

MORPHEUS

META-COACHING & SELLING

VOLUME V

2013

MORPHEUS — 2013

Coaching

- 1) A Meta-Moment – for Exploring Unspoken Questions
- 2) Detail Mastery– cure for the Curse of Vagueness
- 3) Graham Richardson’s Session
- 4) The Test!
- 5) The Art of Group Coaching
- 6) *Event*: The Coaching Conference (5)
- 7) Coaching and Assessing Self-Actualization
- 8) The Inner Secret within “Learning”
- 9) Thinking Outside the Circle
- 10) *The School Project* of Self-Leadership for Kids
- 11) *ACMC Event*: The Bali Experience

- 12) *ACMC Event*: Expanding Meta-Coaching in Hong Kong
- 13) Your Meta-Coach Brand
- 14) Avoiding Mis-Representations
- 15) What do you do when your client has an Anti-Learning Program?
- 16) Group Coaching and the Setting of Goals
- 17) Guidelines for Giving Feedback
- 18) *Event*: Coaching for Community and from Community – Sydney
- 19) Coaching Clients to Specify their Outcomes
- 20) On Being a Directive Coach
- 21) *ACMC Event*: The Growing Meta-Coach System — Norway
- 22) Client’s Goals and the Elusive Question #7
- 23) *ACMC Event*: New Stuff at Meta-Coaching (Hong Kong)
- 24) Dynamically using the 18 Questions
- 25) Thinking about Branding Again
- 26) Group and Team Coaching
- 27) Supervision in Meta-Coaching
- An Invitation to Keep Meta-Coaching Standards* by David Murphy, Co-President MCF
- 28) How to Tighten up your Coaching Approach
- 29) PCMC Coaching
- 30) Key Factors for Elegance in PCMC Coaching
- 31) Getting the KPI – Again
- 32) Different Kinds of KPIs as you Get the KPI
- 33) More of the Different Kinds of KPIs you can get
- 34) *Book Review*: Balancing Challenge and Compassion
- 35) The Neuro-Semantic Precision Template
- 36) Do you have to get a KPI?
- 37) How can it be so Hard when it Looks so Easy?

38) Difference or Judgment

Selling

39) *Selling series*: Selling Yourself as a Coach

40) Selling as Decision Making

41) Selling as the Synergy of Dual Strategies

42) Selling as Effective Communication

43) Self-Actualizing Selling

44) Selling as Handling Objections

45) How do you Decide when to Run a Pattern

Coaching Politics

46) *Politics*: Coaching and Politics

47) Politic – Is it Always Dirty? Can Politics be Positive?

48) How does Political Coaching Work?

49) The Many Facets of Political Coaching

50) Making Your Questions work

51) The First Meta-Question

52) Co-Coaching

53) Training in the Power of Questions

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #1
January 3, 2013

A META-MOMENT FOR EXPLORING UNSPOKEN QUESTIONS

Sometimes when you are coaching, you ask a question or make a statement, and the response you get seems completely disconnected with your response. Have you had that experience? Of course, you had! Have you noticed it? Ah, that's a different question! Actually, it is a common experience in communication exchanges. So, what do you do when that happens? What does it mean?

If you track your questions and responses and compare them to the client's answers (or responses), you will notice that your client from time to time, or perhaps frequently, will not seem to be thinking or talking along the same line. This becomes overt happens when your client does not answer your question. But here is the point of curiosity: yet if the client isn't answering your question, then *what question is your client answering?* Do you even ask yourself that question? If not, then do so. Begin to wonder, really wonder, What question is my client answering if he or she is not answering or responding to what I ask? What line of thinking has my client gone to?

Once you plant that question in your mind, and being to really get curious, you can begin listening for and then exploring *the missing question*. Obvious there is some question afoot. But what question? What question is driving your client's attention, mind, interest, and emotions? As your client is responding and answering *some question* or some concern and it seems more compelling than what you asked or brought up, there's a strong possibility that the missing question is a core question that has captivated your client.

So, when your client doesn't answer your question, but seems to be answering a question that's been posed in his or her mind, then what question is he or she answering? Ask!

If what you're saying right now is the answer to a question, then what is the question?

This question, which is a simple meta-question, will operate as a meta-reflection and invite the client to begin to really listen to him or herself. Once they have presented the question, you might check and make sure that *that* is indeed the question. Then ask:

And how do you answer that question? What is your answer?

How have you attempted to answer that question in the past?

I did this not so long ago. I had asked a question, and had noticed that the person had *not* answered the question, and in fact, I had asked it two more times and still, no answer. I didn't know if the person was evading the question, if the person had truly not heard the question, if other thoughts were arising within and so much captivating the person's attention that he really had not, and probably could not, hear the question. So I called for a *meta-moment* of reflection,

brought the fact that I had asked the question three times, and still he had not responded to it.

“Really? You asked me something three times? No! [pause] ... [I shook my head in the affirmative.] What did you ask me?”

So I started to repeat the question and as I did the person interrupted me in a highly excited state.

“Oh, oh ... I remember now! Yes, when you asked that, and you used the word ‘playful’ and then said ‘taboo’ I recalled an incident from childhood and then began talking about how painful ‘playful’ as an idea has always been and ... now I remember, I thought, ‘Is that why I feel anxious whenever the idea of being creative comes up?’”

So is that the question that you are answering as you responded to me? “Is that why I feel anxious whenever the idea of being creative comes up?”

“Yes, I think it is. [pause] ... Yes, that’s it!”

And so what is your answer? How do you answer that question?

[Long pause] ... Well ... I don’t know. I guess so.”

You ‘guess so.’ You don’t know?

“Yes, I know. No guessing. I have always felt anxious about creativity, about being creative, about being forced into situations where I have to be creative. I like things neat and I like things in their proper place. Orderly. That’s what I like.”

So how do you answer that question now? When you ask yourself the question, “Is that why I feel anxious whenever the idea of being creative comes up?” what do you answer?

“Well, it’s been like that. [pause] ... And, ... Well, I don’t know.”

Do you want to continue to feel anxious about being creative, or in situations where you are asked to be creative?

“No, definitely not.”

So what do you want?

“I want to be comfortable and even playful in being creative.”

And with that a breakthrough occurred. In saying those words, the client had *an Eureka! Awareness* and begin to make a change that freed him in a way that he had never before been freed. And what created it? Simply finding his question, the question that was activating him and his matrix of frames, but which were mostly outside of his conscious awareness. This demonstrates the power of calling for a *meta-moment* where you and your client can *step back* and reflectively explore the process of the conversation. May you have many wonderful Eureka Meta-Moments in this new year!

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #2
January 9, 2013

DETAIL MASTERY FOR THE CURSE OF VAGUENESS

If you want to move to the PCMC level of competence in coaching and become truly professional in your coaching, *mastering details is required*. (Yes, it's true, so go ahead and groan and moan and get it over.) Good, you're back! Also, if you want to join the Assist Team to get practice in Group and Team Coaching, leadership development, as well as benchmarking (which is actually about developing your skills in receiving and giving feedback), then you also have to master detailing and meta-detailing.

Why? The answer is easy: *Mastery is in the details*. Without details, there's no precision, clarity, or a crystal clear focus. Critical details are, at the same time, critical success factors in every field of endeavor. So what are the specific details that you need to know and focus on with a client to demonstrate expertise in facilitating the unleashing processes? That's a good question because it is not just any detail that counts. In fact, details can create confusion and leave one with only a vague sense of things, just as the problem of being exclusively global. So just as you can be too global and fail to make critical distinctions, you can get lost in irrelevant details.

What we actually need is *meta-detailing*. This is the skill that arises from synergizing the opposite ends of the meta-program continua of global—specific. When you can do that, then you will be able to adequately address vagueness in your clients. Now when a person is vague, the problem is that he only has a general sense that either something is wrong or that he wants or needs something, but don't know what. Yet without a specific problem or goal, there's no clear target to aim at. It is specificity that gives a person a clear target to aim for.

When you engage in the coaching *Clarification Conversation*, you deal with *the curse of vagueness* (whether caused by being too global or too detailed). That is, you coach a person to get more clear about the situation of her current reality, what she wants, what is required to achieve her goal, the price that will cost, etc. There are actually several kinds of vagueness.

1) *Static vagueness*. This would be the vagueness that nominalizations create. When you use a false noun that comes from a verb that's been frozen in place, you are dealing with a vagueness that recreates the world as if it is non-moving, static, unchanging, dead. But it just seems that way due to language. The map makes it seem that way, reality is not that way.

Take the nominalization “motivation,” dig inside it and there's yet another nominalization, “motive.” And then when you dig inside that term, you finally get a verb, “move.” When a person *moves* consistently toward something, we say that she has a “motive,” and when she keeps moving in that direction despite obstacles, she has a strong “motivation.” Inside of the nominalizations (motive, motivation) are actions and activities.

The nominalization creates the vague sense of a static, non-moving, dead world. It's the magic of de-nominalizing that re-discovers the dynamic world that is alive— then you can see the specific processes that make that world alive. This is the power of detailing. When you detail the specific details and variables, you operationalize your terms so that you can describe how a person does what he or she is doing. This gives specific awareness of how to change things.

2) *Evaluative vagueness*. This is the vagueness that results from making judgments and evaluations. It is difficult to know what's really going on when a person evaluates something and judges it. Whether the person announces that it is good or bad, smart or stupid, helpful or useless, or a thousand other judgments, the difficulty is that we are only given the bottom line of the person's evaluations. We don't know the criteria by which the person has made those judgments. As such, we don't know the validity or ecology of the evaluations. We have to ask, "By what criteria are you making those evaluations? By what standards?" Without knowing that, we are only left with vague evaluations. By detailing the criteria, we begin to get a clear description apart of the facts on the ground that the person has judged. Here, as elsewhere, the details clear out the vagueness, prevent confusion, and enable a clearer picture to emerge.

3) *Global vagueness*. In global vagueness we have over-generalizations, exaggerations, wild jumping to conclusions, etc. A person generates a global vagueness by using a category and class, but no members of the class. Clients do this all the time! Opps, was that a global vagueness? They talk about rejection, criticism, conflict, embarrassment, anger, fear, etc. but they give no specific example of such or any personal cases to flesh-out the category that is upsetting them so much. By way of contrast, details ground experience in reality and make it real. This then creates a credibility since it is not fluff, but a real tangible thing or experience. In this, details make the invisible visible. Now we can see it. "Oh yes, Bill told you that he didn't like your report and you'd have to re-do it. Ah yes, and from that you felt he rejected you."

4) *Detail vagueness* is the vagueness that's created when a person gets lost in the details. This typically indicates that the person has dropped the relevance frame. What is relevant? What counts? The person doesn't know. He has forgotten. He is lost in piles of irrelevant details and so only has a vague sense of where he is and what to do.

Details create and use distinctions so that now your descriptions have a distinctiveness about them—as they say in the writing industry, especially novel and screenplay writing, "killer details." Here a narrow focus on a specific detail makes the writing or story so credible that it eliminates any question or doubt about its authenticity. This, in turn, gives your writing a distinctiveness that makes it stand out in a memorable way.

How can you become more skilled and masterful at details? Get *Communication Magic* (2001) and learn the Meta-Model of Language inside-out. Learn the distinctions, learn how to use them, then use it constantly until you can detail the conversations that you have in your mind and that you hear. Get *Sub-Modalities Going Meta* (2004), that is where I first introduced the skill of meta-detailing as a skill of genius.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #3
January 16, 2013

A GRAHAM RICHARDSON SESSION

I wish I had kept record over the years of the hundreds and hundreds of coaching sessions that I have benchmarked. But I have not. Last year (2012) I had the privilege of working with dozens of Meta-Coaches who are moving beyond the APMC level as they are preparing to set for the PCMC level. If you've been on the leadership team as a benchmarker, you know how challenging that can be— counting all of the behavior expressions of each of the seven skills. During my time in China recently I transcribed Graham Richard's 2011 coaching session that he did in Sydney in April of 2011 during the *Coaching Mastery* program. And after transcribing it, I benchmarked it. Here it is now for your examination.

Over the past two years, we have showed this video-tape numerous times and I'm always delighted to see it again and again because of the expert level of coaching that is demonstrated. Now the transcript the follows is a transcript of a coaching session that took only 18 minutes. And yet within that time frame, a tremendous transformation took place. And for those of you wondering how in the world can you get enough "marks" for the supporting skills, 1-per minute for the level "3," here's an example of 62 in 18 minutes— which is more than 3 per minute!

This video was on the website of NLP Worldwide which sponsored the training, but I am not able to find it there any longer. I have written to Heidi Heron to find out where it is and if we can get it on the Meta-Coach website. Plans are now underway to have Graham in Paris during the *Coaching Mastery* there in October for a day of Coaching and Modeling, he will coach, I will interview and model his coaching. But more about that later.

Coaching Session by Graham Richard

Sydney, Australia; April 2011

I have added *Meta-Coach Distinctions* throughout the text by coding them in brackets [description] to identify what is occurring in this coaching session.

Graham: *What would you like to talk about?* [Inviting a goal or outcome, WFO Q #1]

Adnan: About making a decision, do I keep doing what I am doing now, work on becoming financially independent, or do I shift gears and go into coaching and training which is a big risk. I don't enjoy doing what I'm doing now.

Coach: *Oh you don't.* [Acknowledgment]

Client: I love coaching and training. Do I keep doing what I don't enjoy for another 5 to 7 years...

And then retire, having become financially independent. [Acknowledgment]

And then do what I want. ...

Okay. (Nods head) [Encourager to speak]

Or do I jump into that and that risk to become financially independent in 5 to 7 years.

Okay. So that's the decision you want to make. [Framing the category of what the session will be about.]

Yes. And I've been stuck and I've not been doing anything about it. (HmMMM) and I feel that I have to decide because I'm not operating from a place of decision, but just a place of convenience. (Nods) I wait to see what's going to happen, but nothing ever happens.

Nothing happens. [Acknowledgment]

Nothing happens because I'm not making a decision and I keep having my doubts, "Maybe I should; maybe I should." (Gestures with right hand to his right and slightly out front) But if I do make a decision then I know this is what I'm doing for the next 5 to 7 years and that's it (hmMMM) and put the other option aside.

So while nothing is happening, what's happening? [Framing by implication: something is happening. Inviting deeper perception of situation.]

I'm just doing uh, first it was 5 to 9 years, now it is 5 to 7 years ... and I'm just feeling more and more frustrated that I'm giving my passion away, I'm giving my vision away, I could be inspiring millions of people, I know it (hmMMM), I believe that, (hmMMM), and people are waiting to be inspired (hmMMM) and are not because I'm indecisive (hmMM, okay).

*So there is this 9 year time frame coming down to 5 (gestures the size of 9 to 5) and you're frustrated because there are millions of people out there waiting to be inspired and you know you can do it (absolutely!), right, ... and **you're stuck**.* [Summary and acknowledgment and use of client's words to indicate frame, "you're stuck."]

And I'm stuck because I'm thinking about my financial independence.

Okay, so you're stuck because you're thinking about your financial independence. (Yes) and What is it about that thing? [Acknowledgment and exploration question]

It's about knowing that no matter what happens I will always be financially secure so that I don't have to worry about that aspect and so that I can be where I want to be without looking back at that. (Pointing to his right and behind). Now I keep thinking, "What if this happens; what if that happens? I don't have the money to do what I want to do, then that's where my attention will go and I'll lose my vision again.

So what is the ... this thing or that thing that might happen? [Exploration for details]

Uh, let's say something comes up, I don't make enough money and I don't have enough money to build the vision that I have and all of that will take me away from my vision (gestures with right hand straight in front "vision" and "take away" moves hand to right) and it defeats the whole purpose. (Nods)

So it would have to be *your* money? [Clarity check]

(2 second pause) To start with. Yes.

And how much money would that take? [Clarity check]

A few million bucks.

Right. And do you have a few million bucks? [Testing question]

I will in 5 to 7 years if I wait ...

Right. But you don't want to wait ... because *you're frustrated*. [Acknowledgment and framing]
I am frustrated, I'm not sure if I want to wait or not. That's the indecisiveness (hmmmm).
That's what it comes down to. (Hmmmm)

Okay, so to start would be two million dollars. [Acknowledgment]
Yes.

So if you had the two million bucks would you get started now? [Testing Question]
Absolutely!

Absolutely! So it's about the money. [Acknowledgment and framing]
Yes.

So you're stuck because of the money. [Acknowledgment, checking, framing]
Yes.

Okay, when this nine year period is up, how much money will you have? [Exploration]
I'm aiming at two million.

Oh that would be the two million ... [Acknowledgment, confirming with client]
I will have 150,000 dollars income a year. Then I'm not working for money anymore,
I'm working for my vision. (Hmmm)

So how important is it to you this bit about these millions of people waiting to be inspired ... by you? [WFO Q #3— compelling or why important]
It's very important. I feel that people are waiting for someone to inspire them and there are people who do that like yourself (hmmm) and Michael Hall and many other people ... (hmmm) and I believe I'm one of those as well who are making a *massive* difference.

So it's very important to you? [Testing Q]
Absolutely?

And how important to spend the next 5 years getting the two million? [WFO Q: compelling]
(5 second pause) It's only important because it will give me the push toward my vision without having to look sideways. (Gesturing back and forth) I feel that if I do it now, I will be looking sideways and worrying about money (hmmmm), but if I did have that, I'd have nothing to worry about and I could go forward and nothing could stop me.

So it's only important because you'd be looking sideways? [Acknowledgment] (Gesturing with right hand back and forth in similar way)
Yes

Right .. And sideways being? [Clarity check]
The decisions, can I make this? Can I afford this? I can't pay for my marketing, I can't pay for my business, I can't pay for my family... (hmmm)

This looking sideways is the risks? [Checking, Exploration]
Yes, the risks.

And how do you relate to risks? [Exploration]
(Pause) I believe that everything I do is a risk. But it is calculated risk. And I feel that because this is an unknown territory, it would be I wouldn't know what I was getting myself into.

Okay, so you have ... these two things are important (gesturing to one side and to the other side).

The one gets you the money in time, but you would like to get that now. You're getting frustrated and it's really, really important to you that you get out there and start working with people on the inspiration. [Acknowledgment, Summary]

Absolutely.

Okay, so tell me, if you have ... if I was in the situation, what would you say to me. What question would you ask me? [Exploration]

I would ask you to follow your vision.

You would? You'd tell me to do that? Right! ... Why are you smiling? [Acknowledgment, Testing, Putting words to physiology, "smiling"]

Because that's one of the things stopping me getting out there and working with people as well, how can I tell them to do something I'm not doing.

So would you like me to *tell* you to do it? [Testing]

(Laughs, smiles, pause) ... No, I would have to believe it myself.

You wouldn't like me to tell you to do it? [Testing]

No.

Then why did you tell me? [Confrontation]

(Laughs. Smiles.) .. Then I'd ask you.

What will you ask me? [Exploration]

(12 seconds pause) ... If you had two years to live, what would you do?

You would ask me, If you had two years to live, what would you do? [Acknowledgment]

Yeah.

If you had two years to live, what would you do? [Testing by turning the question around and applying to the speaker, Counter-framing]

I'd follow my vision.

Do you have two years to live? [Testing, Exploration]

In my mind I have 56 years left. (Audience laughter)

So now we have a problem? Hmmmm. What if I was to kill you in two years? We could make an arrangement. (Lots of laughter) [Framing, "have a problem," Exploration, Humor]

How much would it cost me?

Your life!? (Much more laughter, from everyone in audience) [Humor, Confrontation, Testing]

Money would not be important any more. (HMMMM) Because I could manage.

(HMMMM.)

Okay. .. (Pause). Now if you ask me that question. And I said I only had two years to live, what would you then answer me? [Exploration]

What if you only had 4 years to live? And the answer would be yes. And then I would ask if you had 8 years? And the answer would be yes. And I would go to 16 years. Then I would say 'Maybe.'

Okay, now you've got me confused. *Are you confused?* [Framing, Suspense, Testing]

Not really. No.

You're stuck. [Acknowledgment and reminding of previous framing]

I'm stuck.

Are you sure? [Testing]

(7 second Pause) ... It's about my uncertainty about ... I think it's about me being uncomfortable with uncertainty. I think that's what the whole thing is about. It's about

my feeling that I need to know. [Meta-State description of levels that could have been detected, 'uncomfortable about uncertainty' also, 'need to know']

I'm having a problem. I don't believe you. ... (pause) ... I don't think it is that important about going out and inspiring people. [Framing by owning that he as the coach has a problem, Confrontation, MQ- levels detected; Challenge]

(12 second pause) ... You're right. (Nods head)... In a way, what I mean by that is ... I think I'm more focused on myself than on others in going out there and inspiring others. And keeping that in mind, I would obviously do what I'm doing now (hmmmm.) Because it serves me (hmmmm).

So now you're getting real, I'm starting to believe you. Thank you! So now, tell me what you really, really want now? [Validation, Celebration, WFO Q. #1, "What really want?"]
(7 seconds pause) ... I want to make it about others, not me.

Okay. How are you going to do that? [WFO Q #7: How do? Exploration]
(8 second pause) ... just going for it.

Okay, now are you convinced? ... because I'm not... [Exploration, Testing, Confrontation]
(Interrupting) A part of me believes it (right) ... I just have to start.

Okay, and you haven't started yet? [Testing]
Kind of, but...

Kind of. [Acknowledgment, Clarity check]
But I'm like a two-year old, I all over the place.

Right. (Nods) *So when are you going to grow up?* [Confrontation]
(4 seconds pause). ... I feel like I just did.

Right. You just did. Okay. So let's put this together. Interested? [Acknowledgment, Commitment, 'let's put together']
Absolutely.

What do you want to do? [WFO Q #1 an #7]
I want to make a difference.

Okay, How? [WFO Q #7 process]
About making it about others.

Yes.
And doing whatever it takes.

Yes, and what is it going to take? [Acknowledgment]
A lot of inconvenience.

A lot of inconvenience. ... *To you?* [Confrontation]
To me.

Who cares? [Confrontation; State Induction — Challenge]
I don't.

You do. [Confrontation]
(Pause) I used to.

You used to. ... So what changed? [Acknowledgment, Exploration]
(8 second pause) ... I'm telling myself the truth about what I really want.

Right.

What I really want... I was hiding behind it because it sounds good, (right), because it feel good (yeah, nods), and because people said 'Wow' and I don't have to do anything to achieve that (yeah, nods).

So now you're getting real. How does that feel? [Validation, Exploration, Explore Emotions]
Real.

Yeah. But how does it *feel*? [Confrontation, Exploration]
Pretty good.

And how does that feel? I need a feeling. [Exploration, Challenge— state induction]
I feel very centered.

That's not a feeling. [Confrontation]
(10 second pause) ... It's the feeling in my chest.... (holding hand on chest)

Yes! What is that feeling? [Exploration]
(3 second pause) ... It's the feeling of being unstoppable if I choose to.

Yeah, not a feeling. (3 second pause) ... Are you connected to your feelings? [Confrontation, Exploration]

I push them down. I think.

Show me. [State induction]
(9 second pause) ... I feel that it is coming up and something is pushing it down. (Right hand moves up his chest and then down).

Something? Your hand just did that. Do it again. [Put words to gesture]
Something is pushing it down. (Hand moves up and down again)

Pull it up. What's coming up? [State induction, Exploration]
Emotions ...

Yeah ... (inarticulate in recording)
I could feel the pressure in my head. (Hmmm)

It's a feeling rushing in your head. [Acknowledgment]
Yes.

So .. What are you going to do? [WFO Q #7]
I'll make the change.

What change? [Clarity Question]
Starting to make a difference.

How? [WFO Q #7]
My first step is to just leave behind everything I'm doing now.

Leaving behind everything you're doing now. When? (Speaking slowly and deliberately)
[Acknowledgment, WFO Q #4]

By the end of the year.

By the end of the year. Say it. [Acknowledgment, Challenge— state induction]
(4 second pause) I'm chickening out.

(Pause) ... You have tears in your eyes. ... you're really going to do it. [Put words to physiology "tears," validation]

(Pause)

Put your hand up ... please. (Palm of hand moving up). Turn it over, push it down. ... That

chicken. (Pushes hand down and then off to his right and then back behind him.)
Turn it up, pull it up. What are you picking up now? [State induction, Exploration]

(5 second pause) I'm going to do this as soon as I go back.

As soon as you go back. Where? [Acknowledgment, WFO Q #4]

Back to Dubai.

Dubai. You're going to leave your job and go back to Dubai? (Yeah). When are you going back to Dubai? [Exploration, WFO Q #5]

In May.

In May? (Right) Have you started doing this yet? [Testing Q]

What do you mean?

This.

I have.

(Yeah). What is this? [Clarity Check]

It's the change.

Yeah. What are you going to do when you go back to Dubai? [WFO Q #7]

I'm going to leave everything I'm doing now (and?) and start my vision.

Start your vision. And what's your vision? [Acknowledgment, WFO Q #1]

Start a training company that transforms the lives ...

What's its name? [Exploration]

(3 seconds pause) Lasting Change.

Lasting Change. ... I'm starting to believe you. [Acknowledgment, Validation]

So am I! (Smiles, laughter)

Okay.

This is a good change?

Yes, it's a good change. Are you stuck? [Validation, testing]

No, I'm not.

You're not stuck? How do you know? [Testing; WFO Q #18]

Because I'm not lying to myself anymore.

Not lying to yourself anymore. Right. ... so what do you need now? [Acknowledgment, WFO Q #15]

(7 seconds pause). ... I just need a mentor. (Hmmm) Someone who's done it (hmmm).

For support.

Where's that mentor? [Exploration]

I'm sure he's around in this room (laughter). (Group laughter)

There's that chicken again. (Laughter) so you're giving this to me now? Do you need that? [Confrontation, Framing, Testing Q]

It would make things easier to have a mentor.

Yes. It's not easy. What you're doing is hard. You're giving away everything you've been doing, you're going back to Dubai and starting something new. Coaching ... called what? [Truth speaking Challenge to action, commitment; Acknowledgment, WFO Q #1]

Lasting Change.

Lasting change. You're making that commitment in front of these people. Tell them.

[Acknowledgment, Confrontation, Challenge— state induction]

(Turns to audience) I'm making the change ...

Stand up ... tell them. [Challenge — state induction]

I'm making the change. (Applause, yells, hug from Graham) [Validation]

Benchmarks

18 minute session —

Support — 62 marks !!! Very intense “holding the space”

Listening— Complete use of client’s words, 13 silences! 6 clarity Checks.

Questioning — 8 WFO questions (missed the Quality Control Q.)

Lots of exploration, testing, checking questions

Meta-Questions – only one ...

States Induced – 7!!

Support:

Acknowledgments: 25

Confrontations: 15

Celebrations: 1

Validations: 6

Framing: 9

Put words to Gestures, physiology: 3

Humor: 1

Summary: 2

Matching — voice, energy, gestures — 90%

Listening

Clarity Checks: 6

Silences — Pauses: 13

Sounds: 24 (hmmmm, right, okay)

sights: 10 (nods)

Questioning:

WFO Questions: 8

Testing: 18

Exploration Q.: 24

Checking Q: 3

Meta-Questions:

Levels detected: 1

State Induction:

States induced: — 7— Suspense, convinced, stuck, challenged, feeling state (“rush to head”), commitment (“say it”), refuse the chicken state.

Explore emotions: 4

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #4
January 23, 2012

THE TEST

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

- 1) *What are the 4 mechanisms of change for psychologically healthy people?*
Motivation, Decision, Creation, Integration.
- 2) *What are the 7 core coaching skills?*
Listening, Supporting, Questioning, Meta-Questioning, Inducing State, Receiving and Giving Feedback.
- 3) *What are the 5 helping professions?*
Consulting, mentoring, therapy or counseling, training, and coaching.
- 4) *What are the 5 core skills of the helping professions?*
Giving advice for consulting, guiding for mentoring, healing or fixing or re-parenting for therapy, teaching for training, and process facilitation for coaching.
- 5) *What are the 8 matrices in the Matrix Model?*
Three processes matrices: Meaning, Intention and State. And five content matrices: Self, Power, Others, Time, and World.
- 6) *What are the 3 key actions or activities of a Neuro-Semanticist?*
On the meaning axis— create great, inspiring and robust meaning, eliminate or suspend dis-empowering meaning, and on the performance axis— actualize meaning into performance (the mind-to-muscle process). See the front page of the website, www.neurosemantics.com for an extensive answer on this.
- 7) *What are 10 basic meta-questions that is in the manual?*
Believe, Value, Permit / Prohibit, Intention, Decide, Identity, Metaphor, Remember, Imagine, Expect.
- 8) *What are the 7 kinds of coaching conversations?*

Clarity, Decision, Planning, Experience (or Resource), Change, Confrontation, Mediation.

9) *What are the 5 steps in the process of meta-stating?*

Access, Amplify, Apply, Appropriate, and Analyze.

10) *What are the 7 models of Meta-Coaching?*

NLP Communication Model, The Meta-States Model, The Matrix Model, The Axes of Change Model, the Benchmarking Model, The Self-Actualization Model, and the Facilitation Model.

11) *What is the 8th. Model?*

Meta-Programs.

12) *What are 14 of the 18 questions of a well-formed outcome?*

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

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

In italics —

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

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

14) What are the 8 roles of change?

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

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

Coaching is 1) the art of facilitating¹ 2) an individual or organization² 3) to a specific agreed upon outcome³ 4) via a ruthlessly compassionate conversation⁴ 5) that flushes out the core of meanings of the client⁵ 6) and identifies and mobilizes inner and outer resources⁶ 7) to develop, unleash, and actualize the client's potentials for achieving his or her dreams.⁷

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #5
January 30, 2013

THE COACHING CONFERENCE

We decided that for the second International Neuro-Semantic Conference, we would make *coaching* the entire focus. So in June this year, in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, the Neuro-Semantic Community of Trainers and Meta-Coaches will presenting many, many aspects of coaching over the three days of the Conference. The theme of the Conference is *Actualizing Coaching Excellence* in five core tracks:

- Coaching
- Business
- Self-Actualization
- Education and Training
- NLP and Neuro-Semantics

If you go to www.neurosemantics.com and click on Trainings and then — **2013 Conference** you will see a brochure on the Conference that Meta-Coach and Neuro-Semantic Trainer, Danny Tuckwood from South Africa designed. And if you click on the PDF attachment that I have sent with this post— you will see a full description of all of the workshops and keynote presentations that are planned for this year in Malaysia.

The last page of the PDF file, in fact, is a registration form, so if you want to copy it and fax it to the sponsor, you can.

Hj Md Taib Mat, MTM Consultants Sdn Bhd.
Fax : 03-5513-4461 or email mtm@akademinlp.com

Keynote Presentations

We have also expanded the keynote presentations to six and these will begin and end each day. Because in Neuro-Semantics we know that intentionality is the engine of progress and direction, we have planned for **6 Keynote Presentations** which one designed to create an inspiration for all of us to step forward even more to reach for excellence. The *Achieving Excellence* will be in the following areas:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| • L. Michael Hall | Modeling Self-Actualization |
| • Mandy Chai | Collaborative Abundance |
| • Lene Fjellheim | Coaching Business |
| • Omar Salom | Developing Leaders |
| • Hj Mohamed Taib Mat | Education / NLP |
| • Colin Cox | Training / Presentations |

Yet we feel that it is not enough to merely inspire people with a vision, we have to equip people with skills if we expect people to be empowered and enabled for the vision. So to achieve that we have planned for **18 Workshops** given by **22 Presenters** who come from **9 countries**. Here are the speakers, their country, and their titles:

- Mohamed Taib Mat— Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Actualizing in Education

- Anthony Pinto — Malaysia Meta-Model: Magic of Lang.
- Mohamed Marzuki — Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia School for Actualiz. Potentials
- Alan Fayter — Christchurch, New Zealand Presuppositions in Coaching
- Colin Cox — Auckland, New Zealand Using Music in Training
Motivation
- Lena Gray — Auckland, New Zealand Establishing a Coaching Culture
- Joseph Scott — Tasmania, Australia NLP Communication Model
- Jay Hedley — Sydney, Australia “ ”
- Susie Linder-Pelz Sydney, Australia Neuro-Semantic Research
- Susie and Scott Pochron Benchmarking Meta-Coaching
- Shane Stewart — Sydney, Australia Axes of Change
- John Sands — Melbourne, Australia “ ”
- Tim Goodenough — South Africa Raising Talent– Fast Tracking
- Kgobati Magome — Johannesburg, South Africa Cultural Transformation
- Cheryl Lucas — Pretoria, South Africa Supervision in Coaching
Systemic Coaching
- Taryn Sydow — Johannesburg, South Africa Consulting for MCC
- Michele Wickham — Johannesburg, South Africa “ ” (Manager Coach Cert.)
- Scott Pochron — Ohio, USA – Actualizing Leadership
- Mark Ashton — California, USA — Bruce Lee & Self-Actualization
- L. Michael Hall — Colorado, USA — Self-Actualization
- Mandy Chai — Hong Kong, China — Collaborative Abundance
- John Murry Hunter — India — Using Your Voice
- Omar Salom — Mexico City, Mexico — Leadership Development
- Mustafa El-Masry — Egypt — Revisiting Bloom’s Taxonomy

So as you can see, this second Conference truly will be an International Conference and will highlight one of the central developments in Neuro-Semantics — the Meta-Coaching System. As you mark your calendar for that very special weekend at the end of June, 2013 — **June 21, 22, and 23, 2013 in Kuala Lumpur** — you might also want to make some plans for some holiday time in Malaysia, Singapore, Bali, etc. There’s a whole world to discover in Malaysia.

Many thanks to Anthony Pinto the first dreamer of this Conference and to Hj Md Taib Mat who is hosting the Conference.

Meta-Coach License — 2013

Many are signing up for renewing their license. To do that, go to www.meta-coaching.org Click: About Meta-Coaching, the pull-down items will bring you to: Meta-Coach License Renewal. Cost: \$40 US dollars, yes it says at different places “\$50 AUS” dollars but that’s because it is old and trying to keep things updated (well, that’s a challenge in itself) and yes, Australia dollars are now higher than US dollars, but Paypal will charge US Dollars! Just to re-assure you — *all monies to Meta-Coaching goes to Meta-Coaching*, for MC websites and promotions.

Being in “**Good Standing**” with the ISNS and the MCF means that you live up to the standards of quality in delivering service to people and ethics in relating to them. That includes truly and accurately representing yourself. If you are *not* a Neuro-Semantic Trainer or a Modular Trainer, you are falsely representing yourself in teaching or training the Neuro-Semantic and Meta-Coach models. And if you are not acknowledging sources, referencing the texts and websites that you are taking materials, you are not behaving in a professional or ethical way.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #6
February 6, 2013

THE ART OF GROUP COACHING

New things are coming for the experience of *Coaching Mastery* this year (2013) in terms of the science and art of Group Coaching. So if you are on the Assist Team or if you are returning to revisit and deepen your understanding and experiential competence in Meta-Coach Methodology, then you can anticipate to learn a lot more and experience a lot more with regard to transferring your basic coaching skills to the context of a group or team.

“Why are you adding these new things?” you ask. For several reasons, not the least of which is that fact that I’ve just completed the first draft of the text of the next book in the series of the Meta-Coaching books which is on *Group and Team Coaching*. And that means I’ve been learning a lot!

1) *Different Kinds*. For example, one of the most important learnings is that of distinguishing 7 different kinds of Group Coaching. Previously, I lumped all aspects and forms of “group coaching” into one classification. I didn’t know better than to do that, but now I do. All coaching of groups is not the same. Sometimes you are coaching a group which is comprised of individual members who are there to learn or experience something. That’s a learning or experiential group. Then there is the group who want to become *a group*. They want to tap into the group dynamics that would make them a cohesive unit so that they can experience collective thinking, learning, deciding, and acting. That’s a very different kind of group coaching. Then there is the coaching of a cohesive group so that they become a team. And that again involves different coaching skills and methodologies.

2) *More Conversations*. I’ve also learned that beyond the 7 Coaching Conversations that we have distinguished in Meta-Coaching (*Coaching Conversations*, 2011 edition), there are at least 3 more conversations that a Group Coach will facilitate: The Meta-Conversation; The Rounds Conversation, and the Problem-Solving Conversation.

3) *More and different needs*. I’ve also learned that the *needs* that are before you as a Group Coach is more extensive and also different from the needs that you work with in one-on-one coaching. People in a group still have *needs* that drive them, governing their perspective, participation, understanding, skills, etc. And also “the group” has needs. As an entity in its own right, the group or the team has needs which need to be addressed and satisfied by the group coach and/or leader. In a group there are leadership needs, power needs, political needs, and more.

4) *More dynamics*. With the additional needs and drives, a group has an additional energies or dynamics—dynamics which emerge from the experience of the group itself. It has a climate or atmosphere; it also has systemic dynamics that are absent in one-on-one coaching. For example,

there is within every group a need and a drive for cohesiveness and belongingness, yet if the group leader and/or coach does not managed this well, the group will fall into a particular dysfunction called “group-think” which will undermine the creativity of the group. A well-functioning group will be more intelligent and more productive than the most intelligent and productive member of the group, but a dysfunctional group will actually lower the intelligence and effectiveness of each member. A group coach needs to know this and be able to translate that knowledge into competencies to deal with it.

5) *New Change factors.* As you know, we have two powerful Change Models in Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching: The Axes of Change and The Crucible. With Group Coaching, we have yet another— the group itself. *Group dynamics* come together within a closely-knit group and especially in a team so that the group itself becomes or operates as an agent of change. What I’ve discovered by reading into the works of Kurt Lewin and his change model of unfreezing, moving, re-freezing and how he thought about changing culture (especially the Nazi culture that he came out of) is how a group coach or group leader/manager can use a group to change the culture of a business or a nation.

6) *New Skills.* From all of this, additional skills that are uniquely group coaching skills emerge and so I have a chapter about that in the book. And one of these skills involves being able to step back from the group to observe and record the group processes and to then give feedback. That is such an important and powerful skill that I have an idea for how we can integrate that into the *Coaching Mastery* program.

7) *New Model.* Right now the new book ends with two chapters about how to move a group to become a team— a self-actualizing team. In mapping that out I began with the well-known and described group dynamics— the active mechanisms within a group that pulls the group together as a group and enables it to develop a group identity. What I then happened upon was how the very same dynamics, when they are further developed and enriched, moves a group to a cohesive and well-functioning group, and when developed even further, moves a cohesive group to become a team. As a result, this spiraling of the same dynamics generates three levels of “groups” in terms of development and with each shift to the next higher level, greater trustful vulnerability in the person or persons leading (or coaching) the group. I don’t know what I’m going to call these three spirals of group development, but a name will surely emerge.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #7
February 13, 2013

COACHING AND ASSESSING SELF-ACTUALIZATION

As a Meta-Coach, you can now coach and assess the self-actualization of your clients. On Monday I sent out the following to the Neurons egroup (the international egroup of Neuro-Semantics). Unlike this egroup which is exclusive and limited just to Meta-Coaches, that egroup like *Solutions* is open to anyone who is interested.

A number of Meta-Coaches are having their clients fill out the Self-Actualization Assessment Scale *prior* to their coaching and then once a month or every other month asking them to do the assessment again. This gives you the ability to explore your client's biological and meta-needs, the meanings they give to them, where they may have overloaded them with meaning, or failed to give them accurate meanings, or give them too low or little of meanings. Feel free to send out the following to your clients or potential clients.

ASSESSING SELF-ACTUALIZATION

One of our purposes in Neuro-Semantics is to enable ourselves and others to actualize, or make real, our highest and best. *Highest* refers to your highest visions about life, your values for how to live, and meanings for making life meaningful. *Best* refers to your top performances, your best skills and competencies, and taking your actions so that they reflect you when you are in the zone of performance. Yet to do that with mindfulness requires that we be able to assess where we are now and where we are as we progress, in other words, assessment of our self-actualization. And that means creating benchmarks for self-actualizing development.

The first attempt to do this occurred in 1964 when Everett Shostrum met with Abraham Maslow and took the 15-17 characteristics of self-actualizing people, which had been discovered in over 20 years of modeling, and began to create behavioral indicators of those characteristics. The result? The POI, the Personal Orientation Inventory, a questionnaire of 150 force-choice questions around 10 subsidiary distinctions of living the self-actualizing life. The POI was, and continues to be today, a well developed instrument for measurement and assessment. And if it weren't so expensive, I'd been promoting it in all we do in Neuro-Semantics, but alas, to take it and use it costs \$128 for each person, each time.

When I complained about that some years ago (2009), Tim Goodenough challenged me to begin creating our own assessment scale. In January 2010, Tim and I completed a prototype and ran it with the Leadership Team of Neuro-Semantics. Since that time, we refined it, I wrote a

description of it, and lo and behold, we have our very own Neuro-Semantic Self-Actualization Assessment Scale. You can now find it on the website:
<http://www.neurosemantics.com/assessment-scale-form>.

This Assessment Scale invites you to look at your driving needs— those lower and higher needs that drive your neurology, physiology, and psychological states of mind and emotion. For each of the four lower needs and for the fifth level of self-actualization needs, you will find seven or more distinctions. The scale invites you to gauge yourself in terms of *how well are you adequately meeting your needs*. Are you just “getting by?” Then you would put a check in the middle. If you are not getting by very well, then you will be to the left in the red zone. If you are more than just getting by, you are thriving or optimizing, you will be to the right of the center line, in the green zone.

Getting by refers to being able to fulfil the need so that the drive goes away. That’s how the lower needs work. When adequate gratified by true-satisfiers (things that truly correspond to and fit the need), then the disequilibrium, the inner tension, the driving urge reduces and then vanishes from awareness. That will be a first sign of using a true satisfier. Another sign: energy! Vitality. You will feel good and be able to focus on the next-level needs.

If you are not using true-satisfiers, but false-satisfiers, then the drive doesn’t go away. In fact, the drive for that need, whether food, drink, shelter, money, sex, etc. will dominate more and more. You may become obsessive about it, and then compulsive in your actions. False-satisfiers and false-beliefs about our needs, for us humans, will create neurotic needs. We will semantically load the need with meanings, understandings, beliefs, etc. that the need cannot bear and the result we will become obsessive-compulsive about the need or some false-satisfier (drugs, money, gambling, etc.) and the false-gratification makes things worse.

Now you can assess where you are and how you are dealing with, handling, coping, and hopefully *mastering* your innate driving needs. The lower needs are “animal” needs because the higher intelligent social animals have those needs as well— the need not only for survival and safety, but for connection, bonding, belong, and for recognition of their place in a group. The mechanism that drives these lower needs is *deficiency* and so Maslow designated them, the D-needs. These are the needs that do not go away until fulfilled. And when fulfilled, they go away.

The higher or self-actualization needs are those which are with us from the beginning— in nascent form— but which become fully present to us as we fulfill the lower needs. These are the uniquely *human* needs. These are our needs for knowledge, meaning, understanding, beauty, order, mathematics, excellence, fairness, justice, contribution, making a difference, giving love, etc. The mechanism governing these needs is abundance and *being-ness*. *Abundance* means that when you gratify them, they grow. They do not go away, they do the opposite— they expand and become fuller. *Being-ness* means that unlike the lower needs that are instrumental needs, means to an end, these are non-instrumental, they are *ends* (not means). These are for living in, for *being*, they are valid and satisfying in and of themselves.

So where are you? Go and take the assessment. It will take 30 minutes when you do it the first time and then you can print off the results. Each time you do it thereafter, will go quicker and quicker as you get more acquainted with it. If you need a Meta-Coach or a Neuro-Semanticist to work through the completed form with you— check out Trainers on www.neurosemantics.com and Meta-Coaches on www.metacoachfoundation.org.

Announcement

It is this assessment that we use in the *Unleashing Vitality* training and the next time I will do that training *and* all of the other three Self-Actualization trainings will be May in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (May 25 to 31 and June 1-3). If you are interested, contact: Dr. Jairo Mancilha — jairo@pnl.med.br

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #8
February 20, 2013

THE INNER SECRET WITHIN “LEARNING”

There’s an inner secret to learning which I came across recently that radically shifted my thinking about learning. I don’t know how you will react to this, but when I first came upon it, I found it surprising— very surprising. And a bit disorienting at first. “Surprising? Disorienting? Are you talking about *learning*?”

Yes, learning. And yes, I understand that most of us in this field find learning exciting, thrilling, and inviting. We know its value and power. What are the first thoughts that come to your mind when you hear the word “learning?” Try it. Make a list as quickly as you can about the thoughts that rush into your mind when the word “learning” is mentioned:

Understanding, gaining new ideas, putting ideas together to create solutions to problems, memorizing data, able to take data and process it effectively, developing as a human being, expanding capacity for things, unleashing intellectual capital, comprehending, wisdom.

All good stuff, right?! Now yes, I could imagine an adolescent who didn’t have a good experience in school and even mistreated by those in authority and who was forced to study things without any preparation for the benefits of that study ... generating a list: boring, unpleasant, for geeks, hard, shows my inadequacy, reminds me of Bill who I hate, etc.

So what is this new twist on learning? It is this. Learning is that wonderful experience that you get to experience in those very moments when you do *not know* something. It arises when you are confused and disoriented, when you are out of your comfort zone, and when you struggle with something from a state of ignorance. If you were not in these (typically) unpleasant states, if you already knew, there would be no possibility of learning. Learning only becomes a possibility when you come upon something that’s so new, different, and unaccountable that you feel frustrated, ignorant, confused, upset, and needing clarity. Now isn’t that great!?

“And all of this means what?” Well, it means that your ability to learn is dependent upon, and a function of, your ability to move yourself to the edge of all of this frustrating disorientation. If you stay safe and secure with what you already know, if you play your life small and stay away from challenge, difference, the unknown, etc., then you will seldom be in a context where learning can occur.

This suggests that learning, more often than not, involves discomfort. Learning requires that you get out of your comfort zone and face ideas, understandings, and beliefs that you disagree with and with contexts that are chaotic, confusing, and disorienting. This suggests that your capacity for accelerated learning actually depends on your ability to tolerate frustration, disorientation, and

not-knowing the solution. So, how's your tolerance level? How okay are you with entering into these states?

And while I'm at asking questions, does any of this remind you of *Coaching Mastery* and the challenges and stretches we provide in that context? I hope so. Learning is more than just information uploading of data. Any computer can do that without learning a thing. Learning involves both the cognitive uploading of information and the emotional tolerance and acceptance of not-knowing. It involves the embracing of ambiguity and chaos.

The creativity of learning involves connecting one thing with another and seeing, recognizing, or creating a pattern. When you do that, then eureka moments occur and people are surprised to recognize how the information that was disoriented and confusing comes together into a new pattern.

So here's the paradox of learning— learning occurs best when you are relaxed, playful, and feeling good *and* when you are challenged, stretched, and feel sufficient anxiety to figure something out. Yes, you need both playful and curious acceptance of what is *and* conditions of optimal stress or tension (anxiety). How to put both together into the right mix— well, that's a challenge each of us face as we manage our own learning strategies and if you are a trainer or coach, managing the learning context for others.

Finally, what does all of this mean for coaching? How does this relate to your interaction with your client as you attempt to facilitate your client *learning*? Obviously (well, I hope it is obvious), keeping your client comfortable and telling your client what only fits with what he or she already knows is a formula for preventing your client from learning! It is a way to stop learning, to inhibit learning, to undermine your client's ability to handle learning situations.

So what is a coach to do? Isn't it to create a trusting and supporting relationship and then introduce the challenge of discovery? Isn't it to invite your client to learn how to handle chaos and confusion and not-knowing? Could that be? Hmmmmm.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus# #9
March 6, 2013

THINKING OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE

Coaching Skills for When Your Client Loops

Clients loop. They go round and round the circle of stimulus and response. You know that, I know that, and from time to time a client will even recognize it. And yet, most of the time, they do not. And this is so much true, that even when *you* are the client, when you meet with your coach to unleash some potential or deal with some interference, when you loop, you probably don't even know it!

Now from *Coaching Mastery* and various Neuro-Semantic trainings (even APG), you learned about the two communication loops, the horizontal and the vertical loops of communication. The horizontal loop is the way communication looks to a Behaviorist: X trigger occurs, person responds with Y behaviors of speech and action. X leads to Y. X causes Y. That's the view from the outside: stimulus–response, event–experience, but of course, this is a shallow and superficial perspective.

The vertical loop continues the horizontal as it receives the feedback from the outside and now the person *feeds-back* to him or herself on the inside. That is, the person selects things to focus on, foregrounds them, represents, draws conclusions, constructs beliefs, and all of the meta-levels of understanding. Then sends the information invented back into the mind-body system as emotions, somatic energy that becomes the feed-forward to the world as actions and verbalizations. This is what the world of the Cognitivist or the Neuro-Semanticist.

Now the looping by which we and our clients get stuck is the looping around the first learning loop. This is the language of Gregory Bateson, the MRI people (Mental Research Institute), and the language of professor Chris Argyris. The first learning loop is the learning that we humans make when we encounter something and begin to build our understanding of it. The temptation, or may I say, seduction, is to get caught up in that loop and spin round and round it and never exiting.

So what do we (or you) do to get out of the primary loop? We get out of that loop by spinning out of that circle and going meta whereby we can then engage in some *double-loop learning*. You've heard the phrase calling for more creative thinking when people recommend "thinking out of the box." Well, this is "thinking outside of the circle." Here you step out of the circle that traps you in going round and round the circle. And when you do that, you are then able to think *about* the learnings that you made which created the circle that you've been looping around in the first place. And from there, you can evaluate it from a high perspective. Then you learn about your learning or meta-learn. Then you can think about the quality of your thinking and so meta-

think. This meta-cognition of course, is the foundation of the Meta-States Model and the heart and soul of Neuro-Semantics.

That's why in Meta-States and Meta-Coaching, we call for *Meta-Moments with our clients so that we can invite them to do some meta-reflection*. When you do that, you are working systemically as you are inviting your clients to step out of their own mental-emotional system to consider the outside-of-conscious frames and assumptions that govern that system. And this is the highest and one of the most powerful leverages of change.

The Question about Looping

Are you, or your client, looping or learning? If a person keeps going round and round the same symptoms, problems, and complaints and the so-called "solutions" do not fully and completely solve things, then there is a very strong possibility that the System has that person. The Matrix has you. And so instead of learning something, instead of learning *how one is creating that reality*, a person is just looping around and possibly getting into a stuck state deeper and deeper.

Consider the seduction that all of us who do *process facilitation* feel when a client presents something to us and we know the answer! What happens for all of us is that we are sorely tempted to *give advice!* And it would be so simple, so straightforward, so direct, so efficient. But consider.

Your client has a symptom —> you give advice —> they follow the advice. Think of these three steps as a circle. Now they have another symptom, so they come to you for more of your incredible wisdom, you give advice again, they implement it. And again this happens. And again. From this experience—

- What have they learned? What have they discovered?
- What resources have they accessed and applied?

Probably no longer and no development. If they learned anything, they learned dependency, they learned that *you* have the answers (not them), and that they can't figure it out, and that they need you. This is a form of looping not learning. And it is not what we want for our coaching clients.

What do we want? We want them to spin out of that loop, go to a meta-position, take a meta-moment, and as they move to a double-loop, a loop about the first loop, they can learn about their first loop learning. And of course, as you and I know, now they can run a quality control, run ecology checks, and from that place of being at choice point, move themselves into a much more productive direction.

The Meta-State Model inherently involves double-loop learning and it does so level upon level. That's because as a model of self-reflexivity, it enables us to step out of the circle and think outside of the circle.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus# #10
March 13, 2013

THE SCHOOL PROJECT

SELF-LEADERSHIP FOR KIDS!

We have all heard the call for many, many years. People attend NLP and Neuro-Semantic Trainings and they experience so many “aha!” experiences and such great moments of Eureka, Personal Empowerment, and even self-actualization and they say things like —

“They ought to teach this stuff in school!”

“Are there materials on this so I can teach my kids?”

“Why don’t teachers and principals know this stuff!?”

Well, 3 years ago I put out a challenge about this and lo, and behold— Neuro-Semantic Trainers and Meta-Coaches rose up to respond and meet the challenge. What they did was this— they took the basic 3 days of NLP Training (“*Coaching Essentials*”) and the basic 3 days introduction to Meta-States (“*Coaching Genius*”) and wrote it into 40 lessons for each year of school— Grades 1 through 12.

That’s amazing! They did what I could not have done alone. I could never have created NLP and Meta-States for first-graders, second-graders, third-graders, etc. But *together we as a community did it!* Actually there were some 50 people who cared about this donated their time, skill, and effort to get this done. Well done! Meta-High Fives to all of you who contributed.

And now it is ready ... well, it is ready in English. And it is the first version of the materials. And that means this:

We need people in every country and language group *to translate it into other languages.*
We need people to keep refining the materials.

The Theme: We put the materials of NLP and Meta-States into a theme which we believe will be readily applicable and relevant and inspiration — ***Self-Leadership***. What does this mean? It means that the materials are put into the format of enabling children to —

- Learning how to “run their own brains.”
- To discover how their brain processes information best—which will make them the best learner they can be.
- To take charge of their learning so that they have *inspirational reasons why to learn*.
- Discover their *powers* for learning and developing and so feel empowered, in charge of themselves.
- And that will reduce “bullying” and enable them to not be pushed around.

Discover how to be a leader of themselves ... week after week for 40 weeks in a year, and year after year— 12 years. So that by the end, they will be good critical thinkers, empowered, able to step in and out of their “flow” or “genius” states. Exciting, isn’t it?! I think so.

And now we are making this material available to **you** — as a licensed **Meta-Coaches** as we have with the Neuro-Semantic Trainers. Why? Because both the Trainers and the Meta-Coaches will be among the first persons who will be taking this to Schools—School Principals, Teachers, Administrators and invite them to add this to their curriculum. The Trainers will need to train the teachers on how to use with their classes, they will also need Meta-Coaches to help coach them with it.

Selling it: We are asking for 1 hour a week. That's all. 1 hour. We will provide all of the materials. The School Project is a project of *The International Society of Neuro-Semantics* (ISNS) which is in 41 countries and is a Non-Profit Contribution. A Non-Profit, Educational Charity is set up in South Africa ... and governed by a Guiding Committee of the ISNS. The prototype of the program was experienced by a School in Johannesburg, South Africa and overseen by Nizam Kalla, CEO of AMKA Company.

Investment: The royalty charge for any School that takes on the **Self-Leadership Curriculum** is \$1 per year for each student.

The School will produce the manuals for their students. There is no cost to the School for this. Any school that cannot afford to pay can apply for a payment exemption to **The School Project**. Our desire is to provide the materials as wide and far as possible.

The \$1 royalty charge will go to **The School Project** funds in South Africa to provide for Schools who cannot afford even making copies of the materials.

As a Trainer and/or a Meta-Coach —we encourage you to either train the NLP and APG trainings *pro bono* or for a discount to the schools unless, of course, the School has plenty to invest in the training of their teachers. We believe that as you give in this way, other trainings and opportunities will come your way!

Accessing the Materials: Click on the following — it will bring you to Log In > ISNS School Project <http://www.neurosemantics.com/isns-school-project> Log in information: reachtheworld — metacoaches

I have set this up under this projection so that Neuro-Semantic Trainers and Meta-Coaches only will have access to it. The reason? So that those in leadership roles (Trainers and Coaches) are in charge of it—and this can be *our gift to the world*. So please, do not send out the log-in information. I sent this out to the Trainers group 2 weeks ago, and now to you. When you as a Meta-Coach get this accepted into a School System, most of them will need a Neuro-Semantic Trainer to work with them to train the teachers. This is how we can collaborate.

About Translations:

For those of you translating it and already we have people planning to translate the materials in Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, etc. —would you please arrange to have the Translation put on the website of the Neuro-Semantic Institute in your country and on the international website? And remember, it belongs to all of us – to everyone!

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus# #11
March 15, 2013
A Meta-Coaching Report

THE BALI EXPERIENCE

As we begin this new year, the very first *Coaching Mastery* in 2013 was in Indonesia— Bali specifically. And this was **the 50th** Meta-Coaching Boot Camp! The 50th which means that there are approximately 1,640 Meta-Coaches who have been through this experience. Now we did have the smallest group that we ever have at *Coaching Mastery*, 21, and yet it was —for me—one of the very best.

Why? Well, we had an excellent Assist Team which I attribute to Mariani and Basian because they called them together and prepared them ... and all except one was from Indonesia and 9 from the previous *Coaching Mastery*. Think about that! From the first class we had 9 return to be on the team! I think that's great. Nor was it that the team was especially skilled—they were not that skilled, we have had teams comprised of people who had returned 4 to 7 times. But what we had was a group of people with a passionate attitude for learning, openness, and receptivity which rivals any other group we have ever had. And when I said, "Another practice session?" They all enthusiastically said, "Yes!"

I found the same attitude in the participants. So whereas in many groups we have to send many, many days de-emphasizing "the score" and singing the Mantra, "You are more than your score!" and, "It's just a matter of time." That was not an issue here. Instead, I saw true celebration from people even on Day 7 when I gave feedback that they were operating at a 1.2 level on a given skill ... along with detailed descriptive feedback. They were absolutely grateful and even excited to receive information about "what to do next!"

Then there were the Indonesian people at the venue. I would finish a coffee or something at breakfast and a person would come by, ask if I'd like more, "Yes, thank you." And when they returned with a coffee, they would say "Thank you." And I would say "thank you" and then they would say "thank you" to my thank you for their thank you. And then I would say thank you for your gracious responsiveness, and they would thank me for my kind words for their thank you of my thank you of their thank you! I thought— If only we could model and import that generous and gracious customer-service attitude to America or Europe or the UK! What a difference that would make!

Here are comments from two of the people who were there, first from Janine Daniels, who did her Meta-Coaching in South Africa and who is now in Singapore and the MCF Region Director there and one of our Team Leaders. Then from Dr. Ken Ho from Sydney Australia. I think that their words will give you a sense of what the experience was like for so many of us.

Here is Janine's blog which she wrote after the event:

“Having just returned from a 12 day trip to Bali, where I assisted as a Team Leader on the Meta-Coach Mastery Training, I find I have renewed appreciation for the basics. As in any profession, coaches define their skills (their ‘how to’) in concrete terms. We need to know what to do, why, when, where, with whom and how. It’s not a random conversation— but a fierce one that is structured to really get to the heart of the matter. And so, like in any profession, continuing education is vital to maintaining our edge and skill level.

And I have just had a skill fest. Not only was there a requirement to model the skills, competencies and attitude of a coach, but as a team leader, I had the opportunity to step up and lead a strong group of leaders in their field. People who are used to leading, not following. And then I got to benchmark their skills, looking at the structure of their coaching sessions, stretching their skill level and supporting them as best I could. And in return, they taught me. In so many different ways, every person I interacted with taught me about disclosure and reminded me how vital emotional connection is.

For a few months, I have been aware of a discontent deep within me. Not for anything material— but for the return of my essence. I have taken myself and what I do so seriously that it’s given me a hard edge. So whilst my intention to contribute as much as I am able has been good, it has resulted in a dis-ease at my core.

I realised this week that I could sum up in one word how I’ve been feeling. And that word would be ‘impatient’. It stops me from living in the present as I continually focus on ‘what else’ I need to or want to do. It sets my body on edge and stops me from connecting lovingly and joyfully with my world and the people in it.

I remarked last night to Michael that the Indonesian people leave me humbled at their ability to connect and live life wholeheartedly. Time after time this week, I observed people jumping into each other’s photographs, dancing without inhibition, hugging each other with full embraces, and laughing from their toes. I felt so welcomed into a community of people that I’d never met before and received gifts of love from so many special people, that I leave this beautiful island filled with a sense of peace and love. I leave with special memories as to how precious our hearts are, and the value that truly suspending time and connecting with another human being brings. And yes, I also leave with coaching skills that have deepened and sharpened – and I’m ready for some serious action.

And here is Ken’s comments:

“Wow Janine ... ditto, ditto, ditto!! You have summed it up so well re. the 8 days in Bali. I feel inspired by the energy and passion you and the 'team of leaders' showed throughout the boot camp!

Thanks to Michael Hall ... he's got more than the '10,000 hour' expertise, his mastery in his craft and content is evident by Awe that kept us in full attention the whole 8 days. It is with profound Appreciation that I again thank organizers Mariani and Basion to put on this event. Bali is already a magical place, now made even more special because of my experience of Meta-coaching there. I was privileged to share the 'trenches' of coaching, being coached and being benchmarked with our special group. The Acceptance of this process has given me such a strong bond of mateship with my many new friends.

The laughs and tears throughout the week reminded me again and again, what small wonders

only is required to change a mindset or a unresourceful behavior. Thank you all for sharing and caring.”

We have many, many more *Coaching Mastery* programs this year — in April Sydney Australia and Oslo Norway, in May Hong Kong, in June and July Mexico City, In August Rio de Janerio Brazil, in Oct./November South Africa, Auckland, New Zealand, and Paris France, and in December Guangzhou China.

2013 Meta-Coach License Renewals

To this day, we (Omar Salom, MCF President 2013, Germaine Rediger, and myself) have received over 140 Meta-Coaches renewing their license ...

China and Hong Kong Meta-Coaches and Meta-Coaching

I just completed in Shanghai and Hong Kong several *Meta-Coach Presentations*. In Shanghai to Managers and Coaches and want-to-be-coaches about the field of Coaching and Meta-Coaching and the Axes of Change which the questions turned it to coaching Managers on Managing. In Hong Kong to Engineers about Meta-Coaching in Six Sigma and Lean Organizations. There I discovered the importance of doing my own selecting of volunteers for a process rather than having someone volunteered— and especially in Hong Kong! It was great to see all of the Meta-Coaches who showed up and both their developing skills and their passion for expanding the Meta-Coach Brand.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #12
March 19, 2013
ACMC Event

EXPANDING META-COACHING IN HONG KONG

Attention Meta-Coaches in Hong Kong! I need your help! “For what?” you ask. To help us expand Meta-Coaching as the Coach Training of Choice in Hong Kong!

This May in Hong Kong we will have our 4th program and for the first time we have a real live *Expert Coach* coming to *Coaching Mastery*. Thanks to Michelle Tanmizi for helping us find some experts in the field of Coaching in the Hong Kong area, and we have invited Steve Ellis to come to be interviewed and modeled. This is new and a sign that the field of Coaching is maturing in that part of the world.

So I need your help and make this *personal request to all of the Meta-Coaches* in the Hong Kong, China, and Phillippines area: Would you help us to people to *Coaching Mastery* this year? We need high quality people who would make great Coaches. We need Trainers and Consultants who want to add Coaching to their skill set. We need senior managers, CEOs, and business owners who want to use Coaching as a methodology for leadership.

I have encouraged Mandy and her team a APTI (Asia Professional Training Institute) who has sponsor *Coaching Mastery* in Hong Kong three times —to make a special effort to get those who have graduated from Module III to return to enrich and deepen their Coaching Skills. The reason is that we need *truly qualified Meta-Coaches* there —those who will set the pace for Coaching in the Hong Kong region.

To this date, I don’t think we have a single person who has made Coaching his or her full-time profession ... and that’s in part because Coaching is just now coming into its own as a separate profession. And there is still many in organizations and corporates who confuse Coaching with Consulting, with Therapy, with Training, etc.

The fact is —the first persons who present themselves as Coaches in a new city or country are the ones who get to *define Coaching* and I would love to see Meta-Coaches doing that. As Meta-Coaches, *you are the representatives of the Meta-Coach System* so who you are and how you work is the very best advertisement for Meta-Coaching! That makes *you* the Brand! So I need you to recommend other coaches and people who would make great coaches to come to the trainings.

Here’s something else that I need your help in doing—to build a great Assist Team. If you read what I wrote about Bali recently, you know that being *on the team* gives you experience in Group and Team Coaching and can be a great way to review Coaching Mastery. And, you will get some extra days of Training in Meta-Coaching and especially in the skills of receiving and giving feedback.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus# #13
March 20 2013

YOUR META-COACH BRAND

The design of the *Meta-Coach Foundation* (MCF) is to create a way for *you*, as a Meta-Coach to work on creating and developing your *brand* in your city and country. Michelle Duval launch **MCF** in 2003 as a non-profit organization— an association of licensed Meta-Coaches— to provide support of the coaches and promotion of Meta-Coaching.

- How does this work?
- How can you use the MCF chapters for your own personal support as a Meta-Coach?
- How can you use it to promote the Meta-Coaching System in your city and country?

Realized first and foremost two things. First, *your skills as a coach is the heart and soul of the value that you give to clients*. This makes your coaching skills critical— essential — non-trivial. And when you graduate with ACMC, you are just at the beginning of your development. The 2.5 benchmark means that you have sufficient skill to do a good job, it also means that you are still a long way from full competency of “3” for the seven core skills. So you need more development. And that’s what the MCF chapters are for— to give you continual improvement, learning, and practice.

If you are serious about developing as a high quality coach— get to every MCF practice that you can. Of course, be joyfully serious. Be delightfully serious. But be serious. What you give to an individual client and a corporate client is your *abilities, skills, and competencies in facilitating the processes for unleashing potentials*. How skilled are you? How much more skilled can you become?

I’m often asked about the rigor and the high standards that we have set for the foundational levels in Meta-Coaching. ICF standards and others do not have those standards even for their “Master” Coaches. “Why the high standards? Why be so rigorous with them?” The reason is that a Coach is judged and evaluated *by the marketplace* by his or her skills! That’s why. Most people really do not care about how many degrees, certifications, or testimonies you have. They care about what you can *do* with them in the Coaching Conversation.

Second, *your skills will deteriorate if you do not keep them fresh and sharp*. It is inevitable. And I see it all the time. Team Leaders and benchmarkers return and I can tell you in just a couple minutes of watching them coach and benchmark *if they have been practicing*. If they have not regularly and consistently been practicing, they will have dropped a good bit under the 2.5 mark. And sometimes this can be a real shock to them when they get their feedback on their actual behavior.

Why would they be shocked? Ah, this is the subtlety of the deterioration of skills. It is so subtle that most people will not notice the slow, ever so slight deterioration week by week. But

deteriorate they will— *unless* you are regularly practicing and *unless* you are getting precise and challenging feedback that allows you to know what to “deliberately practice” and work on.

These are the reasons that *you* need to be involved in a MCF Chapter and if there is not a chapter where you live— for *you* to start one! And every licensed Meta-Coach has the right to start one. So, you are excuse-less. And if there are not other Meta-Coaches around you, invite Coaches from other training systems. Invite friends, invite want-to-be-coaches, invite trainers, invite people who know NLP, who know some other discipline. So again, you are excuse-less. It is up to your initiative, your proactivity, your commitment to yourself.

Yet the MCF Chapters can do more. You can use them to not only practice, to finish the ACMC credentials, to prepare yourself for PCMC, to learn new and more advanced skills, you can use the practice to support you in your business skills. You and the others can spend time sharing information about the local market, about organizations, conferences, and so on. You can work out your business plans, you can set up your own MCF Conference — half a day, full day, etc. It is up to your creativity!

And there’s more. You can use the MCF Chapters to invite HR people, business owners, CEOs and anyone interested in learning more about the field of Coaching, about Meta-Coaching, about seeing Meta-Coaches in action. In other words, you can use it to show-case what you do! You can show-case Meta-Coaching skills. You can let people come and experience it as clients. There are so many ways that the MCF Chapter can become a key way to promote Meta-Coaching in your city.

Are you getting the idea? You do not have to wait until someone provides the leadership, you can step up to leadership yourself. And this is one of our themes in Neuro-Semantics— we believe that leadership is functional and situational and that there are many, many dimensions of leadership. So in this situation— and the functions required— there are all kinds of opportunities to practice your leadership.

So *be the Brand* of Meta-Coaching where you are! Set the *brand* of high quality, high standards, and peak performance abilities as a result of the Meta-Coaching System that you have learned.

From: L. Michael Hall

2013 Morpheus #14

March 27, 2013

[I wrote this originally for the Trainers' Egroup Reflections, but thought it would be valuable for the Meta-Coaches.]

AVOIDING MIS-REPRESENTATIONS

In the last week, I have written many emails (a dozen or more) to three different individuals on different parts of the planet about *mis-representation*. Technically all three of the individuals that I dealt with did not mis-represent themselves. Technically. If you looked at the words very precisely, they did not. I agree. They did not.

Yet at another level, there was the implication of misrepresentation. That is, a customer or client reading the advertisement (and everything I was dealing with regarding the three individuals had to do with marketing and advertisement) would *more than likely misread* and *misunderstand*. And that's the point. If there is a strong likelihood that people would get a false impression and operate under a false understanding— then it would be a mis-representation.

Example #1. Everything we do in NLP Practitioner and Coaching Mastery meets and far exceeds the ICF competencies. Yet if you write that and put that out on your website or about your training, people will get the idea that your training is ICF approved. They will. Most people will not read that carefully. They will not read the fine print or read for the exact phraseology. They will get an impression, and they will operate from that impression. So you and I, if we are professional communicators which we claim ourselves to be, need to go the second mile and be crystal clear in what we say and what we mean and do not mean by what we write.

After you say, yes, this meets and it even far exceeds ICF standards, write, "This is not a training that is approved of by the ICF."

"If you take it, you will not have a training by an ICF approved training company, you will have to use the profile pathway for getting your ICF credentials. This will require one more step. And we have already created the paperwork you'll need to submit."

This is being explicit, overt, and upfront and going the second mile to be crystal clear, and it is what professionals do. Why? Because we have nothing to hide, nothing to be ashamed of, and because we glory in telling the truth.

Example #2: Advertising your prices. Now what you should never do about prices is enter a market where there are other Trainers offering the same thing and try to under-cut them by under-selling them. That is just not ethical and not the way to win a market. If you want to win a market, raise *the quality of your training* so that the value you is far outstanding over those who are in the field.

Example #3: Leaving out your sources. Then there was the advertisement for training in the Axes of Change. And while there was mention of Meta-Coaching, there was no indication that the training was not a certified training or that the training is the intellectual property of the ISNS and the MCF. What ideas would people get from the advertisement? Would people come away thinking that it would “count” for further training in Meta-Coaching? Would they think that this model of generative change was created by the person delivering the training? How could people *misunderstand*? By asking ourselves that question, we can do due diligence about preventing misunderstandings and communicating with more clarity and precision. And isn't that the field that we are in? Shouldn't we be applying that to ourselves?

Now talking about misrepresentations, here's another one on another subject. A Meta-Coach recently handed me copies of the first chapter of a book titled, “Matrix Energetics” written by a Chiropractor who now claims healing powers and the ability to tap into the quantum level. The sad and pathetic thing is that he “thanks his teacher, Dr. Richard Bandler” for this! And that's all he said. If I didn't know better, I would assume that Dr. Richard Bandler was one of his sources for Matrix Energetics! But of course, he was not.

He then refers to the field of Quantum Mechanics to lend “credibility” to his claims and William Tiller who wrote the Preface wrote, “At present, only our unconscious is aware of this new magnetic information wave level of physical reality that functions at superluminal velocities ...” Wow! That sounds impressive. But wait. What does that mean? “Only our unconscious is aware...”! And what is that supposed to mean? How can your *unconscious* be *aware* if it is *unconscious*? And this is supposed to be “The Science and Art of Transformation”! Actually, it is a new age guy wanting to believe in “energy” forms that we can't explain but we can tap into and use from the quantum level!

And since I'm on the subject of mis-representations — here is a link that exposes the mis-representation of Richard Bandler. Richard finished his Master's Degree but never returned to any University anywhere to continue his education and yet you will find everywhere that he and others refer to him as “Dr.” As noted in the following link, this is a complete mis-representation. I've known this for years, and have always wondered why someone who is a “genius” would need to booster his image with a “Dr.” when it is not true?

<http://www.fakedoctorate.blogspot.sg/2013/03/richard-bandler-co-founder-of-nlp-phd.html?m=1>

Every Professional community cares about protecting its identity and brand and so establishes mechanisms where that community can govern and police itself. After all, when a community will not do that, outside forces will! If and when you see an advertisement, website, promotion, etc. that does not accurately hold the values and visions of Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching, or even those that have things that can be misunderstood, let myself or one of the leadership know about it. This form of mutual and peer accountability that will enable all of us to live up to our Vision and Mission.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #15
April 4, 2013

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOUR CLIENT HAS AN ANTI-LEARNING PROGRAM?

I recently read several books by Chris Argyris, an original thinker about management, leadership, learning, change, etc. I was particularly interested when he described an anti-learning process which he called “a defensive structure.” Such defensive structures can be in both individuals and groups and as such work as formidable obstacles against learning. It is not only that we do not learn, it is that in such conditions, we *cannot* learn. There are structure that *prevent* learning. It operates like an antidote to learning.

Now have you ever had those kind of thoughts about another person, a client, a group (an organization or company) or even about yourself?

“What’s wrong with him, can’t he ever learn?” “I’ve told her a dozen times and she still doesn’t seem to get it!” “The group just keeps having the same argument over and over and we don’t ever seem to learn or move on. What’s going on?”

If you have ever experienced a situation like that, there is a strong likelihood that an anti-learning program (frame) was at work at a meta-level operating outside-of-conscious awareness. If the behaviors, languaging, and responses keep happening and it seems like learning is never achieved, it would probably be a good guess that there is a governing frame that is actually forbidding it.

Now if this is the case, how could a person or a group get themselves into that kind of quandary? Surely no individual or group would set something like that up on purpose! Would they? Surely, that kind of a thing would have to come about inadvertently, accidentally, and as an unexpected consequence of something else. But what?

This is where Argyris’ description of it as a “defensive structure” is so useful. This suggests that the structure is there *defending* us against something. It must be a *defense against some threat or danger*. Given that, what would be some threat or danger to learning? Would it not be that *what* we would learn would be a perceived threat to our sense of self whether to ourselves or in the presence of others? So let’s make a list. It could be a threat or danger to —

- Being right: What if we learn that we are wrong about something?
- Being honest: What if we learn that we have been dishonest about something? That we lied, or betrayed a value?
- Being moral: What if we learn that we have done someone wrong? Violated them or hurt them in some way?

- Being ineffective: What if we learn that our hard work and extra hours amounted to nothing, was ineffective, didn't achieve our objectives, etc.?
- Being less than we thought: What if we learn that our management was just mediocre, our leadership was less than inspiring, that the role that we cared so much about has been a disappointment?

In these ways and many more, what if we discover something which we do not want to discover about ourselves? Can we face the truth? Can we embrace a negative evaluation about ourselves or something we did or cared about? Ah, yes, it is here at these kinds of things that we most often find ourselves weak and vulnerable *and so we build up defenses against them*. We do not want to *learn* about such. Such things are “hard” truths— things are hard to hear, hard to see, and hard to say.

And, besides, we want to be positive, don't we? We want to be an optimist, to look on the bright side of things, to be hopeful, and encouraging, and we don't want to be a gloom-and-doom type of person, so it is in this way that we inadvertently and not-intentionally build up assumptive frames that work outside of our awareness to keep these hard truths away from us. And it is these defensive structures that operate as anti-learning programs.

Now does any of this have any relevance to coaching? You bet it does! This now gives you another distinction to make regarding your clients. It gives you more questions to ask:

What do you want to learn? What learning do you need to make to be more successful?

What do you need to un-learn? What old learnings are now in the way?

What do you fear learning? What anti-learning tendencies or frames might be holding you back from learning?

Picking up on the double loop of learning from Bateson and the MRI group, Argyris talked about superficial learning. This occurs when a person learns too fast. Well, at least it seems too fast. Something happens and a person quickly jumps to a conclusion, makes a new learning, and off he goes. Yet if there is no double-loop of learning, that is, no stepping back to examine the frames you used in your first learning, no asking, “What framed led me to draw the conclusions that I did?” “How did I interpret things in that way?” “How accurate or useful is that?” then the first learnings may be too shallow, too superficial, and unuseful in the long run.

As a coach you facilitate learning and as a Meta-Coach you facilitate people *learning to learn*. And now you have some more distinctions that you can use, do you not?

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #16
April 11, 2013

GROUP COACHING AND THE SETTING OF GOALS

Someone asked me recently, “Where can I get practice doing group and team coaching?” I said, “At your local MCF chapter.” They said, “I don’t have one.” I said, “Great, that’s even better! You get to start the group, call people together who are interested in coaching, and coach that group to become a team of highly interested people!” He said, “I can do that?” I said, “I don’t know, can you?”

Yes, I knew that he was actually asking if he had the right to start an MCF chapter and, just as we say in *Coaching Mastery*, in the tone of voice of Obama, “*Yes you can!*” So, if you want to practice group and team coaching, why not start with your local MCF chapter? A “group” can be as small as 2 or 3 people so if that’s all you have, you have enough to start. Okay. So, how do you start?

Set a goal of course. Engage in an outcome conversation with the small group of people until you co-create some outcome that you, as a group, would like to achieve. So just as with an individual, keep asking the “What do we want?” question. Then ask the “Why do we want that?” What makes a group a dynamic and cohesive group is a shared goal— something big enough to require the participation of several people. If you can do it yourself, you don’t need a group. But if the goal is bigger than you, then you have a performance challenge that can energize you *as a group*.

Now when it comes to goals, beware of this— there are several kinds of goals that groups set and they are not all equal. The most common goal that businesses and organization sets are *financial goals*. These goals are all about the money. Then there are *activity goals*— goals that we set which gets us engaged in doing things. Now the problem with activity goals is that groups can get busy doing stuff, and doing stuff, and doing stuff—but that’s all that happens, people are busy doing stuff. And for what? What’s the purpose? What’s the big why?

The best kind of goals, the kind of goals that energize people and that create communities are goals that fulfill some performance challenge— *performance goals*. If your goal is to “go to the gym,” then the activity of “going to the gym” may seduce you into thinking that you are reaching some goal. But what? If, however, your goal is to “increase your fitness level as measured by losing ten pounds and being able to jog for 30 minutes” then you have a performance challenge.

I was at the gym in Sheridan Hotel this morning when I looked over at two guys who were on the treadmill reading the newspaper! They were walking slower than a bride could possible saunter down an aisle in a state wedding! Reading the morning paper, they had to go slow enough so that they could actually see the words and not shake the paper too much. Well, they were busy. They were doing stuff in the gym. Reaching a *performance goal* though, I don’t think so!

So for your MCF chapter— don't merely set *activity goals* like meeting twice a month, instead set a performance challenge— to introduce the Meta-Coaching System to 50 people this month, to 3 organizations this month, to move my benchmark score from a 2.5 to a 2.7 on Listening. This doesn't mean that you should not have any activity goals. They are fine. They are especially fine within a performance challenge so that there is a challenge to actually step up to being able to *do* something new or more.

What does your client want? More money. Okay, that's fine. But what is the performance challenge that will increase the likelihood of making more money which is above and beyond a mere financial goal? To find two more ways this month to add value to the lives of my clients. To go out of my way and surprise three people this month in giving them extra value for money. If you create performance goals like these, your focus will be on what *you are doing*, not on what you want to *get*. And that will make a big difference in your attitude.

For your MCF chapter, why not set a performance challenge of creating a Self-Actualizing Group? Now there's an idea! Suppose you set the performance challenge that once a month, your MCF chapter holds a

Self-Actualizing Encounter Group. You conduct the group around the theme of *unleashing*. You begin by doing a "round" conversation by going round the group and asking each person to answer, "What do you want to unleash in yourself in the next 30 days?" The person has to be specific enough so that in 30 days there can be a measurement.

"In 30 days I will be more released from my dependence and neediness on the approval of others. I will take 3 chances to say something in this group or to someone in my life for which someone might criticize me. I will begin to make a list of these things and continue until I have 30 things on the list."

The Self-Actualizing Encounter Group could meet more often, but even if it only meets once a month, then as you coach the group to be a cohesive group and eventually become a team, you gain incredible experience in *coaching a group*.

When it comes to coaching a group of people, many new factors enter into other picture. These *group dynamics* are the social energies that arise when people come together and relate to the Others Matrix:

Will I be included? Will I have any influence in the group? How will I handle it if the majority don't see things my way? Do I like the leader? Is the leadership distributed in the group or is it located permanently in one person? Are we having fun? Is it all work? Are the conversations boring and trivial or challenging, insightful, and fierce?

Here's to your Coaching Excellence!

See you at the coaching excellence conference in Kuala Lumpur in June!

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #17
April 15, 2013

GUIDELINES FOR GIVING FEEDBACK

It is great to see various Meta-Coaches developing new materials that contribute to this field. Below is Emilia's development of step-by-step instructions for giving feedback which she developed in the MCF Chapter in Mexico City. And attached is the latest form of the Feedback Sheet for benchmarking which we use in Meta-Coaching. Tom Kelsall (tom@soulfarmer.com.au) developed the new adjustments during/ after the Training in Sydney this past week. I added them yesterday to create Form 27. If you are doing benchmarking in your MCF Chapter meetings— use this one! Designed by Maria Emilia Coria Bleck [mecbleck@hotmail.com]

1. Sit next to the person whom you are going to give feedback.
Sit in rapport.
2. Set frames for feedback. Example:
“Thanks for allowing me to observe your session and for allowing me to give you feedback. I appreciate the opportunity to learn with you. I am going to give you feedback due to what I could see and hear in the session. While I did not hear or see everything, this is what I did and can offer to you...”
3. Hold the Feedback Form so the coach can see it and see the levels that you point to.
4. Mention the ability (or skill) that you are going to refer to, i.e., Support, Listening, etc.
5. Mention the sub-skill and the level (the number on the scale) where it is located.
6. Mention the examples of the behaviors that you saw or heard of the sub-skill
Example:
“In the skill of Support, in the sub-skill of Setting Frames which is at level 2.5, I heard that you set the frame of time when you said that the session will last 30 minutes, you also set a frame about Interruptions when you said 'I will be interrupting you in this way,' and the frame of Internal Resources when you said, 'I start from the assumption that all of my clients have all the resources that they need.’”
7. Continue to mention the other sub-skills of the level you are referring to with their examples. Cover all the sub-skills of that level, whether you have seen or heard something about that sub-skill or not. In case that you have not seen or heard any behavior of that sub-skill, mention that too. Example:
“In the sub-skill of Acknowledgment, I did not hear that you mentioned something when the client said X ... that could be a great opportunity to make an Acknowledgment.”

8. If the coach showed a behavior that's at a lower level, mention the specific examples and mention the level. Let the coach know that those are behaviors that lower the competency level. If you did not see or hear behaviors of lower levels mention that too. Example:

“I did not see you interrupting, I did not hear any paraphrasing, I did not see you making no visual contact.”

9. If the coach showed behaviors of upper levels, mention the specific examples and mention the level where it is located. Let the coach know that those behaviors raise his or her level of competency and encourage him to continue doing them.

10. If the coach did not show upper level behaviors, mention what he or she can start doing and give examples. Example:

“When the client said X, you could have said X which belongs to the sub-skill of FBI Meta-Question, which is in level 3.5.”

11. Continue with the next skills one by one and do the same as steps 4 to 10.

12. Count the behaviors, define and mention the level where the coach was operating. And say something like: “Regarding to the amount of behaviors, the level which you are operating is ...” Follow the criteria of the table:

0 MINUTE SESSION:	QUANTITATIVE	QUALITATIVE
SUPPORTING	Level 3 – 30 marks Level 2.5 – 20-25 marks	“what” acknowledges, “what” celebrates, etc. “How” acknowledges, “how” celebrates, etc. “weight”
LISTENING	Level 3 – 30 marks Level 2.5 – 20-25 marks	“What” and “how” makes Word tracking? “weight”
QUESTIONING	Level 2.5 – at least 7 WFO Q’s and enough to explore and probe.	“weight”
META-QUESTIONING	15 meta-questions	“weight”
STATE INDUCTION	1 state each 5 minute	“weight”

**Note: Meta-Coaching refers to getting to the heart of things, mobilizing resources, facilitating change, unleashing potentials. With all of these in mind, has the coach demonstrated the ability to do that by listening, supporting, questioning, etc? To what extent?*

13. Mention the strengths and mention two sub-skills which the coach should focus on. Write this on the Feedback Form.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #18
April 15, 2013
ACMC Event

COACHING FOR COMMUNITY AND FROM COMMUNITY

I always enjoy *Coaching Mastery* and probably the amazing thing about it is that I enjoy it for a number of different reasons. This last week in Sydney, the thing that I really appreciated about it was the *sense of community* that had been created and that continued to grow throughout the days. This is one of our primary purposes in Meta-Coaching—to create a community of professional men and women around the world who both live and present the Meta-Coaching way of doing things. And we are doing it—there are now 1,664 Meta-Coaches on the planet. That is also the reason for the MCF chapters all around the world.

It is not often that I walk away from a training with a real strong sense of community, not as I did this time. The thanks for this goes to the two guys who led out this year for the first time—Jay Hedley and Joseph Scott of *The Coaching Room*. Now while I generally believe in people, I have to confess that I didn't believe that they would pull *that* off. Typically the first time out in sponsoring Meta-Coaching, those in the sponsoring role are so caught up in all of the logistics and modules and other things, that there's hardly time left to think about the *spirit* that one is creating. This was not the case with Jay and Joe—the Js as they call themselves. They truly delivered on creating a strong sense of community among the people that came through *Coaching Essentials* and *Coaching Genius*. So, well done guys!

Community lies at the heart of Neuro-Semantics because we know that it is as important as it is rare. Yet community something that we humans do not seem to do very well; it is also something that the field of NLP sucks at. We are much better at creating competition than community. We are much better at focusing on individuals and empowering individuals than creating a community where all are welcomed and that is able to tap into the synergy of bringing together diverse and complementary skills. We are much more masterful at getting into conflicts, disagreeing, taking things personal, and throwing grown-up tantrums than collaborating for community.

What leads me to think that Jay and Joe created a lot of the spirit of community and collaboration? For one thing, we set up the next ACMC (Oct. 2014) and they communicated their vision of having 70 at the next *Coaching Mastery* with 30 on the Assist Team and while there, 14 people signed up to be trained over the next year-and-a-half in benchmarking coaching sessions. It was also great to have 6 or so Meta-Coaches revisit ... one revisiting from 2004!

As an expression of the Neuro-Semantic Community supporting *Coaching Mastery* we had three Meta-Coaches come last week in Sydney. We had Graham Richardson, Shane Stewart, and Heidi Heron as our expert coaches—another wonderful sign of collaboration as all three returned

to Meta-Coaching to share how they do business and make coaching work as a livelihood. So I had the privilege again of interviewing them. Graham also did a coaching session, this time it lasted some 45 minutes— which you can find online.

Part 1 <https://vimeo.com/63869897>

Part 2 <https://vimeo.com/63989280>

The *Coaching Mastery* training in Sydney went very well. It seemed that we went through more kleenex boxes than usual and that the majority experienced some pretty big transformations in their lives.

In terms of community, we had a really excellent Assist Team for leading the teams and benchmarking. The attitude and spirit of the team was everything I could hope for— it was as positive as the team in Bali a few weeks ago — so we are really starting out 2013 with some excellent teams! As in Bali, I saw them extending themselves beyond the hours, devoting time and energy to answering questions, running patterns, etc. And because we were short 2, Lena Gray from New Zealand flew over and helped out as another benchmarker —and significantly contributed to the whole experience! And as she said in the Graduation Ceremony, “We are changing lives one conversation at a time.”

I am now anticipating that there will be some MCF chapters in Melbourne and in Brisbane and in other places around Australia. The Chapter in Sydney has been running 20 people and Jay and Joe have plans for live-streaming it so that others around the country can “tune into it” online. And Femke told me recently that she’s set up one of her virtual Chapters so that it fits the time zone there.

As an aside, prior to *Coaching Mastery*, Susie Linder-Pelz along with Penny Tompkins and James Lawley recorded 6 ninety-minute coaching sessions by some Meta-Coaches with “fresh, virgin” clients for a research project that we are all collaborating on. Susie is the master-mind of this and is keeping it hush-hush so that I don’t even know what’s been studied. I’m doing the benchmarking, James and Penny will somehow in some way apply Clean Language to it ... and in the end, Susie will write Research Papers on it and present it to the next NLP Research Conference.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #19
April 24, 2013

COACHING CLIENTS TO SPECIFY THEIR OUTCOMES

As you know, the *first question* in Coaching and especially in Meta-Coaching, is “What do you want?” And that’s because the client sets the agenda. So we ask—

- What do you really, *really* want from this session?
- What can we explore and create that will have the most transformative difference for you?
- What do you want from this session that will improve the quality of your life?

Recently, however, I have heard some coaches *mis-use* these questions. Now if you had asked me prior to the benchmarking sessions that I did *if* a person could *misuse* such questions, I would have probably said, “No, probably not; at least I can’t even imagine that.” But now having seen them misused, here is another distinction to add to your repertoire of how to conduct a coaching session.

The Misuse of the “What do you want?” Question

What I observed from several coaches in several coaching sessions was the following. The coach would ask this question, “What do you want?” The client would offer either a statement or a story indicating that they wanted something. Sometimes it was clear, but more often than not, vague and convoluted. After that the client would then described more about his or her life situation, and then the coach would ask the *What do you want?* question again. This led the client to identify another outcome. The client would explain some more, the coach would then again ask, *What do you want?*, the client would offer another outcome. And so it would go. For the whole session! By the end, the client had specified numerous things (5 to 8 things) that he or she wanted and the session ended without actually coaching to any of those outcomes or even getting clear about what the client really wanted.

What is the misuse here? It could be several things: The lack of inferential listening, the lack of testing questions, the lack of an acknowledgment with a focused inquiry about the outcome, and/or the lack of grounding the outcome.

Testing Questions enables you, as a Coach, to ground the outcome into a commitment. These *yes-no questions* test the decision and commitment of the client:

“So you want to work on dealing with your anger? That’s what you want most?”

“So the best use of our time today is to focus on answering the why question, ‘Why do you always end up spending your money and saving nothing?’”

Grounding Questions then enable you to follow-up and get sensory-based information from that commitment and then you can follow-up with another testing question:

“So what will you see or hear or feel when you have ‘dealt with your anger?’ What will

that look like or sound like? If I saw you in a situation that triggers your anger and you have dealt with it, what would I see in you? How would you be responding? ... [answer] and that's what you want from this session?"

"So when you get the answer to the *why* question, you will have explanations about the context, the situation, the beliefs, the drives, the frames within you that stimulate and trigger you to spend and not save? And that's worth your time and effort? ;;; [response] ... and after you get the *why* you will be able to change things? ... ["No.?"] Oh, so is that what you want, to be able to change your spending habits and start a saving habit?"

The last example also includes *inferential listening*. Implied in the statement about wanting to know why is wanting to know why *so that* I can change things. Why else would the client bring it up? The client has not said it explicitly, but it is there implicitly. It is implied. So you can *infer* it from the statement. The client may not even know that he or she has *implied* it. So when you present it and ask about it, you are using your *inferential listening to offer feedback and test how it sets with a client*.

[*Infer*: to derive as a conclusion from facts or premises, guess, surmise, hint, suggest. Infer implies arriving at a conclusion by reasoning from evidence. *Imply, implication*: to involve or indicate by inference, association, or necessary consequence rather than by direct statement, to contain potentially.]

Inferential listening is deep listening to what is *implied* within the client's statements. It is more than just listening to the surface words of a client. To do it requires that you put that as a question in the back of your mind:

What is my client suggesting, hinting at, implying, etc.? What is implied but not said overtly by this statement?

Finally, make an acknowledgment of what the client says, then offer a focused description of the outcome and inquire if this is what the person wants. This is a pace, pace, pace, *lead* pattern.

"So I hear that your quickness to anger in some situations at work has not served you well and you want to deal with the speed of going into an anger state so that you can slow it down and shift to a state in which you can be less reactive and more able to listen and carry on a conversation, is that what you want?"

"So you want to create a way to shift from your pattern of spending and develop a new habit of saving, you'd like to understand some of the old frames and motivations that have kept the old pattern intact, and you'd like to shift them to create new frames and motivations that will support a new habit, is that right?"

Anticipate that you might not have it just right, and ask the client to explicitly correct any part of it that is not right. Once you hear something that the client wants, do this repeatedly. Iterate this process over and over helping the client to formulate what they want. The misuse of the *What do you want?* question arises from assuming that the client already has a well-formed description of the problem to solve or the challenge to take up. The client probably does not! And that's good —after all, that's why the client needs you as a Meta-Coach to help formulate that.

So when a client answers the *What do you want?* question, acknowledge it, test it, and ground it. Then hold it as the client's outcome frame until or when the client changes it.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #20
May 1, 2013

ON BEING A DIRECTIVE COACH

“What do you do in coaching as a Coach— should you be directive or non-directive?” This was the question that a Meta-Coach in Sydney asked to me recently after some of the benchmarking sessions. Part of the reason for the question was the low marks he made in the coaching session. He thought he was “holding the space,” “being respectful,” “listening intently,” etc. but the person who benchmarked him wrote on the “Next Step” section to step up and be more active in the session. So he asked me what I thought.

Now in the *Coaching Mastery* manual you will find a whole page on this question (Skill #1: Supporting, page with heading “Directness”, p. 47 in 2013 Edition). There I have two sections, one on indirectness and the other on “Coaching directness.”

The style and skill of being directive involves numerous things. Here are a few:

1) *You need to be direct as a coach in directing the process facilitation.* After all, you are hired to facilitate the client through the processes so the client can change, access resources, and achieve his or her outcome. In other words, *you are hired to lead!* So the coaching conversation ought to be a *dialogue* and not a monologue. That’s why we say that the speaking part of the coach should be between 30 and 50% of the time. Below 30% of the time, the coach is probably too passive and not engaged enough, involved enough, getting the *meaning-to-flow-through* the conversation enough to make the conversation a true “dia-logue.” Above 50% and the coach is too directive and not giving the client sufficient time to talk and express him or herself.

2) *You need to be direct by not letting the client go on and on and on and getting lost in a story.* When that happens, there is far too much that is missed — that’s because there will be far too much not clarified with clarity checks, and too much is not heard and explored to enter into the client’s matrix of frames. After all, this is coaching and not therapy.

3) *You need to be direct by effectively, graciously, and respectfully interrupting them.* Set that as a frame as you begin. “I’m going to interrupt you.” Don’t ask permission to interrupt them. Announce it as a frame as part of what coaching is. With regard to permission, *give yourself* permission to interrupt and reframe it for yourself as a way to truly be caring and engaged. Then practice it until it becomes natural and fits your style. I say, “I’m going to interrupt you because I’m going after your frames and so I won’t need a lot of content.”

4) *You will also need to be direct when it comes to helping your client identify and decide on an outcome for the coaching program and each coaching session.* So when you ask, *What do you want?* you will also need to follow up with some testing and grounding questions (as mentioned last week). That’s if the client actually states something that is wanted. Otherwise, you have to

discern from your inferential listening what the person wants and present that back to him or her. “So if I’m hearing you accurately, you are wanting X. Is that right?” This directs the person to identify something and helps the person put the desire into words.

5) *Directness is also required when you facilitate a client into a state.* Once a state is identified as a desired state by the client, then as a coach being able to step up, provide the accessing, the evoking, and the provoking is critical for enabling/ empowering the client to go into state.

6) *Directness is also required for confronting in the coaching conversation.* To try to soften it, to side-step the issue, usually makes things worse, not better. Directly and in a straightforward way to bring up that which could be upsetting assumes that the client has the ego-strength to deal with it.

7) *You need to be direct when challenging relevancy.* The relevancy challenge is a question about how whatever is being said or done is relevant to the client’s outcome. “Is this relevant? If so, how?”

Framing Yourself for Directness

Here is a series of questions to begin an exploration with yourself and your coaching style if you are not very direct and if you find directness a challenge:

- What resources do you uniquely require in order to step up to being more direct?
- What beliefs do you need about being direct?
- What state or states would enable you to be more direct in a gracious and compassionate way?
- What sense of self or identity would help in being direct?
- Do we not, as Coaches, believe in the client and his or her resourcefulness, ego-strength, and willingness to face the truth?
- Do we not also have the flexibility to adapt as we provide information or a response so that we can adjust ourselves when new information becomes available?

Coaching is about both pacing and leading. In effective coaching you pace, pace, pace, lead. So leading is part of it! Pacing alone means that you are being with your client, connecting, creating rapport, creating the safe space, but *not using that space for transformation*. Here’s to your increasing development of being direct as a Meta-Coach!

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #21
May 8, 2013
ACMC in Oslo Norway

GROWING THE META-COACHING SYSTEM

Last week in Norway we had the largest *Assist Team* of team leaders and benchmarkers that we have ever had in the history of Meta-Coaching. We had 23 people on the Assist Team in Oslo Norway! Now with that size, that made it challenging to find a table big enough for all to sit around and have our evening dinners together. And it made it challenging to work with each person during the two days of preparation when we coached and benchmarked each other. And yet, we pulled it off. Then at the end, just when I was beginning to breathe a sign of relief, Lene began talking about doubling the numbers again for next time. Agggghhhh!

And of the Assist Team — we had people from 9 countries: USA, Canada, El Salvador, Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, Egypt, and Norway. Talk about an international group! And, of course, the more times a person returns to be on the team— I can count on a more mature and highly skilled team.

In Norway, we began with 61 and ended with 58 participants and 23 on the team. That doubled the number of participants in Norway from what we had in 2011. Next January (2014) there will be a small ACMC training as Lene Fjellheim and Femke Stuuut will be running a prototype group of 21 participants for their first joint leading. After that, we will have the next big one in May of 2015, Lene wants 100 participants. That will then require an Assist Team of 35!

Previously, we have had more participants than 60 before. Once we had 83 and on another occasion, 97. But in each case we did not have the support team that could handle that many and keep up the standards. We also did not have the quality of team leaders that could create and deepen the personal connection with that many people. But to my surprise and delight—we achieved that this past week.

One of the things I appreciate about *CoachTeam*, Norwegian sponsor, is that they have raised the bar and they have set a standard of wanting participants to have both Practitioner and Master Practitioner certification in order to come to *Coaching Mastery*. That really deepens the experience for everyone because the coaches-in-training for Meta-Coaching have a pretty rich and extensive background.

During the training, I caught a cold and by Day 4 was highly feverish and feeling so ill I did not even go. Very fortunate for me and for everyone else, Lene and Femke were ready to go and did a marvelous job of presenting *Facilitating Systems* and the Matrix Model. Previously, Femke did a coaching session in front of the group and when I benchmarked her performance, she scored at

2.7 and 2.8 throughout the skills—a really superior presentation!

Another first at this training— the first Meta-Dog to graduate! Yes, I'm kidding. But one of our participants, Anna who uses a seeing-eye dog, brought her dog with her and so Kasper has become the first Meta-Dog having attended all eight days of the Coaching Boot Camp! And with his great big dark brown eyes and seems to catch everything, he probably is seeing as much as the most highly trained Meta-Coach. He probably doesn't know when something is semantically loaded, but at least he sees it!

With this *Coaching Boot Camp*, we have now had three in a row this year in which *community* and *building community* has not only been a strong emphasis and theme, but a reality. First in Bali, then in Sydney, and now in Oslo, if there was something that I think everyone would acknowledge, there was a sense of community and there was that sense in leaving, that one is not alone, but part of a caring community.

And that's is at the essence of the Meta-Coach and Neuro-Semantic *brand*— that what a person receives, experiences, and is called upon to be a part of is a collaborative community.

It's also great to be a part of people with a vision— a vision that goes beyond one's own success as a professional Coach and Trainer and/or Consult, etc. And that's also something that's becoming more and more dominant in the Meta-Coach trainings. Now that we have the School Project for Self-Leadership completed ... we have people in many countries working on translating it into various languages and getting ready to introduce it to many schools.

Here's to the visionary leadership that Lene Fjelleim, Erica Grunnevoll, and Nan Rogstad have demonstrated!

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #22
May 15, 2013

CLIENT'S GOALS AND THE ELUSIVE QUESTION #7

Do you know Question #7? Of the 18 questions in the Well-Formed Outcome questions, what is Question #7? Among the questions that make up the Well-Formed Outcome process by which you facilitate clarity and decision with a client, question #7 is *the key* question. It is the question that pinpoints the core activity that's required for reaching the client's outcome.

In spite of this I would estimate that up until now 90% of all of the coaching sessions I've observed and benchmarked, *the coach forgets or skips Question #7*. I've even observed this in very skilled coaches who were very well informed of the WFO questions! Even though they know the question, and some of them knew it by heart, when it came to the moment of working with a client, somehow, in some way, something so interfered . . . that they forgot to ask Question #7. Suddenly Question #7 becomes elusive in the process and they are unable to get ahold of it.

I say "up until now" because I am determined to change this! The first thing I'm going to do is to step up a new contest that will run throughout the week and culminate in a Speed Question Contest. You've heard of Speed Dating. This is Speed Well-Form Outcoming! I think we will start doing this— this week's in the *Coaching Boot Camp* here in Hong Kong. Participants will not only memorize the 18 questions, but on the night of the presentations, there will be a contest to see which member of which team can quote off the 18 questions — the fastest!

What is Question #7? It is this: "What do you have to *do* in order to get what you want?" So simple. So straightforward. So obvious. "What do you have to *do* in order to get what you want?" After all, you have to *do* something to get what you want! If you don't have to *do* something, and if that *doing* is not something that's within your power to *do*, then you have no control over achieving your desired outcome.

So ask your client, "*Do what?*" Once you ask that and you have a grounded answer, that is a see, hear, feel (VAK) representation of something that the client has to do to achieve his or her dreams, then you can ask the other process questions:

Can you do that?

Have you ever done that? If so, what happened? What worked? What did not?

Is it in your power to initiate it and sustain it? Is it inherent to you?

How many steps are involved in doing that? How many stages?

Do you have a plan for doing that? Do you have a strategy? Do you need one?

If you have a plan, what feedback would you want to know how you are doing?

Is there anything stopping you from doing that?

The process questions lie at the heart of the Well-formed Outcome process and define the client's role, responsibility, and power to make his or her dreams come true. These are the questions about the client's *doing or doings* which are absolutely required for successfully achieving the outcome. And these process questions all center around the answer to "Do what?" So ask, "Do what?" and don't leave that question until your client has identified what needs to be done or says "I don't know" in which case you then make *that* the "what" to talk about and figure out.

"What do you have to *do* in order to get what you want?" Clients, if they know what they want, often focus so much on what they want that they downplay, dismiss, or even discount focusing on what they have to *do* to get what they want. It about *performance!* Ah yes, performance, the other side of the Meaning-Performance axes, the *neuro-* side of Neuro-Semantics.

So why in the world do coaches *not* ask about the "do what?" My observation is that they either get caught up in the content of the client's story and dilemma or they jump over the "do" to trying to help the client do something that they think is the answer. Caught up in content is a typical interference. The coach gets seduced and even hypnotized and then just as lost as the client in trying to figure things out. Trying to solve things and fix things so the client can get his or her outcome is the other way that coaches are tricked from not asking the "do what?" questions.

They hear something that reminds them of a pattern, a process, or something else that they (the coach) can do and so instead of letting the client have the problem, the coach takes on the problem of the client not experiencing the outcome and so jumps in to try to fix this. Then, instead of working out the *coaching contract* of what the client wants to achieve, the coach jumps over that, assumes he knows what the client really wants and is off to the races trying to make that happen. This leads to *not* asking the "do what?" question as well as most of the other WFO questions.

Here then is a question to drive into your mind and heart and have a ready access on your lips: "What do you have to *do* in order to get what you want?" Ask it once, ask it twice, ask it a dozen times and don't move on from it until your client has answered the question. It is the key question to understanding what's involved and required for your client to reach their objective.

Extra Hint: Run the Contest of the Speed Well-Form Outcoming at your MCF Chapter! You'll have lots of fun doing so. Here are the 18 questions that they have to say in full.

Theme:

- 1) What do you want?
- 2) What you see, hear, and feel when you get what you want?
- 3) Why do you want that? What will it get you?

Contexts:

- 4) Where do you want this?
- 5) When is it possible to achieve this?
- 6) With whom will you do this, if anyone?

Processes for Achieving:

- 7) What do you have to *do* to obtain what you want?
- 8) Are *you* able to do this?
- 9) Can you do this?
- 10) Have you ever done this?
- 11) How many steps and stages are there to what you have to do?
- 12) Do you have a plan or strategy for your actions?
- 13) Does anything stop you or interfere with you doing this?
- 14) How will you monitor your progress and what feedback will you want?
- 15) Do you have the external resources?
Do you have the internal resource you need?

Checks:

- 16) Is this goal ecological, holistic, and realistic?
- 3) Is it still compelling to you?
- 17) Are you going to do this? Have you made a commitment to this?
- 18) How will you know you have achieved it?

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #23
May 22, 2013

NEW STUFF AT *COACHING MASTERY*

This year we returned to Hong Kong and for the 4th time conducted *Coaching Mastery*. The total amount of Meta-Coaches in the Hong Kong continues to grow even those this time we had a small group and because of that, I decided I would use the small group to do some experimenting, namely, by introducing some changes to see how they would work.

Change #1: Assessment after the Coaching Boot Camp

The first change was to explore how it would go to announce that the full Certification Certificate would be given two weeks to a year after the Coaching Boot Camp instead of at the end of the eight-days for those who reached the benchmarks. Several of the trainers and sponsors have been suggesting this and I wanted to see how it would go. So we announced on Day 1 that the final Assessment for the Certificate would occur at the MCF chapter meetings after the Coaching Boot Camp.

This reduced much of the pressure for reaching “the score” during the 8 days and allowed people to know that *it is just a matter of time* and so, relax, *focus on learning*, and you will be assessed later. A few still stressed themselves out about the scores, but I would say that most relaxed from over-focusing on the score and put more attention on learning.

This also put emphasis on the Meta-Coach Community after the boot camp, it put emphasis on attending the MCF chapters, on supporting everybody after the “hot-house atmosphere” of the intense 8-days and the importance of *maintaining the skill level for weeks even months after the event*. I think that’s good.

Change #2: Separation of the Group Project and the Group Presentation

The next change separated two events and made them very distinction. First, I announced that on the night of Day 7 each group would present something about coaching in a skit that would “make a point” for learning and be a spoof so that we could laugh at ourselves ... that separated the skit from the group project.

The Group Project of thinking through a business experience (needs analysis, presenting, selling, negotiating, creating a coaching culture, and so on) would be paperwork turned in at the end of Day 6. I then used it and presented the group’s work on Day 7 — The Day about the Business of Coaching. Then on the night of Day 7 the groups present their Comedy Skit on Coaching that would *humorously make a point*. By separating these two events, we maintain the importance, and seriousness of the Business Project and at the same time provide a way for the group to have a lot of fun and let off a lot of stress.

In Hong Kong this past week, one group did a skit on The Well-Formed Income (!) And within it the importance of getting Ecology Cheques as well as the Axis of Changes where you dial for

“change” (change for a dollar or whatever the currency) and then get to ask a changeable question. One guy participant dressed up as a lady very well endowed, I mean *very, very well endowed*. And of course, “she” had so many resources for the Axis of Changes.

Change #3: Speed Questioning Contest

As I mentioned in last week’s post, we took the 18 questions, wrote them out precisely, passed them out and asked everyone to memorize them. Then each team was to select their Champion Speed Questioner and so on the morning of Day 8 we had the Contest. Alvin Baldovino from the Philippines won at 52 seconds, calling off by memory all 18 questions in a row and precisely as they were written.

Other Highlights at Hong Kong APMC

This year our Expert Coach was Steve Ellis, a former CEO and for the past five years has been a Professional Executive Coach focusing on Leadership Development. He is with J. Lindberg International and works internationally as a Coach. Steve came on Day 7 and offered the group a lot of insights, practical suggestions, and inspiration. Steve offered some of the best advice I’ve heard on interviewing a manager and his stakeholders for determining the viability of coaching with that manager.

About coaching skills: “You have to get your head empty. A clear head so that you can get your listening gear on.” For coaching practice: “There’s no such thing as a role play, it’s all real play.” For selling: “You are always selling yourself. I get hired because I’m me.”

While every *Coaching Mastery* is international, this one was just barely—we only had two nations represented—China (Hong Kong) and the Philippines. And the amazing thing, at least for me, but I think also for everyone, is how very different the two cultures (even though some of the Philippines are Chinese or had Chinese grandparents). Mandy said that by the end of the training, many of the people who call Hong Kong home were beginning to truly appreciate the absolute curiosity in questioning and the raw openness that our Philippino coalition brought.

Mandy Chai co-trained the program and I am concerned that while we have 2 in Mexico and others interested in becoming Meta-Coach Trainers in South America and 2 in South Africa and others in Africa interest, and 2 in the process in Europe and others interested, we do *not* have but one in the process in Asia! Dr. Paul Chan says that if he was 10 years younger, he would step up to it! Anyone want to donate 10 years? :) Anyway, to raise and groom the kind of leadership that we need— here’s a challenge to those of you anywhere in Asia!

Another excellent team of team leaders and benchmarks— excellent in their attitude and commitment, sometimes I am very humbled to see the dedication in the teams. A great big Meta High Five to all of you!

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #24
May 29, 2013

DYNAMICALLY USING THE 18 WFO QUESTIONS

I included the 18 questions that comprise the Well-Formed Outcome Pattern that we use in Meta-Coaching in Meta-Coach Reflection #22. If you have not yet memorized those 18 questions, and you want to become really skilled as a Coach, and especially as a Meta-Coach, do that this week. Once you do that, the next step is to understand how to use these questions dynamically to facilitate a Clarity Conversation with your client and then a Decision Conversation. There are four sections of questions and each one identifies the one of the four essential elements which is within a goal that is well designed. Here is a fuller description.

1) Relevant Theme.

The first three questions focuses in on the client's theme and makes that theme ultimately relevant for the client. "What do you want? Why do you want that?" *What* targets the subject. It identifies the area or domain wherein there is something that the client thinks as desirable. *What* generally identifies the end-result from exerting oneself to take the require actions so that one can obtained something that will improve the quality of life. Many clients don't know what they want. So ask, "What do you *not* want?" "And when you no longer have that, what will be present?" When the client tells you want they want — see if you can get a see-hear-feel description of it. That's the VAK. "What will that look like or sound like or how will you sense it in your body?"

While this may not be what your client really wants, it is a beginning place, so lock it down. Use testing questions to do this. "So this is what you want? Are you sure?" Then link it to the kind of coaching conversation they seem to be calling for— "So you are wanting a Clarification Conversation to get really clear?" "So you're wanting a Change Conversation to change a limiting belief?"

Next, ask "Why do you want that? Why is that important to you?" This calls forth the person's values and intentions. And with each value spoken, test it, confirm it, and holding that one in place, invite your client to rise up to the next highest value and intention. "So that's important to you? And when you get that, what does that give you that's even more important for you?" In this way, you discover the relevance of the theme. You discover the client's *big why* that lies in the background for wanting whatever he or she wants.

2) Grounded Contexts

The next three questions contextualizes the relevant theme that you've co-created with your client. And with the contexts, you ground the *want* with time, space, and personnel coordinates. So you ask, "When, where and with whom?" The *when* gives you a rough time-line for the completion or achievement of the outcome. If it is sometime beyond the time frame of the session, then what you'll do in the session is in

service of the larger outcome. If it can be achieved within the coaching session's time frame, then is the person ready for it? Ready for the change? And is it realistic? Here you will jump down to the Ecology question and use it to check if the objective can be achieved in that time frame?

The *where* positions the outcome to home, relationship, career, health, friends, and so on. In what domain is the outcome? Spatially where will the outcome occur? Depending on the outcome, does the location matter? If it does, what does the goal require in terms of space or location? If a goal is, "I want to move into a new home." does your client have any idea of where that new home would be? Does it matter?

The *with whom* identifies the social context if there is one. Does the goal itself require others? Starting a coaching practice certainly does. Who will you coach? Where is your market? Starting a company with one or more partners certainly does as well. Do you currently have a collaborative partner? If the outcome can be achieved in the session, then the answer to "With whom?" is you as the coach.

3) The Processes involved in reaching the outcome

The third section is the section that describes *the how to* for the goal achievement. "How will you reach your goal?" The answer lies in what you have to *do* in order to get the results that you want. From the *awakening* of the first part and the *contextualizing* of the second part, this is the part where you get down to the details with your client. And that's why people with the global meta-program find this challenging and have a tendency to skip this part. But this is *the how to!* Without this part, the person can dream and hope and wish ... but will never make real.

The key word in this section is *do*. And Question #7 is: "What do you have to *do* to obtain what you want?" *Doing* implies action, responsibility, proactivity, and planning. This is the section that begins to put the client *at cause* for making his or her dreams come true. This is where the effort and the work occurs. Dreams just don't come true without effort. They are the result of focused, disciplined, and planned effort.

So we explore to check that this doing lies within the realm of activity of the person: "Are *you* able to do this?" Then we explore capability to see if the person has the skills, competency, etc.: "Can you do this?" If we get a yes to these questions, then we check out the person's history: "Have you ever done this?" Perhaps the person has already done it but then quit. Or what they attempted lacked the persistence, resilience, belief, or some other quality. The complexity of the doing is explored with the next question:

"How many steps and stages are there to what you have to do? How many things does a person have to *do* in order to reach the desired outcome? Are there a lot? Are there natural stages that the person will have to go through?"

When there is a lot of complexity and numerous stages, then people usually need a plan, hence the next question: "Do you have a plan or strategy for your actions?" And if a person creates a plan, then following that plan requires monitoring how one is doing, the milestones along the way, and using the feedback so that a person can keep improving: "How will you monitor your progress and what feedback will you want?"

Given all of this exploration into the process of *the how to* for goal achievement, we then ask: "Does anything stop you or interfere with you doing this? What's holding you back, if anything?" Perhaps this will become the focus of the coaching session—to deal with interferences or how the person stops him or herself.

And what stops a person may be the lack of sufficient resources to make the doing possible. "Do you

have the external resources? Do you have the internal resource you need?" If so, then the coaching session would become a Resource Conversation.

4) Quality Control Checking of the Desired Outcome

Because the final questions are meta-questions, they invite the client to take a meta-moment, step back, and reflect on the quality of the outcome that they have been exploring. The first step back is to gain a wider perspective about the resources that will be required: "Do you have the internal resources to make this happen?" Then a wider perspective about how the outcome fits into the person's whole life: "Is this goal ecological, holistic, and realistic?" If it passes those checks, then the *why* question again: "Is it still compelling to you? Do you still have a big enough why to go after this?"

Next, the commitment question: "Are you going to do this? Have you made a commitment to this? Are you ready to make a commitment to this knowing more about the process and the form of this outcome?" This moves from the Clarity Conversation to the Decision Conversation. With the clarity that your client has experienced through the exploration of the outcome, is he or she ready to go for it?

Finally, the question that seems to torture coaches around the world, the question that calls forth the sensory evidence that will convince the client upon completion of the outcome: How will you know you have achieved it? This epistemological question explores the client's convincer strategy: "*How will you know that you have achieved your goal?*" The trickiness of this question arises because with every *kind of conversation* there will be a different kind of evidence.

- For a Clarity Conversation— the convincer will be the person's understanding or clarity strategy.
- For a Decision Conversation— the convincer will be the person's strategy for when and how to make a decision. What meta-programs does the person use? What values and standards does the person use? What time-frame? Etc.
- For a Planning Conversation— the convincer will depend on how the person plans, how the person strategies, the person's style and convincer that he or she indeed has a plan.
- For a Resource Conversation— the convincer will involve the person's internal "tests" that lets the client know that a resource has been accessed and is now available.
- For a Change Conversation— the convincer will similarly involve an internal "test" of some sort. In both of these last Conversations, you will *test* the client repeatedly by asking, "Can you do it now?" If the answer is yes or no, ask, "How do you know?" This enables you and the client to begin to discover *how* the client knows that he has or knows that she has not.

The Well-Formed Outcome Questions are a dynamic set of questions by which you create a coaching contract with your client. And as you do, you are already coaching two things— clarity and decision.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #25
June 5, 2013

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT BRANDING, AGAIN

The very first article I wrote to the Coaches egroup on branding was January 6, 2011. At that time, I titled the article—*Selling and Being the Meta-Coach Brand*. In recent *Coaching Mastery* trainings, groups have worked on *the business project* of “Branding yourself a Meta-Coach.” Some teams do really well, others seem to think that their job is to invent the brand, and others don't seem to have a clue about how a Meta-Coach brands him or herself as a Meta-Coach. So I've been thinking about brands and about the Meta-Coach Brands.

Now when it comes to brands, *brands are everywhere*. Every car manufacture has a brand and sub-brands for the variety of cars, so with every soda pop, and restaurant, and hotel, and airline, and major corporation— if you start looking, you'll see brands everywhere. So what is a brand? Take Apple's brand— it is the picture of an apple with a bite taken out of it. Hmm. Does that suggest anything? Coca Cola's brand is the name itself, written in an old English script and in bright red. McDonald's has the golden arches, and Nike has the phrase, “Just do it!”

At the physical level of a brand, the brand involves representational systems—*brands are symbols* or emblems that the brand-maker uses to give quick recognition of their company and/or product. It could be a word, a phrase, an emblem, a metaphor, an unique shape, etc. It is something that stands out and that creates an impression in the mind much as a physical burning hot iron brand *brands* an ownership letter on the rare-end of a cow!

In Meta-Coaching we have two brands —

- 1) The MC within circles and layers.
- 2) The MCF logo: the yellow blocks with one blue one and the arrow.

Yet that's just at the physical level. There's much more. At the verbal level, a brand introduces special words and phrases, and the special use of those words to give people who are fans of the brand a special insider's way of talking. Think Harley Davidson. Now that's a company that has really created a strong brand. Their consumers are so devoted and loyal, they not only buy the products, not only wear the clothes, they tattoo “Harley” on their arms and necks!



The verbal level of a brand is especially important when the product is intangible— when it is an experience. So what is our verbal brand in Meta-Coaching? It has to go beyond the

verbalization that Coaches in general use. They use such general terms (which we do also): holistic, life/work balance, difficult conversations, challenge, responsibility, holding the space, inner game, etc. You can hear these words and es. phrases by most coach

In Meta-Coaching, we have our own special language: fierce conversation, get to the heart of the matter, frames, meaning-making, meaning-performance, ruthless compassion, crucible, Matrix, self-reflexive consciousness, the meta-moment, Axes of Change, the Crucible, climbing the meaning ladder, synergy of meaning-and-performance, Self-Actualization Psychology, and so on.



The conceptual level of a brand involves the ideas, concepts, and principles that define the product or service, the company, and/or the companies values.

In Meta-Coaching, we have some unique concepts that we promote:

- Coaching is systematic when you can answer the systematic question: How do you know what to do when, with who, how to do it, and why?
- Coaching is systemic involving the mind-body-emotion system, within multiple layers of systems (family, ethnic, religions, cultural, business, etc.).
- For Coaching to become a profession, there has to be collaboration, accountability, a code of ethics, etc.
- The unique Psychology of Coaching is *Self-Actualization Psychology*.
- To be truly professional we have to have and hold rigorous standards including behavioral benchmarks for all competencies and values.
- *Meaning* and *meaning-making* is the “heart of the matter” — the Inner Game that has to be won first.

The personal level of a brand involves how people who promote a brand conduct themselves, carry themselves, think, talk, act, relate, care, etc.

In Meta-Coaching we encourage each coach to find his or her own style which emerges from one’s best states, so that one holds a combination and synergy of compassion-and-challenge, so one is direct, focused, and has expertise in process facilitation.

So regarding the branding in the Meta-Coaching System—*we already have a lot of branding*. It does not have to be invented. It does not have to be improved, it only needs to be used. *So use it!* Use it by living it! Use it by supporting MCF chapters. By getting the Meta-Coaching approach known. Use it on your websites, business cards, the way you talk, the way you walk, and so on. And if you like — tattoo it on your arms or forehead! :)

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #26
June 12, 2013

GROUP AND TEAM COACHING

The newest development in the Meta-Coaching System is *Group and Team Coaching*. It is not new in the sense that we have not addressed it before, or presented it, or created group experiences so that you learn it both from the inside and the outside. We have done all of that. What's new is that we are developing models, patterns, and trainings for training Meta-Coaches for group and team coaching.

From the beginning of Meta-Coaching, we created *group* experiences in the training as we asked the team leaders to “coach” a group of 5 to 10 people to work as a team, to be an effective working group, and ideally, to become a team. The group or team was inevitably an *ad hoc group*, created for the dual purpose of supporting people as a learning group and for creating a “project” of some kind together.

Now, without a doubt, group coaching is challenging. Obviously, when you coach a group, you have multiple persons to attend to, calibrate to, recognize their patterns of thinking, perceiving (meta-programs), emoting, relating, etc. You also have the relationships between the persons to notice and facilitate so that differences do not create unnecessary conflict and that when valuable conflict arise, you work with it and help people harvest value from it.

With group coaching, we move from the basic *five kinds of coaching conversations* to several more, giving us 12 Kinds of Coaching Conversations for individuals and groups.

Five Basic Coaching Conversations —	Changes with a Group
1) The Clarity Conversation	1) Open Exploration
2) The Decision Conversation	2) Negotiation
3) The Planning Conversation	3) Planning
4) The Experience Conversation	4) Experience/ Resource
5) The Change Conversation	5) Change / Transformation

Unplanned Coaching Conversations	
6) The Confrontation Conversation	6) Confrontation

The first Group Conversation	
7) The Mediation Conversation	7) Mediation

Additional Coaching Conversations that are primarily Group Coaching Conversations	
8) The Meta-Conversation	9) The Rounds Conversation
10) The Problem-Solving Conversation	11) The Collective Learning Conversation
12) The Conflict Resolution Conversation	

The coaching conversation that you have with groups not only include the five / seven basic

conversations, but additional ones that take group dynamics into account. The *Rounds* is the simplest: “Let’s go around and have everyone response to this issue.” *Group Problem-Solving* entails the Well-Formed Problem and the Well-Formed Solution that we do in the “Unleashing Creativity” training. The *Collective Learning Conversation* reveals how two or more persons “learn” together through an intense dialogue; it’s not for the closed or defensive, and it is certainly not for the know-it-all. It is for those who are willing to suspend evaluation and embrace ambiguity. And getting a group to do that—well, that’s the art!

Very soon, the tenth book in the *Meta-Coaching Series*—*Group and Team Coaching*—will be available and one of the new thing in it is *The Trust Spiral Model of Group Development*. By incorporating the key variables within group dynamics, those that make a group a *group*, and how these dynamic factors grow and evolve when a group grows and evolves, this model offers a guide for coaching a group to become more cohesive as a team. This complements the traditional four-stages of group forming: forming, storming, norming, and performing. And it goes further. It goes beyond that by offering ideas about how to move a group of people to become highly cohesive as they learn to communicate and work together in a collaborative way for a mutual goal.

The model takes five of the most fundamental group dynamic mechanisms and viewing each factor as a process that develops over the life of a group, then each variable in developing a group can be viewed in terms of its maturity. Currently the model looks at three stages of development, when the group is more like a committee. The individuals are working together, cooperating but the quality is low. They are just beginning to connect as a group. Eventually, however they become a functional group and even a high performance group. Finally, the group dynamic create a deep bonding that makes the group so cohesive that it becomes a team.

The *trust* part of the spiral is that trust also, as a group dynamic, is the principal dynamic that defines the different stages of the group’s development. At first there is little actual trust. When the people become a true and effective work group, there is a lot more trust, and finally at the level of being a team, there is strong explicit and implicit trust that molds the group into a team.

All of this has many, many ramifications for the coach in terms of skills, leading and managing the team, coaching the level of trust in communicating, relating, taking ownership of responsibilities, and so on.

I predict that *Group and Team Coaching* is going to be one of the most dominant trends we see in the field of Coaching in the next two decades. As companies rely on self-managing teams, on work groups that create new products and innovate them, and on ad hoc groups to handle crisis that arise from time to time, there will be an increased need to train and coach these groups and teams to operate at their highest and best. And who better to do that than a Licensed Meta-Coach?!

From: David Murphy - Co-director of the MCF
June 12, 2013

AN INVITATION TO KEEP HIGH META-COACHING STANDARDS

As all of you already know, but perhaps non everybody remembers, to become a fully licensed Meta-Coach it is a privilege and it is some thing the person has to earn by his or her effort, commitment and consistence practice. If we use this words to talk about becoming a Meta-Coach, that's because we want to keep the highest standards in the field of Coaching, as we do right now.

The quality of the coaching sessions makes the difference. There are so many, many Coaches around the world, but no one doing what we know to do in Meta-Coaching: having the most transformative conversations in life, touching the hearts of people to become their best version they can be... transforming step by step, little by little but in a great way the life of lots of humans. Changing the world (even though that sounds to big).

I invite you to engage the most people you can, to get them into the MC field. Let's grow, let's put the MC and Neuro-Semantics principles into the map of every single person in the world. Let's share the gift we have received, the powerful and transformative tools we have in our hands. Conferences, keynote presentations, demonstrations, workshops, uploading videos to the web, programing webinars, talking one by one, etc., what ever you can invent to expand the model and involve the most people you can.

Let's work together on this wonderful life project.

So by the other hand I want to share with you about the quality of the benchmarkings and giving feedback. For that, let me share you a little bit about our recently experience in Mexico city with the APMC process. We have a team of team leaders and benchmarks who have working on their benchmarking skills during one entire year! We also have a group of Meta-Coaches to benchmark only at the Coaching sessions during the APMC training, but no previous practice in benchmarking. So the difference between both groups is TO MUCH! It's very notorious how difficult is for those who haven't practice consistently to benchmark with the quality the participants need to be benchmarked and also the quality of the feedback they need to receive to take their skills to the next level.

So if in your country it is possible to do the same: to train the team leaders and practice at least once at month to benchmark and give high quality feedback, please do it. That makes the big difference. To your highest and best

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #27
June 19, 2013

SUPERVISION IN META-COACHING

In January 2010 Cheryl Lucas and Carey Jooste volunteered to take the lead in creating the *Professional Track of Coaching Supervision in Meta-Coaching* and now, after more than three years, they have succeeded in creating a whole program of Supervision . . . a 90 page Training Manual and a detailed procedure for those interested. *Supervision?* What is that and why?

My story. The first time I engaged in supervision, I was the one being supervised. It was during my degree in Clinical Psychology with Regis University and I chose and hired Dr. David Koos, a licensed Psychologist in my home town in Colorado. Then, for the following six to nine months, I reported to him on a weekly basis. I brought in my current counseling and psychotherapy cases, we reviewed them together, he asked about my thinking, strategies with people, explored what I thought a given approach would do, why I thought it would achieve what I imagined, what other resources I might use, how I was doing with it, maintaining professional boundaries, and so on. He would also asked how I was personally handling various cases, which ones evoked things within myself, which ones I struggled with, and he also answered lots of my questions about doing therapeutic work.

It was a great experience. It would have been great just having someone to talk to about such things, and yet what was even greater was having someone with much more extensive experience, someone who was fully licensed and trained in psychological therapy and practice, and having someone to challenge me about what I could have easily assumed was the only way to do things.

Supervision in coaching is equally valuable and not all that different. And, if you have not noticed, it is built into the Meta-Coaching system. After all, every time you coach during *Coaching Mastery* and at the MCF Chapters, you have someone sitting in with you to supervise how you are doing, what you are doing, interrupting and helping out, checking where you are, your strategy, what you are noticing or failing to notice, what kind of conversation your client is asking for, and much more.

In preparation for the supervision, the team leaders spend two days prior to the *Coaching Mastery for APMC*. They watch coaching sessions and then participate in understanding what went on, the structure, where to intervene, how to step in to ask questions, how to prevent the session from going wrong, how to benchmark the skills, what skills were present, which ones were not, the level 0 and 1 skills that undermine the session, etc.

Supervision involves several layers of response from the one supervising to a coach. It involves the *content* of the coach and how to recognize coachable topics, non-coachable topics, and irrelevant and shallow subjects. It involves the *persons* involved— coach and client and the

quality of the relationship, how it is supporting or failing to support the client, the *structural framework* of the session in terms of strategy, design, technique, etc.

When a supervisor is doing all of this, he or she is actually “coaching” the coach on how to coach. And so if the coach is meta-coaching, this is *meta* to the meta-coaching! The supervisor must therefore be *very* skilled in the basic skills as well as many of the advance skills. After all, when you supervise, you have to be listening to *both* client and coach and able to track how the conversation moves. You have to also be able to support both, recognize the quality of the questions and ask questions about the questions like, “Do you really want your client to answer that question?” “If he does, where will that take him?” “I think I just heard a ‘why’ question in a negative state, did you?”

And at the heart of supervision is the receiving and giving of feedback and involving both client and coach. After all, just as we attempt to *not* tell, correct, instruct while coaching, so with supervision, the supervisor mostly attempts to *coach* when supervising even though he or she has some expert knowledge.

I like the standards that have been created for Supervision in Meta-Coaching — such things as having been on the Assist Team twice, having 100 hours of paid professional coaching oneself, involved with an MCF chapter, etc. These are the things that give the one supervising credibility and skill.

When I work with the Assist Team to prepare them for being consultants to the coaches, to supervise the session, and to benchmark, among the things that I say are the following:

- Your job in the coaching sessions is to create the atmosphere where coach and client can have a good session.
- Your job also is to not let the coach practice “wrong,” he or she can practice wrong on their own! This is not the place for that. So keep offering nudges and interventions to help the coaches-in-training to practice “right.”
- You will need to be intervening regularly. As you do, simply ask, “Where are you now? What does your client want?”
- Keep checking to see if the coach knows *what conversation* the client wants. Ask, “What kind of conversation does your client want to have?”
- Give validations and celebrations when the coach succeeds according to the benchmark criteria.
- As the supervisor/ benchmarker, listen for and notice the patterns of both coach and client so that you can *see* the invisible structure of the session and “track” the session. Do so in such a way that if you were asked to track the session, you could say, “Yes, it started here, went over there, and then there, and then back here.”
- As for a coach, so also for the supervisor / benchmarker, you have to meta-detail the objective of the session and the specific questions, support, skills that the coach is using to work in a way relevant to the outcome.

Soon we will send out more details of the Supervision Track and how you can step up to it to add it as one of your skill sets and use it to supplement your financial sources. Thanks to Cheryl and Carey.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #28
July 3, 2013

HOW TO TIGHTEN UP YOUR COACHING APPROACH

In listening to hundreds of Coaching Sessions every year, one of the biggest problems for coaches, especially as they start, is not being able to manage the conversation. In saying that they are *not able to manage the conversation*, I mean that the conversation at the beginning seems messy, unwieldy, unformulated, even out-of-control, spinning around, going nowhere, etc. In the Coaching Boot Camp, when this happens, the person benchmarking is commissioned to interrupt, ask:

“Where are you in the process?”

“Where will you go from here?”

“What kind of conversation is your client wanting to have with you?”

So, how do you tighten up your coaching approach so that you can more effectively *manage the conversation* so that the conversation reflects the premises and competencies of “Coaching,” and empowers the client?

1) Be sure to frame the conversation and do so in an effective way.

Six months ago I added a new page to the ACMC Training Manual, “Framing as You Get Started.” That page gives recommendations on your initial frames so that you get your coaching off to a good start. What to frame? Frame that the conversation *not* a “normal” conversation. Frame it as a *special and unique* conversation. Frame it as designed to *get to the heart of things —to the meanings driving and informing the person’s sense of reality*. Frame it as about *process*, not content, and that you *will* interrupt them. Don’t ask for permission to interrupt them. Inform them that you *will be interrupt them* because it is not about the story, but the thinking and meaning-making. Frame your client that it is about transforming life and unleashing potentials. Do not have a chat! Don’t set it up as a therapy session by asking, “What’s your problem?!”

2) Set a focused frame that identifies what your client wants.

To do this, learn to use and “work” the 18-Well-formed-Outcome Questions in the following way. Start with the first one, “What do you want?” As your client muddles around trying to express what he or she wants, ask the question repeatedly and ask it as an acknowledgment:

“And so what is it precisely that you really, really want from this conversation?”

“So getting clear on why you are procrastinating is what you want most of all?”

“Creating a resource so you shake yourself out of your procrastinating is what you want and that would be the most important thing for us to use this session for, right?”

When you get something, lock it down. Use an Acknowledgment to do that and then follow up with a Testing Question.

“I heard you say you want to overcome your procrastination. Right? And you want to develop a resource and a plan for acting on your decisions instead of putting them off. Is that right?”

As soon as you do that, ask *why*. “Why is overcoming procrastinating on your decisions important for you?” Whatever they say, repeat back (Acknowledgment) and confirm that it is important. Holding that value, then ask *why* that value also is important. Do this repeatedly until it is obvious to you that the person *really wants* this. If it is not “obvious” to you, you don’t have in your client a strong enough state. Question two (WFO) is designed to *induce a strong and robust enough of a state to have the conversation*.

Now lock it down in time, space, and person.

“When do you want to achieve this? Where? With whom?”

After you lock down the context of what your client wants, *ask the most important question of all*. Ask question #7.

“*What do you have to do to get what you want?*”

About this question, you can ask a series of follow-up questions: Is this in your power? Can you do it (capacity)? Have you ever done it? If so, then validate this! Honor and recognize that your client *can* do this and *has* done this! Throw a party! How many steps will it take? Any stages in doing this? Do you need a plan or strategy? Do you have a plan or strategy? What information or experience will you want to pay attention to as feedback that will tell you that what you are *doing* is working or not working? How will you monitor what you are doing? Is there anything that could stop you?

Asking these *doing follow-up questions* is to gather information about the *doing*. What does your client have to *do* to get what he or she wants? Don’t spend a lot of time on these, a few seconds is usually sufficient. Yes, a few seconds!

Now check things off. Do you have the external resources for this? The internal resources? Is it ecological? Is it still compelling— do you still really, really want this now that you know what you have to *do* to get what you want? Again, you are just gathering information, so don’t spend a lot of time on these— seconds.

Now lock it down: Have you made a decision that this is what you want in this session? Yes or no? And by the end of the session, how will you know that you have achieved what you want this conversation to be about?

3) Set and operate from “the want” as your relevance frame.

In one sense, it does not matter what your client says regarding what he or she wants. What’s important is that they say something. Whatever they say, run with it! Ask the other WFO questions and *develop their want*. They say they want it, so why? In what context? And what do they have to do? That *want* will change! Expect that. And allow it to change. And whatever it changes to, grab that and run with it *using the WFO questions*. What will this do? It will enable your client to get clearer and clearer, and clearer— the first and primary Coaching Conversation. It will also enable your client to make a decision— the secondary Coaching Conversation.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #29
July 10, 2013

PCMC COACHING

Because of the people who have recently reached PCMC level, you heard a lot on this egroup last week about *PCMC coaching*. And for anyone who has been benchmarked at ACMC training in the past two or three years, you know how challenging it is! And it is— in one way. In another way, it flows naturally and easily from the basic premises that define effective coaching. Let me explain.

Years ago when we set forth the core competencies of coaching, I examined “the basic skills” as set forth by ICF and as many other Coach Training programs that I could find. And the amazing thing was the incredible consistency and similarity among all of the different programs. While definitions of coaching and even objectives often differed radically, here was one thing that all had in common. In fact, the differing groups and programs were almost anonymous in identifying the core competencies that define coaching. In Meta-Coaching we divided them into four categories for the seven skills:

- Relationship Skills: Listening and Supporting.
- Exploration Skills: Questioning and Meta-Questioning.
- Mirroring Skills: Receiving and Giving Feedback
- Experiential Skill: Inducing State

What I’ve discovered in the past eleven years of Meta-Coaching is *the absolute critical nature of listening*. Today, what the Meta-Coach Trainers say as well as those Benchmarking and those leading the MCF chapters is a key principle in Meta-Coaching:

The quality of all of your coaching skills depends on the quality of your listening.

Or conversely, You cannot question or meta-question, give feedback, support, or induce state any better than you can listen. After all, What did you *hear* that leads you to ask that question? Or provide that statement of support? Or give that feedback? Or induce that state? *Listening is the mother of all the coaching skills*. It is the primary one. I recently re-read a passage from Fritz Perls and noted afresh a phrase that Fritz used when someone finally came into the *here and now* and became *present* to another person or even to oneself. Fritz would say, “He finally has got ears!”

Getting your ears is your first task in coaching because if he can’t hear what your client is saying or trying to say (which is more likely), then you won’t be very effective. And that’s what will easily and gracefully help take you to the PCMC level. So stop listening to yourself. Turn off your own internal dialogue about whether you are doing it right or not, what you are going to ask next, how much time you have left, etc. Stop all of that noise. *Come into the here and now so you can be fully present to your client ... and just listen.*

Now to train your ears to hear— as you go through *NLP Practitioner* or *Coaching Genius*, train your intuitions to listen for representational systems and predicates, train yourself to hear value

words, meta-words (beliefs, decisions, understandings, knowledge, etc.), train your self to hear the strategy sequence of how your client does whatever he or she is doing. Then when you go through *Coaching Genius* or *APG*, train yourself to hear the client's meta-states and meta-levels.

As you repeat all of this training in *what* to listen for, these *structural and process distinctions* will eventually drop out of your consciousness and you will have them at ready access. Then you will be able to hear frames, the client's structures, strategy sequences, cognitive styles (meta-programs and cognitive distortions) and that will give you *so many choices* for facilitating discovery, insight, decision, and change.

At the PCMC level, people are able to go much more directly *to the heart of the matter* because they are able to listen without judgment or internal noise. They just listen. So they don't miss so much. There are fewer and fewer things "not heard." They have their ears and they are using them! And they go much slower.

When we all begin, our fear is that we won't know what to ask, we will run out of questions, the client will set there quietly not knowing what to say, and we will be stuck. By the time you learn the basic skills, you experience a new problem. Now you are getting so much information and so many things on the table, you hardly know where to start. And so you end up missing so much! There are so many things marked, "not heard" because you could not ask about everything that was flowing out of the client!

What I have noticed among those who are coaching at the PCMC level is that they *go faster by going slower*. They get to *the heart of the matter* faster by slowing the client down and feeding back to the client through acknowledgments and testing questions and clarification questions so that they are getting a rich and detailed understanding — and they are doing so with fewer and fewer words from the client.

So what distinguishes the person who has moved to *coaching at the PCMC level*? Here is a summary:

- There is a very deep and profound *listening* so that very few things are missed or "not heard." The listening is very active so that the conversation is every bit a dialogue.
- There is an elegance in the *timing* of the coach as demonstrated in the smooth transitions, the gracious movements in the dialogue. There is none of the "reactiveness" that is common when a new coach jumps from subject to subject following a client's ADD!
- There is a *succinctness* that's brief and to the point so that the coach doesn't have to say much to facilitate the conversation. Succinctness also enables the coach to "work" the questions asked in such a way that they harvest a lot of value.
- There is a *grounding* that continually occurs as the coach holds the relevancy frame and keeps tying it down to sensory-based facts.
- There is a recognition of *coachable moments* that is so oriented to the client's experiencing so that the coach keeps moving back into *the Inner Game* of the client's matrix of meaning-frames.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #30
July 17, 2013

KEY FACTORS FOR ELEGANCE OF PCMC COACHING

What is it that makes *PCMC Coaching* so elegant? What are the key factors? I mentioned many of them in the last Meta-Coach Reflection, here I continue that exploration.

Key Factor #1: Identifying, catching, and responding to the Coachable Moments. As you learned in ACMC, there are always moments in the coaching conversation which are special moments, moments when it seems like a client opens up and it's like you have a direct pathway into the client's matrix, into the person's heart. We call that a "coachable moment." And if you know how to recognize those moments, how to catch them, and how to respond to them effectively—the coaching becomes incredibly powerful and profound.

So, how do you do that? How does the PCMC level coach do that? The key, as I mentioned in the previous post, is *listening*—actively and deeply listen — listen for their heart and then respond to that level of openness and vulnerability. To do that, always calibrate to the person's state—to their *experiencing* moment-by-moment, and notice changes, alterations, emotions, insights, ahas! etc. Calibrating at this level means *being there in the here-and-now moment* with your client.

Key Factor #2: Be real. When one of these moments occur, what's happening is your client's system is being activated, and at that moment, it is there. It is present, and to some extent, it is offered to you. Now if your very presence is a crucible space for them (with observation, acceptance, unconditional positive regard) then at the moment of activation in your client, whatever is mobilized within them—a feeling, an insight, a fear, a hope, a defensiveness, a dread, an excitement—whatever it is, the person him or herself has come out from behind themselves and is, for that brief moment, *real — authentic*. And now you have a coachable moment.

Miss it and you miss that opening. Miss it by bringing it up a minute later and often the activation will have passed and the person may not longer be *present* to you in his or her *realness*. But catch it — encounter it, confront it, bring it up ... in that very moment, and you have the possibility of magic happening.

Now I cannot tell you how to do it. Oh, yes, I could give you some words, but if they are not your words in that moment, they will probably not work in that instance. That's because *to their moment of being real—you have to bring your own authenticity*. It's not a matter of technique. It's a matter of heart touching heart. What you might say is, "What happened just now?" But if you say those words when something didn't happen ... or in a way that doesn't convey your care, compassion, love, fascination, etc., then it won't work.

It works when whatever you say (and it may be that you say nothing!), what happens is that the client lets you in. The person lets you in to his or her *inner game* of frames and meanings, and memories and fears and joys and all that goes on in their matrix.

Key Factor #3: Stay Open. When the *coachable moment* begins, that does not mean it will stay open. The openness into the person's inner matrix could end at any second. To keep it open, as a Coach, you have to keep pacing whatever is offered. This is where your pacing (matching) has to move to the higher levels of pacing. Now you can stop matching at the lower levels because you have moved beyond that and the physical matching will not make much difference. Now use "Acknowledgments" to feed back to the person what you hear. Do that with their words and their tones, tempo, emphasis, etc. and especially with belief statements, values, understandings, decisions, identities, permissions, prohibitions, etc. This linguistic matching continues to "hold the space" for the client—it keeps holding the Crucible within which your client can do the transformative work.

At this point don't blow it with advice, judgment, storytelling, or trying to "run a NLP pattern!" Hang out with your client in the ambiguity, distress, uncertainty, not-knowing, "pain," etc. of that place. It is their inner world. By all means do not try to fix anything! Just *be there, be present, hold the space*. Now is the time to slow down and be a mirror, offer an empathetic vibration so that, as you feel the rhythm of their experience, you feed it back to them — inviting them to self-awareness, self-listening, self-discovery, and self-renewal.

Here also is the place for "Inferential Listening." But only after you have "held the space" long enough for them to *be with their own experience*. Think of this as facilitating (enabling) the person to thoroughly get acquainted with their own inner game/ inner matrix / inner world — the world that they have fought, avoided, evaded, and have not allowed themselves to fully experience.

Then inferential listening becomes powerful. Now you can take what is *implied* in the statements and feed back to the person what you hear *inferred within it*. This is usually what they do not know and are blind to. This is where the Meta-Model questions also are extremely powerful, but if you have not created the context for this, it will feel artificial, contrived, and forced and so will not work.

If the person says, "I can't stand criticism; I guess I'm just a peacemaker." *Implied* is a rule that forbids conflict. Did you hear that? I wonder if the identity statement ("I'm just a peacemaker") is what *forbids* the opening up of a conflict? "Who would you have to be in order to 'stand criticism?'" "You are *just* a peacemaker? You are *no more than that*?" "Would you like to be more than *just* that? If so, who would you like to be?" "Would you like to be truth-speaker even if it disturbs someone's peace?" "What resource would enable you to 'stand' the criticism and not let it take away your unconditional value as a human being so that you can influence your relationships so that they can be authentic?"

Watching the PCMC level coaches coach has been a real delight in seeing the elegance and magic of what happens when the basic skills are integrated into the person's unique style.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #31
July 24, 2013

GETTING THE KPI — AGAIN!

After writing about *coaching at the PCMC level* (the last two articles), several people wrote and asked if I could write in the same way about getting the KPI. I wrote back to one person, “If only!” I wish it was that easy to write about. But I’ll give it a go here and next time. First of all, however, there are several frames to set about “getting a KPI” that’s important for understanding and clarity as we get started:

1) *The KPI is the last WFO Question.* The KPI is not separate from or different from the well-formed outcome questions. It is simply *the last question*. So you could ask all 17 of the WFO questions and still not “get the KPI” because you didn’t close it off. Or, you could have gotten it from all the information that the client gave you, you just did not formalize it and lock it down as your “verbal contract.”

2) *The KPI is the epistemological question.* It is the question about “how do you know what you know?” Epistemology is that branch of “knowledge” that has to do with the *process of knowing*. This distinguishes two facets of knowledge: knowing is one thing, and *knowing what and how you know* is quite another thing. Here we are asking a specific question: How will you know when you have reached your goal?

3) *The KPI epistemology is a question about your convincer strategy.* Another way of thinking about it is to realize that it asks: How do you know that you are *convinced* that you have a solid and sure and robust knowledge that you can check off \checkmark your goal as completed? What will convince you—something that you will see, hear, do, etc.? In what representational system will it be in?

4) *While the KPI cannot be an emotion, it can be internal and subjective.* When a client says, “I will feel calm” (or excited, or confident, or at peace, etc.) this is *not* sufficient for an epistemological convincer. Do you know why? (If not, or even if you do, see below.)

5) *The KPI will be a sensory-based performance.* You will have an *indicator* (that is a sensory-based cue) and a *performance* (some activity) which will let you know that your objective has been reached and you can check it off \checkmark .

So why will the KPI *not* be an emotion? Because if you test it, “Can you feel that now?” you can almost always say “Yes.” That’s because *feeling an emotion* is one of the easiest things in the world to do, it simply is the skill of state induction, elicitation, and creation. And any good communicator, hypnotist, storyteller, movie-producer, musician, dramatist, etc. can induce an emotion! Yet after inducing the emotion, do you have your goal? Certainly you can access the feeling, but does that mean you have actually reached your objective? You can feel confident about losing weight, but have you lost weight? You can feel peaceful and calm about handling a conflict, but can you handle the conflict? Feelings can be, and often are, disconnected to an

experience. That's why many people "feel confident" about skills that they are *not* competent to handle! Watch the interviews for the "Idol" programs. How many people *think* they can sing, and even *hear* themselves sing as the next Idol who cannot actually carry a tune!?

With most goals, what we actually want is the competence to perform skillfully. And when we do, we will feel confident. To try to *feel confident* before we are competent has got the strategy turned around. The question here is, "What do you have to do in order to feel confident?" That will lead you to the KPI.

Internal and subjective KPI's will tend to be for change goals and experiential goals. Now when you ask, "How will you know that you have reached your objective?" there will be an internal test. I always ask it in reverse first, "Have you reached your objective right now? Have you changed that belief? Do you have that experience of resilience within you?" And the answer will always be "no." Of course it will be "no." We have just started. We have not done anything yet. So now ask the epistemological question: "How do you know you do *not* have your goal?"

When you ask this, watch very, very carefully. Calibrate to what happens within the person. That's because often they will answer your question *and be unconscious of their answer*. In doing so, they will have *run some test in their mind*. Typically, they will have considered some situation or event and thought about how they would handle it, and then they will "know" that they cannot handle it now. All that will occur in a split-second. So be in the here-and-now, be absolutely present and notice. Then you can ask:

"What did you just think about that was your *test* to see if you have changed the belief or had that experience? What did you test your desired outcome against that let you know that right now you do not have it and/or cannot do it?"

That test— usually a mental scenario let the person know that right now they do not have their desired outcome. Great! There's your internal subjective test— a *performance* that will be the key indicator later on that the person *can do it*. So test and lock it down.

"So right now you cannot imagine yourself handling that situation? If you try really hard, can you see and hear yourself doing it? ... No? Okay, good, so we have a test? So at the end of this session (or program) you will run this same test and if you can then see and hear yourself do it, then you will know that something has changed. Right? And that would be valuable to you? You really want that? Great! So that's our contract!"

There you have it. How to "get your KPI" with a client. As you keep practicing the WFO questions and become artful, graceful, and elegant in asking the questions, the information you gather in the process will inform you and your client about what's really important to him or her and how they convince themselves about things. There's more, but that will be for next week.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #32
July 31, 2013

THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF KPIS AS YOU GET YOUR KPI!

All KPIS are not created equal. That's because there are different kinds of KPIS and that depends on the *kind of conversation* that you are having with your client and the conversation which your client *wants* to have with you. And because of this, "getting a KPI" can be very easy with one kind of conversation and very, very difficult with another kind. This presents one of the challenges in "getting a KPI."

As a Meta-Coach you know that there are five basic kind of Coaching Conversations: clarity, decision, planning, experiencing, and changing. The lesser two are: confrontation and meditation. Then for groups and teams there are four more: the Meta-Conversation, Rounds Conversation, Problem-Solving Conversation, Collective Learning Conversation, and the Conflict Resolution Conversation (all of this in the new book, *Group and Team Coaching*, 2013).

In what follows, I have started with the easy one and then move to the more challenging. In each section there is a *evidence procedure question*—the epistemological question that calls forth the Key Performance Indicator. After that, a description of the kind of evidence sought, the forms, and then some examples.

3) The Planning Conversation — the Easy KPI to Get

Question: How do you know that you have a plan? Can you articulate the plan? How do you know that you do *not* have a plan?

Evidence of a plan will be a description of the plan.

Typical forms: A written list, a flow chart, a diagram, a systems diagram, a strategy, a decision-tree, etc.

Examples:

By the end of the session I will have sketched out the first 3 steps of the plan.

By the end of the session I will have created a decision-tree about how to do X.

By the end of the session I will have a flow chart for managing (or creating) Y.

By the end of the session I will have designed a strategy for Z.

1) The Clarity Conversation — The Strategy for Understanding

Question: How do you know that you understand what you are seeking to understand? What gives evidence of that understanding?

Evidence of clarity: This will be evidence that the person understands or comprehends something that one has been unaware of, confused about, what one has misunderstood. Evidence of clarity therefore goes to one's strategies for understanding.

Typically forms: “Understanding” is usually coded visually (diagrams, formulas, flow charts, etc.), by sound (auditorially: sounds, represent the sounds of a song), kinesthetically (physically walk through a process, act out or gesture something), or in language (the precise words that encode the understanding).

Examples:

By the end of the session I will have a list of 5 to 7 items that explains X.

By the end of the session I will have a mind-map that sketches out some understandings of X.

By the end of the session I will be able to articulate to you one or more possible understandings of Y and what it means.

2) The Decision Conversation — Strategy for Commitment

Question: How do you know that you have not yet decided? How do you know that you are indecisive, back and forth, procrastinating? How do you know that you are ready to make a choice between one or more choices?

Evidence: Making a decision will involve identifying the criteria by which the person decides, making a lists of reasons to make a decision, the benefits derived, and a counter list of the cost of making the decision. It will involve comparing the pros and cons of deciding for something as well as the pros and cons against something. It may also involve checking the frames about deciding and committing to something and the meanings about such.

Typical forms: Lists of Pros / Cons. Evaluative weight (0 to 10) given to each item.

Identification of beliefs about deciding, making a commitment, taking a risk, etc.

Examples:

By the end of the session I will have 5 to 10 pros and cons for the decision.

By the end of the session I will have 5 to 10 pros and cons against the decision.

By the end of the session I will have given each item a rating (0 to 10) fo the emotional/ semantic significance.

4) The Experience or Resource Conversation — for Experiencing/ Resourcing.

Question: How do you know that you have had the experience that you want and need? How do you know that you do *not* have that experience? What will let you know that you can now do and have access to it?

Evidence: With an experience or resource the indicator could be remembering that you have had the experience or access now to a skill, activity, etc. from the resource. Do you recall X experience? Is there any evidence (notes, mind-map) of that memory? Can you now do what the experience or resource has enabled you to do?

Typical forms: Verbally recalling, pulling out written review, video-tape, describe when, where, with whom, etc.

Examples:

By the end of the session I will have practiced my presentation 3 times and reviewed the feedback you give on 3 criteria (engagement, framing, and rapport).

By the end of the session I will experience the Swish Pattern (or any other pattern).

By the end of the session I will have accessed 3 states that I will use to meta-state or frame myself to enhance my “sense of self.”

5) The Change Conversation — The Strategy for Creating Difference

Question: How do you know that you have changed? How do you know that you have *not* changed? What is different or has changed (belief, decision, habit, identity, etc.)? What indicates that change?

Evidence: When we change something is altered and now different. If it is external: way of talking, way a person does something, a habit, then that external change will be seen, heard, sensed in a different way. That will be the evidence. If the change is internal (belief, decision, identity, etc.) then there will be a *test* that the person uses to indicate that change. Asking, “Can you do it now?” should bring a “no I can’t” answer. Then ask, “How do you know you cannot believe something, have an identity, etc.?” To answer that, the person will run some test in his or her mind. Watch, calibrate, and then ask.

Typical forms: Externally, able to show new or different behaviors, able to show new elegance of style, able to demonstrate the absence of the former problem (so many days without smoking, years being sober), able to handle an experience with a new or different mental-emotional state.

Examples:

By the end of the session I will gauge my sense of the likelihood of starting my own business at a 8 instead of a 2 or 3 where it is after run the Belief Change pattern on my limiting beliefs.

By the end of the session I will be able to imagine confronting my boss and staying calm at a stress level of 3 to 5 whereas right now when I imagine it, I’m at a level of 8.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #33
August 7, 2013

MORE OF THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF KPIs THAT YOU CAN GET

In the last Meta-Coach Reflection I mentioned that there are many different kinds of KPIs and I covered the KPIs within the first five kinds of Coaching Conversations. And yet, as you know, there are other kinds of Coaching Conversations and with them we have additional kinds of KPIs. Most of the ones that follow here involve an experience or resource and so are very similar to the KPI of the Experience Conversation or the Planning Conversation.

6) The Confrontation Conversation — Facing One's Dragons

This Coaching Conversation is almost never one that the client *asks for!* Yet it is the one that the client really needs and when done graciously and effectively, the client deeply appreciates, yet seldom requests. As a result, you probably will not ask the client how he or she will know if they have had this conversation with you. Given this, you would do well to check with your client whenever you sense that there's something to bring up. "Are you ready to face something that might be a bit challenging to face?"

Questions: How do you know that you are willing and/or able to face X (the subject that might be challenging for the client to face)? How do you know that you are *not* willing or able to face X? What lets you know that?

Evidence: Effective confrontation brings up something unpleasant or challenging and does so in such a way that the person does not get defensive and does not fall back to the defense mechanisms (e.g, arguing, escaping, denying, intellectualizing, refusing, etc.). The evidence that you have facilitated this kind of a Coaching Conversation may entail expanding your client's awareness of what could derail him or her, self-sabotage one's vision, etc.

Typical forms: Meta-Comment about the importance of a subject or experience to the client's outcomes and the importance of considering it, facing it, dealing with it, creating various coping skills to it so it can be handled effectively. Exposing an area that is a blind-spot to the client.

Examples:

By the end of the session I will have talked about the shame of my divorce to gain understanding of what I contributed whereas now the shame overwhelms me and I either dissociate and avoid it or collapse in tears.

By the end of the session I will have discovered what I don't know right now—namely, what is keeping me from making money or asking for a raise, I will be able to recognize the blind spot and stay curious rather than defensive.

7) The Mediation Conversation — Working through a Conflict with Another Party

Questions: How do you know that you have experienced a mediation process with someone that you've been at odds with? How do you know that you have *not* experienced mediation with that person?

Evidence: The evidence that you have had a Mediation Conversation will involve recalling what each person in the conflict said that they wanted, why they wanted that, the intention behind that, the talking through and negotiating a workable solution, to either restore the relationship to the other person or to at least end the stress and conflict and bring some resolution to it.

Typical forms: Recall the memory, describe what happened, when, the results, able to talk about the previous conflict from a calm state indicating not reassessing the conflict state.

Examples:

By the end of the session I will have put the issues between myself and X on the table and be able to describe X's point of view to his satisfaction. I will do so calmly and with respect.

By the end of the session I will have given control to the mediator to guide myself and X through the process to see if we can find a way to get beyond this impasse and find a win/win arrangement that we can use to manage the current conflict. I will be able to describe X's point of view and the steps we each take to create a resolution.

8) The Meta-Conversation — The Conversation of Larger Perspective

Questions: How will you know by the end of this session that we have stepped back and moved to a meta-level to expand perspective? How do you know we have moved from story to the structure?

Evidence: Because this is an experience, the KPI will be similar to the Experience Conversation. The person will either have notes or memories of the Conversation, or will have a "test" in mind that right now when the person runs it, he or she cannot see, imagine, hear, etc. it, but at the end will be able to.

Typical Forms: Similar to the Experience Conversation.

Examples:

By the end of the session, the coach will have asked or invite the meta-move two or more times, "Let's step back and reflect on what you just said or did or brought up, as you step out of the experience, what are you aware of?"

9) The Rounds Conversation — The Group Conversation par excellent

This is the most common Group or Team Coach Conversation and is the simplest thing in the world. The Coach simply provides direction for the group or team to go *round the group* and let everybody say what they think about the subject.

Questions: How will we know at the end of the session that we have gone around the group and have heard from everyone?

Evidence: "John has brought up an important subject and proposal. Let's start here with Elizabeth and go clockwise and hear what everyone thinks about this." Since this is an experience of the group, it is similar to the Experience Conversation: memory, notes, recording of the experience.

Typical Forms: Same as Experience Conversation.

Example:

By the end of the session we will ask if everyone had express his or hr view and been included and we will know we have succeeded if everyone says 'Yes.'

10) The Problem-Solving Conversation — The Creativity Conversation

Questions: How will we know that at the end of the session, we have engaged in problem-solving? What will let us know, as a group, that we have spent quality time in problem-defining and solution discovering?

Evidence: As a group experience, the evidence will be similar to the Experience Conversation.

Typical Forms: Memory of participants, notes, list of brainstorming ideas, mind-map of the problem and/or the solutions, etc.

Example:

By the end of the session we will have the notes that Jonathan our scribe has made of the problem—a well-formed definition that we have developed and a list of possible solutions as well as five to seven of the criteria that we want the solution to meet.

11) The Collective Learning Conversation — The Brain-Meld Conversation

Questions: How will we know as a team that by the end of the session we have engaged in collective learning? What will be the indicators that we have mutually learned?

Evidence: This will be similar to the Experience Conversation. Specifically, the focus will be on learning—reflecting, re-examining assumptions, looking for new information, reformulating current information, thinking together in a dialogue.

Typical Forms: This Conversation will differ from a typical conversation in that people will not present or argue for positions, but seek to discover and learn what they do not currently know. “What do we not know as a group that we need to know?” “What are possibilities that we have not considered?”

Example:

By the end of the session we will have a mind-map of the questions that we want to learn more about. The question will be in the middle of the flip-chart paper and there will be six or more lines going out from the center as the lines of thought that we explored in our dialogue. We will have three to four learnings or discoverings listed at the bottom of the paper.

12) The Conflict Resolution Conversation —

This Conversation is similar to the Mediation Conversation except instead of mediating between two or more parties, this conversation may involve many other kinds of conflicts that arise in groups and teams—conflicts for which there may not be opposing parties, but the need for reducing tension, moving beyond defensiveness and positions, and finding some resolution even if it is acceptance of the current situation and release of needing to fix it.

Questions: How will we know that we have resolved the current conflict? What will indicate to use that the conflict is done and over with?

Evidence: The presence of conflict is easy to detect—states of stress, anger, fear, disgust, etc. and interpersonal tension in people not talking or talking in ways that include cognitive distortions (e.g., blaming, mind-reading, judging, etc.). The evidence that this has been resolved will be people accessing relaxed and calm states, states of liking, warmth, empathy, compassion, etc. The absence of the cognitive distortions and the presence of more sensory-based language.

Example:

By the end of the session we will recall that we put “the conflict” on the table and then explored it using the Neuro-Semantic Precision template. We will have a set of notes recording the progress of the conflict resolution.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #34
August 14, 2013
Reviewing a New Coaching Book

BALANCING CHALLENGE AND COMPASSION

A few days ago I read a new book on coaching, *Challenging Coaching* (2012) by two British authors John Blakey and Ian Day and the Preface written by none other than Sir John Whitmore. Overall the book has a lot of good stuff in it, they make a strong argument that *Coaching* is not and should *not* be confused with *Therapy*. They also urge the reader to focus more on the challenging part of Coaching than the supporting part. They also emphasize responsibility and accountability in the book. Yet as good as these parts of the book are, there are some severe weaknesses in the book that, for me, undermine its value and indicates a bit about where the field of Coaching is.

First, they have a limited knowledge of the history of Coaching as a field. In Chapter 3 of this book the authors provide a history of Coaching — except they either do not know anything about Timothy Gallwey (1972) or Warren Bennis or many others and so skipping all of that history, they write, “Sir John Whitmore and Graham Alexander pioneered it in the 1980” (p. 27). Then to make things worse, they attribute their source to be Carl Rogers’ therapy model without connecting him to the Human Potential Movement or Abraham Maslow and so then they spend pages criticizing Rogers and Laura Whitworth (*Co-Active Coaching*) for the over-focus on therapeutic support! Very strange. My reflection is that here is an example of jumping into writing something without doing one’s homework!

I suppose they previously thought coaching was exclusively about non-direction, exclusively holding to the individual’s agenda and building rapport. That’s because they spend all of Chapter 3 arguing that coaching involves some direction, and it should also fit into the agenda of the systems that the client lives within (especially when doing Executive Coaching in an organization), and that it should move from rapport to challenge. Reading through all of this, I kept wanting to put my hand to my forehead and say,

“Duh! Of course! We pace, pace, pace in order to lead! We start with the client’s outcome and check that it is ecological.”

Second, with a limited perspective about the field, they oversee their unique offering. In this book, they announce that they have discovered something *new* and *revolutionary* and *unspoken* in the field of Coaching! Wow! This should be good. So what is this new, revolutionary, and never-before-realized truth that’s so crucial for coaching? It is that Coaching should be as much about *challenging* as it should be about *compassion*. So this is the revelation? If you want to join me in saying, “Duh!” go ahead. That’s what I uttered in my mind when I finally came upon their big revolution.

In fact, in Chapter 2 “From Support to Challenge” they introduce “The Support/ Challenge Matrix” (p. 17). Yes, that’s right. They have two axes— one marked Challenge and the other Support. Hmmm. I wonder if they got that from the *Coaching Mastery* training manual!

But no. At least not directly. And at least not by their acknowledgment. In the book, they have turned the diagram around from the format of the Facilitation Model that’s been in the ACMC training manual since 2007 so that the vertical axis is Challenge and the horizontal axis is Support. I put Support or Compassion on the *Meaning Axis* to indicate the meaningfulness of the coach and the coaching experience to the client—care, compassion, support. And I put Challenge on the *Performance Axis* to indicate action, behavior, and what the client is challenged and stretched to do.

Now about Support (compassion) and Challenge, they write:

“The diagram demonstrates that there are two variables at play here: support and challenge. It is when these two are out of balance that performance suffers.” (p. 17)

Fascinatingly, they have created the same quadrants that we have in the ACMC manual: when both are low there is inertia and apathy; when the challenge is high but support is low —stress; and when support is high and challenge low— cosy club. When both are optimal— the loving boot (in the backside) and high performance (p. 19). The difference is that in Meta-Coaching, our focus is on integration of the two not dichotomizing them, so we think of them together as *compassionately challenging* or *ruthlessly compassionate*.

Third, non-professional acknowledgment of sources. There is not a single reference to an NLP model or book in the entire book. Well, no explicit reference. But there is NLP language —*calibrating* to the details behaviors of clients (e.g., breathing, posture, etc. p. 137), *timeline*, *present state*, etc. Then there is the mention of Bateson’s Logical Levels (page 142). Here the authors list: environment, behavior, capability, beliefs, values, and identity. But there’s a problem! This is *not* Bateson’s list of Learning⁰, Learning¹, Learning², Learning³ (*Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 1972). That is Robert Dilts’ list which he developed from Bateson. And it is even in the same order (with “environment” at the bottom and “behavior” above it, which is Robert’s unique ordering) and the same diagram that Robert developed for “Logical Levels.”

What does that mean? It means the authors read and knew at least some NLP and never gave the tiniest bit of recognition or acknowledge whatever book that they had read from Dilts. And, of course, that’s a professional and ethical violation of disrespect.

They even have some NLP-like “patterns” or exercises in the book and the one on the Heros Journey (pages 124-125) even contains language that sounds like they got that from Robert Dilts.

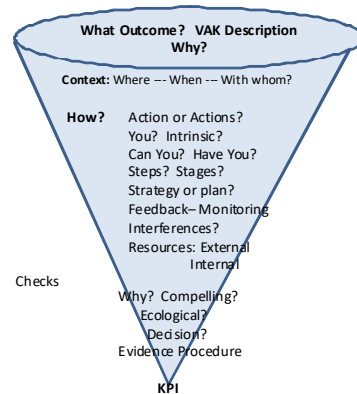
“The coach then instructs the coachee: ‘What I’d like you to do now is to walk back along the timeline to the present and identify the key steps from the present state to where you are now.’ As the coachee walks back along the timeline and talks, the coach makes notes while inviting the coachee to share through open questions such as ‘where did you become discouraged?’ ‘How did you gain fresh motivation?’”

Then there is the pattern on perceptual positions (page 174) using three empty chairs for other stakeholders and take turns moving to those chairs to take on those perspectives. The one and only time the authors mention NLP, they note, “the GROW model, co-active coaching, NLP, Gestalt and the solutions focus movement. Within 20 years, coaching has grown rapidly and become accepted as a mainstream leadership weapon in the war for talent.” (p. 28) So they knew! And they used and quoted, but they covered it up so that the NLP in the book sounded like it came from them rather than the original source.

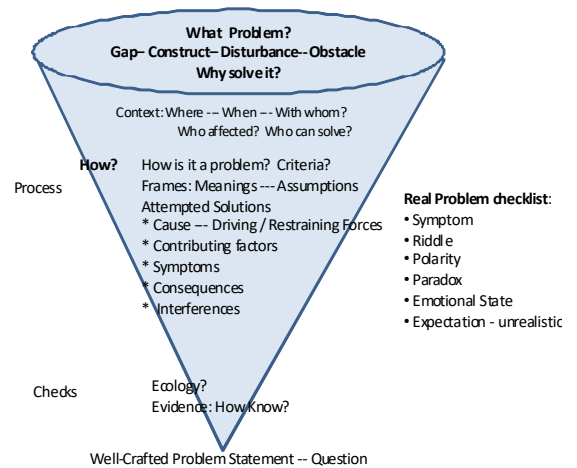
From: L. Michael Hall
 2013 Morpheus #35
 August 21, 2013
 Introducing a New
 Neuro-Semantic Model

THE NEURO-SEMANTIC PRECISION TEMPLATE

I don't remember how or when I put the Well-Formed Outcome (WFO) into the form of a funnel. It was early in the development of Meta-Coaching. At some point, because the intention was to funnel or drill down to specifics—I drew a funnel and I then overload that funnel with the WFO questions. As time passed and we found additional questions to the original ten, I included those and the number of questions increased, I then searched for how to group or classify the questions and that led to the four areas of Subject, Context, Process, and Checks.



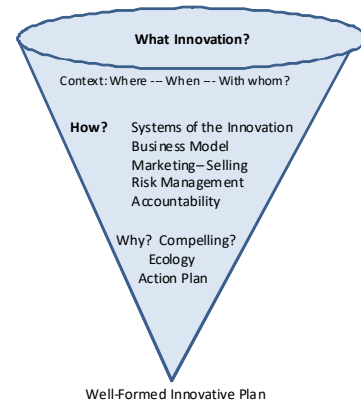
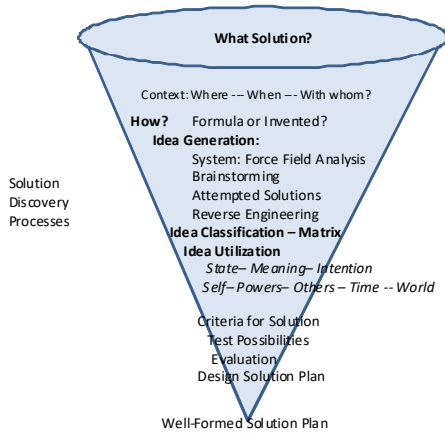
Later I read Martin Robert's book, *Change Management with NLP* and discovered his list of Well-Formed Problem Questions. So when I first put the Creativity and Innovation workshop together (2007), I used the same format: Subject, Context, Process, and Checks to sort out the list of questions. So it was then natural to create yet additional funnels for precision when I created the Well-Formed Solution and then the Well-Formed Innovation (see *Unleashing Creative Problem-Solving*). But it has not stopped there. Last year at both Meta-Coaching and NSTT, I found that we could just as easily use the Precision Funnel for a Business Model. And more recently, I found that it works just as well for Developing New Skills. Recently I also used it and created a precision funnel for how to create a Self-Actualization Company (see *Unleashing Leadership*).



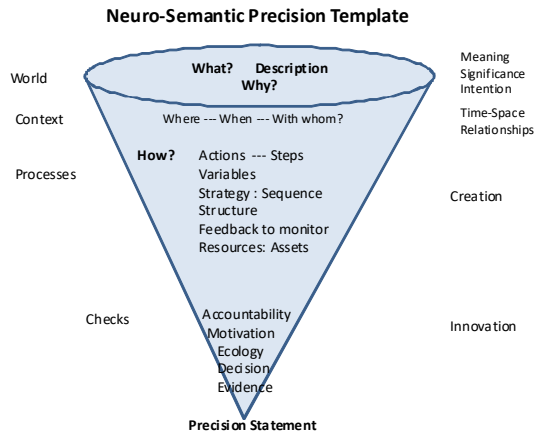
After using it so many times it slowly dawned on me that this funnel that we use to create more precision and clarity is itself a template — perhaps a model. So let's name it, *The Neuro-Semantic Precision Template*. Having done that, then what else could we apply it to? That's a question for you!

What else could you apply it to?

What are you studying, working on, training, etc. which requires precise and clarity? If you took your subject — contextualized it — then identified the operational processes that describes its strategy, and then identified the valued checks (criteria) and diagramed it as a funnel, what would that give you? Would that give you more clarity as you think about your theme and would it enable you and others to create more precision?



Here is the general funnel — The Neuro-Semantic Precision Template:



From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #36
August 28, 2013

DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO GET A KPI?

After reading all of the posts on Getting a KPI (#31, 32, and 33), someone, not to be named, wrote this past week and asked:

“Do I really have to get a KPI? What if I don’t? Can I still coach? Can I still be a Meta-Coach— and a Meta-Coach in your good graces? And do even the expert coaches always get a KPI?”

The short answer is “No. No you don’t have to get a KPI to coach, be a good coach, be a Meta-Coach, or even be in my good graces!”

Now for the longer answer. Remember what the KPI is and what it is for. The KPI is for measurement. It answers the question, “How do you measure the success of a coaching session or a coaching program?” The KPI gives you a way to do that. It is also a process by which you can meet a client’s convincer strategy. It answers the question, “What will convince you that you have reached the outcome of your goal and achieved what you wanted?” The KPI is so that you and your client will know some *performance indicator* which informs them about *when* the goal has been reached and when to break out the Champagne.

So while you *don’t have to get* a KPI, what is critical to get are the earlier well-formed outcome questions. These are the questions that enable you to *formulate* the goal or outcome of your client in a way that is smart, intelligent, and well-informed about “excellence” in goal-setting.

What do you want? Why? Why is that important to get?

When do you want that and where?

What do you have to *do* in order to get what you want?

Is this within your control so you can initiate it and sustain it?

We call these the *core* outcome questions. That’s because if you don’t know the answer to these questions, if your client has not answered these questions, then you probably are not coaching. You are having a nice chat, you are subtly or not so subtly giving advice, you are doing therapy or trying to fix your client, you are listening like a bar-tender who keeps clients talking and drinking.

Effective Coaching that empowers clients is focused and intentional, it awakens the person to possibilities, and it puts them at cause. And for that you minimally need to know the *why– why – when – where and do what*. These are the four core questions. Effective coaching is about compassionately challenge a person to take a real hard look at oneself, the person’s lives, hopes, fears, dreams and to make some robust decisions that will unleash more of the person’s possibilities. Is that what you are doing?

Then you'll want to begin with the sharpening, focusing questions that we call the WFO questions. *What* does your client want? The fact that he or she doesn't know is the very reason for the question and for the coaching. Of course, he doesn't know. Most people do not know! That's why she is there paying you for the conversation that she can get nowhere else. The "I don't know" stops all of the others in her life, but not you. The "I don't know" is a great place to begin.

Above and beyond all of this, the Well-Formed Questions provides a *sense of direction* and *orientation* for the coaching. And with that, now you have a *relevance frame* that you can use to determine if some question or response is appropriate or not. You and your client now has a direction in which to go. This is another reason for working toward the last question, the one that locks down the KPI.

Getting a KPI is getting a *contract* with your client—the coaching client. What are you seeking to achieve together by having the conversation? That's another benefit and effect of getting the KPI. When you *clench a KPI* this enables you to complete the contract that you are making with your client. Now you have the critical evidence that lets both of you know when the outcome has been reached and completely satisfied.

So while you do not have to get it, it is smart to go after it. And it is skillful to clench it. And that, of course, takes skill. It takes the skill of the Meta-Model in asking precision questions and holding the frame until you get it. And when you get it, you have gotten the person's strategy for clarity, decision, planning, experiencing, and/or changing. And that speaks about modeling using NLP and Neuro-Semantics. So no wonder it is an advanced skill and one that we require for the PCMC level, not the APMC level.

What then should you do until you develop through understanding and practice and feedback the ability to clench the KPI? Just keep asking the 18-questions of the Well-Formed Outcome. Memorize them. Get to the Chapters and notice what happens as you use the different questions. Then ... eventually, you too will be clenching the KPI.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #37
September 4, 2013

HOW CAN IT BE SO HARD WHEN IT LOOKS SO EASY?

When it comes to Coaching, when you see someone really skilled at it, someone with years of experience, someone who has thousands of hours of experience in connecting, exploring, mirroring, inducing state, framing, etc., *it looks so easy*. These days, I hear that constantly as we have some of the PCMC level coaches demonstrate coaching. But then when they attempt to replicate what they just saw demonstrated, they say, “How can it be so hard?”

The answer is that *there is a hiddenness about expertise*. What’s hidden are all of the years that led up to the current expression of the expertise. When you see expertise, you are observing the end-result from literally years of practicing, streamlining, and integrating. You are observing someone who has taken the fundamental skills of matching, connecting, questioning, etc. and who has integrated those skills into his or her style and that’s why it seems so natural, so intuitive, and so easy.

“It looks so easy ...” And from an abstract level, what the person is doing or saying is easy to understand. The challenge is *not* understanding the concept. What’s difficult to “learn” is the skill at the pragmatic level, at the moment when you need to acknowledge or validate or put words to physiology, etc. Yet *why* is pragmatic knowledge so difficult to “learn” in this sense of integrating it so that it is instinctive, intuitive, and implicit within you? Why is it so difficult in the sense of challenging to get it into your neurology so that you can actually *do* it with grace and ease?

I have heard these questions in various forms during the past years at *Coaching Mastery*. On the surface, listening seems like such a simply and obvious skill. You just listen to what the person says. And so also supporting. Yet knowing all about these skills and the dozen or more sub-skills of behaviors that make them up is insufficient for being able to perform them.

The answer about what typically makes the skills “hard” is that our current habits of communication—our habits are in the way. So first, we have to interrupt them and stop them from block the higher level skills. Having done that, we then have to practice the new skills and keep practicing until they become “natural” to us.

Another factor making the new skills much “harder” than they look is that typically the new Coach has far too much “noise” in his or her head. They have all of the principles, rules, understandings, knowledge, etc. rattling around. These are the things that they have learned that they are supposed to do ... and while they may very well be right and true, they are also

interfering. The result is that the new coach is listening as much to self and all the things that they are supposed to do as they are to their client.

This brings up *the paradox of coaching*: Stop trying so hard. Just be present. It's not about you; it's about your client. So while you have set your intention to "be present," once you are in the moment, you let all of the self-talk go. Of course, when you are first new to it all—you need to remember your intention and understandings about how coaching works. Ah, the paradox! As you have learned about coaching, the intentions that best drive it, the understandings about how it best operates, remember all these things until you don't need to remember them consciously. That takes time. So knowing that, relax. It will come.

Let me know relate this to the Well-Formed Outcome Questions. Since we have begun asking the Assist Team leaders to memorize the 18-questions and since we have been running the "Speed Questioning" contest at *Coaching Mastery*, I've noticed that as new coaches learn (memorize) the 18-questions, they are integrating them much faster and so they are also getting to be more natural and easy with the well-formed questions. In the past few months I have seen brand new coaches much more natural and elegant with asking those questions. The reason: they are integrating the questions faster.

Expertise's hiddenness means that within and behind what looks simple is a richness of understanding and skill. The *timeliness* that looks so simple in the one with expertise arises from an understanding of where the client is in terms of developing and reaching his or her objectives. As a result, the coach operates in a highly strategic way—having a sense of where he or she stands in relation to the coach. As a result the *timeliness* arises from the interconnection between the models that the coach is using: Matrix, Axes of Change, Facilitation Model, Meaning—Performance Axes, Meta-States, etc.

Yes, it looks easy! Yet that "ease" has arisen not because it is easy, but because the person has put a lot of effort into developing the foundational skills and thinking strategically using the multiple models of Meta-Coaching.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #38
September 11, 2013

DIFFERENCE OR JUDGMENT?

As you well know, effective and professional Coaching is non-judgmental. Clients do not hire you, as they would a consultant, for your professional judgments and advice. That's simply *not* what coaching is about. Accordingly, in Meta-Coaching we emphasize this on Day One of *Coaching Mastery* as we do the Releasing Judgment pattern, focus on Sacred Listening, and do the De-Contamination Chamber to get our ego-investments like "being right" out of the way. The design is to get into a state of pure listening—and-supporting without any of our own agenda for our clients.

In the rest of your life, however, judgment is not only important, it is crucial. You could not survive a day without your judgments! When you cross a street, drive a car, step from the platform onto a train, etc. you need to use *good judgment*. And I hope that you have good judgments in those areas of life.

But what about "difference?" What's the difference between making a difference and making a judgment? Coming from Gregory Bateson's work, NLP has emphasized finding differences and in fact, finding *the difference that makes a difference*. That's because, as Bateson wrote, what gets mapped onto the map is *difference*.

As a Neuro-Semantic Coach, one of your fundamental skills is that of *scanning for difference*. At least that's what those of us in the training business seek to facilitate in people and especially in Meta-Coaches. In *Coaching Genius* or APG, you learned the difference between self-esteem and self-confidence and that distinct enables you to *hear*—really hear—a person and whether they have that distinction or whether they suffer their "self-esteem" going up and going down instead of being unconditional.

You also learned the distinction of the different kinds of *powers* that each of us have—mental, emotional, linguistic, and behavioral powers. And with that distinction, you can *hear* a person speaking about what they can and cannot *do* with their powers. You can distinguish when a person accepts and owns his or her own powers and when a person does not.

You can also scan for difference between what a client says at one time versus another time or what a client says and then does. In other words, you scan for incongruence. If a client is shaking his head side-to-side while saying he really wants something, you scan for that difference and then mirror it to your client and ask about it. "Is your side-to-side movement indicating 'no,' or does it indicate something else?" Scanning for difference in this way does not make a judgment, does not judge the client, it notices a difference and brings it to the client's awareness.

Now of course, you can scan for difference and instead of presenting it cleanly, you could *make an evaluate* (judgment). For example, you could notice a meta-program difference, a person

trying to offer details while using abstract and generalized terms and present the difference as a judgment. Then instead of saying, “The term ‘alignment’ is general, a nominalization, and in using it you have not informed me about what are the items that are not aligned.” You say something like, “‘Alignment’ is too abstract, you have to be more specific if you want to communicate clearly.”

Now the ability *to scan for difference* is the ability to be in a state of sensory-awareness and a purely noticing state (observing without judgment). And when you do, then you will tend to be “put on alert” when “news of difference” comes your way. This *put on alert* means that when difference arises, you notice it and to that noticing you may experience confusion, surprise, ignorance, or wonder. These are the states that typically are induced when we are operating at the periphery where we interface with a client without our filters. So instead of “interpreting” and “making sense” of things with our filters, we experience the information or the difference and so not-knowing what to make of it – we are surprised, confused, ignorant, etc.

It is the know-nothing state that allows this. If you already know and expect things (use your judgment filters) then you will see nothing and hear nothing other than what you already know. So to that extent you will be blind to the difference.

How can we make distinctions and notice differences without judging?

- 1) Periodically review your perceptual filters. Review the meta-programs that you most often use, your belief filters, your value filters, your motivational agenda, etc. As you “know thyself” with regard to these, you can recognize when you are using your filters rather than purely noticing differences.
- 2) Practice looking for counter-examples. When you think you’ve found a difference, explore the possibility of counter-examples, suspect that a filter may have blinded you. Check with others. This is where having an “external check” is very useful.
- 3) Constantly ask, “What am I missing?” because you are missing things! We all do.

Every NLP and Neuro-Semantic model gives you a set of tools for analyzing and modeling an experience and so each gives you a *set of distinctions* to pay attention to. Do you know the set of distinctions that are within the Meta-Programs? The Meta-Model of Language, the Meta-States Model of Reflexive consciousness, the Representational Systems, Sub-Modalities, Strategies? These sets of distinctions create new perceptions enabling you and me to see into the very structure of experience. to see into the operational functions. Thereby enabling identifying leverage points of change and development.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #39
September 18, 2013
Selling Yourself as a Coach #1

SELLING YOURSELF AS A COACH

Coaching is one thing and selling yourself as a coach is another thing. Or, is it? It certainly seems like two different activities. One is the work of what you do when you actually coach; the other seems more like the preparation work regarding how you get business. But *what if* . . . What if these seemingly two things were actually *the same thing*? If they were, then what would that mean to you in terms of selling yourself as a coach? Let's play with the idea for a bit.

First, let's revisit "coaching" from the perspective of the interpersonal dynamics. In coaching, you first greet someone and set a frame; you set a powerful frame about what would make the most difference in that person's life today. And you may do that several times in order to "have a conversation like none other." After all, you want the coaching to count, to be memorable, and to be life-changing. So you begin by inspiring and inquiring and inviting the person to speak about his or her aspirations. "So that's what you really want?" "Yes." "And addressing that would be the best way to spend our time today?" "Yes."

Doing this you connect with the person, match and pace and gain rapport, and then you start the inquiring about the context of that aspiration (when, where, with whom) and what the person has to do, and can they, and are they, and do they have the resources to pull it off. Along the way you explore what the person means with the words used, you check and test, you identify frames and check ecology, and you make sure that the aspiration and the plan to actualize it is ecological and will not be at the expense of health, finances, relationship, etc. And when you facilitate their planning and experiencing and deciding, you keep mirroring back any blind spot or incongruency, challenging and urging. And then you end with, "So what will you do to continue what you've started here?"

Okay, now let's visit what we mean by "selling" from the perspective of the interpersonal dynamics. As you meet someone and the conversation turns to what you do, you lead off with an engaging statement that offers a bit of a teasing idea that is designed to fascinate.

"As a professional change agent I enable individuals or groups to unleash more and more of their hidden potentials so that they can live with more vitality and power and effectiveness."

However you introduce yourself, it should answer the person's question and be suggestive so that it invites yet another question.

"Yes, I have the most unique conversations with people, a kind of conversation that they can have no where else because they go far deeper and by the very nature of this it creates inner empowerment and transformation. I just love it."

“Really?” “Oh yes, since I began this work, I haven’t worked a day; it’s my passion. Seeing people wake up ... sometimes with some people, it’s like seeing Zombies come alive and become human again.”

Along the way, you match and gain rapport, ask questions about the person and what’s important for him or her.

“Well, if you ever feel that there’s something big and wonderful clamoring inside you, that you are ready to blossom in being more fully yourself, having one of those ‘conversations like none other’ might be a good idea.”

You offer but do not push. You imply and make available without any pressure. You inspire and awaken greater aspirations. It might be about finances— creating enough wealth so that you can choose what to do and where to invest your energies— creating enough vitality so that you wake up excited for the new day—creating enough personal resources to feel that you are the author of your life and in charge of your destiny— creating enough personal love and connection so that you feel connected and loved and contributing, etc.

If the person then gets interested, you speak about the benefits that will accrue from coaching, maybe a story of someone you worked with that matches some aspect of the person before you. When they want to know about how it works or the cost, then because you know some of the person’s key values, you put the process and investment in terms of their values— whether it is adventure, learning, effectiveness, self-actualization, love, contribution, etc. How? Use a corresponding metaphor.

Adventure: “Well, the process is like the Hero Journey. A person hears the call to an adventure, and then gets ready to leave home for the path less traveled and so the coaching sessions map out the inner hero so that you can unleash your best self.”

Learning: “Well, it’s like a person Masters Degree in ‘You.’ But the courses are very experiential and the learning customized to your inner possibilities; we meet every other week for two hours with reflections of insights gathered along the way. And the exam for certification is Life.”

Effectiveness: “Well, it’s like unleashing yourself as the CEO of your company, the Company of You and your family. So the coaching sessions are like board room meetings as we go to the heart of things about the meaning of your life and what will enable you to live the most fulfilling life so that you leave the legacy you desire.”

Challenge: “Well, it’s like having your own personal trainer as you identify your next level of development and someone to support you and hold you accountable.”

Then, if the person’s fascination is engaged, you set up your Introduction Session or however you do your contracting for Coaching and away you go. *Coaching — selling*, what if they are two aspects of the same thing? Some years ago I took the seven core coaching skills and presented them to a group of sales people as the Seven Core Selling Skills: Listening— supporting; questioning— and indepth questioning; calibrating to the person and mirroring back, and facilitating emotional experiencing. After all, you sell best when you are not “selling” but when you are “relating,” do you not? Then it is not so much about “selling” (getting someone to take and buy what you have to offer) as to find out if someone needs or wants what you have to offer.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #40
September 25, 2013
Selling Yourself as a Coach #2

SELLING AS DECISION-MAKING

As a Coach, what are you doing when you sell well? One thing that you are doing very well is you are enabling a person or a group to make a great decision. After all, in selling you present a product or service or an experience or an opportunity and then you facilitate the person (or group) to weigh the advantages against the disadvantages of buying your product, service, experience, or idea. If you do this in a way so that a person makes a great decision, one that enriches the quality of life because it adds value, solves problems, eliminates negative states, enriches life with valued experiences or products — then the person will walk away very grateful that you enabled them to make that decision. If it doesn't achieve these things, then the person will probably suffer from "buyer's remorse."

"What was I thinking that I bought that?" "I'll never buy from that person again; he is only trying to make a sale and does not have my best interests at heart."

A number of years ago I was in the market to purchase some rental properties. I wanted to buy another home for an investment. And because I was beginning to travel more and more, I needed someone to help me. So I turned to some real estate agents. But the first four or five that I met were so interested in "selling" me properties, in "making a sale," in "closing the sale," that they did not really listen to me. They did not listen to my values, standards, situation, concerns, etc. They would show me properties that did not fit my criteria and then, after wasting my time, they would try to persuade me to buy it anyway. They would tell me all the benefits of it— benefits that didn't fit my situation at all.

Then I met Janine. She asked lots and lots and lots of questions— more than all of the others altogether and then, when she asked me to see two houses, she framed that request in this way: "I have two houses that are close to what I think you want, but I don't know for sure. Come and see them, and tell me what you like in them and what you do not like." A week after doing that she called, "I have a house for you." I went to see them. But I was not ready for what I found. She found a property that was not only just right, it was perfect. I bought it on the spot. And two weeks later, when we went to the closing, I walked away delighted at how right it was and the value that I got and also surprised at how fast it went.

Janine didn't "sell" me; she helped me make a great decision. And because of that, over the years, I bought another 14 houses through her. After I had bought seven houses through her, I once was in Sydney when she called and said she had a house for me. I told her to buy it for me and we would close in two weeks when I returned. I bought the house sight-unseen and was thrilled with it when I returned. That's high level effective selling!

How did she sell so elegantly and professionally? Whenever we talked she had nothing to sell, but she was always seeking to find out about my wants, desires, values, criteria, etc. I never felt pressured, forced, or manipulated. I always felt respected, listened to, and cared about. I felt that she had my best interests at heart and so came to trust her—implicitly trust her. So when she made a recommendation, I knew that it was a quality recommendation. She sold by being trustworthy and credible.

If you frame selling as *helping people make great decisions*, then the old connotations of “selling” as being manipulative, controlling, and unethical drop away. Selling becomes a way to truly serve people. And with this frame, it also eliminates buyer’s remorse as you now generate “buyer’s delight.”

If selling-and-buying describe the process that we talk about when we use the single term “selling,” then within the experience of *selling excellence* are several strategies, the first one is the buying strategy which involves the decision-making strategy. It is first because if you have learned selling excellence, then you first discover a person’s decision-making strategy and buying strategy. Then when you know that, you can sell to them the way they want to be sold to! If you don’t do this, what are you left with? Selling to them the way you know to sell to them.

Yet the odd thing about this is that when I’ve asked sales people if they would want to be sold the way they sell, a great many of them said, “No, of course not!”

“So let me see, the way you are selling is something that you would not want to receive. Is that right?”

And when they say yes, that’s right, I ask,

“Then tell me how you want to be sold? How would you want a person to sell to you?”

Many did not know. They had to think about it and I had to ask many questions to help them discover it. Then an amazing thing would almost invariably happen. They would say, “You know I like it when I think about someone selling to me that way, I think that would be a good way for me to sell.” I’d then confirm that this fits for them and then I’d ask the next question.

“Well if finding the way you would like someone to sell to you works for you, what if you first found out how the people you are working with want you to sell to them? What do you think about that?”

And again, invariably they would say that that would be great! And that they had never thought of that, and then they would ask, “Well what if they would not tell me? How would I find it out if they would not tell me?”

“Hmmm. What happened for you when I asked you how you would like someone to sell to you? How is it that you just told me? Did you feel vulnerable or powerless? Or did you feel that you were simply expressing your beliefs and values and what you would like?”

So as a Meta-Coach, frame selling as *helping people make great decisions*.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #41
October 2, 2013
Selling Yourself as a Coach #3

SELLING AS A SYNERGY OF DUAL STRATEGIES

In the last post I mentioned that to sell effectively you need to know your client's buying strategy. Without the person's buying strategy, how can you identify and use the right selling strategy? It is these dual strategies— *how the person buys and how you sell to them* — that go together. And when they are unified with the coaching skills and other frames, they generate for you a synergy of *effective selling*. Interested?

The most obvious thing that this means is that *you cannot effectively sell anything if you do not know the way a person buys*. This is so obvious that it hardly needs stating and yet it is so commonly and universally ignored that it needs to be stated over and over and over.

What then is the problem? The problem is that we all tend to constantly default to ourselves. Rather than even consider how a client buys and how a client makes buying decisions, we view things from our point of view—how I want to sell, how I know how to sell, my motivations for what I want to sell, etc. And this creates a high likelihood of a mismatch: That how I want to sell is not how my client wants to buy. “If I move toward this, surely you would want to as well!”

The solution is also as easy to state as it is difficult to put into practice. The solution goes back to the first article that the best selling is coaching. That coaching and selling are but two-sides of the same thing. That is, to effectively sell—coach to the buyer's buying strategy.

Find out how the person buys and then sell to that person's strategy. And how do you do that? Use your coaching skills. *Supportively listen* to the person's wants and needs, to his or her desires and fears. *Listen deeply* so that you can find out if the person has any real need or want for the benefits of your product or service— if the person does not, you do not have a customer. Move on. If the person does, then *use questions and meta-questions* with the person to enable him or her to discover that need or want. And of course, as you do this induce the state for the person that corresponds to what will indeed enrich the person's life.

When you coach the person's discovery, you are going to discover something. You are going to discover the person's values, goals, emotional state, financial state, etc. You will discover what the person needs to consider about your product and service that will convince them— what we call the person's Convincer Strategy (which is also a meta-program). Here too most people sell wrong— they try to convince people by using their own convincer strategy rather than find out the individual's before them. In your questioning and receiving feedback, you will discover

many aspects of the person's buying strategy— does the person need to *see* what you are saying, *hear* the right words in the right tone and tempo, or *feel* (experience) a bit of the product?

When you find it and if you have had the full NLP Practitioner training, then you could map out the strategy. You could write out using the Strategy Model format the person's way of buying and with that in hand, you then have a map for how to sell to that person. I mapped all this out in the training manual *Selling Genius* many years ago. But you don't need that manual, you just need to know the Strategy Model and then practice it until you're good at it. So a great way to go about this is to begin— begin asking people. “What's important to you about your goals and visions for life?” As you do, take note of what they want to move toward (their values) and what they want to move away from (their dis-values).

Then ask about how they decide on things. This will tune you into their Decision Strategy (the subject of last week's article). Next, explore their Implementation Strategy. How do they take action on their decisions? Do they have a style of acting on what they know and decide (active meta-program)? Or do they reflect even after knowing and deciding (reflective meta-program)? Or do they shut down out of fear, timidity, hesitation, etc. (inactive meta-program)? After that you can then use their Motivational Strategy to induce the energy that they need in order to take action on their visions, values, and decisions.

The bottom-line is this: To sell effectively in a humane and respectful way— Study your potential buyer well. When you know how your person buys, then you can match his or her required strategies (learning, understanding, deciding, implementing, motivating, etc.) with your presentation. Along the way you will be able to answer the questions that we all have as buyers:

Do I really want this or need this?

What do I need to solve the problems that block my goals?

What do I really want for my life goals and visions?

What criteria of values and standards do I use to determine high quality for myself?

When do I want or need a particular solution?

What kind of relationship do I want with the person who presents the solution to me?

Here then is another way to reframe “selling,” another way to think of selling so that it does not put you off: *Selling is simply matching a buyer's way of buying.* It is a way to show respect and honor to a person by deeply understanding how a person operates when buying. After all, we all buy and buying in a emotionally and emotionally satisfying way, a way that enriches our lives and unleashes our potentials is only a wonderful opportunity to apply your coaching competencies.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #42
October 7, 2013
Selling Yourself as a Coach #4

SELLING AS EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

What do you do when you “sell?” Ultimately, you talk to someone. Is it that simple? Could it be that simple? Yes. *Selling is simply talking to people about something that you are fascinated and passionate about to see if it would enrich their lives.* So what’s so scary about that?

Now as a Meta-Coach, if selling is *talking with people* about what’s important in their lives, their goals and dreams, their values and standards, and their needs and wants, then selling is just a form of communication— and lo and behold, *you have in your possession the world’s most cutting-edge communication model.* You have in hand the NLP Communication Model and so that gives you a tremendous advantage when it comes to selling, does it not? Of course, you have to be able to use it in selling. And you have to be in the right state when you use it.

The art of selling is the art of effectively communicating to people which explains why I began this series by saying that selling and coaching are two sides of the same coin— communicating. So when you learn how to make your selling elegant and exquisite, you are simply coaching a potential client to understand the value of what you are offering and if it fits for him or her, to go ahead and make a decision and act on that decision.

I modeled the field of sales and the process of selling back in 1997 and created the *Selling Genius* training manual which I then delivered in many countries and organizations. One of the things that was surprising to me back then was the realization that *we all sell.* Everybody sells. To be a human being is to *sell.* That’s because whenever we communicate, we are trying to *sell* our ideas, our suggestions, our recommendations, our wants, etc. When you want to go out to a particular restaurant— you have to sell it to the others. When you want to ask for a date, you are selling yourself. When you want a group to go along with your idea— you are selling. When you train or present or make a request— you are selling.

There’s no getting away from the fact that *to communicate is to sell.* Sometimes you are selling yourself, sometimes your ideas, sometimes a product or service. Yet always and inevitably, you are selling. The questions to ask then are these:

How skillful are you in selling? How successful are you in the process of selling? Do you have any limiting ideas or beliefs or states or decisions or identities, etc. that are holding you back or sabotaging your best efforts?

What can selling mean that will assist you as a Meta-Coach? Selling means talking to people who are interested in improving the quality of their lives and skills regarding the product and service of Meta-Coaching which you believe will enhance their lives. In selling, you

communicate to the potential buyer how the product will add quality and value to that person's life. Then in the dialogue, as the person comes to understand the difference that the difference that the coaching will make and then, if it fits the person's finances, time, context, etc., the person will make a decision to go for it and sign up for the coaching.

Sometimes all of this occurs in just a few minutes and it will seem that the presentation of Meta-Coaching sells itself. At other times, the whole selling (communicating) process will seem like and feel like a lot of work and struggle. Why? Because sometimes people have a lot of mental and emotional work to do inside themselves as they come to understand, develop personal clarity, clarify their values, prioritize what's really important, and go back and forth in how they make the decision to buy. And of course, all of these things are coaching issues—which you know when you think about the basic kind of Coaching Conversations: Clarity, Decision, Planning, Experiencing, Resources, and Changing. Isn't that fascinating?! *Most of the very things that you do in coaching with a client are the very things that you do once you get a client?* How Fantastic!

Now what is your hesitation about selling? What are the limiting beliefs that hold you back from working with a potential client to enable that person to become a coaching client versus what you do when the person is a coaching client? It's all about communication, isn't it? Well, there's more to it than that, and I'll get to that in the coming articles.

When selling itself feels like hard struggle, you are probably selling at the wrong level or in the wrong state, or have not reframed the selling process itself for yourself, or have some false intentions and expectations.

Yet if selling is just talking to people, and talking to people about the value of something that you are offering, then the best selling state for you is to believe in the value that you offer. Do you? Do you know and understand the value of the Meta-Coaching process? Are you passionate about it? Are you able to call off a list of the benefits that a person will receive from the experience?

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #43
October 14, 2013
Selling Yourself as a Coach #5

SELF-ACTUALIZATION SELLING

When you sell yourself as a Meta-Coach or Meta-Coaching as the premier form of coaching, there are two places that you can sell from. And these two places then creates two very different forms of selling. First, there is deficiency selling and second there is self-actualization selling. And because of these two places to sell from, one feels terrible when you do it and the other feels great.

The first is *Deficiency Selling*. This is the selling that originates when you are living at the lower needs, the *deficiency* needs (D-needs) and you are still working to get your basic needs met. And it really doesn't matter which need you are seeking to fulfill or cope with, if you are unable to satisfy that need, you will experience deficiency within yourself and it will affect your attitude, your state, and your way of operating.

Deficiency Selling refers to the kind and low quality of selling that you do when you are operating from neediness, from one of your needs being unfulfilled. And because of this you will inevitably feel that lack (consciously or unconsciously) and your temptation will be to feel that you *have* to sell. "I *must* make this sale!" And, of course, that kind of internal pressure will turn your focus on yourself, your product or service, and *not* on the client or customer. And when you are not focused on your client, then regardless of whatever you are selling, your ability to effectively present it and show its value in someone's else's life will be tremendously reduced.

Obviously, selling from that place will not feel good. You will be operating from lack and that deficiency will make you feel needy, and that neediness will create a state of being desperate. Sure, you are "motivated," but the motivation of this state is one that is focused on you and focused on what you do not have. It is driven by scarcity. And so it motivates competition because the character of this drive is that of "the more, the less" pattern. The more someone else gets, the more it deprives you, the more it takes away from you, so the less you have. No wonder it can generate a ruthless competition against others. No wonder it puts you in "the jungle" — which is what Maslow called the realm of the lower needs.

Self-Actualization Selling describes living at the height of the human needs, the self-actualization needs. It refers to moving beyond the deficiency needs as you have learned to sufficiently cope with your lower needs. As you do, you now find that the higher needs driving you and awakening you to the truly human needs for meaning, knowledge, beauty, order, excellence, fairness, equality, truth, love, contribution, making a difference, etc. Now you also are experiencing the abundance of "the more, the more" pattern. That is, the more you fulfill the needs, the more they grow giving you more passion and vitality in life.

Talk about a great place to operate from! When you are living in the self-actualization needs, you have discovered the *being*-needs, the needs that enable you to more fully *be* who you are and what you are about. Talk about a great place from which to present and sell! And why? Because when you are in the Being-needs, you are selling from a sense of abundance and contribution. You are living out of being your best and instead of the ruthless competition of the D-needs, you are in a place of truly wanting the best for others and whether someone buys or not, you are focused on making a difference and adding value.

If you want to become more effective in selling, take care of your lower D-needs. Use the Self-Actualization Assessment Scale that we developed to determine where you are and which lower need with which you may need to develop better coping skills. You don't need them satisfied fully at 100%, you only need them fulfilled *sufficiently* so that you can "get by" and so that the next level of need will emerge.

The key thing is to remove any and all semantic over-loading of the D-needs. That's how people get stuck there. What meanings have you given to a given lower need that over-loads it with too much meaning, hence too much motivation and drive and thereby gets you stuck at that level? Then be sure to open yourself up to the B-needs so that you can find and experience the higher needs that makes you fully alive / fully human. And then you will be ready to sell in a truly effective way — coming from a state of abundance.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #44
October 21, 2013
Selling Yourself as a Coach #6

SELLING AS HANDLING OBJECTIONS

When you “sell” or attempt to sell, there will be objections. Even if a person wants what you are offering, believes it will improve the quality of his life, sees the values in it, and actually wants to buy— it is not unusual for her to offer objections. It will happen, so expect it. After all, don’t you do the same? You go to a store to buy a big ticket item because you want it and you have the money, and you have already decided that you’re going to get it, but then when someone is showing you the item— you bring up “problems,” complaints, and questions that stands as your immediate objection to buying.

Why do you do that? Multiple reasons. You could legitimately have some questions about how it works, qualities and features of it, options that you could choose, perhaps about something that you didn’t know or expect that has left you surprised or disappointed. You could also be debating back and forth between different choices— each with some different features and none with all of the features that you want. You could also be stating objections to slow down the process and give yourself time to think. You could be re-considering your original choice. Now that you are here and the opportunity to buy is right in front of you, you are now questioning if you want to spend your money on this, if you really need this, etc.

You could also be someone who operates from a meta-program of “never convinced” and so you inevitably utter objections. Or your state of indecisiveness could be a habit that you’ve gotten into. Or you enjoy the batter back and forth as your way to see if you can negotiate the price down or negotiate for some extra benefits.

Objections — we all have them and most of us use them when we buy. So when you are on the other side of the equation, when you are selling, first and foremost— *Expect objections and learn to enjoy them.* And why not? Objections means that the person is still in the game, still considering, and still engaged with you.

If you have any fear of objections, dread of objections, or any negative semantic reactions to objections— here then are some additional new frames by which you can adjust your attitude and put yourself in a more positive state. Tom Hopkins, a Sales Trainer writes,

“Champions have almost an affection for even the peskiest objection.”

“Objections are the rungs on the ladder to sales success.”

He then notes, “There’s not a product or service on the market that doesn’t have some built-in objections and at least a few minor problems” (*Selling*, page 149). Given that, what’s the big deal? Objections are just facets of the process of selling and buying and the fact is, if you don’t

know what is stopping someone from buying, then you'll not know what the person needs to hear and consider in order to buy. That's why a spoken objection is always better than an unspoken one. When the object is unspoken—you are almost completely limited in being able to respond to it effectively.

Consider objections on the way to a sale the same way a runner in a hurdle race considers hurdles—they are there to test your skills, test your persistence, and test your knowledge. If you are not getting objections, then knowing those which are built-into product or service, you can bring up typical objections. Doing that shows that you're familiar with what you are presenting, you know its strengths and weaknesses and you are comfortable talking about it honestly.

In fact, this is actually a powerful strategy for inoculating yourself against objections. To inoculate yourself, make a list of all the objections that could possibly be raised. Whatever the objection, first turn it into a question. Then spend time learning multiple ways to answer those questions. Then you will be in a good position to begin learning how best to frame and pre-frame the objection. As you do, sort out the objections—personal, situational, time, money, priority, value, etc. Then you'll know what kind of an objection it is and how legitimate it is, how strong it is, etc.

Regarding how to respond to an objection effectively, here is a process.

- 1) Completely hear the person out. Do so patiently and graciously as you validate the person and separate him or her from the objection. "I can see how you see it that way."
- 2) Repeat it back for confirmation. Do so in a matter-of-fact way so the person feels understood.
- 3) Question the objection to understand it more fully. Be gentle as you meta-model the details of the objection.
- 4) Check and recheck the person's values and how they fit or don't fit the product/service.
- 5) Invite possible new frames as reframes for understanding the objection.
- 6) Check the reframe to see if it satisfied the objection.
- 7) Invite the person to offer a solution or a new frame.

Here's to your inside-out, self-actualizing, coach-based selling!

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #45
October 30, 2013

HOW DO YOU DECIDE ON WHEN TO RUN A PATTERN?

Rodrigo Santiago recently sent an email with a very important question about Meta-Coaching. He asked, “What is the right moment to run a pattern with a coaching client?” Then he noted that sometimes the coaching client simply doesn't know anything about patterns.

“Therefore, not knowing about patterns, they are actually blind to the possibility of asking a coach for them. They may have a goal and want to create a plan, but usually they do not ask for patterns. What then? How can I fit a pattern into a meta-coaching session?”

As a Neuro-Semantic trainer, as well as a Meta-Coach, Rodrigo wrote one of the first things that I would have written about — the fact that many of the *patterns* are actually built inside of some of the fundamental Meta-Coaching processes.

“The Intentionality pattern is built inside the WFO. The Belief Change pattern is sort of built inside the Quality Control questions that leads to Meta-Yes and/or Meta-No which then reinforce or diminish the power of a frame.”

So obviously, where these are already present, you could follow up and facilitate the pattern more fully. He next wrote about another important distinction, that of inviting or suggesting the pattern by listening for the Elicitation Questions.

“I could run a pattern in a moment in which the client situation fits into an elicitation question. That's what I've tested a couple of times. I ask the elicitation question as a test question.”

As an example, he offered this:

Client: "I can't handle all these obligations. Makes me feel sick."

Coach: "Do you think the way you relate to obligations are contributing to this situation?"

"Yes."

"How do you know that?"

"X, Y and Z."

"If you had a better relationship with obligations, how would that change the situation?"

"I'd just do them."

"Would you like to have that? Is that an important thing for you—having a better relationship with obligations?"

If client confirms this, then, "Do you have the resources to improve your relationship with obligations? Do you know how to do that?"

"Yes." — If yes, coach the client to do it.

"No." — Then, maybe here is the thing to go for. But how?

This example shows that when a client semantically loads a concept so it is unresourceful for him or her, you can then use the Meta-Stating Concepts Pattern by asking meta-questions about the concept. That is, detecting the pattern of the problem within the conversation gives you the ability to recognize the elicitation question which governs when to use a pattern. So the more

you know and are familiar with the Elicitation Questions in the NLP and Neuro-Semantic patterns, the more prepared you will be for knowing when to use a given pattern and how to use it.

My recommendation is to think of *patterns* as simply *the processes* by which you do your coaching. When you first start coaching, it is actually important to stick as strictly as you can to the pattern. In that way you will learn how to run it properly, that is, as the pattern is designed to be run. Do that a dozen or two dozen times, and what will happen is that you'll get a good sense of the pattern— how it works, what it does, what it is designed to do, how to troubleshoot it, etc.

Once you do this with a dozen patterns or better, with four dozen patterns, you will have at ready access a lot of neuro-linguistic and neuro-semantic processes. This typically takes two or three years of practice and regular coaching with clients, yet when you reach this point, that's when the art of coaching and the magic of coaching will really begin to occur. Why or how? That's because then you'll have an intimate sense of what the different processes can and cannot do and then you'll be able to begin to mix and mingle them.

Now if you do that before you have 500 hours of coaching experience, and you are doing that because you are being driven by an options meta-program, you may feel great. You may feel powerful. But those feelings will be deceptive. You may be going for a ride, but you will not be able to demonstrate the actual competence of a trained artist in the field of human communications. This is where practice— practice— practice, 10,000 hours of practice, and deliberate practice that's reflective comes in.

Patterns in NLP and Neuro-Semantics are proven processes for enabling a person to go through an experience for a specific outcome. That's why the elicitation question is so important. It enables you to test whether a particular pattern is the right pattern for a given situation. In NSTT, we encourage all of the trainers to memorize (yes, memorize) the elicitation questions on the 14 Meta-State Patterns. We do that so that they will then get into the habit of memorizing and deeply knowing the elicitation question for any and every pattern. After all, knowing the pattern is one thing, knowing precisely *when* to use it and *with whom* to use it and for *what purpose* (*why*) to use it—that's an entirely different thing. That's what an expert in a field knows. And that's what we want you to become— an expert in this field!

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #46
November 67, 2013
Political Coaching Series #1

COACHING AND POLITICS

If you coach, you deal with politics. Especially if you coach groups and teams, politics is everywhere. Especially if you coach a political leader, the very context of your coaching now becomes political. Given this, what do you know about “politics?” How do you frame *politics* in your thinking and coaching? For that matter, what are we talking about when we use the terms *politics* or *political*? To answer these questions and many, many more, I’m beginning with this post to write a series on Coaching and Politics.

What is Politics?

Since most of the time there’s no better place to begin than at the beginning, let’s begin with the terminology. As we do this, we start with the word itself—politics, and that gives us *polis*, the original Greek term for *city*. A *polis* or city is a place where we live together, where we come together as a people, and as a community.

So politics is, most fundamentally and literally, how we get along with each other as a group of people. *Politics is how we organize and govern ourselves so that we can get along effectively with each other.* The politics of any group, community, company, or organization is made up of all the ways that we interact to govern ourselves.

Another Greek word, *politeia*, is translated “republic.” This refers to “a regime of governance.” In other words, it describes how we set up processes for governing our interactions. And when it comes to different regimes, we could create a kingdom, an aristocracy, an oligarchy, a democracy, or a tyranny. Each form presents a different process whereby we set up a way of “ruling.” (Also see this week and last week’s Neuron articles.)

Do we organize ourselves so that our group is ruled or governed by a wise king or perhaps not-so-wise boss? That would give us a kingdom or a tyranny and dictatorship. Do we organize our community so that it is ruled or governed by a small group of people? Then we have an aristocracy or oligarchy. Is the rule that of the people, the many? Then we have a democracy. Or do we select certain person to represent the larger group—then we have a represented republic. There’s lots of ways to organize ourselves politically and each has its strengths and weaknesses. None are perfect.

Why? Why set up some “regime of governance?” Aristotle argued that we do so for the good of both the individual and of the city (the whole community).

“The good life, for men individually and for the political community is the over-arching theme of Aristotelian political science.” (Leo Strauss, *History of Political Philosophy*, p. 122)

“Men have a natural potential to develop [the virtues], but actually doing so requires habituation. The moral virtues are similar to the arts in the way they are acquired, for men learn to become good by performing good actions.” (Ibid., p. 124)

How about that! *The purpose of politics is the good life!* To be political is to care about, and attempt to organize human communities, so that there is justice, equality, freedom, development, prosperity, happiness, cooperation, and collaboration. That's why.

Of course politics can and often does become “dirty.” Then it can turn nasty, and it can even become evil. Actually, this describes the way we most often use the term “politics.” So when we say that an office is highly political, or a person is “playing politics” we refer to the worst forms of how people interact with each other: holding secrets, avoiding being direct and honest, gossiping, triangling, being a “yes” person to a boss, using manipulative techniques (blaming, accusation, etc.) to gain power and influence, etc. This is the typical use of the term “politicking.” We seldom say that a person is politicking when he or she is being open and transparent, creating mutual win/win arrangements, or creating structures that empower people. Yet those actions are also aspects of politics— positive politics. And it is *positive politics* that we need in our companies, organizations, and governments.

When we comment that a problem or a solution is *politically charged*, we mean that there are people and groups of people who have conflicting goals, agendas, values, styles, etc. We mean that they are in conflict and fighting to win a battle. Each is trying to gain more power and influence to get things to go their way. Typically when this happens, people become rigid and absolutists; “My way or the highway.” “I have *the truth* and you do not.” Then with this black-or-white, either-or positioning, people experience no flexibility and so there is no negotiating. And that leads to fear, suspicion, and distrust. It is this kind of thing that turns most of us off with regard to politics.

Yet what is politics really? *Politics is relationships.* It is people interacting in how they organize their communications and conversations as they seek to influence each other, persuade others to understand their perspective, to go along with a decision they want, to value what they consider most important. Politics has to do with how we make group decisions, invest group resources, and set up group communications. So politics are inherent in Group and Team Coaching and in Executive Coaching.

“Remind me again why we do this?” *We engage in politics because we are social beings.* We not only need each other to be fully human, we also experience our highest sense of meaning and satisfaction when we work and play well together. We engage in politics so that we can cooperate and collaborate to create together what none of us could create by him or herself. After all, no single individual could have built the Great Pyramid or put a man on the moon—it takes a group or community.

Phillips Shively in *Power & Choice: Introduction to Political Science* (2008) says that politics is how we make use of power to make common decisions for a group. This highlights that what is *political* refers to *group* behaviors, values, organizations, policies, etc. So wherever there is a group— whether a family, a class, a company, a church, an association, an interest group, a country, a group of countries, etc. we have “politics.” We could even talk about your own individual self-politics— how you organize yourself, use your powers, influence yourself, etc.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #47
November 13, 2013
Political Coaching Series #2

POLITICS — IS IT ALWAYS DIRTY?

Can Politics be Positive?

Now that you know that *politics* is just we social beings communicating, working, planning, and organizing our life together to create our *polis* (city or community), you know that politics as such is neither good or bad. What determines whether our politics it is good or bad is *how we do politics*. Now you can raise the question in your coaching or if you're involved in a group, "How do you play the game?" Depending on how you do politics, you live out healthy and positive politics or toxic and dirty politics.

You do not have to run for office or be selected to a position in the government before you *do politics* in one manner or the other. *You are a politic being*. To the extent that you relate to others, are parts of groups, teams, organizations, companies, associations, communities, etc, you are political. We are all political beings. Being political is part and parcel of being human and that's why politics comes up in nearly every aspect of our lives.

Now it is true that you might try to be apolitical. People who do that dis-avow some or all of the facets and dimensions of politics. They don't want to vote for one thing over another; they don't want to hear the positions of the various sides; they don't want to take sides; they don't want to be put in charge of things, to be responsible for results; etc. Yet even in the attempt to be apolitical, you are being political.

Because politics is about *how we get along with each other*, organize ourselves, handle "power," decisions, information, differences, etc., wherever there are groups, organizations, inter-personal communications, conflicts over differences, etc. there is politics. The question is not: Whether there will be politics or not? The questions are:

- What kind of politics will there be?
- Will it be down and dirty politics, scheming, underhanded, manipulative, etc.?
- Or will it be honoring, respectful, positive, and empowering for all?

This idea of a *positive politics* is new and strange, even weird, to most people. That politics can be anything other than what we have known it to be all of our lives can even strike many people as a complete paradigm shift or dreamy romanticism. And why? Mostly, because we have never seen it. We haven't even read about it. So it seems remote and foreign and impossible.

Yet, if politics simply describes how we get along, and the quality of how we work together as a group or organization, then there's no reason why we cannot work to lift up the quality of how we do politics. Just because there's been a history of trying to get the best of another by lying

about him, misrepresenting her, not telling the whole truth, etc. doesn't mean that we cannot change the culture of our politics, does it? And just because it may take a lot of change, does that argue against trying to bring more honesty, transparency, and openness into our politics?

If then it's the culture of how we manage our communities, how we organize our communications, how we choose leaders, how we make decisions as a group, how we disperse funds and allocate resources, etc. that has tended to reinforce dirty politics, then all we need to do is to clean up our politics. *What does it mean to clean up our politics?* It means to clean up our cultures which tolerate the politics that we currently have and to set up a more responsible and accountable culture. It means exposing the systems that allow for corruption, manipulation, "good ole boy" clubs, etc.

Does all of this sound like a job for Cultural Coaching and for a Cultural Coach? Good! That's precisely what it is. It so happens to sound also like a job for those who engage in both Executive Coaching and in Group and Team Coaching. And no wonder— when you are doing Group and Team Coaching or Executive Coaching — you are engaged to some extent in dealing with politics and the business or organizational culture that is supporting the current culture.

Obviously if we operate from the new psychology of the bright-side of human nature that we call Self-Actualization Psychology and if we use that to develop and unleash self-actualizing leaders, executives, managers, and companies — then doing that is part and parcel of how we develop a self-actualizing politics in our communities, organizations, and associations.

In this week's *Neurons* I made a list of the kind of political governments that we can choose from. Using McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y of human nature leads to politics as usual (Theory X) and to politics as it can be (Theory Y) when we base all of our frames of understandings, beliefs, meanings, and values on Self-Actualization Psychology.

When I usually talk about these things, many people dismiss my words and this vision as idealistic and completely unworkable on planet Earth. "Self-Actualizing Politicians?! Are you kidding?" "Whoever heard of such a thing!?!". It is at that point that I get to tease their dogma and torture their beliefs and open up a vision of something truly amazing but not incredible. All I have to do is say, "Yes and it has already happened ... [pause for dramatic effect] ... think President Nelson Mandela of South Africa."

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #48
November 20, 2013
Political Coaching Series #3

HOW DOES POLITICAL COACHING WORK?

I noted in the post last week that if you are doing Executive Coaching and/or Group and Team Coaching, you are already doing some political coaching. It is inescapable. That's because if you are dealing with groups of people interacting, communicating, dealing with differences, working through conflicts, figuring out how to delegate, how to share "power," etc., then you are already dealing with politics. So how are you doing?

Yes, while you may not officially be a "Political Coach," and while someone may not have hired you for that, and while your client may not be in "politics" formally, your coaching will be touching on political issues. Lots of them.

- What then do you need so that you can increase your effectiveness when you get into this domain?
- What frames of meaning would support you in this dimension of coaching?
- What does the Meta-Coaching system offer you?

1) *Learn and use Self-Actualization Psychology in your Coaching.* This is first and foremost. After all, you have a great psychology—Self-Actualization Psychology—which can serve as the basis of your coaching. I mentioned this last week in the article on whether politics have to be dirty? The point is this—Whenever there is *dirty politics*, you know there are some meaning frames (beliefs, understandings, decisions, identities, etc.) that is supporting dirty politics. You know that your people whether they are leaders, executives, managers, supervisors, or front line people are operating from a Theory X perspective. You know they are behaving as if they believe people untrustworthy, irresponsible, unethical, ready to take advantage of others, ready to lie, steal, and deceive, etc. Obviously, that gives you a lot to coach people about!

This is where Meta-Coaching gives you a real advantage. Yes, you start with behavior and are usually brought in to deal with low-level unacceptable behavior. From there you begin to address the person's thoughts and emotions (their states), then you begin to back up and find out the frames that's driving their ineffective response patterns. You ask people to take a Meta-Moment to reflect on their assumptions, what they are assuming about people, human nature, human relationships, power, leadership, etc. Stepping back to look at the highest level frames, the person's assumptive frames means flushing them out and getting them on the table. And when you do that, you make those frames transparent.

Learn the distinctions within the Theory X and Theory Y framework. Learn it so well that you can detect where a person and where a group is in terms of these paradigms. When you do, you

will be able to hear a Theory X question and distinction it from a Theory Y question.

2) *Get ready to Challenge your Clients.* “Politics as usual” is how we typically describe an organization’s culture and is often used to explain, justify, and defend the current system. Accept that, pace it, and then *lead your client away from it.* Challenge the politics as usual.

When you hear the “politics as usual” that typically means that people *expect, believe, and anticipate* that they and others will not trust others, suspect them, hide information, gossip and triangle, justify “stealing” time, products, etc. And depending on how bad the politics and culture, some will tolerate and expect corruption— using organization or public resources for private gain, negotiating or bartering or selling votes, overlooking misdeeds even crimes, taking bribes, stealing money, etc. All of that is Theory X stuff.

If you are wondering, “Why does it seem that corruption sets in so regularly in people when they are in positions of trust?” There are numerous answers. One is that people expect and believe that people are naturally corrupt. They live in cultures that tolerate it and so they become skeptical about it. When someone engages in such behavior they are not shocked, and they justify it, “Well, everybody does it a little bit.” And so they do not hold people accountable, they do not blow the whistle, they do not challenge such behavior.

As a Political Coach, you will want to challenge all of this and facilitate your clients to become intolerant of such. In the long-run it will undermine the success of the company, organization, or association. Here you will want to coach for professional and ethical behavior as you help people develop a vision for a culture of positive politics. And that culture will need a structure for accountability, challenge, and oversight.

3) *Enable people to Wake Up to their Culture and Politics.* Whatever a group’s political culture, the people in that group for the most part has been socialized to that culture. That’s true for all of us. We live in any culture long enough, and we will get used to the politics in it so that we can survive. Plus, a culture is simply a shared reality— a set of shared values, beliefs, expectations, decisions, identities, etc. So part of the challenge of a coach is to enable people to begin to see—for the first time— and with fresh eyes the politics that they have taken for granted.

Is this easy? No, of course not. Otherwise, they could easily do it themselves. That’s why they need a coach— that’s why they need a Meta-Coach!

4) *Inspire a Culture of Positive Politics.* Maslow set forth the principle. To create a good society, we need good people. We need to awaken, challenge, and develop people to be good, to step up to being the best they can be. How do we create a healthy and just society? The virtues that we need / the moral education — courage, moderation, generosity, truth-telling, friendliness, self-control, nobility, responsibility, accountability.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #49
November 27, 2013
Political Coaching Series #4

THE MANY FACETS OF POLITICAL COACHING

In the past post on Political Coaching and the four on “Neurons” on Government, I have defined politics. That’s just the beginning; that’s just defining what we’re talking about when we talk about “politics.” Yet about this, there is much more to say. That’s obvious when we shift our focus to ask the following questions:

- “What are all of the facets of political coaching?”
- “What are the range of subjects that fall under the concept of something being *political*?”

Asking these questions reveals that when it comes to politics and to things political—a great deal of our communities, groups, associations, businesses, corporations, governments, etc. are *political*. What are these facets?

Authority	Communication	Money / Finances
Culture	Groups	Resources
Decisions	Group dynamics	Negotiation
Decision-making	Cooperation	Governing / Governance
Delegation	Collaboration	Kingdom
Leadership	Ground rules	Oligarchy
Management	Framing	Democracy
Power	Constraints	Tyranny
Rules	Vision	Aristocracy
Regulations	Mission	Positions / Positing
Triangling	Manipulation	Control
Influence	Responsibility	Transparency
Hiding / Secrets	Statesmanship	

So, what do you think? Is this a broad and expansive area for the field of Coaching? And for the most part this is an unexplored area. Yes, there are, and have been for some time, *Political Coaches*. Most are not been full time, but only do it occasionally. And in many, many countries, Political Coaching has not even started. Leaders have to be somewhat developed personally to understand the value of it, the benefits that they can derive, and so wherever there is still the old Theory X of human nature, then you have Theory X of management, of leadership, and of politicians.

Because politics is everywhere in human groups, it is in families, committees, boards, partnerships, as well as all larger groups. Given that we cannot avoid politics and be apolitical, the question is *the kind and quality of political behavior* that we generate. And as with everything human, we can now ask the quality control questions about it: is it positive or

negative, does it enhance or diminish our experience, does it empower or dis-empower people, is it ethical or unethical, does it provide clear and precise information or does it hide information and keep secrets, etc.

Political coaching got a real boost, at least in the United States, more than a decade ago when President Bill Clinton had his crisis in truth speaking. It was the year that he “did not have sex with that woman” and kept saying so over and over for six months. Finally, he hired a personal coach who changed everything. President Clinton hired Anthony Robbins and together they went off to Camp David. Then and three days later he appeared for a press conference where he announced that “Well, actually I did have sex with that woman.” And that was a really big story for a day or two and then it was over. Done. Suddenly nobody was interested in it any longer. But what came out of it was even more fascinating — the President of the United States has a “Personal Coach!”

Then for the next 6 years or more every time Anthony Robbins appeared on Stephen King or Oprah, he suddenly had a new title, “Personal Coach.” And with that people at the top all wanted their own Personal Coach. Now wouldn’t it be absolutely fascinating to know what Robbins did in facilitating Clinton to come clean and tell the truth? Actually, this is a key factor in political coaching— challenging and even confronting those in power. Holding them accountable to such criteria as truth, doing right, justice, equality, etc.

Political coaching deals a lot with leadership within the context of multiple cultural factors — especially values, accountability, responsibility, clear and precise communications, etc. So all of these are key factors in coaching people within highly politicalized contexts.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #50
Dec. 4, 2013

MAKING YOUR QUESTIONS WORK

Is there's a secret for making your questions really, really *work*? I mean, a process by which the questions you ask as a coach can activate the best responses in your client, mobilize his or her resources, facilitate discoveries of self-awareness and Aha! insights, and generate the kind of changes and transformations that you want for your clients? When a question really *works*, it challenges, it confronts, it activates, it releases blocks, it captures the attention, it inspires, etc. It does all kinds of wonderful things.

One of my privileges for over a decade now has been to interview dozens and dozens of expert coaches and entrepreneurs, 31 Expert Coaches and 20 or so Entrepreneurs, and to observe them in action using questions very powerfully. As I have learned so much from them about questioning, it has revolutionized my own questioning skills.

Now the first and foremost questions for a Meta-Coach are the 18 Well-Formed Outcome questions. I began with the five that were the original NLP pattern, and over the years added additional questions until Bob and I had the 10 WFO questions which we put in *User's Manual of the Brain*. Those were the 10 that I taught when I used to teach NLP Practitioner. Then in the years of modeling expert coaches, I have added the additional 8. To this day I am still excited about these formatting and framing questions for you as a Meta-Coach because they enable you to facilitate the Clarity Conversation and the Decision Conversation and to create a high quality *contract* for your coaching.

And now there's more. *How do you use the WFO questions so powerfully?* I've been asked that over and over by Team Leaders and the Meta-Coach Trainers and recently I began modeling that out and last week in Guangzhou China I introduced the following diagram (it is in two parts due to its size). This diagram is a *Decision Tree* or a *Flow Chart* for asking the questions and for knowing where to go after you ask the question. To ask the questions one after the other *and to not notice the response you get* is to use the questions in the most superficial and ineffective way. You will not get much if you do that.

How do you use these questions powerfully? To create a strong personal impact with them—ask the question, notice if the person answers your question, if not notice what question the person does answer (!), acknowledge that, and then repeat the question. To then really get some mileage out of the questions, *refine the questions*. And how do you do that? Refine each WFO question with the *testing, checking, clarity, and exploration questions*. This is illustrated in the diagram as the penetrating arrows (↖). Use these questions to *refine* the WFO questions. This creates clarity, focus, and the relevant details.

If you move too fast—racing down the WFO list, you won't know what the hell you're talking

about! So *refine* the answer by checking questions, testing questions, clarity checks (for how the person is using the terms), and exploration. Do this to *ground* the conversation. Every “yes” answer that you get, move down to the next WFO question. Every “no” move up to the “What?” question again and go from there.

In this way, the WFO questions can be used as a system and so operates systemically to guide your questioning. Using the four sets of refining questions enables you to ground and detail and for a global person, this will help you “chunk down” (to use the NLP jargon) to sufficient specifics so that both you and your client know what you are talking about. If you notice the penetrating arrows (↔), these are the key places where you need to get a *sensory-based description* (the VAK to use more NLP jargon). This answers the question, *Where* does the VAK occur in this set of questions? Answer: It occurs several places!

When you put this together, you will now have the ability to truly *work over* the answers of your client so that they create clarity — insight, awareness— and then decision. How do you learn this? Practice! And then some more practice. Keep checking with your client to see how he or she is experiencing the exploration. Get to a MCF chapter to practice this. Create a MCF chapter and get people there so you can practice or observe this. Then you too will become a powerful questioner!

What is the power in this? It is your power to get your client to become clear and concise on what he or she wants. It is to enable and empower your client to think critically about the goal presented. It is to interrogate their reality— that’s what you are doing with the clarity, testing, and checking questions. And altogether this then becomes the conversation that is like none-other. It is focused, it is challenging, and it is clarifying. Welcome to Meta-Coaching!

Subject/
Theme

WHAT? ?

←TEST←

Motive

?

Can You?

Time

*Why?

This is what to
talk about?

Space

?

When? _____

←CHECK←

Personal

?

Where?

Really?
Sure?

Action

?

With Whom?

←CLARITY←

Control/
Influence

?

DO? ?

VAK?

Def. of word

Meta-Model Q

Capacity

?

You?

←EXPLORE←

Tell me more?

Memory

?

*Can?

What do you mean?

?

*Have?

?

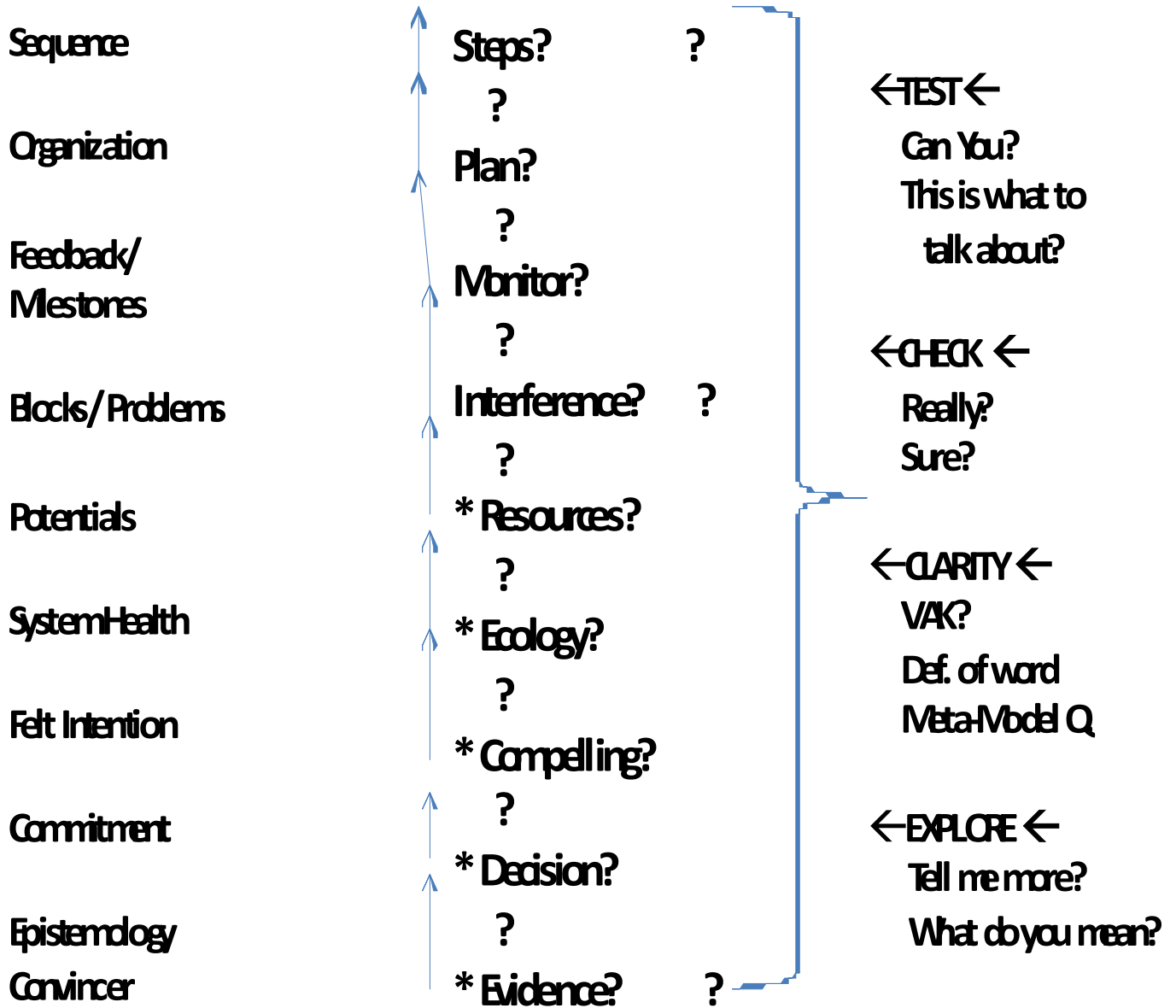
Code:

* Meta-Questions

←check VAK clarity

Arrow down: if "Yes" to Q

Arrow up: Go back to "What"



Code:

* Meta-Questions

←check VAK clarity

Arrow down: if "Yes" to Q

Arrow up: Go back to "What"

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #51
Dec. 11, 2013

THE FIRST META-QUESTION

In Meta-Coaching, we ask meta-questions. Recently someone asked me a very strange question. “What was the first meta-question?” What the person meant was: What was the first meta-question *in the field of NLP*? That got me thinking. Wondering. What was it?

Then I remembered something. So I pulled out the book, *Meta-States: Mastering the Higher Levels of Your Mind* (2008, p. 237) and there it was. What I wrote there was about when Richard Bandler and John Grinder heard a meta-question from Virginia Satir. They even called it a meta-question, but they did not understand it.

I wrote: “They *almost* stumbled upon Meta-States in *The Structure of Magic*, Volume II, in the section ‘The Meta-Question.’”

“This question [How do you feel about feeling angry?] is extensively used by Virginia Satir in her dynamic therapy—she describes this question as an excellent way to tap the client’s self-esteem (the client’s feelings about his feelings)—a part of the client closely connected with his ability to copy. . . . the client shifts . . . to the next higher logical level” (p. 57)

In this statement we here learn what prevented them from recognizing and inventing the Meta-States domain. They blindly accepted Satir’s erroneous explanation that the “reference structure” elicited “was the client’s self-esteem.” (p. 161). They unquestioningly accepted that complex equivalence: “referent structure of the question” = “self-esteem.” But look with fresh eyes at Virginia’s question: “How do you feel about feeling angry?” That has nothing to do with the category of self-esteem.

This question arose originally from Virginia’s therapeutic conversation between a father and his daughter. He was upset, even angry, and he was yelling at his daughter. To this, Virginia Satir responded by separating out the father’s intent in his yelling behavior from his behavior of yelling.

“Do you yell at everyone like that? You don’t yell at the paper boy?”

Her question here distinguishes contexts. When and where does the father yell? And that question by implication implies that this father has control over his yelling. Then she set a higher level frame by simply asking another meta-question. With this question she took the behavior and classified it as a primary state detail and then put it into a new category.

“Are you trying to tell her that you care about what she does? Is that what this anger is about?”

In *Meta-States* I wrote: “What a magical move! In this maneuver she offered a new frame. By identifying and reframing yelling in this way she put it into the class of *caring messages*. Virginia

then asked yet another meta-question to presupposed, and thereby create, yet another higher state of mind:

"Well, how do you feel about knowing that now?" (*Frogs Into Princes*, p. 171)

This meta-question elicited in the father a new state—a meta-state of evaluation about the invented category that Virginia suggested as a new frame. To respond to that question he had to step back from his state with all of his neurology of yelling and try on the new frame-of-reference *about* yelling at his daughter—and view it as a caring message.

Virginia's meta-questions invited him to set a whole new frame. In this way she graciously prescribed a new meaning—a meta-state of loving concern about his relationship with his daughter. It invited him to go meta to "*know that*" loving message "*now*" (a hypnotic embedding of a command) and then develop the next higher meta-state of evaluation *about* that knowing.

Richard Bandler and John Grinder recognized that this sentence worked. They acknowledged that, but they also said they didn't understand how it worked.

"That's a weird sentence; it doesn't actually have any meaning. But it works." (p. 171)

It doesn't mean anything!?! Really? Well, without understanding how reflexivity of consciousness works to set new states-*about*-states and higher frames of reference for meaning, I suppose I would have concluded the same. But using the structure of the Meta-States model we can now recognize what that sentence meant and how it worked at higher levels to create new neuro-semantic frames.

So imagine this situation where you would ask Virginia's meta-question. If a person was angry, if the person was yelling or shouting or telling off someone, and then you ask, "How do you feel about *feeling angry*?" that question would work to invite the person to step out of the anger state and into a new state of awareness, and with awareness, choice.

To answer the question, a person would have to step out of primary state of being aware of who and why he is yelling and begin to entertain other ideas— ideas about the yelling. Is the yelling effective? Do you like being in this state? Is it sending a caring message? Of course, to ask these questions about the first state are additional meta-questions. And they invite a person to create new frames and a more expanded awareness.

Both the father and the daughter are now invited to see and frame the *yelling* as a member of the class of *caring*. The question then invites the person to *go meta* to this new understanding and explore how one feels about yelling as a category of caring.

"How do you feel *about* your feelings *about* what is happening?"

When I first read that as I was discovering the Meta-States model, this was the first meta-question that I became consciously aware of.

What do you feel about your feelings?

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #52
Dec. 18, 2013

CO-COACHING

I do not often do co-coaching. I had the privilege of doing it in April this year with Janine Daniels when we had an opportunity during ACMC in Bali. She and I had a very real session with one of our Team Leaders who was really, really struggling with a major decision in her life. A decision that had a great many ramifications. It was affecting her career, her immediate family of husband and children, her extended family of father and mother, etc. After she presented it as a session subject for us to benchmarking the coaching session and she had still not found resolution, I suggested co-coaching. So together we facilitated the coaching as we did it together. And from what the Team said and what our client said, it was brilliant. It was much more than the sum of the two.

This week in the 57th ACMC had in Guangzhou China, I had the privilege of co-coaching on two sessions with Mandy. We co-coached the *Extending Meta-Programs pattern* and then we co-coached the *Coaching Demonstration* on the day that we video-tape the session. In the first Mandy led, in the second I led. And again, I thought the total effect was an emergent property of something that was not just an *addition* of two, but a *multiplication*. Then something more than and different from the total emerged.

Actually, this was the very first time in doing the Coaching Demonstration in this way. Every other co-coaching, as with the first ones I did many years ago with Michelle Duval, was in private. When Michelle and I used to do it, it was almost always with a difficult client. But not this time.

With co-coaching there are two coaches for the client and this allows the presence of more than one style of coaching to be a part of the experience. And with four eyes and four ears, much more of the processing and patterning of the client can be seen and heard. In our Coaching Demonstration, Mandy decided that she would do the step backs. So she called for a meta-moment from time to time and invited the client to become aware of what was happening. This is powerful for putting the client at cause. It's powerful for a momentary break from the exploration to cultivate higher level awarenesses.

This not only shifted things for the client, it also gave me a break so I could gather my thoughts, assess where we were, where to go next, and to observe the client as he responded to Mandy's questions and interventions. In this situation, Mandy took notes and tracked things. I mostly worked first to ground things with testing, checking, and clarification questions and once grounded, then I used meta-questions to do the work of facilitating developmental change.

How do you co-coach? First, set up signals with your partner as to how you will let each other know when you want to intervene and say something. You may want to sequence challenge and nurture and thereby play Good Coach/ Bad Coach(!). You could sequence one using the up

(meta) questions and the other the down (primary) questions. You could take turns as three-minutes each, then switch. There are numerous ways that you could sequence your roles.

Co-Coaching also is a great way to get started. Find someone to co-coach with in one of the MCF chapters and notice how it takes so much of the pressure off of one person to do everything. And if you practice in a Chapter, you could try out numerous partners to see whose energy fits best with you, and who compliments your style best. There also you can get feedback from the others on this unique form of coaching.

And as mentioned, co-coaching is especially powerful with difficult clients. If you have someone who has patterns that they are completely caught up in and who tends to go around to different coaches and “defeating” those coaches; “See, no one can handle me!” here is a format that can interrupt that pattern.

In co-coaching, with two witnesses to the client’s patterns— there can be a lot more feedback to the client, and confirmation of the same feedback by more than just one person. This can break the power-struggle that can sometimes get set up with a single coach. And when a pattern is so systemic and so complex, having a co-coach with you can help one or the other of you to see the patterning whereas where a single coach may be too busy intervening to catch the subtle patterns.

Post Script

After we did the Coaching Session and showed the Video in the evening, the client stood up and explained that when I asked him to give himself “permission to handle other people’s displeasure” . . . he was “very resistant.” “I was stubbornly resisting and did not want to do it.” That’s why my heart started pounding. After the second request to notice how well it settled or not, he said he decided to try really hard to resist because he could feel that his old belief was changing. (!) After the third invitation and my words directing him to say the words that we talked about, he said all of a sudden a new belief popped up ... and he decided that I was there “supporting him” and not imposing anything, but that I believed in him so much, he just had to let it happen. (!)

Now I didn’t see any of that. I just saw a client dealing with the request and seemingly having some internal processing. But by simply holding the space and staying with the process facilitation, he later said that he learned something tremendously important. He said, “Even *empowerment* imposed, is empowerment resented.” He noted that he had been coaching for several years, had done Landmark trainings, and that “from now I will stop trying to get my clients to succeed. I will just be present to them. That’s what enabled me to change.” I was really impressed with his honesty and authenticity. Wow! After all, that’s what makes for a truly effective and powerful coach.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Morpheus #53
Dec. 25, 2013

TRAINING IN THE POWER OF QUESTIONS

You coach best by asking questions. That's the point we strive to make on Day 2 of *Coaching Mastery*. And that's because coaching is a discipline that's all about asking questions. Questions ground a subject by going out and down; these are Meta-Model questions of precision and specificity. Questions go deep into the person's mind or matrix by moving into their meaning-making domain; these are meta-questions. Yet while most people are poor to mediocre in asking questions, the science and art of asking questions can be developed — with a systematic model, with deliberate practice, with sensory-based feedback, and a commitment, a coach can become incredibly powerful by asking questions.

Here are two new exercises that we have just started doing in *Coaching Mastery (ACMC)* that is drilling in the power of asking powerful questions. The first one I hinted at two weeks ago in how to “work over” and refine the well-formed outcome questions. Feel free to use these exercises at your next MCF chapter meeting.

Training the Refining Questions

Asking the well-formed outcome questions by themselves and without refining the answers will not give the client a powerful or profound experience. The answer to each question has to be refined. It has to be worked over so that it becomes precise. And how do you do that/ By using the four key refining questions— the questions for Testing, Checking, Exploring, Clarifying.

The *checking questions* checks to make sure that your understanding is accurate, that you accurately heard the person, and that they mean what you think they said. “So you said delegating?” “I understand you want to focus on what responsibility *for* means, right?” The *testing questions* tests the person. It is a very small challenge. “This is what you want to focus on? Really? There's nothing more important? You're committed to this?”

The *clarifying questions* or clarity checks (under listening) clarifies the meanings of the words and terms, discovers the see-hear-feel qualities of the terms they are using (the VAK). These questions enable you to create a specific movie in your mind of the client's world. Every where you are not clear, ask a clarification question. The *exploration questions* are to expand the landscape of the person's inner world, to get enough information to have a clear understanding.

Practicing the Refining Questions

- 1) Get into a group of 5 to 10
- 2) Appoint each person a kind of question: WFO, testing, checking, exploring, clarity.
 - Spend time giving examples of each so the person is ready to go.
 - Checking:* So you said X? So this will be new for you? So you have tried this before?
 - Clarity:* What do you mean by X? What's your definition of X? Give me an example, when did this last happen? What do you see, hear and feel?

Testing: Is that right? Can you do that? Do you really want to do that? Have you made a commitment to this?

Exploring: What do you think about X? What's the greatest thing about X? Tell me more? If I could peak into the theater of your mind, what would I see what you see X?

- 3) The group coach (team leader) presents a situation such as the following:
 - a) I want to move forward but there's too much conflict.
 - b) I am tired all the time, I'm just not getting enough sleep. I guess I go to bed too late.
 - c) I really want to save money but I can't stand the idea of budget and controlling money.
 - d) The leaders in our company are incompetent. They don't know what they are doing.
- 4) After the group coach presents the situation, WFO person ask first question, then go around the group to ask each of the questions; then question two and go around, etc.
- 5) Group Coach will help refine or develop the question if it does not "work over and refine" the WFO question.

Meta-Question Training

This practice is for training one to think of and how to articulate meta-questions. And because meta-questions are those that invite the client to *go inside*, these are the questions that enable an indepth exploration of the person's matrix of frames.

- 1) Get into a group of 4 to 10 people
- 2) Appoint each person one of the Meta-Questions:
Menu list: Believe, value, permit, decision, intention, identity, metaphor, remember, imagine, expect, etc. Each person is to ask questions using the above term in response to the situation that's presented.
- 3) Group Coach presents a situation to the group. As soon as the situation is presented, go around the group and each person is to respond with a meta-question using the meta-question they have received. Examples of situations:
 - a) I am frustrated, I got a 1.5 on supporting.
 - b) I can't stand it when I have to stand in long lines and wait.
 - c) My child won't do his homework, so I'm failing as a parent.
 - d) I fear by rejected if I ask her for a date.
- 4) The Group Coach is not to "answer" the question as much as to help each participant with the meta-questions. Give a thumbs up if it is a relevant and effective meta-question. If the question is not relevant or on target, then ask the group to help rephrase the question so it is an effective meta-question.
- 5) After going around the group 2 to 5 times, debrief:
 - a) Which was the most powerful or impactful meta-question?
 - b) Which was the least impactful?
 - c) Let's now put together two or three of our questions to create a complex meta-question. What would be the best complex meta-question we can generate?