, there are times when where a client wants to go is unhealthy, un-ecological, and even dysfunctional. One of the advanced skills of listening is being able to hear mis-diagnosis and call your client to that awareness.

To pick up on the previous post, to be effective as a coach, you have to be persuasive. That leads to a very personal question— How persuasive are you as a coach? How much more persuasive would you like to be?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #24**  
**May 24, 2017**

## **COACHING SELF-ACTUALIZATION**

Given that the *Psychology of Coaching* is Self-Actualization Psychology (Humanistic psychology), the Meta-Coaching System established in 2002 was based on the psychology that governs the bright-side of human nature. This is the side that is wanting to be and do more. It is the side that wants to be challenged, wants to put its gifts and skills to good use that makes a difference in the world. For that purpose, I began searching for the models of that psychology in 2002, for models that would enable a professional coach to use that psychology and coach a client to begin “making real” (actualizing) his or her potentials.

For me that began an intense study and research into Maslow’s writings, and then Carl Roger’s ... I read everything that each of them wrote. Except for Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and Growth Model, I could not find anything else. So I began reading everything I could get my hands on from anybody and everybody in the Human Potential Movement. When I still could not find any practical model, I began looking into Esalen, the headquarters of the HPM. I read biographies of Esalen to understand what that movement found, what they used, what they tried.

Later, it was from that search that I was able to begin creating the models we now have in Meta-Coaching — The Matrix Embedded Pyramid, the Self-Actualization Quadrants, the Self-Actualization Assessment Scale (with Tim Goodenough), the Crucible Change Model, the Trust Spiral, the Leadership Axes. And that process has not stopped, it is continuing to this day. I also began writing both articles and books about this psychology that informs what coaching is and how it works: *Unleashed! Self-Actualization Psychology*, *Achieving Peak Performance*, *Unleashing Self-Actualization Leaders and Companies*, *Unleashing Authenticity*. In addition, we in Neuro-Semantics launched the New Human Potential Movement in 2007 with the trainings.

I rehearse all of that because of what happened today. Today I’m in Manila and writing from the series of trainings that Aldem and Vanessa have sponsored here in the Philippines. Today we finished the first four modules: *Unleashing Vitality*, *Unleashing Potentials*, *Unleashing Creativity*, and *Unleashing Leadership*.

And among the numerous people who have come in and out of the individual models, 14 have been through all of them. Those 14 have also studied NLP and completed Meta-States (APG) and so they are the newest group to be certified with the *Self-Actualization Psychology Diploma*. Now because most (or perhaps all) of them are also Licensed Meta-Coaches (ACMC), they have been adding to their repertoire of coaching skills —many, many more coaching skills. The skills that enable a person to coach the unleashing of potentials.

What does this mean? Not only does it mean that they have richly supplemented their coaching skills, they have more importantly gained a greater perspective of the vision of self-actualization —namely, enabling a human being to become his or her best self, fully alive/fully human. That’s

more important because that's the ultimate purpose of coaching. Coaching is about challenging people to step up to unleash their potentials. It is about stretching forward to find one's highest values and meanings (the *Being*-needs and values) and actualize them in behavior. That's why a professional coach ought to be fully trained, not only in the skills, but in the Psychology of Self-Actualization.

*The Meta-Coaching System* starts with communication because coaching is a conversation and that is the first experience that a coach needs to be able to facilitate, namely, the many different kinds of coaching conversations. That is the first competency for coaching. This requires connecting through listening and supporting, exploring via questioning and meta-questioning, refining through giving and receiving feedback, and experiencing through state induction and framing.

Yet all of that is governed by the purpose of coaching— unleashing a person's highest and best potentials. That's where the psychology of coaching comes in and where Self-Actualization Psychology in particular comes in. We do introduce it briefly at *Coaching Mastery*, but briefly, a few hours on Day 6.

I'm personally really proud of this whole group of people. We had a Ceremony this evening in Manila for 10 of them. I'm sure Facebook will soon be popping with pictures and comments about this. I'm proud because I see the benchmarked competencies of self-actualization vigorously alive in each of them:

Authenticity	Congruency	Passionate	Empowerment
Creativity	Presence	Courage	Collaboration

So a big congratulations to them— this is how we are creating *Leaders for the New Human Potential Movement* that we launched in 2007. Today the process continues ... and I — we— have more colleagues who will be delivering these trainings and using them in consulting and coaching!

**From: Pascal Gambardella**  
[pascalgambardella@gmail.com](mailto:pascalgambardella@gmail.com)  
**Neuro-Semantic Trainer**  
**Morpheus #25 and #26**  
**May 30, 2017 / June 7, 2017**

## MAPPING RESOURCES

There are two activities I do to relax, one is to solve mathematics problems and the other is to create resource maps. "Resource maps" are diagrams (and models) that define, capture, explain, and illustrate relationships between key concepts. They can be concept maps, mind maps, or illustrative graphics. They may evolve as a "model of my understanding" of a subject, and often continue to evolve as a shared understanding among a group of people. Creating resource maps and solving mathematics problems reflect my visual-kinesthetic learning style: seeing and manipulating, whether it is equations or concepts. This article describes three different ways resource maps are useful to learners, trainers, coaches, and modelers:

- Learn - Create to Understand and Reference the Material
- Teach - Use with Visual and Digital Learners
- Model - Model to Evolve Your Understanding

Although this article is primarily about resource maps, I will briefly come back to mathematics (mostly as an analogy) later.

### Resource Map Examples

Over the years my resource maps and other diagrams have appeared in six Neuro-Semantics books. I just started publishing [resource maps](#) on my website, making them freely available to anyone who is interested. Here are four, with associated links, that I will refer to in rest of this article. You may find it convenient to have another browser window open to view each as they are discussed.

- [Meta-States and Frames](#). This map explores the meta-states model within Neuro-Semantics. It relates meta-states to frames, and vice versa.
- [Cognitive Distortions](#). This map illustrates a cognitive distortions model. Cognitive distortions are a person's thought and behavior patterns that convince him or her of something that is not true, usually reinforcing negative thoughts or emotions. The map is useful to a meta-coach who wants to understand how a client can get himself or herself in trouble, or to anyone who wants to understand how politicians can distort reality.
- [Well-formed Outcome](#). In the of 1939 movie, "The Wizard of Oz", the film starts out in black and white when Dorothy is in Kansas. A tornado brings her to the Land of Oz, and suddenly the film is in color. When I first encountered the well-formed outcome questions in Neuro-Semantics, they were either just text (no graphics) in a manual, or summarized in a black and white funnel on a meta-coaching evaluation form. Since my coaching sessions are in color, I thought I would create a resource map of the well-form outcome in color.
- [Matrix Model](#). This diagram illustrates the Matrix Model, which is a systems model within Neuro-Semantics.

## Learn - Create to Understand and Reference the Material

For many people, especially visual learners who are trying to understand a complex topic, drawing a concept or mind map can help them clarify and cement concepts. For example, I defined and related the following words from Neuro-Semantics in a concept map: meta-state, frame, meta-frame, and meta-level. I did it in the resource map "[Meta-States and Frames](#)." I took what I knew, and what thought I knew, and poured over many articles and books while creating that map; and, I learned from that experience. It reinforced my belief that there is always something new to learn from a subject even if you think you know it well.

Resource maps may also serve as studies, similar to Chopin Études (which, I recently learned, is French for "studies"). Chopin's Études illustrated his emerging musical techniques. Many people use them today as teaching pieces, although that may not have been Chopin's primary intention. I thought about this while reviewing the [Cognitive Distortions](#) map. I created that map to catalog cognitive distortions and relate them to three characteristics of hopelessness: making things personal, making things permanent, and making things pervasive. My map did not explicitly address how to deal with a particular cognitive distortion someone encounters, especially during a coaching session. I thought that new resource maps could serve as coaching études for meta-coaches. Creating such maps might be a nice activity for local meta-coaching study groups.

Let's do a deep dive into a possible étude map and see where it leads. Imagine we are a group of meta-coaches relating our experiences and working on this map together. Suppose we create a new étude for the "all or nothing thinking" cognitive distortion. That distortion is evident in the statement: "I will either be a dismal failure or a completely success." As a coach, we do want people to see the gray areas, or the continuum (to use a mathematics term). If I were to create that étude, I would begin with the illustration of that cognitive distortion from the Cognitive Distortions map and include its connections ([see that map](#)) to "either/or choices can make things pervasive (undermines everything)" and to "limits choices, and thus possibilities for solutions."

The meta-model reflects the linguistic patterns associated with cognitive distortions (see "Communication Magic" by Michael Hall). So, I would add associated meta-model challenges. One relevant meta-model pattern is the "either/or" pattern. An example of its linguistic challenge could be: "So you have no other alternative except total success or failure?" (Another meta-model response, not related to the cognitive distortion, would be to ask for the meaning of the pseudo-word "failure" to understand what, if anything, "failure" references in the world.)

The "all or nothing thinking" cognitive distortion is also associated with the meta-program (perceptual filter) "classification scale" (see "Figuring Out People" by Michael Hall and Bobby Bodenhamer). Its distinctions are "either/or", continuum, and multi-dimensionality. An example of the later would be to substitute the word "and" for "or", and say: "I will be a dismal failure **and** a complete success (because persistence and learning from each failure can lead to success)." Perhaps a better way of phrasing that last statement would be "I fail and I learn; I fail again and learn more; ... I fail and succeed." Another great example of multi-dimensionality is the first sentence of Charles Dicken's "Tale of Two Cities": "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of

hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us ...” (That first sentence continues to go on and on; my guess it was because he was paid by the word.) I could also say “resource maps are useful and not useful” as I will discuss in the next session. Since the cognitive distortion is related to a meta-program, we could use the “expanding meta-programs” pattern to help a client gain more flexibly in his or her behavior. Finally, I would include in the map some examples to make it more concrete. Can you think of anything else to add (e.g., mind lines)? The map is not meant to be complete (which is not really possible with models anyway); just an illustrative, learning tool.

I use many of the maps I create as references. For example, I use the [Well-formed Outcome](#) map as a reference during coaching sessions. I also created maps for meta-questions, meta-programs, and coaching questioning types (i.e., testing, checking, exploring, and clarity). I may publish some of these maps this year. If I refer to a map long enough I can picture it when I need it. I thought that I might call the process of creating the map and incorporating it into memory the “mind-to-map-to-muscle” process since it reminds me of the mind-to-muscle pattern (where you incorporate principles into your mind-body system).

### **Teach - Use with Visual and Digital Learners**

Use resource maps when you want to appeal to visual learners and those people with a high preference for information (within the Preference Sort meta-program). I discovered this during the twenty-five years I ran a monthly NLP Study Group in the Washington DC area. For example, we decided in 1998 that we would explore the first edition the Mind Lines book (by Michael Hall and Bobby Bodenhamer). The book had few diagrams, and initially, for me, was difficult to understand, let alone present it to the group. While reading the book, I found myself drawing lots of diagrams, including a mind map, which contained all the mind-lines on one page.

When I shared these diagrams with my study group, I noticed it helped many of the visual learners better understand and remember mind lines. The auditory learners had no problem with the material. I introduced myself to Michael Hall for the first time in an email and shared the mind map with him. He added my mind map to the next edition of the book and asked me to draw a few more diagrams for the book. Then, he invited me to attend a prolific writing workshop as his guest, eventually leading to me becoming more actively involved in Neuro-Semantics; all because of my need to draw resource maps.

It is important to consider how to use resource maps during a training. Many may be too complex or detailed to reveal as one slide. Most Neuro-Semantics trainings are not given as if you were in a college classroom showing one slide after another, perhaps leading some participants into an unwanted trance. As trainers, we know that you want to engage your audience, inducing appropriate states as needed to help them experience and learn the material. You might sprinkle simple maps in your presentation to cement concepts. They also serve well as resource material in your manuals, and can complement glossaries.

### **Model - To Evolve Your Understanding**

I have left the best (at least for me) use of resource maps for last. A resource map is also a model that you can update and build on it as you gather more information and insights on the subject of

the map. It is a place to add new understandings and it evolves it as you learn more. It is like working on a crossword puzzle. You may work on it for hours and get stuck, unable to fill in any more answers. And, the next day you look at it and wonder why you hadn't filled it some obvious answers the previous day. I'll discuss two examples where I updated an original resource map because of new insights; one concerning the Meta-States Model and the other the Matrix Model.

A month after drawing the original Meta-Model and Frames map in March 2017, I realized that although it provided a snapshot of the definitions and relationships between concepts, it did not explicitly state the dynamic "meta-stating" process critical to understanding and using the meta-states model. Borrowing from mathematics, I would say it was missing the theorem: "When you meta-state, you are setting a frame; conversely, when you frame you are meta-stating" (paraphrase of a similar statement from Michael Hall, *Neurons*, March 7, 2016). I added that theorem to the map on May 23, 2017 and uploaded the [new map](#).

I want to discuss how you can use this resource map to understand the "theorem." As you read on you might find it useful to refer to that [map](#). Let's start with the first phrase "when you meta-state, you are setting a frame." A frame is a reference we use to understand and interpret something. I showed my five year old great nephew Jack a picture of a brown lizard that I took while visiting Austin Texas. Curious about the color, he said he thought all lizards were green. I said "what if I told you that some lizards change color." He then became very excited and curious (perhaps, excitedly curious) and asked more questions. We then watched a YouTube video of a chameleon changing colors, and the questions went on and on, picking up speed. Have you experience that while talking to a young child? He started with frame of reference associated with the belief that all lizards are green.

Texturing his curiosity with excitement (and probably some other states only known to a 5 year old), he was open to changing that belief. By changing that belief he went to a new meta-level, where each meta-level embodies all facets of experience (e.g., beliefs, decisions, attitudes). Meta-levels are just meta-frames that are part of a holography rather than a static hierarchy (as an example of the latter see Dilt's NLP logical levels). So meta-stating had the effect of setting a new frame (a meta-frame) that included the belief that not all lizards are green. In fact, some lizards change color.

Now, let's look at the statement "when you frame, you are meta-stating." When I was talking to Jack, I was changing the frame and he was texturing and changing his state as we went along. However, I want to use another example to better examine the statement. When we use the phrase "when you frame", it does not (usually) mean starting from nothing (e.g., there is no reference to interpret or understand something). It starts from an initial frame (e.g., a frame around the present state), which has its own associated meaning, beliefs, etc. and operates at a given meta-level. When some new experience changes some facet of that frame (e.g., meaning, intention, belief), I am at a different meta-level (by definition of meta-level) and an associated meta-frame to the original frame. I used aspects of the new experience to modulate my initial state, going from a level to a meta-level, from an initial state to a meta-state. Since meta-levels are frames, we can say "when you frame, you are meta-stating."

Many years ago I created a diagram of the **Matrix Model**, which appears in the book by Michael Hall (The Matrix Model). I looked at that initial diagram recently and recognized that it did not capture an important aspect of the content matrices: that they are all aspects of the Self. So, I updated the diagram to include that observation, adding a bit of color, and a short definition of each matrix.

Hopefully, I have conveyed the value in creating and using Resource Maps. Use them to learn, to teach, and to model.



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #27**  
**June 14, 2017**

## **COACHING AS A COLLABORATION**

*When you coach, you collaborate.* It's inevitable. The questions that follow from that are: How well do you know that? How well do you act on that? All of the core competencies that you went through in your ACMC training were designed to enable you to be effective in collaborating with your client. That's why you listen and support, question and meta-question, receive and give feedback. Of course, effective collaboration requires more— much more— but it begins here. This is the foundation for collaboration.

I recently discovered that *simply stating this* helped some coaches slow down and engage in more effective and active listening. Prior to that, their focus was on *themselves*— what *they* were doing and how much *they* were helping. Once they captured the idea that the coaching experience itself is a collaboration and that you, as the coach, have to earn the right and trust from your client to collaborate— they slowed down and created a much deeper and more intimate relationship.

Now the reason coaching is collaboration is because *coaching is a method for joint creative work*. Your purpose is not to show off or make your expertise shine, it is not even to solve the client's issues or problems. No! What you are doing is co-creating a solution, one better than what the client or you could have produced on your own. No wonder this calls for effective communicating and for the even more difficult skill of listening deeply and accurately.

What are you listening for? You are listening for your client's code. Did you know that? Do you know *how* to do that? This is where your NLP and Neuro-Semantic trainings play a critical role. That's because one of the most valuable contributions of these models is that they give you *the hidden invisible code* for the structure of a person's experiences. And that's one of the things that we really highlight in the PCMC trainings.

Now collaborating as a Meta-Coach means that you first spend plenty of time *seeking first to understand your client— and understand that person on that person's terms*. So get ready by setting for yourself a "I know nothing of this person's content, story, struggles, and words." That will put you in a good place to use what you do know— the structure of human experiences and the processes for facilitating clarity, decision, planning, resourcing, changing, etc.

To effectively collaborate with your client, you have to get yourself out of the way. That's the reason for the two patterns that we present on Day One of the ACMC training: *Releasing Judgment pattern* and the *Decontamination pattern*. If you still are finding that you are getting too much of you in the way of your coaching, then go back and run those patterns again and again. Get to a MCF chapter and having another Meta-Coach facilitate those processes with you.

In the book that I wrote with Ian McDermott, *Collaborative Leadership*, we put a big emphasis on being able to operate from abundance rather than scarcity. There's a reason for that. If you are in

a scarcity state yourself, you will not be in a very giving mode and your client will sense it. Collaboration works when two people are giving their very best to the experience of co-creating understanding, clarity, decisions, etc. Whenever someone is holding back—the quality of the coaching goes down. And with it the quality of the solutions are reduced as well.

When you coach a single client, the collaboration is one of two individuals attempting to relate in such a way that together they generate something that is more than the sum of the parts. And when you coach a group or team, you are inviting a dozen or three dozen people to create a collaborative team that can be smarter than the intelligence of the smartest person in that group. This usually does not happen in groups. Most groups, in fact, are dumber than the most intelligent members. It takes collaboration to transform a group of individuals into a truly effective work group, or better yet, a team.

*Coaching is collaboration.* Your client hires you, not to solve problems, but to enable him to discover and unleash new responses. That occurs through the coaching conversations. It occurs as you align with your client as her colleague in the great adventure of facilitating her highest and best vision. Here's to your collaborative success!

### **Meta-Coach News**

- The APMC Training in China that was scheduled for June has been postponed until the first of November. It will be from Saturday Nov. 4 through Nov. 11. The Team will meet for training on Nov. 2-3 at Guangzhou China. Contact Mandy Chai for more information. We are looking for team leaders who understand and practice *collaboration*.
- APMC training in Mexico began this past weekend and will finish in July. David Murphy and Ivan Robles are leading out and Omar Salom is co-training with them. This is a great example of *collaborative leadership in action*.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #28**  
**June 21, 2017**

## **THE POWER AND CHALLENGE OF BENCHMARKING**

Benchmarking intangibles is not easy. If it were, others would have already invented it and would have developed processes for streamlining it. But they have not. As far as I can tell, my book on *Benchmarking Intangibles* is still the only book in the field of Coaching—as well as in the other fields of personal development, communication, leadership, training, etc.

I based the benchmarking model on the NLP Communication Model and especially on the NLP Meta-Model of Language. Starting with a word like “listening,” “supporting,” “leadership,” etc., the first task is to take a false-noun (a nominalization, like “leadership”) or an unspecified verb (like “listening”) and make it more specific. You do this by identifying the more specific actions or behaviors that you would literally see or hear or sense. That leads to sub-skills and sometimes sub- sub-skills. For listening, a sub-skill is being able to repeat back a person’s exact words with no paraphrases.

After you obtain a sensory-based set of actions, then put the action on a continuum and identify the degree of the behaviors from low quality, medium, and high quality expressions. This gives you a continuum for that specific behavior, a range of behaviors that could be evaluated in terms of quality. With that, we can then figure out both the quantitative number of actions that would indicate a competent skill as well as the qualitative quality of the actions that would be characteristic of a skilled practitioner or of an expert in that skill. With that, you then have *benchmarks*— performance indicators of a desired competency.

The next step in learning to benchmark as *a process is to use the benchmarks*. This requires taking the benchmarks and learning them and then being able to see and hear them in real time when someone is coaching. That’s a lot harder. You could memorize the 15 or 20 sub-behaviors for each skill, but the real challenge comes when you need to be able to *recognize* them in real time and to mark them down while a person is coaching— talk about a stretch!

Now you know why we spend 2 full days with the Assist Team prior to starting the ACMC training and go through 4 to 5 sessions a day giving those who will benchmark the practice that they need to competently use the benchmarks. Having done this over and over and over, my sense is that it takes a Meta-Coach *at least five times* on the team going through this to be able to effectively benchmark. I’m fortunate in this regard, I go through this process ten to fourteen times every year, averaging once a month and then spend another 8 days benchmarking in the ACMC training.

Consequently a lot of those who receive the benchmark training, even after ten days (2 days training, and 8 days of ACMC) are still not ready to sign Coaches off on the benchmarked skills. That's because benchmarking is not only about being able to see and hear the required behaviors, it is also about being able to see and hear *what is not present* —namely, that which the coach did not do. This immediately shows up under level one of Listening, “things not heard.” To be able to mark this, the person benchmarking has to be catching all of the things that the client said that the coach did *not* follow up on. How do you do that? I have found that the best way for me to do it is to take extensive notes of nearly everything the client says during the session while simultaneously marking down every behavior that the coach is doing.

So in benchmarking I'm filling in both sides of the coaching conversation simultaneously. I'm focusing on seeing and hearing everything that the coach is doing that fits one of the sub-skills of the five core skills *and* I'm writing down the flow of the coaching conversation and using a marking system so that I can identify what the coach is catching and responding to and what the coach is not catching and responding to. At first this was overwhelming. But now after 15 years, I can handle that level of detail complexity pretty easily *and I can still read my notes* (!).

Many of those brand new to benchmarking can't do that. Many find that on their first time of attempting this cannot hardly write down anything of the coaching conversation. This is the skill of tracking over time where the coaching conversation went, where it deviated, where it looped around, where it jumped a logical level, etc.

One consequence of this is that they cannot provide as high quality feedback to the coach as someone more experienced. That is just to be expected. I wish we had a whole team of people who had benchmarked at least five times (50 days of experience) that we could take with us everywhere we train *Coaching Mastery*. But we don't. Yet when you are benchmarked by a Meta-Coach who has some understanding of the process— that is still far better than coaching without any supervision or benchmarking. In fact, it is far, far better than to do it with no feedback.

We ask those learning the benchmarking skills and competencies to slow down, focus on just a couple things at a time— and give feedback on whatever would make the most transformative difference for the Coach. And that's why sometimes a person will say “you got a 2.3 or a 2.5” when you were not even close to it. They are seeing and hearing as best they can, but they are not seeing and hearing very much themselves. But give them a few more times on the team, and they will begin seeing and hearing at a completely new detailed level— and will become competent in this meta-skill of benchmarking.

The process of benchmarking offers you a tremendous on the job practice (discipline) of really learning to listen and support. It will stretch your global–detail meta-program so that holding a meta-value (like listening) you can detail it into the 17-plus sub-skills. If you ever want to be able to give high quality feedback to people, especially to managers and leaders in organization, or go into shadow coaching, there's nothing more effective for training your receiving and giving feedback than joining the Assist Team to learn how to benchmark.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #29**  
**June 28, 2017**

## **THE ORIGIN OF COACHING AND NLP**

Here's something I did not know until a couple weeks ago: NLP was present at the origin of the field of Coaching! Now we know that it was *Thomas Leonard* who in 1992 founded the beginning of the field of Coaching. Before that year, the term "coaching" was only briefly used in the business world and only as a synonym for lots of other things, facilitating, coaching, consulting, etc. Prior to 1992 there was no precise definition for coaching. I recently saw the term "coaching" used in the 1990 book, *The Fifth Discipline* by Peter Senge, and he used it in the general sense of facilitating.

Now prior to that, *Timothy Gallwey* is credited with being the grandfather of the field of Coaching with his 1972 book, *The Inner Game of Tennis*. Gallwey even took that theme to Esalen in 1972 and presented it there. I began seeing "coaching" mentioned in 1992 in *Anchor Point*. That was when the first articles on Coaching proper appeared in that journal. At that time, what was "big" in the field of psychotherapy was Brief Psychotherapy, Ericksonian, and Solution focused Therapy.

A week or so ago I got an email from Layton Payne. I originally met Layton in Houston Texas (from 1995 to 1999) when I was traveling to Houston once a month to train at the NLP Center of Houston. I first met him when I presented *Selling Genius* there. Then last year we re-connected in Santa Cruz when I did the APG training at the NLP Gym. What I recently discovered is the role that Layton played at the beginning of the field of coaching and something else that I did not know about Coaching or Thomas Leonard. Layton wrote:

"I don't know if I'd mentioned it, but I was part of Thomas Leonard (and Sandy Vilas) alpha version of coaching training. There were about 15 people in this nascent group and we met weekly for several months—with lectures, group interactions, etc. All of the weekly meetings were held at the office of NLP Institute of Houston."

I did not know any of that! All of that was completely new to me. Before he launched the field of Coaching, Thomas Leonard began experimenting with a "nascent group" and did so at *an NLP Training Center*. How amazing!

"Thomas was heavily influenced by the Landmark Education work, and even worked for Werner Erhard, I believe. Sandy was the business side of things, mainly the front-end part— sales and marketing. (Sandy remains a close friend of mine.) Sandy eventually wanted to grow and formalize the CoachU.com business and Thomas began Coachville.com, with lots of free stuff and wasn't as structured and formalized as CoachU. Coachville, [he] was more about R&D and Thomas' writings and musings (he was a very prolific writer, like you), IMHO."

I explored this further with Layton because I worked with one NLP Center there. For several years I worked with Edit Carrol Rodas at the NLP Center of Houston. I ran Master Practitioner training as weekend trainings the first of every month. He said that he didn't recall the specifics of the NLP Training Center.

“I want to say that Sandy (who lived in Houston for years) had a business associate who ran/owned the NLP and Sandy had an office at that location, for a while. During or shortly after that time, Sandy and his then-wife, Donna Fisher, started the "networking" business — giving half-day long classes on networking skills.”

There you have it. While Coaching was not started by NLP, and did not come from NLP, *NLP was there in the background*. In fact, Leonard and the others apparently knew some NLP and possibly used a little bit of NLP when he began Coach U. Here we have a little bit of the secret history of coaching— all which is very strange since so many in ICF today have a prejudice against NLP.

After that beginning, it didn't take long for the idea of coaching to enter into the NLP community. And no wonder— it was a natural fit. In fact, it was the year 1992 that coaching articles began appearing in *Anchor Point*. But at that time, coaching was *not* clearly distinguished from therapy. At the same time some of the newest forms of therapy were Solution Focused Therapy, Brief Psychotherapy, Ericksonian Therapy, and Strength-Based Therapy. These were the areas that I was focusing on at the time as a psychotherapist and because of that, I put together “Empowerment Coaching” in late 1991 using the fundamentals of NLP. I did introduce what later became known as “The Power Zone” but that was still several years before the discovery of the Meta-States Model.

Today, given that Coaching is essentially a deep probing conversation that invites a person to get real— no wonder the NLP Communication Model fits coaching so well. And it's really no surprise that coaching through Leonard Thomas grew out of a NLP context.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #30**  
**July 5, 2017**

## **I WANT YOU PERSUASIVE AND...**

There are lots of reasons that I want you to be *a highly persuasive Meta-Coach*. For beginners, the more persuasive you are, the more easily you'll find it to get clients and develop a full time practice in coaching. Your persuasiveness will inspire people to want to experience the in-depth unleashing conversation called "coaching." And if you work with organizations or businesses, your persuasiveness will enable you to "get in" as you'll have more influence with the decision makers.

But that's just the beginning. Once you develop the learned skills that comprise the ability to effectively persuade others, you also have the ability to now deliver on your promises. After all, the person who does *all the work in coaching is the client, not you*. No matter how much you care and believe in your client, you are there as a facilitator. It's not your job to live your client's life for them. They have to do that. You inspire them to do that; you empower them to develop the skills to do that; you support and follow-up to help strengthen their resolve and self-determination. But you can not live their life.

It's paradoxical: your client has essentially hired you to *persuade* him so that he can continue that *persuasion* as *self-persuasion*. Clients come to you because they need to learn self-leadership or self-management or self-motivation or self-support, or some other aspect of how they relate to themselves. And they learn it from you. So the more skillful you are in being able to persuade them to learn, to develop, to assume responsibility, to be inspired, etc., the more effective will be your coaching.

It may seem that if a human being becomes your client and pays you money, that person doesn't need to be persuaded. But no. Frequently the coaching conversation itself revolves around this very focus. She wants to be persuaded about something that she is not persuaded about— yet. She is sitting in your coaching chair wanting you to persuade her about the value, importance, understanding, etc. of that thing. What is implicit, and what is not explicitly stated, is something like—

"I want to believe that I have the powers inside to take charge of my life, but I need you to help me with that belief." "I want to believe that I'm a good person, that my value is unconditional, but I have never experienced that and it seems far-fetched. Help me believe that."

*That's why your ability to persuade determines your ability to coach.* So, where are you on the scale of being persuasive? How well can you present a statement or a line that will change a mind? The good news is that as a Neuro-Semantic coach, you have some very powerful tools for this very thing. The training and the book, *Mind-Lines: Lines for Changing Minds* is all about

framing and reframing. So is the book, *Winning the Inner Game*. And so is the most recent work in the Meta-Coaching series, *Inside-Out Persuasion*.

In fact, while I have only recently completed *Inside-Out Persuasion* in 2016, I began writing it back in 2002. Why did it take so long? Primarily because I was looking for a way to frame and package it non-manipulatively. And that's because there are a lot of processes that you can learn and use with people that will influence them— persuade them— that do so unethically. Sure, they get the job done, but they do so at the cost of your integrity. Not good. Some work for the short-term, but then as soon as the person thinks about it, they see that you *used* them, *played* them, and did not truly respect them.

My desire is that you are persuasive *ethically*. And that means being caring and respectful and that you don't treat the end as justifying any means. The *means* that you use counts. How you enable your client to achieve his outcome does make a difference. That's because there's something *more important than an outcome— even your client's outcome*.

That's why I had to write the book, *Get Real: Unleashing Your Authenticity* before I could complete the work on persuasion. What's most important is you and your clients being real live and authentic human beings— moral, upright, congruent, living by their integrity, caring in the way they treat themselves and others, etc. This means that *the process for how we go about living and reaching our outcomes is more important than particular outcomes*.

That's a lesson that lots of clients need to learn. Are they enjoying the process? Are they learning something new and interesting every day? Are they becoming increasingly the best version of them? Are they respectful and patient? Are they kind and considerate? *Being* is the core of the human experience, *doing* is the expression, and *having* is the result. And yes results count, but they are not nearly as important and doing. And doing is not nearly as important as being. Now you know the Meta-Coaching and the Neuro-Semantic set of values that should govern how we practice this discipline.



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #31**  
**July 12, 2017**

## **THE HARDEST PERSON TO PERSUADE**

Last week I mentioned that *I want you persuasive and ethically persuasive*. As you enhance your skills of persuasion, you will be much more successful in getting clients, getting into organizations, and influencing the people that you need and want to influence. And that will open many doors of opportunity for you to make a difference for individuals, families, companies, etc. Here's another aspect of you becoming more persuasive, namely, *you influencing yourself*.

Strange? Well, let's explore this idea. How are you at persuading yourself? How are you at getting yourself to do and follow-through on what you want to do? Ah, yes, the old *knowing-doing gap* again! We *know* what to do to improve our health, our fitness, our business, our relationships, our finances, our wealth creation, and on and on *and yet* how many of us also have a challenge in actually *doing* what we know we should do?

The principle here is this— if you can't persuade yourself to do what you want to do—how will you be able to persuade others? How will you be able to positively influence those who you want to touch with the value that you can offer? In terms of persuasion, the first person to persuade then is you. So, how are you at that?

This also has other multiple applications and implications. One of the things that I found in modeling highly persuasive people is that the ultimate form of persuasion is character— and specifically being authentic. As examples of that, I wrote some brief descriptions of John F. Kennedy, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Winston Churchill. And yes, while they all also were skillful in their language skills, elegant in communicating inspiring ideas, and inspirational— they were best at persuasion because they were authentic. They were totally convinced about what they were saying.

*“All of these masters of persuasion also operated from a solid ethical character. While they had sweet words and elegant ways of speaking, their source of their influence was the character of their person— they lived in an inside-out persuasion. ... They persuaded by being an example of the meanings that they communicated.”* (p. 17)

Here's what I wrote in the Foreword of the book:

*“... self-persuasion comes first and perhaps I the most challenging form of persuasion. Self-persuasion also comes before self-leadership because if I cannot lead myself or manage myself about what I'm not convinced of, I will not be able to influence others.”* (p. 7)

Yes, the hardest person to persuade is sometimes ourselves. This explains why it is easier to *intellectually know and understand something* and to make a decisive commitment to *act on* what you know. “Knowing” is easy compared to acting. At the point where you act—consequences occur. Now you could not succeed, or you could find out that you were wrong, or you could not do it well. Maybe you will discover that you are incompetent. So it is very human to procrastinate, to put off, to study more.

Question: Given all of that, are you truly *persuaded*? Are you actually *persuaded* about what you think you should do? If you are, then are you now acting on that persuasion?

Interesting enough, the very term “persuasion” has within it the idea of thoroughness, “to thoroughly urge” someone to do something. Persuasion implies action and commitment. When we say that we have persuaded someone or that we are persuaded about something, there’s no longer any doubts or questions. We are sold on something. The communication process has reached a conclusion. When you *persuade* someone about the value of coaching, you know that they are ready to sign up. When you *persuade* a manager or leader in an organization, you know that you are getting in.

An interesting exercise for yourself or for your coaching client is to make a list of the things that you know but do not do. You can even do this with an organization. We have had trainers go into companies and, using the whiteboards or flip charts in the training room, start making a list of all of the things that they have learned from trainings that have not been transferred to the work place. With a list of things that you *know but do not do* — you can now ask the persuasion questions:

Are you persuaded about the value of this idea?

How persuaded are you? Gauge your level of persuasion from 0 to 10.

What doubts or questions do you have about this thing that you know?

What stops you from making a decisive commitment to act on it?

What do you need to persuade you to take effective action on it?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #32**  
**July 19, 2017**

## **TRUE PERSUASION IS SELF-PERSUASION**

A very common about persuasion is that in persuasion *you are the person doing the persuading*. It sounds logical, doesn't it? It sounds reasonable. So, how surprised will you be to find out that it is not? The truth is that for all of your persuasion, what you are really doing is providing the data and information and context and relationships so that the person you are seeking to persuade actually persuade himself or herself. Now, is that weird or what? How counter-intuitive do you find that?

So, here's the truth. The truth is that the only person who can do your thinking and understanding and believing and being convinced about something is *you*. Isn't that obvious? If not, then try it. Grab someone and tell her that you are now abdicating your powers of thought and that she can do your thinking for you. Now calibrate to see if she feels honored by this. Next, check and see if she knows exactly *how* she is going to do your thinking for you(!).

Ultimately when a persuasion works, clicks, makes sense, and succeeds, it is because the person who you are seeking to influence accepts your words, sees your point, agrees with your perspective, reasons to what those facts mean, trusts the process, and goes into the emotion state of feeling convinced. And all of this mental and emotional work— *accepting, seeing, agreeing, trusting, emoting, etc.* is that person's internal work or process of persuading him or herself.

Okay, so what's the point? It is this: *All persuasion is, in the end, self-persuasion*. You persuade yourself. She persuade herself. He persuades himself. When you are the one persuading, then your part of the process is providing information, raw data facts, a way of reasoning about them, ideas for how to frame things, ideas about what it means, leads to, etc. Knowing this actually enables us to persuade with integrity and to do so in service of our clients. It awakens us to our need to first seek to understand our client *on his terms*, acknowledge and match our client's style, and then facilitate the framing of things so that our client can get his outcome. In the end, you persuade your client to become more persuasive with herself.

It is not the case that you are trying to get something from the client. It is not that you are trying to convert your client to your way of understanding, interpreting, or doing things. It is not about proselytizing. To effectively coach, you go in without any needs or demands. It is not about you. It is about your client. So in coaching, you want nothing from your client, not even your client's success. You have *no agenda*. You are listening sacredly— just listening out of the sheer awe and mystery of another person.

Yet on the other hand, you are on a mission and you do have an agenda. It is to be present to your client, to discern her immediate and long-term outcomes and then to co-create with your client what she wants. Your agenda then is her agenda. Your mission is to enable him to achieve what he wants to achieve ... as he wants to achieve it. Your client does all the work— you are the guide. You point to the door; your client has to walk through. Sounds like the Matrix, doesn't it? Sounds like what Morpheus said to Neo. "I can point to the door, but you must walk in." And yes, you have plenty of tools, a whole host of techniques, models from NLP and Neuro-Semantics, and yet your greatest power is your presence. It is being there with and for your client— and when you are there exclusively for your client's unleashing, then your presence becomes a crucible for the fires of change.

As you and I know all too well, most clients (including ourselves) do not know what they want. Not really. Sometimes they think they do. Yet we know that behind their presenting outcome (or presenting problem) is a deeper or higher outcome, a meta-outcome. "And when you get that fully, and in just the way you want it, what will do for you that's even more important?" That's the meta-question of intentionality which we ask over and over, holding each level of the client's outcome. Eventually, your client finds or creates the *real* outcome— what she most authentically wants.

Your job? Enabling your client to persuade himself that that truly is his highest and most authentic desire— the life passion to give himself to, the "fire in the belly" that most intensely inspires him. Now that the outcome frame has been set, where is your client today? This invites a description of the coaching landscape and next, "So what's stopping you?" "What's in your way?" And next? "What skill, knowledge, understanding, experience, resource, etc. do you need to reach your outcome?"

In each of these landscapes (outcome, present state, problem, solution, innovation) your client needs your influence to fully persuade himself or herself. And if you listen, if you *really, really* listen, you will hear her answer from time to time and be able to feed-it-back to her. This then becomes her persuading herself. This is him finding his real problem and real solution and persuading himself to now be true to himself in living what he knows.

**Want more? The very first training on Unleashing Persuasion is coming!**

Hong Kong ... the first days of September 2017

Sponsored by APTI — and Mandy Chan.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #33**  
**July 26, 2017**

## **PERSUASION IS INEVITABLE**

“But what if I don’t want to persuade?” “What if I think that the whole question about persuasion is unethical, and I want to opt out. What then?”

The answer to this is an answer the questioner probably does not want to hear: *You do not have a choice.* To the extent that you are alive, that you talk, that you are around other people, that you communicate—you persuade. You are inevitably influencing people. It is built into the very fabric of social life. So just as you cannot *not* communicate, so you cannot *not* persuade. Your very presence, your smiling or frowning, will create an influence and will persuade people about something—you like them, or you don’t, you are happy or sad or upset or something. If you fold your arms and stay in the back—you are sending out a message and thereby influencing people to think and feel something about you. In this, you cannot escape persuasion!

Persuasion is inevitable as long as you are alive and breathing. It is inevitable as long as you interact with other people. The question is not *whether* you persuade or not, nor is the question if you should or should not persuade. The question is, *How well do you persuade yourself and others?* Do you persuade effectively or ineffectively? Is your persuasion attempts ethical or unethical? Are you caring and respectful when you persuade or do you try to use people to get your own sweet way? What you cannot do is opt out of the whole persuasion enterprise.

Let’s start with your state. Even when you are just standing around minding your own business, the very state of mind, state of body, and state of emotion that you are in— *influences*. It influences you! Your thinking, perceiving, remembering, imagining, emoting, relating, and just about everything else about you *is a function of your state and operates relative to the state you are in.* This brings us back to the subject of self-persuasion that was the theme in the last post (Morpheus #32). All persuasion is ultimately self-persuasion and the person who is hardest to persuade is you (Morpheus #31).

So, how are you at influencing your own states and being able to access the best states, the ones that are most optimal for the things that you do? Would you like to be able to persuade yourself more effectively and consistently? Do that and you’ll increase your self-confidence, you will build up a solid sense of self-efficacy and self-trust and that will, in turn, make relationships better, and put you in a position where you can lead and manager better. Sound good?

Now let’s shift and think about your relationships. Every relationship can be measured in terms of your ability to influence others— persuade them about your ideas, suggestions, needs, wants, etc. Who do you need to influence? Who would you like to influence? Persuasion is relational through and through. It’s about how you interact with others, how you treat them, how you get them to consider your ideas, how you engage in a dialogue of exchange of meanings, etc.

And because business is all about relationships— it is also all about your powers of the influence you exert to persuade people to see things your way, do things in your style, and buy things that you produce. First of all, you have to persuade someone to hire you, and then to not fire you, and then to see the value that you add, and then to perform your work well, to work well with colleagues, managers, customers, etc. Persuasion is inevitable here also and mostly determines your satisfaction with your work and career. Without persuasion skills, you will sense that nobody listens to you, nobody cares about you, no one takes you seriously, no one gives you a chance to show what you can do. That's a pretty miserable way to live your life. So, you actually need to learn the persuasion skills to enjoy life at its best.

If persuasion is inevitable, several things fall out from that. One is this— you are already persuading people. Given that, How well are you currently persuading people about your ideas, your wants and needs, etc.? What skills are you using or not using? What mental model do you have in your mind about how it works and how to use the skills? Do you like the results you are getting?

Another thing— you may have learned some inadequate ways of going about persuasion, or even worse, some sabotaging things. In that case, you need to do some unlearning, releasing the methods that are not effective and replace them with more effective techniques. And, persuasion is learnable. After all, it is a skill, a relational skill. Interested? Are you ready to become more effective in influencing people? As a communication model, this lies at the heart of NLP and as a model about closing the knowing–doing gap and adding high quality meaning to life, Neuro-Semantics can provide the answer to these questions.

Finally, as a Meta-Coach— you can coach this! You can sell yourself as a *persuasion coach* and enable parents, supervisors, managers, leaders, trainers ... human beings... to become more effectively persuasive.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #34**  
**August 2, 2017**

## **UNRECOGNIZED PERSUASION TECHNIQUES**

If there is a constant in the field of persuasion, it is searching for the latest *persuasion technique*. Having read dozens and dozens of books on persuasion in research and preparation for the book I wrote, *Inside-Out Persuasion*, I came upon that drive again and again. And when I have talked about persuasion in some Introductions and with people individually, persuasion techniques seemed to always come up.

“What can I do to be even more persuasive? What technique can I use?” “What the one technique that will guarantee winning someone to my point of view?”

Now without doubt, there are many. There are books that focus exclusively on techniques. These are the *how to* books that skip the whole question of ethics and goes right to how to persuade someone to buy your product or agree with your conclusions. Why do they skip ethics? Simple. It’s too difficult. It sounds too moralistic. There’s no immediate payoff for it, in fact, it may cost you sales.

Not only is there this hunger for fool-proof techniques that will magically get the results you want, but there also seems to be a hunger for the newest and most subtle technique, especially secret techniques. And it would be untrue for me to say that there aren’t any. There are.

But that is going about healthy, authentic, and inside-out persuasion the wrong way. In fact, I believe that the most powerful “techniques” for influencing another person’s mind and heart are processes that we can hardly call a “technique” at all. And as a Meta-Coach, you already know them. You were trained in them. What you may not know is how to use them effectively or how to recognize them as persuasion techniques.

First is the incredible influential technique of attentive and caring listening. If you take the time to be with someone and listen empathically to them with full presence and care, doing that will enable a person to feel really heard, validated, and valued. It will also deeply influence that person. Obviously you are earning the right to be heard. Less obviously, you are influencing what that person focuses on, where he goes in his conversation, the solutions he finds, etc. Now imagine that! Listening persuades. You can persuade by attending to someone so that the person comes to value and care about your attention. It becomes a reward, an interpersonal reward that she seeks out.

Doesn’t attentive listening influence you? Do you not warm up to the person and want to return the favor? Do you not begin to like the person more and feel safe with that person? Are you not more willing to give that person a hearing?

Then there is questioning. On the surface it seems that questioning is about obtaining information and finding out things, yet it is about so much more. By your questions, you direct a person's attention and invite him to go off in a certain line of thought. By questioning, you raise awarenesses or resources that she may never have thought of. By asking questions, you can draw people out so that they attain a new and larger perspective about something.

To ask a question is to frame a direction for the conversation. Not only that, but by questioning you can also set frames, pull frames apart, and outframe. Pretty powerful things—questions. The Meta-Model questions is described as a “precision model” because by the questions, you enable the person to think and speak more clearly. Think about that. Isn't that amazing? No wonder questioning is a central persuasion skill and a technique for influencing minds and hearts.

You can see this in mind-lines, that is, the questions that facilitate reframing. In the book *Mind-Lines: Lines for Changing Minds*, we put together a formula for 26 ways to frame and reframe something, especially complaints, objections, excuses, limiting beliefs, etc. And they are formulated mostly as questions—questions that get a person to think about things from another point of view—another frame.

This is especially true of meta-questions. How much more persuasive do you think you'd be if you regularly asked some meta-questions—those higher level questions that orient a person in a direction that they really want to go? Would you enjoy doing that? Would that enrich your sense of yourself, your identity, and your skills as a coach?

Attentive listening with care and asking carefully designed questions are actually some of the unrecognized and hidden persuaders that are all around us. We swim in this environment without even recognizing the power or influence of these processes. The bottom line is that you do not have to go off and find some esoteric secret technique for persuasion—you have some very powerful tools in your hands already. Here are two of them. There are more.



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #35**  
**August 9, 2017**

## **CHALLENGE— IN 5 DIMENSIONS**

As a Meta-Coach you know that we frame the coaching skills in terms of two seemingly contradictory values— compassion and challenge. You also know that an ideal coach, an expert coach, is a person who has developed the skill of compassionately challenging. You know that our catch word for this being able to communicate *ruthless compassion*. That means, believing in people and their potentials as we do, we take responsibility to awaken them, challenge them, and stay with them through thick and thin so that they do not sell themselves short.

Now over the years I've written numerous articles on the skill of being able to challenge people. There's a reason for that. There's a reason for continually coming back to focus on this theme again and again. Why? Because *to coach is to challenge*. That's because people who are clients need to be challenged. Further, on the feedback form that we use to identify and measure your coaching skills, we have "challenge." We also have "confrontation." Those are two dimensions of challenge. And there are others. Here are five. Next post— what challenge is *not*.

### **1) Challenge as Testing and Questioning.**

A small, and yet beginning, place for "challenging" someone is asking someone *testing questions*. These are closed-ended questions that requires a Yes/No answer. "Do you really want this?" "Are you sure this is truly important for you?" These kinds of questions challenge a person in the sense that they call forth a decision and a commitment. "Will you or will you not?" "Can I depend on you for this?" Actually, there are many, many questions that perform a "challenging" function. Some challenge by getting personal and intimate. Some challenge by asking a person to get real and authentic. In NLP there is a question that challenges people. We call it the *relevance challenge*. "Jim, I'm not clear about why you are bringing up this subject, how does it relate to the subject of this meeting?"

### **2) Challenge as in Stretching.**

Challenge as stretching means taking on a challenge to what you are doing, experiencing, or achieving. It means stepping up to your next level of development. It means being fully engaged in whatever you are doing, becoming absorbed.

This facet of "challenge" is the very heart of coaching, in contradistinction to therapy, in that it inherently involves inviting people to step out of their comfort zone and to set goals so that they can think more, feel more, be more, say more, do more, have more, and give more. All of this stands against *aiming for* peace, tranquility, rest, equilibrium, etc. Those are goals that are more fitting for therapy— for healing hurts and traumas and creating a solid base for living. Those ready for coaching are more interested in disequilibrium, rocking the boat, stirring up things, and raising the bar.

When we ask questions about challenge, what are we really asking about? Stretching, confrontation, or opposition?

- What are some of the challenges you are experiencing right now?
- What challenges are you having in your life about your health, finances, emotions, etc.?

What most of us know is that the best moments of life occur in those moments when we stretch our mind, our emotions, our body, our activities, etc. By pushing to our current limits and then beyond, we aim to accomplish something that is inherently difficult, something that is bold and that requires courage. Typically when we do this, we move into the flow zone that is the optimal balance between competence and challenge.

### **3) Challenge as Disturbing and Upsetting.**

In these previous forms, “challenge” as testing, questioning, or stretching all have the potential to disturb and upset. In the sense of disturbing a person’s current status quo or state of mind or state of emotion, anything that can potentially upset or disturb is experienced as “challenging.” These states could occur by teasing, playing, and joking. These could occur by introducing something very new or different or unexpected. Sometimes a person or a group needs to be disturbed. They are too self-satisfied, too comfortable, too much at rest, and letting both their talents and their opportunities pass by.

### **4) Challenge as Opposition and Obstacles.**

Another way that we use the word “challenge,” is when we mean that we are going to oppose another’s idea or proposal and play devil’s advocate. “Let me challenge you on that idea, I’ll play devil’s advocate to challenge you about the premises that I think you are operating from.” Because opposition and nearly any obstacle upsets and disturbs, they operate as a challenge to one’s resourcefulness and resilience. Can you maintain your focus when a certain opposition arises or does it throw you off-course?

We can also ask about how much of a challenge is any given obstacle? After all, obstacles are challenging. When an obstacle arises, the question then is — what resource do you need in order to handle that challenge? What does that obstacle challenge in you?

### **5) Challenge as Confrontation.**

The term “challenge” is often used in the sense of confrontation. We say, “I’m going to challenge you...” and our intention is to bring up something that is potentially unpleasant. Yet that description is what we mean by the term “confrontation.” We are going to confront (*con-* with; *front-* face) in the sense of directly bringing up to someone, present it to his or her face, what might be difficult to face. In Meta-Coaching, we distinguish *challenge as stretch* from *confrontation* and use the word “challenge” for the former. Obviously, when you confront, you are challenging. By identifying something that needs to be addressed, you are exposing it to the person and that could very well invite the person to stretch to a new level.

We also challenge as confrontation when we bring up something that could go bad. “I want to challenge you about the fact that you have not answered by question even though I have asked it four times, are you aware of that?”

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #36**  
**August 16, 2017**

## **DIFFERENTIATING TRUE CHALLENGE AND PSEUDO-CHALLENGE**

There is the skill of challenging and there are a large range of things that can challenge a person. There are also many things that you could call “challenging” which are not “challenging” as we use that term in coaching as a coaching skill. I mentioned *the five dimensions of challenging in the last post* (Morpheus #35). Now I want to identify one thing that is actually *not* challenging, although some coaches when frustrated by their clients, falsely calling it “challenging.”

### **Distinction: Challenging and Irritating**

Some people confuse challenge with that of irritating or frustrating. While it is true that people sometimes become irritated or frustrated when challenged (asked to stretch, get out of their comfort zone, face a difficulty, etc.), these are *symptoms* of many other experiences as well. So be careful—merely irritating someone is not necessarily the same as challenging that person. The mistake that many coaches make is telling a client who’s irritated, “It’s good for you because you are being challenged.” It is more than likely that the coach failed to get or keep rapport, was sloppy or lazy in his communications, violated a trust, etc. In such an instance, labeling it as “challenging” is probably an excuse for incompetence.

This attempt at reframing is an attempt to put “irritating” in the category of “challenge” alongside of stretching to a new goal, encouraging one to face a difficulty and persist, and/or inspiring someone to believe in him or herself. Yet it is not the same. It does not fit that category.

For example, I have seen clients get irritated because a coach keeps repeating the question, “What do you want?” I even have a video-tape of a session of a Meta-Coach who asked a client more than a dozen times (19 times as I remember!). Asking that opening question once, twice, or even three times can be effective. It can be a matter of persistence. But after that, it ceases to be effective. After that, your client will probably be wondering why you are not listening, why you don’t get it, and why you are constantly repeating yourself(!). That’s not good. It is not persistence. It is repeating what doesn’t work and not looking for an alternative approach, perhaps not even calibrating to what is not working. In such cases, make a guess about what your client wants, and then check it out. If you do that, you will make yourself open and vulnerable. Here acknowledging offers you a powerful skill for getting on the same page with your client.

“I may not be really hearing you, what I think you want is... Is that accurate? If not, please correct me.”

If clients get irritated by your inelegant questioning, then their resistance is more about *your style or lack of skills*. By all means, do not make it worse by jumping into name-calling. Do not say that they are a mismatcher. Maybe they are; maybe they are not. Sometimes a person mismatches

because what you are offering them does not fit for them! In that case, their mismatching is an expression of their strength. Again, this is not a case of challenging. It is a case of the coach's incompetence.

### **Real Challenging Encourages and Inspires**

The purpose of challenge in all of its many dimensions is to invite and encourage someone to step up and be more. It is to inspire a person to exert the necessary effort to turn his or her dreams into reality. A challenge may hold a person accountable for what he has promised. So challenge. Believe in the incredible potentials within your client and invite them to step up to become all that she can become. That's real and authentic challenging. If your client becomes frustrated or irritated— check out your style, your level of rapport, your approach, etc. Also check out that you are not pushing too hard. If you push too hard or fast, your client may become overwhelmed and enter the anxiety zone rather than the flow zone.

From: L. Michael Hall  
2017 Morpheus #37  
August 23, 2017

## COACHING PEOPLE WHO ARE RUNNING FROM THEMSELVES

What could sound more ridiculous than trying to run away from yourself? How silly is that! I bet you can't get very far! What could sound more futile, non-sensical, and a self-defeating objective? Yet how many people live their lives attempting that very thing? What would you guess? Millions? Billions? And you probably have or will meet some of them as your coaching clients. A scary thought? What will you do? How do you coach *that*?

And why? Why would a person want to get away from oneself? The problem is that they can't shut off the noise in their heads. The problem is that they do not like themselves, they do not like their thoughts or emotions about themselves, they do not like their memories of themselves in the past or their anticipations of themselves in the future. So instead of dealing with whatever is causing all of these distressful symptoms, they live their lives in such a way as to announce to anyone listening that they are trying to get away from themselves.

And how exactly are they doing that? *They are focusing on their outside life to the exclusion of their inside life.* They are doing what we call living *outside-in* rather than *inside-out*. They are busy, busy, busy and they cannot stand a moment of silence of just being with themselves. They are driven by their technology—whether it is their smart phone, car, computer, television, etc. They are drugging, legally and illegally, they suffer addictions from not only chemicals but shopping, gambling, and anything else that takes the focus on of oneself.

I got thinking about all of this recently when I came across a quote from Mark Leary, which came from in his book, *The Curse of the Self*:

“The self is not an unmitigated blessing ... It is single-handedly responsible for many, if not most of the problems that human beings face as individuals and as a species ... [and] conjures up a great deal of personal suffering in the form of depression, anxiety, anger, jealousy, and other negative emotions.”

I found this in the book, *Stealing Fire* by Steven Kotler and Jamie Wheal in a section where they talk about the need that so many people have of “shutting off the self”—that is, get away from their ego, get away from the noise and judgments on the inside. Humorously they describe the internal dialogue as—

“our inner Woody Allen, that nagging, defeatist, always-on voice in our heads. Your too fat. Too skinny. Too smart to be working this job. Too scared to do anything about it. A relentless drumbeat that rings in our ears.”

For them, the solution is to get into an altered state of consciousness which thereby alters this internal nagging. This is why so many people are seeking out every new-age type of meditation or new solution to the universe. Again, quoting Leary:

“Without all the badgering, we get a real sense of people. This peacefulness may result from the fact that without self-talk to stir up negative emotions, the mystical experience is free of tension.”

But the problem is *not* the self-talk. The problem is *the content messages of the self-talk*— the stupid and irrational things that people are *saying* to themselves. What they need is *high quality self-talk!* Nor is the problem the ego. What we call “the ego” is just you. That’s not the problem. Freud designated the ego as your reality-orientation. And that’s not the problem in itself— what could be the problem is an ego-orientation that is messed up.

Coaching someone who is running away from him or herself can be challenging. The first challenge is helping them understand that their symptoms that they are suffering created about themselves— to the meanings, understandings, beliefs, conclusions, etc. that they have drawn. And from those maps they cannot run away. It doesn’t work that way. Those maps— those frames— is the problem.

And if *the frame is the problem, the frame is what has to change*. That brings up the next challenge for you as a Meta-Coach. If it is the noise inside and their misunderstanding of how their thinking has created a problem that the same kind of thinking cannot solve— then the way *out* is *into* the noise and misunderstandings. They will get *through* and *out* of the situation as they *embrace it* to understand the thinking and framing that has created the problem. Then by *stepping above and beyond* the old frames, they can set some new frames.

Now to get them to go there you have to be empathetic, understanding, firm, challenging, loving, and persistent. Yes, you will use the meta-stating self pattern. Yes, you will help them re-access their inner powers. Yes, you will facilitate them discovering the map is not the territory. Yes, you will have to keep awakening them to the possibility of life beyond the need to escape themselves. All of that is true.

Yet mostly you have to know in yourself and firmly believe that their problem is not them and that what they are running away from isn’t the real problem. You have to hold that frame without arguing with them *and* seeing their potentials even when they cannot. That is your ultimate challenge. Are you up for it?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #38**  
**August 30, 2017**

## **IF YOU DON'T PRACTICE, YOU WON'T DEVELOP**

Traveling around as I do, I am now constantly meeting “P” people— Meta-Coaches who are still *provisional* in terms of their status regarding the *coaching competencies*. Sometimes this becomes the very first thing that comes up in the conversation, “I haven’t completed the competencies yet.” “I still have to reach 2.5.” When that’s the conversation, my next question is, “How long?” Sometimes it is just a few months, sometimes more than a year. For me that’s really sad and so unnecessary.

After that my next questions are these:

- “How much are you practicing?”
- Are you doing any *deliberate practice* to keep your coaching skills sharp and up-to-date?
- Are you regularly participating in a MCF chapter?
- Are you receiving feedback from another Meta-Coach?
- Are you video-recording your sessions and giving yourself feedback?

Why this emphasis on practice and the feedback process? Because *if you are committed to yourself and to reaching competency level, after APMC it should take at most eight weeks*. I don’t know anyone that I’ve met in Coaching Mastery (Module III) that would require more than eight weeks to reach the competency level— *if* the person practices daily. But that’s the problem with most people— there is the lack of practice. That’s when you are dancing with a disastrous partner— because when you do not practice a highly refined skill (like any and all of the coaching skills), your skill level will deteriorate. And with that deterioration, you will be even further behind.

That’s what happened to a Meta-Coach that I talked to recently. He had gotten very close to the 2.5 level, just two or three a tenths-of-a-point away from reaching competency level. Then he put off getting to the MCF chapter’s practices, then he didn’t set up plans for practicing, so the next time he was assessed, he was below the 2.0 mark. He was shocked! “What?! I was at the 2.2 and 2.3 level, how could I now be at 1.8?”

It wasn’t until I explained *the dynamics of deterioration* that he began to understand the reason he was slipping back from his previously attained level. Without constant attention, refreshment, experience, practice, etc. a skill— any skill—will deteriorate. This explains the importance of practice and especially of *deliberate practice*.

Now there is an exception. That’s when a skill has been so much over-learned that it drops into your unconscious functioning. To over-learn and over-practice to that extent you have to practice with focus and intention for a thousand hours or maybe more. You have to practice it so much

that your essentially mind-to-muscle the learning so that it is now deeply imbedded within you. In that case, like riding a bike, you will be able to maintain your skill and can easily refresh it so that you don't lose much at all.

But when you are learning the newness, and the finer distinctions, of advance skills like the core competencies of coaching— after those intense eight-days, you need to be practicing one to four hours everyday for the next four or five weeks. Do that and you will reach the competency level and you will be insuring that the skills will be sustainable.

The next challenge will be keeping the sharpness of the skill, that is, keeping the refined distinction that you learned. What then keeps them focused and sharp is regular feedback from time to time. That's what you can get at the MCF chapters and as you both receive and give feedback, as you learn the benchmarks, you will increasingly be able to recognize when you are doing it right and when you are not.

Do you want to develop? Now you know how. And knowing the *how*, you are at choice point: Will you or will you not? I hope that you will make the choice for developing and becoming a highly competent Meta-Coach!



**FROM: Mariani Ng**  
**Sept 4, 2017**  
**Comment on Morpheus #38**

## **REFLECTIONS ON THE POST: IF YOU DON'T PRACTICE, YOU WON'T DEVELOP**

I fully agree about it. It is not only about score 2.5 to be reached, also about how we can do coaching fluently and flow. Both are from practice, practice and practice. Where? MCF.

MCF is a non-profit organization to support our learning experiences and encouragement within each other. For me, it is not an ordinary forum to just discuss and networking. In MCF Indonesia, we have several programs: **MCCafe (Meta Coach Café):**

- MCF gathering after office hours, once a month for 2.5 hours.
- We have program director to organise this, who has set agenda for 12 months in a year.
- The objectives are knowledge refreshment, Meta Coaching Systems in life / family / professional's application and also coaching practices.
- Every gathering has one speaker from MCF members who wants to share their expertise (strength), or sometimes also who wants to strengthen specific area (weakness). We learn together here, give feedback and share experience without any boundaries. We are one big family to grow together.
- Beside this, we also have MCF chapters' gathering based on area. They meet and greet, then practice coaching with fun and joy.

### **Probono Coaching**

- Coaching to 5-10 clients, probono. Sometimes 1 coach did 1 session, sometimes more than 1 session. All on the same day. Usually sponsored by MCF members who has community or supported MCF members to introduce coaching to their clients with MCF as credential.
- The objectives are to introduce MCF to society and also learning experience for Meta Coaches. How this can be a learning forum for us? Because one Meta Coach will act as coordinator to do debrief after session(s), and coaches get the lesson learned about what work/do and what not work/don't along the session(s). For both coordinator and coaches, they can learn from each own roles. Currently we have several coordinators to do the debrief as part of grooming next leaders in MCF. Here, my objective is that everyone can be the coordinator so have the experience to lead the group and strengthen their knowledge of Meta Coaching Systems. Our future leaders in MCF :-)
- We noted down all the probono coaching hours of each Meta Coaches who participate in this program, and will useful as credential to further collaboration professionally.

### **MCF Conference**

- Conference about Neuro-Semantics and Meta Coaching Systems, one day (12 hours), every 2 years. This year will be at Oct. 28, 2017.

- The objectives are to introduce MCF to society, and also introduce Meta Coaches as speakers. The speakers in conference are not necessary famous, they are those who are passionate to share and give value added to society as MCF Members. It is always around Indonesia's Youth National Day, as reminder for us to be part of national building. This is designed 'from us (MCF Indonesia), by us (MCF Indonesia) and for us (our country, Indonesia).
- This event organised by MCF Members, no other external event organiser. Every conference has different director, in collaboration with all MCF Members to make it happened. They do meetings many times in between their professional 'busy'-ness, but they still keep busy and arrange it professionally. Of course we also have dynamics in all the arrangement, but again, always a learning experience to collaborate and make it better from mistake we did.

### **PRACTICES MAKE PERFECT**

MCF is a forum to learn and sharpening our competencies, included our knowledge, skills and also attitudes (as a team and leader). Where can we find safe forum to learn and get benchmarked beside MCF. I am grateful for our collaboration here, and wish can be more fruitful in the future. I do hope this also happen in another countries. Come and share your experience so we can learn from each country worldwide.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #39**  
**September 6, 2017**

## **RESULTS THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS**

If you have tried to get into an organization and they keep asking you about the ROI and about how your work will the bottom-line (they mean higher profits) and they want “proof” that investing in training or coaching will have an immediate upshot in quarterly returns, then you know how short-sighted are so many people in management roles. This very line of thinking and questioning reveals that they have not yet come into the 21<sup>st</sup> century or understand the true “capital” in businesses today. Consequently, you have a lot of work to do to bring them up to speed and deal with two issues— their short-sightedness and their misunderstanding of capital.

### ***The Issue of being Short-Sighted***

The first problem is that of being short-sighted. So many managers can't see beyond this quarter. They therefore measure everything in terms of a 10 to 12 week cycle. If something doesn't produce results in that time period, kick it out and introduce the next “flavor of the month” fad. Focusing on this short period may work for day traders, it is terrible for anyone working with a system— and especially the human system. Expecting profits to shoot up in a three-month period from introducing training, consulting, coaching or some combination is unrealistic at best and almost inevitably doomed to fail. This is why the success rate of innovations is very high, sometimes as high as 70 percent.

With people, things take time. Managers should know this, but a great many either don't know it or don't take it into consideration. Some want to “push a button” and immediately see the desired response. And the result? Impatience, low tolerance, failure to understand the need for repeated communications over time, refusal or inability to thoroughly explain things, etc. and the result of that result? Employees feel more pressure to perform, distrusted by being kept in the dark, and disengaged from not having a voice or at least being heard. And the next consequential result: many of the best talented people leaving, employees dissatisfaction and disengagement, increase of people taking sick days, lower productivity, lower profits.

### ***The Issue of Capital***

A big change from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century is that capital is no longer the buildings, machines, money, etc. That used to be a companies prized “capital.” So organizations richly invested in it. But all of that has now changed. After moving from the industrial age and the information age, we are moving into the service and experience age so that now what really counts is human intelligence, human creativity, human innovations, services, etc. One of the things that this means is that everyday at five or six o'clock *the capital walks out of the building.*

Question: Will the capital return and re-enter the building the next work day? Well, that all depends. How are they treated? Are their talents, skills, intelligence, relationships, enjoyment,

commitment, engagement, etc. cared about and nurtured? Are they as persons cared about and treated with respect?

Because “business” is done *with people* and *through people*, the quality of a company’s people is their richest resource. This is the organization’s true capital. Yet many managers and executive leaders do not seem to have an inkling of an idea about this. They seem oblivious to the fact that results are created *through* people and therefore through *relationships*. And given that, a central key to any business and to the success of any business is via strong healthy trustful relationships. That’s what Stephen Covey Jr. meant in his book, *Business at the Speed of Trust*. We can only develop the business and get results when we trust each other. That’s about relationships.

*Results through relationships*— explains why the great cutting-edge companies who are leaders in their industries are also and simultaneously companies who are developing a “coaching culture” within them and putting a premium on the combination of training-and-coaching. Those still caught up in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are still asking for proof, guarantees, and an over-simplistic understanding of how financial results (i.e., profits) could come through relationships.

An over-simplistic answer to this over-simplistic question: because the financial profits of any company come through *what people conceive, invent, produce, deliver, and service*. Ultimately it is much more about people than the products. That’s why we have today the fascinating fact that there are many, many competitive companies who can produce a highly competitive product or even service and yet they are failing as a company. Often they go bankrupt. Why? The difference? The successful company as a culture that engages their people and the spirit of their people.

The best results — financially, talent retention, engagement, productivity, etc.— arise in companies where the leaders understand that *people have to come first* if we want outstanding profits. Here is a paradox about business and as a *paradox*, it means that it seems contradictory or counter-intuitive at first glance. Only those with a deeper perspective get it. To go for great results, put people first. If you put great results first, people feel compromised and you don’t get the great results.

Now you know where your consulting has to go to get through to those hold-overs from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Good coaching and consulting!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #40**  
**September 13, 2017**

## **COACHING: PERSUADING PERSUADERS**

One of the newest trainings in Neuro-Semantics is the one that came out of the book, *Inside-Out Persuasion: Unleashing Your Authentic Powers of Persuasion* (2017). I conducted the very first training in Hong Kong last week. I started with the title of the book and focused on authenticity, but in preparing for the training, I changed the name and gave it a new title— *Persuasively Impactful Conversations*.

One of the wonderful insights that came out of this research and training that immediately applies to coaching is this strange and paradoxical fact: When someone hires you to coach them, your client is asking you to *influence and persuade* them in such a way that they have more resources, capacity, and skill in *influencing and persuading themselves*. Consider that. They want more self-persuasion so that they can get themselves to do what they want to do, to achieve the goals that they have set.

Yet this is almost never actually said. I have never had a client say that to me or have heard it from other coaches, “I want you to coach me or persuade me so that I can persuade myself.” And yet that is precisely what they want although they may not even know it. Clients come to coaching due to dreams unfulfilled and objectives that they don’t know how to reach or that they block themselves from reaching. Clients come to coaching wanting to step up to their next level of development and to take on an exciting challenge that will make them more fully themselves and yet not sure about what that is or how to do that.

Next time you get a new client, you might want to consider the person’s requests in terms of *how persuaded* is the person right now and/or how much more persuaded (convinced) does the person want to be or need to be? Consider in your own mind, What does the person want to be persuaded about? What does the person need in order to persuade herself about it? When you do, you will actually be uncovering some of the implicit wants and/or needs of your client and that may help you to get to “the heart of the matter” more quickly.

Viewing your client’s requests and situation through the lens of persuasion looks at the knowing—doing gap in a fresh way. Your client knows things that he does not do.

- And if he wants to *do* those things and make them real in his life, then what’s stopping him?
- How is he interfering with the process? Or sabotaging the process?
- Does the person need more knowledge about the *how-to of the process*?
- Does the person need more convincing that it is the right thing to do (e.g., the decision process)?
- Does the person need to eliminate some limiting beliefs or decisions or memories to get free from those restraining ideas?

- Does the person need new understanding and/or skills in risk-management (if the action seems to her risky)?

Any of these things, and others, could be preventing the person from *doing, acting, engaging, and performing* what he or she knows and wants. Viewing the situation through the lens of self-persuasion gives you a new and additional way to address things. Now you can ask these kinds of questions:

- If that's your dream or goal, what *persuasion* do you want or need so that you can influence yourself in just the right way to take the required actions?
- How would you best like to *influence* your own thinking, feeling, deciding, and acting?
- Do you *persuade* yourself in ways that make it easy for you to take on an exciting challenge that fits your values and make it happen?
- When you listen to your own internal dialogue, is it the best for effectively and positively *influencing* yourself?
- Would you like to update and even upgrade your own self-persuasion skills so that you make it easier on yourself?

Nor is this just for your clients, how about yourself? That's another big learning and insight that I got from the research on persuasion: My effective persuasion skills begins with me. The more effective I am at influencing and persuading myself about my challenges, the more effective I'll be with others. To the extent that I struggle in positively influencing myself, to that extent I'll struggle when attempting to influence others.

Persuasion— coaching is one of the ultimate influence professions. People hire you for it. And you succeed as a Professional Meta-Coach by your ability to influence and persuade people to buy coaching as a means to their self-actualization.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #41**  
**September 20, 2017**

## **META-COACHING**

### **Ready for University Support**

After many years of development, the Neuro-Semantic Coaching project that I began in 2000 is now fully ready to become a University Course. Back at the turn of the century I was invited to create a Coaching Program based on Neuro-Semantic NLP. Karen Corban, the promoter was only thinking about a course to run to add to the lists of courses I was running in Sydney. I was thinking about much more. Having interviewed Dr. Dan Bagley in 1997 who introduced me to many aspects of Executive Coaching, I was thinking about modeling the best Coaches I could find and doing for Coaching what the founders of NLP originally did.

That's when I interviewed and contacted Graham Richardson, Cheryl Gilroy, and Michelle Duval and after the initial interviews, modeled *what* they did in coaching and *how* they had become highly effective coaches. Later when I was ready to put the program together, I invited all three to the first Meta-Coach Certification Training in Sydney (2002) and had them co-train it with me. That mostly consisted of interviewing them and turning them loose from time to time to demonstrate their coaching styles.

Then over the years, **the Meta-Coaching System** has grown and developed so that we now have many programs within the system:

- Modules I and II — the foundation of *the coaching conversation* and the core coaching competencies in the NLP and Meta-States Model.
- Module III, APMC — the coaching boot camp that introduces six more models, benchmarks actual coaching skills, and begins to integrate them for the practice of coaching.
- Modules IV and V, PPMC and MPMC— the advance trainings in coaching that focus on framing, pattern detection, recognizing the coaching moment, tasking, etc.
- Group & Team Coaching Module, GTMC — focusing exclusively on working with groups, managing the group dynamics for developing effective work groups and teams.
- Executive Coaching Module — focusing exclusively on those coaching people in executive positions and coaching within organizations for leadership development.
- Transformational Coaching Module — focusing on the heart of Coaching as change and transformation, using the Axes of Change Model.
- Self-Actualization Module — now including 7 modules designed to facilitate the self-actualization of clients by unleashing vitality, potentials, creativity and innovation, leadership, productivity, authenticity, and persuasion.

My objective many years ago was to not only design the program, identify or create the models to guide the coaching process, but also to integrate the models so that a well-trained Meta-Coach

could answer the systematic question: *How do you know what to do, when to do it, with whom to do it, how to pull off what you are doing, and why are you doing it.*

The reason? To make Coaching systematic thereby giving a well trained Coach the ability to know precisely what he is doing and why. In this way, the Coach would be able to work effectively with her clients enabling them to achieve their outcomes. This would give the Coach a solid confidence in this profession. Once this was achieved, I wanted to get all of the content information of the Meta-Coaching System written down. Now that I've finished the 15 books in the series — along with books on Meta-Programs, Meta-States, NLP, Neuro-Semantics and Framing— *we now have the entire curriculum for a complete University Program.* So we are ready to take Meta-Coaching into a University, College, or Business School.

But which school, where, when, and how? That's what is unknown and our next adventure. Over the past years, several have recommended some Universities and I've had conversations with representatives of a few Universities. Yet previously we were not fully ready. now we are. We have learned a lot with the 3,000 who have gone through the Meta-Coaching system and we have refined and streamlined the experiential learning process. Now also we have Meta-Coach Conferences, Congresses, MCF chapters, Meta-Coach Trainers, and more.

I'm ready, we as a community are ready — so now we can ask any of you who may have connections with key persons in Universities or Business Colleges to start that conversation. Use the book, *The Meta-Coaching System*, and let's see where Meta-Coaching will find its first academic base and after that, the first graduates with a University Masters Degree in Meta-Coaching!



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #42**  
**September 27, 2017**

## **SELF-CHALLENGING**

Are you getting enough challenge in your life? What if you are not getting enough challenge by your colleagues or loved ones or at work? What then? Simple— *challenge yourself*. I was thinking about this in Hong Kong, while I was at the Hilltop Country Club doing the *Persuasion* and the *Group & Team Coach* trainings. One day I ran down the Hilltop hill and then over to the 900 stairs up to the mountain road. I noticed my watch as I began and then again upon completing it, 6 minutes and 10 seconds. “I have run those stairs faster than that! And I will again.” A few days later, I got up them in 5 minutes and 50 seconds. And before I left five minutes and 42 minutes.

Breathing more than just aerobically, but anaerobically when I got to the top, I panted for a little bit as I ran the mountain road over to the dam and then around the other side of the mountain. For some reason I was feeling proud of myself for shaving off a few seconds in climbing those stairs. That got me wondering.

“Why do I feel good about beating my old record? For that matter, why have I been challenging myself in this way? . . . What’s the point of this self-challenging, what meaning is driving me to do this? No one is here. There’s no celebration. And yet there’s a definite celebrative feeling inside.”

“Ah yes,” I then remembered. “It’s the self-actualization drive that all humans have within them!” This drive explains why there is a natural and dominate need within us all for a challenge. Yet while it seems inevitable, it can also be killed. It can be diminished, reduced, and for the most part eliminated. People dedicated to “the path of least resistance,” those who have a negative semantic reaction to ideas such as effort, work, discipline, going for gold, stepping up, being the best you that you can be, etc. —the innate hunger for challenge has been all but diminished.

*Challenge makes us feel alive!* Challenge wakes us up, opens our eyes, and mobilizes resources within that we often are not even aware that we have. Challenge is what makes life *meaningful*. It is celebrative and shouts, “It’s good to be alive!” It is what every five-year-old experiences when he finally learns to tie his shoe strings, “Look mom! I tied my own shoe!”

Challenge is also a great antidote to depression. What’s wrong that so many suffer from depression, discouragement, lack of motivation, a wide range of fears, anxiety, and so on? They probably don’t have big enough, or juicy enough, or exciting enough *challenges* in their lives. They are probably trying to play things too safe, too small, and too perfect. They are probably expecting all success and no challenges. They probably have a bad relationship to experiences that they call “problems.”

Now many of these people will find their way into your coaching room. In just the past month I have had six Meta-Coaches write me asking, “What do I do with ‘depressed’ clients?” And of course, if they are truly *coaching clients*, then *challenge them!* Of course, before you do, make sure that they are coaching clients and not therapy clients.

How do you do that? Buy the classic in the field, *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy* (1980) by David D. Burns, M.D. Page 20 has the Burns Depression Inventory, a list of 25 items to help with a basic diagnosis. For decades this Cognitive Psychology approach has been the most successful approach regarding depression and anxiety. Immediately following the inventory is chapter 3, *You Feel the Way You Think*, and the list of Cognitive Distortions.

People need challenge! You do. I do. Challenge is good for the soul, it invigorates the body, it stimulates the mind, and it enables people to stretch out of their comfort zone to unleash more and more of their potential. And this lies at the very heart of coaching.

What are you challenging yourself about this week or this month? In what area do you need to challenge yourself that will stretch you out of your comfort zone? If you haven’t demonstrated the competence level of the core coaching skills— perhaps that’s a good place to begin. If you have reached competence level— perhaps challenging yourself to show it repeatedly or push it to 2.7 or 2.9 would be a good self-challenge.

Self-challenge demonstrates that you are *applying to self* and enables you to show yourself a good example of the importance of always believing there is more.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #43**  
**October 4, 2017**

## WHEN THINGS GET DIFFICULT

Things can, and do, often become *difficult*. Surely you know that and have had that experience. So let's explore that. First, what does that mean? It could mean a number of things.

- 1) It could mean that you are going to have to *put forth more effort* and energy into what you're doing if you are going to succeed. The difficulty is the effort that you have to expend and if you are already tired, demotivated, or lacking vitality, then the sense of difficulty increases. In this case, the problem that's "difficult" is your basic energy level and sense of vitality.
- 2) It could mean that you are going to have to do *some things that you do not want to do*. You have done what's easy or fun, now comes the difficult part— getting yourself to engage in those actions that you do not like doing, do not want to do, do not enjoy doing. Perhaps you feel "uncomfortable," perhaps it feels like too much of a stretch. In this case, the problem that's "difficult" is mostly your attitude.
- 3) It could mean that you are going to have to *do things that you find definitely distasteful* or even abhorrent. It's not that you don't have the energy or don't want to do it, you *hate* the very idea of doing them! In this case, the problem that's "difficult" is your semantic reaction to the activity or activities that you are required to do.

Here we have a subjective human experience, one that we are calling— *when things get difficult*. When that happens to you (or to one of your coaching clients), what do you do? How do you typically and generally respond when things get difficult? How does your client typically respond? We all have our basic *response patterns*, do you know yours? Do you like yours? Would you like to update yours and develop a more mature, more robust, more effective and productive response pattern? What about one of your clients— if that's what they want, do you know how to coach it?

When things get difficult, be sure to first find out *what kind of "difficulty"* you or the other person are experiencing. With a know-nothing frame of mind, embrace the "difficulty" and find out what the person means by that term. With the above distinctions, you now have at least three distinctions to sort out—

- 1) Lack of vital energy to expend the effort.
- 2) An attitude of *not* wanting to do something.
- 3) A semantic block of hating to do something.

Along this line, you can ask yourself some additional questions about the difficulty to gain clarity about it so that you have a sense about what to do.

- Does the person feel *helpless*? Is it the lack of power in the sense of feeling *disempowered* and not in full ownership of his powers?
- Does the person believe *hopeless*? When the person thinks about the difficulty in her future, does she feel that there's no hope— no solution?

- If the person is *hopeless*, is that an accurate description of some real constraints in life, or is that a *pessimistic* discounting way of thinking? Is this a person tortured with *perfectionism* so that he does not accept life on its own terms. Does he have a demanding inner voice that does not accept things?
- Does the person feel helpless or hopeless due to *the lack of skills and resources*? Often, these feelings are indicators that the person has simply *not* developed her resources and has *not* become skilled in handling some activity that needs to be done.
- What does the person *refer to* that is creating the sense of being powerless, helpless, a victim, and hopeless? Is the person using some past referent, especially from childhood, as his reference point?
- Does the person *know how to close the knowing—doing gap*? Often a person knows what to do, understands what to do, but does not *act*. In fact, she exasperates the problem by studying more and learning more, but not *doing*.
- Does the person know how to *change his meanings* about things? Does he know how to unload the semantic frame from its negative load, reframe it or deframe it so that he can give it the meanings that will allow him to take effective action?

### **Coaching When Things Get Difficult**

*As a Meta-Coach*, do you now have some great ideas about *how* to coach when you, or one of your clients, say that “things are difficult?” Actually, with all of the Neuro-Semantic models and patterns that we have in Meta-Coaching System, you have lots of things that you can do. But don’t just jump in without first engaging in the exploration phase to create *clarity* about the kind and quality of the “difficulty.” Do that first. Then you will have a pretty good idea of what to do.

Now can you self-coach this? Probably. And the good news is that most of the solutions are in the APG (Coaching Genius) training: the Power Zone, Acceptance, Unconditional self-esteem, etc. That’s yet another reason to refresh yourself in APG from time to time. I’d recommend that you go through APG at least five (5) times to really *get* it and also perhaps the “Psychology of APG” that we do in the Trainers’ Training course.

A final thought— You could even sell your coaching regarding this. “Are things difficult for you? Try Coaching! See the nearest Meta-Coach for a consultation!”

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #44**  
**October 11, 2017**

## **PREPARING TO FACE PERFORMANCE ANXIETY!**

My next three trainings are three ACMC trainings, back to back— Rio de Janeiro, Guangzhou China, and Sydney Australia. Yes three in a row. And the one thing I can always anticipate is that there will be a group of people at each one who are excellent at creating high levels of *performance anxiety* in themselves at the very thought of being benchmarked. Do you know what I mean? Some of you do— and some of you also have that same skill well developed. :)

Each time I face this, I think and re-think, “How can I frame things so that those so skilled in creating performance anxiety and making themselves less effective in learning and developing, and making themselves miserable along the way, so that they can try a new and different way of learning?” And because it seems to be a strong human tendency to do this, I have also had this conversation the many other trainers as well as some of the Meta-Coach trainers.

One of the things we did several years ago to take off the pressure and encourage people *not* to stress themselves out about the scoring, the dreadful 2.5(!), was to say that “the number doesn’t count, forget it, you will not be assessed until you are ready — sometime after the ACMC training.” And for a great many people that worked. Not for everybody, but for a significant number, it did. They are the ones who I hear “thank you” from and who say that without that pressure, they are able to learn with so much more freedom.

But not everyone. Here’s an analysis. In order to produce *performance anxiety* and to get really nervous about the feedback and benchmarking, you have to *not* be thinking about the learning process, the development of skill process, and you have to be narrowly focusing on *results!* Outcomes. The bottom line. And when you do that, you then ask a yes/no question of yourself: “Can I do it or not?” “Will I make it or not?” Yet what a limiting focus!

Do that and you can create a really good amount of anxiety. Do that and your outcome/results thinking will create an anxious preoccupation with a singular focus: passing or not. And not only will it make the experience painful, it will be stressful. And that stress, in turn, will undermine your learning so that you are making it much harder on yourself.

Or you could shift your frame and think of it in terms of process—in fact, *a process orientation will change all of that*. Your questions will become more open and more focused on learning, “What am I learning?” “What is this feedback telling me about how I’m doing and what I need to do to take my next steps?” This is really the secret of all experts. They adopt a *process orientation* and do not expect or demand that they jump tall buildings in a single leap. They look

at things in terms of steps and stages, as a process of learning, skill development, incremental improvement, and deliberate practice. So, would you like to join the experts?

When you set a *process orientation in your mind as your frame*— then every little bit of feedback actually becomes exciting. Every little bit of feedback is giving you critical success information. Isn't that great? You've heard the old line, "Feedback is the breakfast of champions." But what you may not have heard is *how* champions use feedback to nurture themselves, to gain the energy and resources to become champions. They do that by having learned to love feedback.

The *outcome/results oriented people* are not like that. They *judge* themselves, their experience, their learning, others, the context, etc. by one determination — success or failure. So no wonder they do not like feedback! No wonder feedback itself feels threatening and dangerous. No wonder feedback evokes performance anxiety. And since feedback is the first step for determining skill level (assessment), no wonder *results oriented people get so uptight*.

It is not like that for *process oriented people*. Every step is just exactly that— a step closer! It is a success, it is good news. It is even good news is the news is about what went wrong and did not work. That is good news because they can learn from that. And the whole point is *learning*.

So I'm off to Rio and to meet a whole new group of up-and-coming Meta-Coaches and I will put money down on the fact that there will be several who are excellent at getting themselves into a dither about the feedback. So this is what I will emphasize. And this is also the Catch-22 problem. Being so terrified about "not succeeding" each and every time, they will only half-hear my words. That's why they will have to hear them repeatedly, over and over. And I will do that. I will do that because we need more and more *process oriented people who have fallen in love with feedback and therefore on their way to expertise*. May this attitude come to fully characterize the Meta-Coach community worldwide!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #45**  
**Reprinted from 2015 #16**  
**October 18, 2017**

## **HOW TO WRITE A CLIENT CASE STUDY**

There are several prerequisites for reaching and completing the PCMC credentials. There are the number of paid professional coaching hours, there are the hours of buddy coaching from another Meta-Coaching, and the hours for Self-Coaching. The paperwork for these is minimal, just recording the fact that you completed these. Conversely, the paperwork for the Client Case Study involves more. The ACMC Manual describes in as follows:

*Create a document of a case study of 5 to 7 pages (not more than 7 pages) of a client who you coached within a formal Coaching Program for seven or more sessions. Use the following as a checklist for what the content of the document must contain.*

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

### **The Art of Writing a Case Study**

Writing a Case Study gives you a chance to step back and take a meta-position to what you experienced with your client and gives you a chance to think through the processes you used and the effectiveness of such. Because of this the thinking and writing process itself provides an excellent way to identify the structures that are there, or were there(!), and the structures that you can tune your eyes and ears for in the next sessions. But what do you write? Here's an answer.

1) *Outcomes.* My client at first said that his outcome was to achieve X. Whatever X is, it will almost always (99% of the time) be vague, general, and frequently ill-formed. So in the first session as you use the 18 Well-Formed Outcome questions along with the checking, clarity, testing, and exploration questions, you will help the client re-formulate what he wants. So identify what that coaching for clarity results in: By the end of session one, my client said he

wanted Y. If this shifts 3 or 4 times in the session, write down the succession of outcomes. Because some clients are very unclear about what they want, you could very well do the WFO questions for several sessions.

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

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

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

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

“Recognizing that my client was mid-way up the scale of being global, and also highly kinesthetic, I realized that things worked best if he would create a ritual for his patterns. So with Meta-Yes and Meta-No — having the belief written on a piece of paper and standing away from it ... and reading the disconfirmation questions, he would access a “no that is not ecological for me, not good for me” and step further away from the limiting belief. We did the opposite with the empowering belief. “How far away does the empowering belief seem to you?” He say 10 meters, so we went there and in the coaching session, I asked the confirmation questions, “Do you want that belief?” With each yes that he felt I would ask, “How much does that pull you toward that belief?” and he would move.”

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Client Case Study offers you a way to analyze your sessions, your way of operating as a Coach, and a way to give feedback to yourself. If you are using the inherent supervision processes that are built into Meta-Coaching, by reporting on some of your sessions at MCF chapter meetings, you can continue that benefit by yourself through the process of writing up Case Study Notes from time to time.

To get ready for PCMC— be writing a case study of *one of your clients constantly*. This will get you in the habit of thinking structurally. I'd also recommend to get a mentor or a buddy-coach to share your case studies with so that you constantly improve your writing. The meta-moments that you take in reflecting back on the coaching sessions will help you to detect patterns, to identify where you could have done more framing or induction, etc.

**Next year — 2018** — we are planing for PCMC in Cairo Egypt in March and Rio de Janeiro Brazil in October. So now is the time to begin getting some Case Studies done.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #46**  
**October 25, 2017**

## UNPACKING THE DEPTH

If you start from the idea that *hidden inside* of your client's statement are much *deeper references*, then you will more likely to slow the coaching conversation down and do more exploration and more quality exploration. Would you be interested in this? As far as I can tell, most coaches go far, far too fast in their coaching. They need to slow down. The client also goes far too fast. For that reason both of them miss things— critical things.

One of the sources of this idea is Transformational Grammar. Chomsky's formatting of T.G. was that into *surface statements* and *the deep structure*. The "transformations" of grammar occur from one level to the next. He used this to describe how the deep structure of experiential meaning is transferred into the statements that we make— which amount to a surface statement. To get behind it, to get inside it, to get deeper inside is to probe into the experiential meaning. In Neuro-Semantics we call this the framing structure and picture it as "meta" to the surface level statements.

This is also the design of the Meta-Model. By identify structural facets of the deep structure— the linguistic descriptions or distinctions (mind-reading, cause-effect, complex equivalence, nominalization, etc.) we can move back and forth from experiential meaning to surface statement. That is, behind or within the statement are many deeper distinctions— if only you ask.

How do we do this? In Meta-Coaching, we use the sub-skills in a given category of skill to explore and unpack the deeper levels. We use clarity checks of terms, we ask for specificity, we repeat phrases so the client can hear him or herself, we calibrate to a gesture and ask the client to bring it into conscious awareness, we repeat a word or phrase and "hold" it in the conversation and then "work it" to explore its ramifications, we ask about metaphors to find the hidden comparisons, we ask for examples to get a visual-auditory referent, we validate symptoms and back up to find their cause, and so on.

Unpacking the depth that lies behind or within words, gestures, and experiences is not easy, yet it is also not Rocket Science. It typically involves a rigorous discipline to learn how to become competent at it. Let's practice.

"I feel stuck. It's terrible, I just cannot get myself to stop procrastinating." A simple statement of three phrases and yet several semantically loaded words within that sentence: "stuck, terrible, can't." Time to unpack.

You are stuck in what? "Fear and insecurity."

Fear of what? "That I won't be able to do it."

You are afraid you won't be able to do ... what? "Success as a coach in private practice."

And how much fear are you talking about? "A lot, at a level of 8 on a zero to ten scale."

And what is the fear about? Fear that what threat or danger will occur? "That I will fail."

Fail means what? “Not succeeding.” (Now going in circles.)

What is the worse thing that will happen if you fail and not succeed? “Waste money, look like a fool, hate myself.”

How much money will you waste? “\$3,000!”

What did you spend that money on? “Training and some promotional materials.”

How much on the training? “\$2,500.” How much on the promotions? “\$500.”

How are you using the word “wasted?” You got nothing out of the training? “Okay, then \$500.”

Who looks upon you as a fool for investing \$500 to pursue your passion? “Well, I guess me.” You do? “Yeah.”

And you then *hate* yourself? “Yeah.”

And you do that to achieve what outcome? “Yeah, I know, just self-pity.”

So how stuck are you now in this fear and insecurity? “Well it seems kind of silly now, I guess 4 or 5.”

Will that stop you from trying again, persisting, learning, adjusting?

The very act of exploring and unpacking the depth of meanings inside of words and gestures is often (and usually) an intervention in and of itself. Isn't that amazing?! You are *just* doing information gathering and the way you do that enables you to simultaneously facilitate the remaking of meaning.

How can you learn to do this? Step into the state of mind of being a detective, assume you do not know what the other person is referring to and ask lots of dumb questions. That will take you a long way. After that, be playful. Play around with what is said to lighten things up. Someone says “I want to be present when I coach, but I can't; my mind just goes away.”

Oh, your mind *just goes away*. Pause. Then repeat. *Your mind goes away*. Pause.

And where does it go? Did you send it there? Do you want it to go there? You don't? It is being a *naughty* mind? Or is it being attracted to something more interesting? Is it bored?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #47**  
**Nov. 2, 2017**

## **SO YOU'RE GOING TO GATHER INFORMATION**

If you want to coach effectively, you always begin with *information gathering*. If you don't, then you are more than likely to end up coaching to your agenda, not your client's. In coaching, this is fundamental. Unlike the other helping professions, a coach is *not* an expert regarding what a client needs or wants, the client is. So you have to ask.

That brings us to the next question, *how?* How do you do intelligence gathering with your client so that both of you are crystal clear about the subject of the coaching? For the Meta-Coach, the answer is easy and obvious— *the well-formed outcome questions*. Take the 18 WFO questions and ask them for the purpose of seeking to understand what your client really wants. This is what we begin teaching in Module I (Coaching Essentials) and it is what we try to drive home in Module III (Coaching Mastery). Why? Because that pattern of questions is very, very powerful and, simultaneously, does many other things.

Like what? When you take the well-formed outcome questions and ask them sequentially and do so in an effective way, you engage in the first two kinds of Coaching Conversations— Clarity and Decision. You also create a *Coaching Contract* with your client. At the same time you are beginning to challenge your client to get real, to move beyond the surface desires and fears and to get to what the person *really* wants. This facilitates your client to *get real*. Ah yes, you are doing a lot when you ask those questions.

This brings us to yet another question. *How does a Coach effectively use the questions to gather the right amount of information?* This came up last week in Brazil. After working with the team for two days and then with many of the participants, when I said that I typically get through the 18-questions in 7 to 10 minutes and when I'm really "on," in 4 or 5 minutes, I was challenged to demonstrate. Luckily for me I have done that so many times, it is really no problem. So on day 3 with three different participants chosen by whoever raised their hands, that's what I did.

Think about asking and working the 18-questions as a continuum (see Figure below). On the far left is asking the questions in a piecemeal way, asking one, then forgetting to follow up on the next questions because you are trying to "fix" the client or sidetracked into something the client said. Here your questioning is inadequate because you are jumping too quickly into action, wanting to do something.

On the far right is the other extreme— excessive questioning, here a person spends ten minutes or more on question one ("What do you want?"), another ten on question two ("What will it look or sound like?") and then fifteen on question three ("Why is that important to you?").

## Asking Questions Continuum

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Inadequate Questioning  
Jumping into Action  
Wanting to Fix

Just the Right Amount

Excessive Questioning  
Uncertain & wanting more  
and more certainty

If your questioning is inadequate, you are not getting sufficient information and really do not know what your client wants. So you are acting hastily on minimal information. If your questioning is too excessive, you can easily overwhelm yourself with too much information and not know what to work on. It is as if you have resigned from acting and have induced a strong state of inaction and more and more talk.

The Goldilocks position of not too little and not too much, but *just the right amount of questioning* is the middle position. My recommendation is this:

Use the well-formed questions as a checklist. Go through all of them and even check off the ones that are irrelevant to the subject.

How? If your client says that he wants the subject now, as-soon-as-possible, by the end of the session (question 4) and that seems possible (i.e., a belief change), then in all likelihood he will not need a plan or to monitor the plan. When just say so:

“Given that you want to change a belief and you know the belief you want to change, I’m going to guess you don’t need a plan or to monitor it, you just need to do it. Is that right?”

In that way, you check off questions 12 and 13. If the subject does not seem to you possible in the session, just check. Ask the ecology question (16), “Is it realistic to achieve that in the next sixty minutes?” If yes, ask how is it possible in the person’s thinking (it might be your client’s misdiagnosis). If no, then ask for a new date (“When do you think it is realistic that you will achieve this outcome that you want?”)

I was told by several Assist Team members that they had never before heard, learned, or realized that they could use the well-formed questions as a checklist. [And that, by the way, is why it is good to revisit ACMC repeatedly!] For them, it was a new learning. And if for you— then here’s something new to try out and experiment with. You might also check videos of myself doing sessions and see that I’ve been using them as a checklist for years.

When you use the 18 well-formed outcome questions as a checklist, you can run through them fairly quickly because you are not attempting to intervene, you are attempting to establish an outcome and contract for the session. While you do so, don’t forget the refining questions. Use them to refine the information you are gathering.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #48**  
**Nov. 8, 2017**

## **YOU HAVE TO GO META TO META-COACH**

In recent years we have introduced several coaching tools to enable you, as a Meta-Coach, to move above the content of the coaching so that you can coach to the structure of how a person is operating. What you learned in APG to prepare you for this was the structure of meta-questions, the diamond of consciousness (or experience), and the process of reflexivity. Then, using the Matrix Model, you discovered that all of the Matrix questions are meta-questions except state. So they also allow you to “go meta” and access the structure of your client’s experience.

To the end of expanding this, a few years ago we introduced *the Landscape Template*. Landscape gives you the ability to identify *where* your client is in terms of four spaces— today (now), tomorrow (then), the path to tomorrow, and the meta-lands above those spaces. Then by moving up above that timeline, you can ask meta-questions. We began emphasizing the five meta-questions in the WFO questions by which you create your coaching contract. We then introduced the meta-question drill which we typically do on Day 5 or 6 of ACMC.

Why all of this emphasis? To make the coaching conversation *deep*. So that you can *go in and get real* with your client and *get to the heart of things*— your client’s meanings. If you don’t do this, then the coaching will be superficial, just on the surface of things, and will lack the power to really make a difference. Do you want to make a difference? Then you have to learn how to “go meta” so you can rise above the content and begin to address the structure of the experience. Do that and you can engage in a robust *meta*-coaching conversation.

Most coaches do not do this and sadly, a great many Meta-Coaches still do not seem to know how to do it. They get caught up in the activities of the primary states of Now and Then and the Pathway. They seem to be easily seduced by content, especially graphic details or some emotionally loaded word, or by something that cues them about how they could jump in and “fix” something.

To *think* and to then *hold a coaching conversation* that goes deep into the client’s experience, you have to shift from thinking content to thinking structure. To do that you can use many of the model that you learn in Meta-Coaching and Neuro-Semantics.

- You could use *The Meta-Programs Model* to do that. Ask yourself, What kind of thinking is my client doing? Familiarize yourself with the list of 60 meta-programs and maybe even use the list as notes that you look at and check from time to time in the coaching session.
- You could use *The List of Cognitive Distortions*. That’s another list of thinking patterns— only this list is of thinking distortions that will create problems and misery.

- You could use *The Matrix Model*. You could take a moment to consider where in the Matrix the person is, and then inquire about the person's understandings, beliefs, decisions, etc. about being in that place.
- You could use *The Meta-Model of Language*. I've been surprised how few people who arrive at Module III (Coaching Mastery) do not know the basic 12 Meta-Model distinctions and no one seems to know the advanced level of 22 distinctions (they are in the book, *Communication Magic*).
- You could use *the list of sub-modality or cinematic features*. These features of the person's internal movies actually serve as meaning frames and with them you can do a lot of change work at the structural level.
- You could use the *Meaning and Performance Axes*. This will allow you to take a look at your client's relationship between knowing and doing. How well does your client integrate and synergize meaning with performance?

In these and many other ways you can step out of the content and look at the structure regarding *how* your client is creating his or her experience. Many other ways? Yes, *The Axes of Change*, *The Crucible*, *the Neuro-Semantic Precision Template*, *the Well-Formed Outcome pattern*, *The Trust Spiral*, etc.

A coaching session that does not get to what's behind the emotions and behaviors will only be dealing with the surface factors. The coach and the client will not know what's driving, informing, and governing those symptomatic elements of the experience. They might even think that the emotions and behaviors are central, rather than symptomatic. And that will lead to the tendency to think that the outside world of triggers are the cause of the experience.

A Meta-Coaching session by its very definition gets to the true cause of a person's responses, emotions, and behaviors—to the person's meanings. The Meta-Coach asks meta-questions to get behind the obvious surface factors to the driving and governing forces. And that's what makes Meta-Coaching more thorough, more systematic, more robust, and more effective.



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #49**  
**Nov. 15, 2017**

## **UPDATING THE GOAL STRIVING META-PROGRAM**

How do you go about setting goals and then striving to make them real? That question is the elicitation question for the *Goal Striving* Meta-Program number 40. It is obviously an important meta-program for coaches. You will want to know *how* any given client *sets and strives* to complete goals.

In 1997 I conceptualized this one meta-program as a continuum between skeptic and perfectionism with optimization in the middle. Optimizing is the ideal way. People who conatively filter their choice about *how to go after and strive for a goal* by optimizing are more successful in goal setting and achieving. Here’s the description that I wrote in the 2009 edition of *Figuring Out People*.

“This meta-program relates to how we think, feel, perceive, and make choices about goals. Do we like setting goals and striving to achieve them or do we find goal-setting unpleasant, even painful? People differ in how they perceive and choose to go after goals. Some people relate to goal-setting in a perfectionist style (it’s never good enough), others do so in an optimizational style (doing the best they can and letting it go at that), still others avoid the whole subject as they try to step aside from it and choose to not set goals (goals are worthless, striving after them is futile and frustrating).”

This is the continuum that is in the book:

Skeptic Hate goal setting	Optimizing Does best one can and leaves it at that	Perfectionism Never good enough could have done more and better
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In presenting this meta-program I always call attention to how the polar opposites of goal skepticism and perfectionistic goal striving are alike. Typically after a person strives and strives perfectionistically, he begins to feel that he is not ready and that he needs yet another training or coaching session, and procrastinating. Eventually the person burns-out and flips over to the skeptic position. “I don’t believe in goals anymore. I tried. It doesn’t work.” Fearful of failing, they protect themselves first by putting things off and off and off, and later by becoming skeptical and giving up striving after a goal.

Last week in Guangzhou China, I listened as Mandy and Wing presented this meta-program. As I listened to them and thinking about this, I asked myself some questions. “How are the perfectionist and the skeptic views similar?” “What unites both making them aspects of the same thing?” Immediately I recognized the answer—*fear*. Actually, both the perfectionist and the skeptic are *afraid* of goal setting and striving.

Given that fear I then talked with Mandy Chai and suggested that we could come up with a new continuum to reflect that. She allowed me to talk it out and offered some ideas. That led me to create the following diagram. In this new continuum the contrast is between fearing on one end and embracing goal striving on the other.

Updated continuum:

<p><b>Fearful of Goal Striving</b>          Fear of Failure, Imperfection, Flaws          Avoid Risk, Possibility of a Mistake  <b>Perfectionist — Skeptic</b>          Never good enough, “could have done better!”          States: Stress, Worry, Fear</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Embracing Goal Striving</b>          Accept Fallibility          Use Mistakes for Learning and Correction  <b>Optimizer</b>          Does best one can and leaves it at that.          States: Excitement, Courage, Learning</p>
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When there is a basic fear of goal setting— fear of not making it, fear of one’s efforts not being good enough, of not being superior to others, of being embarrassed, and dozens of other fears— then there will not be a wholehearted embracing of the striving. Such persons may very well engage in a lot of talk about goals, and especially focus on the end product, and they will probably put the bar really high and as they do— that high goal will actually block them from giving themselves to the goal. And if they do actually take action, it will always be judged inadequate, “it could have been better,” etc.

What a contrast by those who optimize their goal striving! By moving forward with their goals, they operate more pragmatically in that they do the best they can and they leave it at that. Usually they set smaller goals, and goals in small steps, so that they can get themselves going and enjoy small steps of success along the way. They also focus on *the process* rather than the end product. As a result, they find that most of the fun is moving toward the goal. The optimizing way means setting process goals as well as end-goals. So along the way they set experience goals, enjoyment goals, learning goals, and relationship goals. No wonder things progress much better by optimizing. Paradoxically, it also produces higher levels of excellence precisely because they are not aiming to do it perfectly or to avoid all mistakes. They consider mistakes opportunities for learning and shaping their responses.

One of these days I’ll be putting this into the next edition of *Figuring Out People*. Until then, this offers you another way to recognize and work with different styles of goal setting and striving in your clients. Oh, by the way, what’s your style?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #50**  
**Nov. 22, 2017**

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

“Are you attempting to do an intervention?” that’s what I asked. In fact, in the past year I have asked that question over and over and over during the ACMC training during the “Coaching Labs” that give the new coaches-in-training their first opportunities to coach under supervision. Sometimes the person returns a question, “What? What do you mean?” Sometimes they give me a sheepish smile, half a nod, and a soft, “yeah.”

Now if you would ever like to know a clear and unmistakable sign of a rooky coach, a newbie, and someone both new to the field and insecure about what they are doing— this is it. They quickly go for an intervention. In fact, the more insecure a person is the quicker they are to jump in and try to do an intervention! Amazingly, sometimes this will occur within mere minutes after the initial whistle and the words, “Let the Coaching begin.” Sometime after I first noticed this, I began observing during the coaching labs and timing how long it would take before someone would attempt an intervention. By contrast, a pro does not do that. A pro first gathers information and takes the time to listen and understand the client on his terms.

*Interventions*—it is what you do. It is also what many people expect you to do. But this can be, and often is, misused. Yet to try to intervene before you understand the situation and before you have clarified the “contract” that you have established with a client about what you’re going to do—is actually to violate their trust. Don’t do that. Take your time and listen, clarify, check understanding, establish your coaching contract. Generally, think of it in terms of 90/10. Devote 90 percent of your time to gathering information and then 10 percent to intervention.

In the 2018 ACMC *Coaching Mastery* manual, I have put in a new page titled, **Intervention**. The page starts with a definition and a warning:

An *intervention* is what you *do* with a client to a specific outcome, that is, to reach a goal or solve a problem. *Warning:* Do not attempt an Intervention until you have a contract with a client and you know specifically what she wants.

Then to set some frames about intervention, I offer the following insight that your very presence as a caring and compassion listener is an intervention itself.

*The Coaching Intervention:* Actually, you have already performed several interventions. That’s because the very process of engaging in a coaching conversation is an intervention.

- Creating and holding the space for a client intervenes with care, compassion, patience, acceptance, willingness to hear, being heard, respect, etc. Sometimes *just that* is enough to bring about generative change.
- Exploring with a personal question that get to the heart of things and that gathers high quality information is another intervention. Here you intervene by facilitating

clarity, sorting things out, framing, reframing, etc. Using the WFO questions is an intervention of focus, intentionality, direction, etc.

- Inducing the coaching states of learning, curiosity, care, focus, etc. is yet another intervention as you enable a client to experience his emotions, enter into an experience, step out of the experience, close the knowing–doing gap, etc. This facilitates the emotional intelligence of awareness, monitoring, regulating, and relating.

Introducing an intervention and doing it lies at the heart of NLP. It's what we do. But there's a problem. People new to NLP are far, far too quick to try to *do something* to someone and so the bad reputation that many have gotten from those people who seem unable to control themselves and who are always “doing NLP on people”(!).

**Basic Interventions:** By information gathering and specifying a client's outcome by using the WFO questions, *you now have a contract* (an agreed-upon outcome) *to actually do something*. With that goal as the objective, there are many things that can enable a client to achieve her outcome.

- Co-create a plan. Invite brainstorming to identify actions to take.
- Change a belief. Identify what your client wants to believe, formulate a sentence, validate it through ecology questions regarding its value.
- Weaken and remove an old belief. Identify the limiting belief by inviting a disconfirmation of its ecology.
- Change a decision. You could use the Decision Destroyer pattern, or do the Re-Decision process using the second axis of the Axes of Change model.
- Change a prohibition against an experience or activity by introducing the Permission frame.
- Change a state. Use any of the state induction patterns.
- Integrate an incongruity or internal conflict.

### **Patterns for Interventions**

*Patterns in the Matrix.* Start by identifying what part of the person's matrix is involved and check out the list of patterns for each of the dimensions of the Matrix. For example: if the Self dimension use those patterns that enhance, alter, or transform an identity.

*Think systemically.* Ask yourself, “Where is the leverage point for change in this person's system?” Have you modeled *how* the person *does* whatever it is that she does? What kinds of thinking (cognitive biases, distortions, meta-programs) dominate?

*Check stability.* If something is interfering with reaching an outcome, is it stable or not? Does it come and go or does it continue? Change stable to unstable; change unstable to stable.

You already know lots of interventions, all of the patterns you learned in Modules I and II. But before you do one, connect with your client, seek to understand your client, and use the well-formed outcome pattern to co-create a contract with your client about the interventions that you will do.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #51**  
**Nov. 29, 2017**

## WHAT HAS TO CHANGE?

To be a coach is to be a change agent. That's what you do! That is also why we spend Day 5 in *Coaching Mastery* on the Psychology of Change and that's when we introduce the Axes of Change. Within the psychology of change, we also introduce kinds of change (generative and remedial), levels of change (using Bateson's levels of learning), and models of change.

It is at that point that we then introduce the two loops of change which are inherent in the Axes of Change— *the readiness loop* which prepares a person for change by tapping into the person's motivation and commitment and then *the implementation of change* which taps into the person's creativity and integration of change. In doing this, the design is that as a Meta-Coach you learn four coaching conversations.

In the *readiness loop* you prepare a person for change by conducting two coaching conversations—motivation and decision. You also prepare for change by identifying specifically what has to change.

- *The Motivation Conversation.* It takes energy to change and so you learn how to mobilize the person's energy for aversion and attraction. When you do this well, you activate the values that inspire and the dis-values that put him off. You activate her highest intentions and propulsion away from the things that violate those highest values.
- *The Decision Conversation.* Yet feeling motivated and energized and inspired is not enough to create change, a person needs to make a commitment, a wholehearted commitment to invest in the change. The person also needs to check out the ecology of the change and thinking it through in order to make a great decision.

In the *implementation loop* you create and innovate the change. Here you have two more conversations—creation and integration. Now you face what has to change and work specifically on enabling a person to move from one frame of mind to another.

- *The Creation Conversation.* Once readied for the change, now it is a matter of using one's creativity to brainstorm how to make it happen. And given that everything is created twice, once in the mind and then in one's actions—creativity involves both developing the mental strategy and then designing the specific tasks to do to make it real.
- *The Integration Conversation.* Creativity however is not the same as innovation and so after the initial start, there has to be continuous shaping, refining, testing, and improving until the change settles down to become one's lifestyle and fully integrated.

Now while these are the *mechanisms of change*, and you have to be able to effectively facilitate these psychological mechanism, the actual key in coaching change being able to identify what has to change. And for most coaches, this is not easy to find. That's why they focus on surface behavioral and environmental changes—changing what a person does or what's in the environmental context where the person changes something.

*What has to change?* For a human being to change there has to be a new and different way of thinking, evaluating, framing, and meaning-making. That's why you, as a Meta-Coach, has an incredible advantage over coaches from every other coaching system. By your training, you know that it is *a person's mental model* that determine her experience and sense of reality. You know that what governs the structure of any experience is *the map* that the person is operating from. You know that when the map changes, the person changes, his experience changes. So that's where you go.

You go meta to the person's beliefs, understandings, decisions, permissions, prohibitions, identity, etc. You go to the meanings that are currently holding and governing the person's current experience to find out what meaning has to change. You then work with the person to see what new meaning has to be created or designed so that his emotions change, his behaviors change, his talk changes, the way he relates to others changes, his habits change, etc.

But this is not easy. In all of the ACMC trainings that I participated in this year, both those on the Assist Team and the coaches-in-training significantly struggled to identify *what has to change*. This phrase, *what has to change*, is now on the feedback form that we use on Days 5 and 6 when we focus on coaching change. *What has to change* is the essential question that governs the question of *how* a person will move from what they do not want to what they do want, from aversion to attraction, from pain to pleasure on the motivation axis. It is also the key phrase on the decision page of the pros and cons of making a commitment. In fact that's what the decision is about. What are the advantages of making that change to one's belief, decision, permission, etc.? What are the disadvantages of changing one's older meanings?

Someone wants to lose twenty pounds (10 kilos) and develop a healthy cardio-vascular fitness. To do that the person knows that he has to change his eating habits and begin jogging. Okay so what has to change? You say his behaviors. Yes, of course. And what has to change to get behavioral change? You say his emotions— how he feels about those behavioral changes. Yes, of course. And what has to change to change those emotions? His environment. Okay, perhaps. And what has to change to get that change?

Until you go *inside* and to *the heart of things*— *the person's meanings*— you do not know, and cannot know, *what has to change*. You only know the symptomatic changes— behaviors, emotions, environment. You also do not know *what's preventing the change*— the beliefs, understandings, decisions, etc. that has and continues to create the person's current situation. That's why you ask *meta-questions!*

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #52**  
**December 6, 2017**

## **META-QUESTIONING**

### **YOUR WAY TO THE HEART OF THINGS**

In the last Morpheus I mentioned that as a change agent, you have to get to *what has to change* and you do that by asking meta-questions. That's because *what has to change* is not at the primary level. It is also not one of the symptoms of change (e.g., behavior, emotions, or environment). Instead it is at a meta-level. Metaphorically it is above and behind the primary level and that identifies "the heart of the matter," namely, the person's meanings. And these meanings may show up as a belief, a decision, a permission, a memory, an identity, and so on. It shows up as some conclusion that the person has drawn and set as a frame in his mind.

This is where most coaches go wrong. This is why most coaches cannot effectively coach change. They hear that the person wants to change an emotion or a behavior — and they zoom in on that. But those are symptoms. Those are not the cause. To be an effective change agent and coach change, you have to get to the cause of the emotion and/or behavior.

Now the process of *drawing conclusions* is one of the most human of things that we do. All of our lives we have been drawing conclusions from our experiences and as we do— *we set frames. We set frames of meaning in the back of our mind.* And these frames of meaning establish the way we think, perceive, and interpret things. These frames of meaning establish our psychologies which explains each person's unique way of reasoning. These frames of meaning also set up the governing processes for how we feel and our automatic habits of thinking and responding. Pretty powerful, wouldn't you say? And pretty significant if you are a Meta-Coach and working to facilitate change.

No wonder then that, as a Meta-Coach, you will want to really, really develop your *meta-questioning skills and learn to move to the meta-level frames as quickly and efficiently as possible in order to be a highly effective change agent!*

Ah, meta-questions! The big buga-boo at ACMC for most coaches-in-training. And why? One of my suspensions is this —*most Meta-Coaches have **not** given sufficient attention to their study of Meta-States* that they learned in APG. In the APG training, you were exposed to 14 patterns and 21 meta-stating processes. But experiencing that *just once* is not enough! It is not nearly enough. You need to go over each of those 14 patterns five to ten times. Yes, 5 to 10 times!

Remember, *meta-stating* is a *different kind of thinking* than what you normally do. Normally, you try to think in a linear way as you go from A to B to C. But meta-stating is about your *self-reflexive mind* and so refers to a more systemic and non-linear way of thinking as you reflect-back-upon your previous thinking or emoting. Given that human consciousness is most uniquely

characterized by self-reflexive thinking, this is essential if you want to *get inside* and find the frames of meaning that are governing a person's experience— her emotions, responses, perceptions, etc.

To practice meta-stating, write down a list of ten (10) states and then start mixing them. Imagine bringing your joy to your anger, your anger to your sadness, your love to your joy, your playfulness to your anger, and on and on. Once you do it one level, then play with three levels, bring joy to your learning to your fear. Enter into (associate) the experiences that you thereby generate. This is a way to play with states and states-upon-states.

Now because every meta-level phenomenon is simultaneously every other meta-level phenomenon— when someone tells you about one level— *you know so much more about that person's experience*. [If this is new to you or if you are confused about this, get the book *Meta-States*, 2012, to learn about this facet of meta-states.] This means that when someone tells you a belief— by inferential listening you know something about that person's values, permissions, decisions, memories, imaginations, expectations, identity, etc. And knowing that enables you to ask additional meta-questions which will allow you to *go deeply into that person's inner matrix of frames*.

This describes how to *get to the heart of things— to the person's inner meanings and frames*. And if you're going to be a professional in the field of Coaching or as a change agent, you absolutely need to develop this skill. We do have a "Drill for Skill" in the ACMC manual for practicing meta-questions. That's a great drill that you can do with one or give other people or at a MCF practice group.

Asking meta-questions enables you to take your client up, up, and away ... from the everyday grime of the street and up into higher atmosphere where meta-phenomenon like beliefs are created. And that's where the governing factors of your experiences and mine are created and exist. To your ongoing skill in asking great questions!



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #53**  
**December 13, 2017**  
Attachment: *Drills For Skills File*

## **COACHING SKILLS WHERE YOU DON'T EXPECT THEM**

*Drills for Skills* has been the project that we have been running at ACMC for two years. As a result, we now have two dozen *drills* that you can use to learn the coaching skills and sub-skills. They are also very useful for making the MCF Chapters more exciting. While the *Drills* began as an experiment, they have turned out to achieve several things simultaneously.

One obvious objective was to give the teams a project to work on that would test their ability to work together and to learn to use the coaching skills as they make decisions and coordinating their activities. At the same time, it has given the group and team coaches the challenge of coaching and leading the teams— a challenge to their group and team coaching skills.

Yet there is more. What is more is *the ability to think in terms of how to model and coach a skill*. Consider that as a premium coaching skill. Often people in organizations, in leadership, and in unique positions want a coach to help them identify a needed skill, one that's required for them to progress and to then coach them in developing that skill. Having done the *Drills for Skills* you have the basic process for how to do that. How awesome is that?

From a coaching perspective, you begin by asking lots of questions regarding the skill. Adopt a know-nothing frame of mind about it so that you put all of your assumptions aside.

- What do you call it? What does it mean to you?
- What do you mean by using the words you have used?
- What are the component parts that are variables that play a role significant in the skill
- When you organize these variables, what is an operational definition of this skill?

Once you and your client works out an operational definition, then the question becomes how to learn it? What pieces does the person need to learn? What combinations of actions does the person need to learn? What are some creative ways that you can co-create for learning the skill? What creative ways can you co-imagine that might be fun? By the way, you could look over the *Drills* to see which one of them might be useful.

When you can do that, you can enable your clients to learn required and desired skills— skill that you may never before have thought about or experienced. And all the while you are doing that, something else is happening. As a side-benefit of identifying the sub-skills and the variables of a skill— you will begin to learn to identify those *bits and pieces* of skills. And with that expanded awareness, you will begin to see and hear them everywhere. You will begin to hear them in the

opening conversations with a client as you are gathering information ... and that will make possible Aha! moments ... moments when you realize inherent resources that the client has and may have no awareness about. Consequently, you now have additional things to *validate* in your client, thereby deepening the connection.

Now who would have thought that in the group project, *Drills for Skills*, there would be multiple coaching skills? Yet, surprisingly, it does.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2017 Morpheus #54**  
**December 20, 2017**

## **DANGERS WHEN COACHING**

*Warning: Dangers Ahead!* You ought to have that sign on the door to your coaching room. Do you know that there are *dangers* that you, as a coach, face when you engage in coaching? There are. Do you know what they are? Here's a few of the dangers that you face when you coach. These dangers previous you from being an effective coach.

### ***1) There is the danger of buying into your client's limitations.***

As you undoubtedly know, clients regularly show up in coaching due to various limitations that they experience within themselves. What makes coaching a great choice and an effective choice for change is when a client presents a limitation that he wants to face and transcend. Most typically these limitations are limiting beliefs or limiting decisions and are often coded in terms of what a person "can't" do. "Yes, I'd like to do that, but I just can't." "I'm just not the kind of person who can do that."

The danger for a coach, however, involves those limitations that the client does *not* present for transformation and those that the client may not even be aware is a limitation. So governed by hidden frames, clients will typically treat their limitations as inevitable and unquestionable factors that cannot be changed. They don't consider them as variables, they view them as deterministic facts. "I'm not a visual person so I just don't make visual images in my mind." "Growing up with an alcoholic father and constantly criticized, I'm just overly sensitive to criticism, always have been."

Buying into the frames that establish the limitation then leads clients to mis-diagnose their situation and mis-diagnose what they think would be the solution. Then, if you as a coach do not catch it, you will be coaching to a false problem or a false solution based on that mis-diagnosis and that will either go nowhere or make things worse for your client.

### ***2) The danger of being seduced by your client's trance.***

When a great many clients show up for coaching, they are in a trance state and, of course, they don't even know it. They assume that their state is real ... and therefore inevitable. What they want from the coaching is either *awareness and clarity* ("I want to understand why I hide things from my spouse and friends") or *acceptance* ("I want to be able to live with ..."). What they don't know is that their trance is activated by their self-talk and their self-talk then results in their state of mind, emotion, or body. As a coach, it is essential for you to be able to recognize the person's trance and address it by calling attention to it.

If you don't, you will be seduced by your client's trance so that you, like your client, believe it and respond as if it is a fact of life rather than an induction which the client uses to create her state.

This trance may be about what the client can or cannot do, it may be about the person's identity (who she is or is not), what's possible or not in the future. You may even be induced into the trance along with your client.

**3) *The danger of colluding with your client's excuses.***

Clients, like all humans, make excuses. The challenge for you is that with highly intelligent clients is that the greater the intelligence, the more sophisticated the excuse. This can make them much more difficult to detect, catch, and expose. Yet if you do not discover and challenge the excuses, and hold your client responsible for the excuses that they make, you will be in danger of colluding with those excuses.

Sometimes this happens when an excuse evokes sympathy in you. You feel bad for your client, perhaps pity their situation, and don't have the heart to challenge them. As you sympathize with them, you get into a similar emotional state. In the end you rescue them from the challenge to step up and so collude with them.

Sometimes it happens when the excuse sounds "reasonable." What happens then is the client recruits you to validate the excuse. When that happens, the client can then sell himself short and have you to thank for confirming that response. Not only have you not detected the coachable moment for when to challenge, to inspire, to invite your client to step up to stretch out of her comfort zone. You have also colluded with her excuse.

**4) *The danger of getting emotionally enmeshed with your client.***

To be an effective coach requires empathy, but not sympathy. Sympathy is more fitting for the person's loved ones (spouse, parents, friends, etc.). It is inappropriate for the coach as it leads to "suffering with" the person and getting emotionally enmeshed with the client. Now there are two people caught up in a situation with no one to pull them out. When that happens, you will tend to go into emotional rescuing, saving, and advice giving.

From: L. Michael Hall  
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## ACMC AS A CHANGE EXPERIENCE

If there is any constant theme at the end of the 8-day ACMC training, it is *change*. That's the message that's repeated over and over and over during the "Speaking from the Heart" time on Day 8. "*I have changed.*" Sometimes it was anticipated and expected, and sometimes it comes as a complete surprise. Sometimes people speak about having wanted a change for years and now speak about finally experiencing it.

Think about that! What is it in ACMC that facilitates so many people experiencing such deep change? After all, the purpose and design is to learn the seven core competencies of coaching. On the surface, the training is about how to have "a conversation like none other, a personal and intense conversation" that is simultaneously both challenging and compassionate. To achieve that we walk through *eight facilitations*, one per day—relationship, exploration, performance, systems, change, self-actualization, business, and professionalism. To achieve that also we introduce the *eight dimensions of the Matrix Model*— state, meaning, intention, self, power, others, time, and world.

Looking at that, the question remains for me. None of that explains how the program facilitates such deep and pervasive change. So what's happening that does explain it? What else happens at the ACMC that we could consider? Other things that happen are the six coaching laboratories by the team leaders and benchmarkers and the group experiences in the teams that the team leaders facilitate. Could that be the secret of change?

Perhaps you have a theory. Here's my theory. What is facilitating the pervasive change is *the experience and supervision of coaching itself*. That's where "the rubber hits the road" and that's where people make it or lose it. It is in the *experience of coaching and being coached* that we find out those who are not ready for the experience and invite those who are not ready to go home. This past year (2017) there were eight people who left after the first laboratory (the evening of Day 2). They either could not handle coaching, being coached, or receiving feedback. Yet those who continued, even though for some, it was extremely challenging on a personal level, and they struggled with either their skills or, more often, with receiving feedback— they persisted and came through.

So what are the *change factors* that lead to deep pervasive personal change? My guess is that it is first of all the feedback and, secondarily, the experience of learning to hold an intensely personal change conversation. And third, the experience of being in an intimate team. With all three factors people become more *self-aware* than perhaps ever before. People often report discovering their blind-spots, learning more about what they can and cannot do, and learning how to handle their emotions in an emotionally intelligent way.

Given all of that, I have been thinking about how we could take the ACMC experience and repackage it in various ways to create other *deep change* experiences for people. That is, if we have a process by which deep pervasive personal change occurs (and we do), how could we change the content and thereby cover other subjects that people want to know about, learn, and experience (for instance, wealth creation, parenting, leading, etc.) — so that we could make it available to anyone who wants it and is ready for it?

What would be the content of such programs?

What would be the tasks that we would give people?

What kind of groups and group projects would we set up?

Here are a couple of ideas that I've been playing with. In this I am thinking out-loud and writing to stimulate others to think out-loud with me about this. If you have ideas, send them to me at [drmichael@acsol.net](mailto:drmichael@acsol.net).

*1) Becoming Your Best Self— the Transformation Boot Camp*

Become a “change agent” for yourself and for others or in an organization.

Day 1: Change context: Relationship: Crucible Elements for Safety.

Day 2: Change Core: Meaning, truth, meaningfulness, creation of Solutions.

Day 3: Change Energy: Motivation, Intention, Aversion

Day 4: Change Ecology: Decision, Values, Choice

Day 5: Change System: Matrix Dimensions

Day 6: Change Kind: Generative, Unleashing Self-Actualization

Day 7: Change as Creativity and Innovation: Intervening for Change.

Day 8: Change Stabilization: Reinforcing and Testing: Keeping the Change.

*2) Becoming Your Best Self— the Transformation Boot Camp*

How to “know” and actualize yourself.

Day 1: You as a Person: Self-esteem, social esteem, identity.

Day 2: You as a Producer: Empowerment, Achievements, Productivity.

Day 3: You as a Social Being: Relationships, Social needs, Social intelligence.

Day 4: You as an Emotional Being: EQ, emotional mastery.

Day 5: You and your Roles: Identification, status, positions.

Day 6: You and your Authenticity: How to be Real, self-alienation.

Day 7: You and your Temporal Self: You in three time zones.

Day 8: You and Your Money: Beyond things defining you.

Ultimately what we sell and provide *are intangible experiences— experiences that change people's lives for the better*. Knowing that, and knowing that we have created it with regard to Coaching, what else can we create together?

