

# **MORPHEUS**

## **DEVELOPING META-COACHING SKILLS**

### **VOLUME VI**

**2014**

# MORPHEUS — 2014

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**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #1**  
**January 1, 2014**

## **GETTING GROUNDED FOR THE NEW YEAR**

“What can you tell me about *how* to learn to see and recognize details?” For many people, this question represents a very significant problem. Why? Because to live at a global level is to move through life as if blind! You are blind to a major portion of reality. The challenge in this is due to the fact that you have a blind spot. You *think* you are dealing with details (and it is your level of detail), and yet it is still so global and general that it is actually entirely imprecise.

In recent *Coaching Mastery* courses, we have had a large number of people with very strong driving meta-programs of sorting globally. So in giving feedback on the coaching sessions, I keep writing on the benchmarking form: “**Details!** Ask clarification questions; flush our more details.”

As I do that I then give examples—lots and lots of examples of detailing questions that they could have asked. I have said for more often than I can count, “I didn’t have a clue as to what you two were talking about! It was completely vague and imprecise.” Typically, the coach says that he or she thought that they knew. So I ask questions about it. Very shortly they realize that they did not get many details and that the conversation was indeed vague. That’s when they start asking, “How do I learn to recognize details?” “How can I improve?”

That’s when I say something like: “Great! You just had your first lesson. How do you learn it? Your first step is to by discover or suspect that you are missing things.” Okay, so what is step two?

### **Recognizing the Levels of Generality and Specificity**

NLP uses computer language in talking about “chunking” up and down. That is, we move up and down the scale of generality and specificity. This is about how we *categorize* the world. A banana is a fruit. “Fruit” is a category or class. In that classification are many other items (facts) that we call “fruit”—oranges, apples, pineapples, etc. And “fruit” is a member of a larger category: “food.” There are many members in the class of food. And “food” is in a larger category of “organic.” And so as we classify we go *up* to higher and more comprehensive and embracing categories. So along the scale we can move *up* from empirical facts that you can see, hear, feel, etc. into categories of greater expansiveness.

When we “chuck down” we move to *members of the class*. Start with banana. We can describe its qualities: unripe, ripe, rotten. On the tree, picked, sorted in bunches, sorted out as individual bananas. Peeled, unpeeled. Uneaten, half eaten, eaten, only peeling left. Sliced by cutting through the middle, sliced by cutting perpendicularly, mashed, etc. In identifying members of the class we move *down* the scale.

## Drilling Down to Details — Testing Language for Detailing

Begin with a word or phrase (X) and then put it to the test. Here are the first two testing questions:

- A) Is it a *category* (class) or a *fact* (VAK sensory-based fact)?
- B) Can you see–hear–feel it or not? (Without hallucinating) Is it empirical?

**A) Category or Fact.** Start by putting this question in your mind: Am I dealing with a *category* or a *fact*? Is this word or phrase a fact? As you seek an answer begin by *suspecting that it is a category*. Most words are. If it is a fact, it will be empirical. You will be able to see, hear, feel, smell, taste it. Can you do that with “meaning?” No. What does it look like? Sound like? Can you do it with “rude?” Or kindness? Leadership? Relationship? Money? No. None of these terms are empirical facts.

If the answer is *yes*, then identify 5 to 10 *qualities* of it. As an example, the unspecified verb “running.”

- \* Speed: Fast / Slow
- \* Style: with Ease / Difficulty
- \* Self / Other
- \* Uphill / Downhill
- \* Gracefully / Clumsily
- \* During Day / Night

If the answer is *no*, then identify 5 to 10 members of the category. As an example: “money” — US dollars, Yen, Rubles, Pasos, Hong Kong dollars, UK Pounds, Egyptian Pounds, credit card, paypal money, gold, silver, stocks, bonds, etc. *Money* is a category. You can’t see, hear, or feel *money*. Another example: “Centered” — feet separated, breathing deep and low, eyes looking out level, voice deep, state relaxed, etc.

**B) Empirical or Evaluative.** If a word is empirical, then you can see, hear, feel, smell, taste, touch it. Now it could be an evaluative term (category or class) for which you hallucinate empirical referents. Then you will not be aware of your hallucinating and you will actually think that the term is empirical. Test it by asking three other people.

Ask them: Could “money” be a category? What are members of the class of money? What does money look like, sound like, feel like, smell like, etc.?

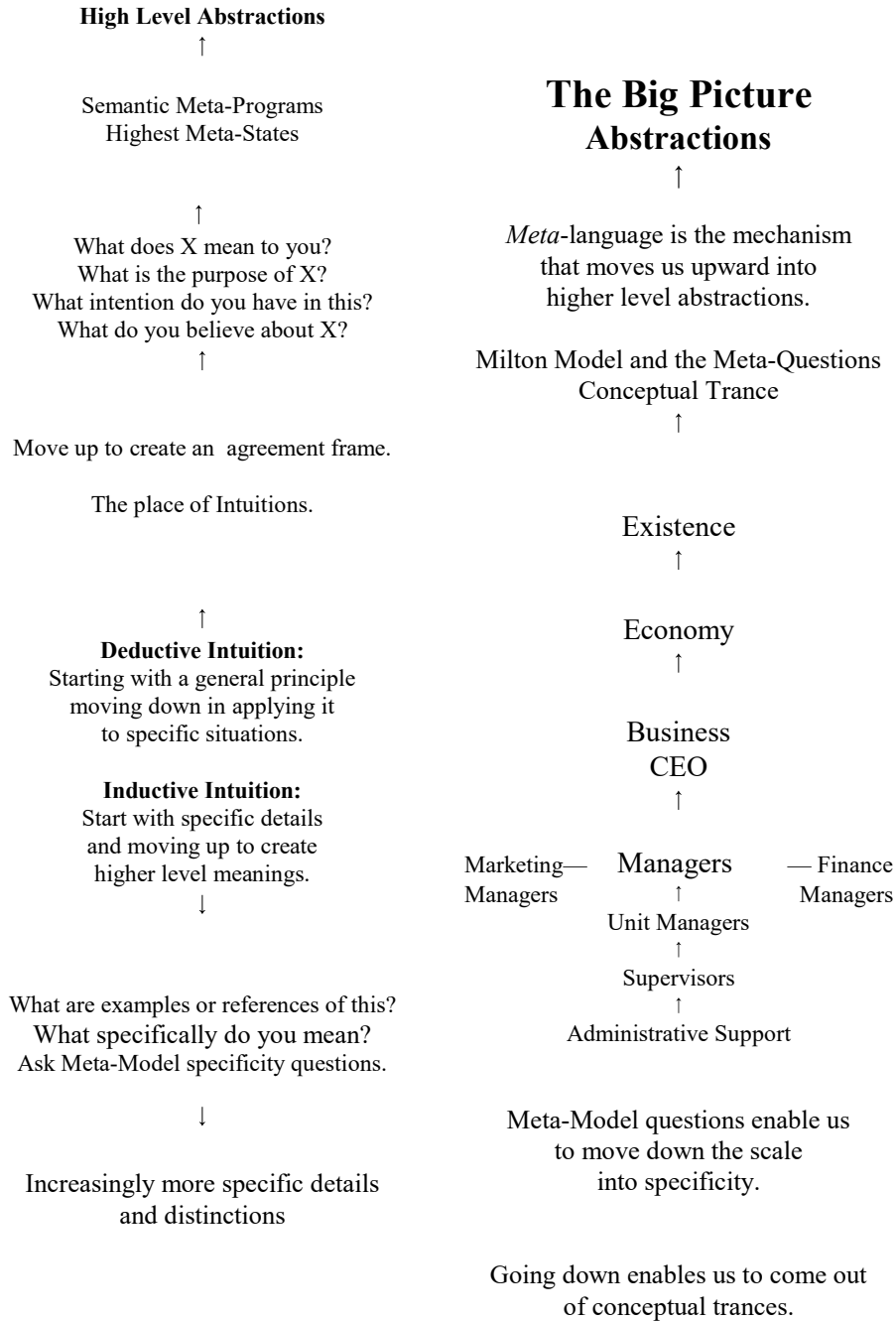
**C) Other Categories.** If the word fails to list members of the category or class, then the word given (Y) is not a detail of X, but another category term. So continue your testing:

- 1) Does it indicate *an equivalent category*? For example, if for “centered” you get such words as— okay, grounded, focused, resourceful. You are getting not a member of the class, but a *synonym* for the category. So you are still at the level of category.
- 2) Does the new term actually indicate not an equivalent category, but that Y is a member of a *larger category*? For example, “resourceful” may in that person’s mind be the larger category for “centered.” The person has moved up rather than to the side or down.  
Check: “Is *centered* a member of the class of *resourceful*? If so, what are other members of this class— for you?”

The following continuum comes from *Figuring Out People* and *User’s Manual for the Brain* to help understand the scale of specificity and abstraction.

# Vertical Continuum

## The Scale of Specificity and Abstraction



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #2**  
**January 8, 2014**

## **PCMC TRAINING**

### **Training for Coaching Expertise and Professionalism**

In the past three years, five times I have spent anywhere from 2 to 5 days working with ACMC coaches and facilitating the processes by which they would take their skills to the PCMC level. That has led to 19 people having reached PCMC credentials. To coach at this level means demonstrating the core coaching skills at a level “3” for the first seven benchmarks as well as four additional skills: pattern detection, framing, tasking, and clenching the KPI.

This experience has taught me a lot about this next level of coaching expertise and how to facilitate people moving to that level. Consequently, I have designed and written a PCMC training manual as well as PCMC Feedback Form (Form 3). Recently, several people ready for PCMC have said that they really did not want to go through ACMC and be assessed afterwards, which is one way we have offered to do PCMC. They have communicated that they actually want some training in the advanced skills in a focused training. To meet this need, I have designed the following *five-day training and assessment program for PCMC credentials*.

If you have been coaching for two or more years as a professional and believe that you are now able to demonstrate the core coaching skills at a level of “3,” here is how you can bring this training to your city or country. In order to run this course we require that there is a minimum of five ACMC coaches who have doing Coaching for at least two years. Payment from the five has to be collected prior to scheduling the course. If that is the case for you, then to sponsor or schedule *The PCMC Training & Assessment* course, contact me for the dates and the arrangement.

#### **Overview of PCMC Training and Assessment:**

- 1) 5 days of training (minimum of 8 hours each day).
- 2) Investment: \$3000 USD.
- 3) Intense intimate coaching with a small group; design is for approximately 7 to 12 people.
- 4) Coaching sessions will be 45 to 60 minutes.
- 5) Presentations include both instructions of the advanced skills and models as well as real-time interaction and debriefing.

#### **Day 1: Stepping Up to Coaching Expertise**

Introduction to PCMC: requirements and qualifications.

#### **Modeling your client’s experience**

Via the Core Coaching Skills. The *integration* of the core competencies.

*Design:* To be able to describe the structure of the client’s current experience.

To identify the gap between PS and desired state. Listening for, discovering the strategy process. The structure of the current experience or situation. This gets to the heart of things, the meanings. See and recognize the client's system at work.

**Advanced Listening:** Because active, focused, and clean listening is the basis for all of the Coaching Skills, instructions about how to *be fully present and no where else*. Learn to not “try” to do anything except to just listen, to be completely present to the client, to understand the client on his or her terms. Transcending instrumental listening and accessing sacred listening.

- 1) Listen for the real question: There is a question (or several) behind the client's question. What is it?
- 2) Funneling that question through the 18 questions to call out the real question. Use the refining questions (testing, checking, clarifying) and keep doing so until you get the KPI.
- 3) Listening for meta-comments in the client that indicate hidden levels of beliefs and assumptions.
- 4) Inferential listening. How to hear what's not being said.

### **Pattern Detection**

Linguistic, behavioral, relational, psychological, thinking (cognitive), emotional, perceptual, belief, self, etc.

Use the Outcome – Problem – Solution – Innovation format. This is the Creative Problem-Solving model of Neuro-Semantics.

### **Framing Skills:**

Explicit framing: Categorizing, meaning-making, reframing, deframing.

Implicit Framing: Preframing, post framing, outframing, priming.

### **Putting a client at Cause:**

Invite awareness of self— self-actions, self-responsibility.

Challenge

Confront and hold accountable.

## **Day 2: Ruthlessly Compassionate Coaching**

### **The Art of Holding a Fierce Conversation**

Integrating the dual attitudes of challenge and compassion.

Degree of each attitude: \_\_\_ Challenge. \_\_\_ Compassion.

Which is your strength?

Which is your stretch?

How to make the conversation fierce: real, personal, intense.

How to develop the courage for a fierce conversation.

The power of confrontation in coaching.



**Coaching Semantic Space:**

Orienting and re-orienting Semantic space.

Time: past, present, future.

Self/ other: Responsibility for and to.

Same/ Difference: for matching/ mismatching

**Advanced Questioning**

- 1) Refining the 18 WFO Questions: Making the Outcome questions work effectively.
- 2) Layered Meta-Questions — FBI Questions
- 3) State Inductions
- 4) Torpedo Coaching Questions

**Days 3-5: Supervised Mentoring and Assessments**

Debrief for the structure, the systemic thinking, the Matrix, the leverage points for change in the coaching sessions.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #3**  
**January 15, 2014**

## **COACHING IN TWO STAGES**

*“How many stages are there in a Coaching Session?”* That’s what one of the Meta-Coaches asked me a few weeks back when we were doing the *Coaching Mastery* in Guangzhou China.

“There are so many models in Meta-Coaching, I just don’t know how to think about the coaching session. I know there are seven kinds of conversations, and that to conduct a session, there’s the WFO questions, the KPI, the need to frame at the beginning, close with a summary and tasking. Yet I really don’t have a clear understanding of the stages of coaching. Can you help?”

Another person asked me about the GROW model. “Is that the answer?” No, of course not! G.R.O.W. came from Sir John Whitmore back in the very early days of Coaching *and is not a model*. It is a little template with four distinctions regarding what to do in a coaching session. The letters stand for: Goal, Reality, Outcome, Wrap-up. And even as a menu list for what to do in a coaching session it is over-simplistic to the point of hardly being useful. When I hear that a coach is using the G.R.O.W. model, I know that they have not had a very thorough training in coaching!

So how do we conceptualize a *coaching session* in Meta-Coaching? We conceptualize it from what we are seeking to do in the session. What is that? Great question. That question will take you to the heart of coaching. What do you seek to do in a Coaching Session?

*You seek to find the client’s objective and then facilitate the client to access his or her own resources to reach that objective.*

This is precisely what distinguishes the Coaching Conversation from consulting, training, mentoring, and therapy. Because the client is his or her own expert about him or herself and because the client has the resources for taking charge of his or her life, that’s is precisely what a well-informed and skilled Coach seeks to facilitate. Okay, so believing that, how then do you run a session?

My recommendation: Run a session by recognizing that there are two stages in the process of coaching your client to experience his objectives and her resources.

- 1) The first stage is finding the question.
- 2) The second stage is enabling the client to answer the question.

*The first stage* focuses on facilitating your clients to get clear about why they are here and what they want. So you conduct a Clarity Conversation with them and continue through the Decision Conversation.

*The second stage* focuses on facilitating their resources to answer their objective. To do that may again require the Clarity and Decision Conversation or the Planning, Resource (experience), or Change Conversation.

***First, the finding the question —the real question of the client.***

Don't start out trying to find, discover, or create a definitive answer for the client. Instead, be a detective. Then seek first to understand the question. What is the question that's driving the client? What question has brought this client at this time to this coaching session? What are the frames in the back of the client's mind that describes his or her quest? What are the assumptive frames that govern the client's theory-in-use?

If the client's behavior and presence in coaching is a question, what is that question? And what is the question behind that question? That's what you want. That's what you, as the coach, need. When you find it you can then funnel the presenting question with the 18 questions of the Well-Formed Outcome pattern. Focus on finding the client's *real question*. Then *refine* the question using the testing, checking, clarifying, and exploring questions.

The first thing in a coaching conversation is facilitating the client to gain clarity and then a decision. Do that and you have your Coaching Contract. Do that and you will know what the client wants. Most coaches go too fast! They go far, far too fast. Slow down, be a detective. Look for clues. Test. Retest. Check again.

***Second, facilitate the client to answer the question.***

Once you know the client's real question, and you help him or her to express it, then ask your client, "What are you going to do to answer your question?" "What is your answer that enables you to move forward in your life journey?"

If he does not know, then move to a Clarity Conversation to clarifying what he needs to *understand* about what to do. Do that until he is ready to *make a decision* about what to do. Explore his Matrix about what it will take to do something to find the answer about what to do. Explore attempted solutions. Identify his or her the system of driving forces and restraining forces. Explore possible information sources that he or she can explore to find out.

If she does know what to do, then move to the Planning Conversation to set up a step-by-step plan on achieving it. Or a Resourcing Conversation to access and apply to oneself whatever resource that will provide the experience to achieve the Plan. Or the Change Conversation for whatever needs to be changed (habits, emotions, states, beliefs, decisions, identity, direction, etc.) that's required to achieve the objective and answer the original question.

Once you know your client's question, then it is a matter facilitating your client to get his or her answers. The principle in Meta-Coaching is this: You don't have to get your client a result; instead you facilitate your clients so that they get their results. Now that's powerful. And that's is sell-able. So go sell it!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #3 (appendix)**  
**January 19, 2014**

## **Follow up on “Coaching in Two Stages” (January 15)**

After I posted last week’s article, Angus McLeod, Ph.D., Visiting Professor of Coaching at Birmingham City Business School, UK, and AMA Coaching School [[www.angusmcleod.com](http://www.angusmcleod.com) [www.coachingfoundation.org](http://www.coachingfoundation.org)] and one of our Expert Coaches in Meta-Coaching sent me links to the fact that the original source and creator of the GROW model has been claimed by several people — up to 4 different persons! Wikipedia says the following about it:

There have been many claims to authorship of GROW as a way of achieving goals and solving problems. While no one person can be clearly identified as the originator Graham Alexander, Alan Fine (*You Already Know How to Be Great*), Sir John Whitmore (*Coaching for Performance*), who are well known in the world of coaching, made significant contributions. Max Landsberg describes GROW in his book *The Tao of Coaching*.

Also while **GROW** is really not so much a model as a process for conducting a coaching session, it is nevertheless claimed to be “a technique for problem solving or goal setting.” And over the years different people have used the letters of the acronym to stand for different things: Here is the list of them from different websites:

- G**— Goal. The end point where the client wants to be. Define so it clear to the client when achieved.
- R** — Reality. The current reality, where client currently is. What are the issues, the challenges, how far are they away from their goal?
- O** — Obstacles. What are the Obstacles to the goal?
  - Options. Identifying obstacles, find ways of dealing with them to make progress.
- W** — Way Forward to the goal.
  - Will.
  - Wrap up.

Promoters of it describe the four steps or stages as processes for raising an individual’s awareness of aspirations, current situation, possibilities, and actions to take to achieve goals. They claim it helps set specific, measurable, and achievable goals, in a realistic time frame.

Others claim that it grew out of Gallwey’s Inner Game.

“GROW was developed out of the Inner Game theory developed by Timothy Gallwey, a tennis coach who discovered awareness questions to facilitate the playing of tennis players. One day, rather than giving instructions, Gallwey asked the player to say ‘bounce’ out loud when the ball bounced and ‘hit’ out loud when they hit it.

This resulted in the players improving without a lot of effort; they were keeping their eye on the ball. By asking questions the player discovered for him or herself what worked and what to change. This gave birth to the Inner Game. The basic methodology of GROW came out of Gallwey's work with tennis players. Gallwey asked awareness questions, "What do you notice you are doing differently when the ball goes in or out?" Players discovered for themselves what they were changing about their mind and body.

In most learning situations learners do better if they focus attention on the relevant aspect of the process, rather than on what they 'should' be doing or trying to get it 'right' they will make progress much faster. Learning happens best when learner is focused on the present. Focusing on the audience, the prize, trying to look good invariably interferes with focus and interferes with the learning process.

Of course, generally speaking *we do not use the GROW model in Meta-Coaching*. It is a nice simplistic acronym for people beginning coaching, but it is quite inadequate when compared to the Well-Formed Outcome and the Well-Formed Problem pattern, the Well-Formed Solution pattern, etc.

Many thanks to Angus for this information.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #4**  
**January 22, 2014**

## **REAL CERTIFICATION**

As a coach, you are a leader. How is this so? It is so because coaching by its very nature is a leadership role. When you coach, you are simultaneously leading people to become more of who they can become. You are bringing out the best in people. So as a coach, you lead people into various processes to support their highest dreams regarding what they want.

Now, of course, to lead you have to first gain rapport. You match (pace) people and in that way you earn the right to lead. In that way, your clients grant you the privilege of leading them. Then as a leader, what you do is focus on bringing out the best in them. And you do that by facilitating people to structure and organize their lives so the organizing becomes effective and efficient for their best performances.

Now in Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching, we have titles—the credentials that define the learnings and skills and the levels of competence. We have Certificates that indicate these things. Yet the Certificates themselves are just pieces of paper. Knowing that, there's a part of me that wishes we could toss out all of the Certificates and avoid them altogether. My preference if I had my way would be to banish all such credentials and titles. Yet another part of me knows that they are important in the world of business and that there they have a useful purpose. So in spite of my preference, we won't do that. And yet, certificates, credentials, and titles can be seductively deceptive and can disorient a person from what's really important.

Certificates, credentials, and titles are *the map*. And above and beyond these maps is *the territory*. The questions then to test every Certificate are these:

Can a person actually function to do what the Certificate and/or the title suggests?

Is there an actual behavioral competence which the certificate points to in a person?

Here then is the seductive thing: A certificate and title without the competence is deceptive when it does not relate to any reality out there in the real world. Then we have a problem. Then the certificate is *just* a piece of paper and its significance is false and gives a false assurance.

That's why there is a big danger when we or any given person focuses on the Certificate and Title. That's because doing so misdirects one from learning and competence development and focuses only on an end result as if when one reaches that end, it's all over. And as one focuses almost exclusively on the Certificate or Title, one can miss a lot of the current distinctions for a more thorough learning. There's another seductive deception. Certificates and titles can also play into certain toxic games like the game, "I'm superior to you or to others because I have X or Y Certificate or title."

That good are Certificates, credentials, or titles? They are mostly for the outside world. It speaks about competence levels. It speaks about the certifying process and the certifying body or organization which holds standards and then presents and recommends a person as a credible and legitimate person who has certain expert knowledge and expert skills. It speaks about the branding of the qualities which the credentials stand for. It speaks about the building up of trust in a brand so that customers and clients can rely on the quality of the product, service, or information that the person can deliver. These are the values of the Certificate.

Above and beyond the Certificate and Title is a person who can deliver. A person who is knowledgeable and skilled and who carries him or herself in such a way that the real certification is *in that person*. The *person* is certified with the knowledge and competence and the certification is his or her presentation— way of being in the world. What truly *certifies* you as a Meta-Coach or a Neuro-Semanticist is *the way* you think, talk, relate, act, etc. that is what truly demonstrates your credibility and competence in every moment. You are the brand. There's then no question about what you can do. That competence oozes from every pore.

In Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching this is actually what we know and realize is *the brand*. It is in the person— and that's why I constantly am saying that *the true brand is the quality of the people representing Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching*. Everything about the person communicates the brand of compassionate challenging— of an intense getting-to-the-heart-of-things conversation. Who you are, your very *being*, communicates the coaching and Neuro-Semantic attitude in your self and how you carry yourself. And when you do that— you are certifying that you know and can do. That's true Certification. That's what truly indicates your credentials.

So let's receive and lightly wear the titles and credentials. Let's de-emphasize the external Certifications and emphasize the internal. That will give more reality to the maps that we call our Certifications.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #5**  
**January 29, 2014**

## **RUNNING A MCF CHAPTER**

One of the ways that we established for supporting individual Meta-Coaches, the Meta-Coaching System in each and every country, and promoting Meta-Coaching is through the *Meta-Coaching Foundation Chapters* (MCF). With more and more Meta-Coaches asking about the chapters—how to run them, what they are for, guidelines, boundaries, etc., it is time again to set all of that forth. So here goes.

The MCF chapters is first and foremost *the local presence of Meta-Coaches and Meta-Coaching* in a given city or country. It is at the Chapter that Meta-Coaches gather for practice, renewal, networking, and fun. These are to be both learning and social experiences and both at the same time. Further, *any* Meta-Coach can start a chapter. To do that all you need is have some willingness, some initiative, some follow-through, and some commitment. Just announce that you are starting a Chapter ... let the regional director know and go for it.

Typically the Chapters will do coaching practice sessions. That's one of the main stays of the chapters— practicing the skills and models. I recommend that you share the teaching as you let various members take turns presenting the information of the Meta-Coaching system and then discussing it and then having someone demonstrate it and then setting up some practice of some facet of it.

You can also use the Chapters for focusing on the business of coaching— how to get clients, how to do an Intro., how to speak in a boardroom, how to benchmark a value or experience, how to charge, invoice, organize your paperwork, etc. Chapters can also invite in experts (coaches, consultants, trainers, etc.) and ask them to speak to the group and entertain questions. In the chapters, you can do supervision of case studies and talk about alternative ways to deal with coaching issues. You can use the Chapter meetings as a place to bring clients that you want to influence— a business owner, someone from an HR department, etc. so that they can see and meet Meta-Coaches in person.

Some chapters (Mexico, Panama, New Zealand, Indonesia) have put on one day Conferences. A Meta-Coaching Conference and had the members present facets of Meta-Coaching and brought together other coaches, HR people, managers, senior leaders, etc. As a chapter you can set up a master-mind group to provide preparation for PCMC assessment. Some chapters gather and have dinner together and then talk. In Norway some of them do a sleep-over in a cabin up in the mountains and then have a whole day of practice.



It is really up to the creativity and leadership within the local chapter to decide what to do. Some chapters have wanted to raise money, so they hold a conference or collect funds so that they can then engage in various social projects.

Guiding and providing leadership for the MCF chapters are the MCF Regional directors. These are people who are stepping up to leadership in the Meta-coaching community. Their job? To inspire and initiate. Most of them lead a chapter and they also support other Meta-Coaches in the same area to start chapters and provide them mentoring, internship, guidance, etc. If you are interested in being a Regional Director, contact myself, Germaine Rediger—or any Meta-Coach Trainer.

The Meta-Coaching System involves the Neuro-Semantic Trainers and the Modular Trainers who train *Coaching Essentials and Coaching Genius* and so invite Trainers from time to time. Ask them to come and provide some piece of the training. Also be sure to invite the Meta-Coach Trainers, especially those in your area. As a community, giving back to the community is part of how we enrich everyone. Whenever I'm visiting a country, one of the real pleasures I have is visiting the MCF chapters and providing whatever encouragement that I can. I had that privilege with the Meta-Coaches in the Philippines just last week.

You can even invite people in your area that are recognized as successful coaches or entrepreneurs to come and share with your chapter. The only caveat about that is make sure that at the end, you have a discussion on how that fits and/or does not fit Meta-Coaching. After all, we want the MCF chapters to be Meta-Coach Chapters. Along this line, the same thing applies when someone wants to share a model or tool that is *not* part of NLP or Neuro-Semantics. Share it and then contrast it with our model. Do not let it be presented and just left there. To do that diminishes the Meta-Coaching System.

A final word about that. If you have an option meta-program, you may have a tendency to move on to checking out other systems, other models, the “new” and “amazing” programs that are constantly being promoted. Be careful. The danger is that you will become a jack-of-all-trades and a master of none. The Meta-Coaching System is so rich that you will not master it even after ten or twenty years. And it is continuing to evolve and grow. Currently we only have 20 who have reached PCMC level and only one the MCMC level— so there's a lot more to be achieved if you have the heart, the passion, and the determination to follow-through.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #7**  
**February 5, 2014**  
**Coaching Systemically #1**

## HOW TO COACH SYSTEMICALLY

Are you coaching in a systemic way? I hope so. That's what Meta-Coaching has been designed for. And yet, coaching systemically is an *advanced form of coaching* and not the form or style that anyone just beginning will naturally do. It isn't unless a person has had training in systems thinking and working.

And yet, Coaching as a profession, and by its very nature is, is and truly has to be, systemic. I hope that by stating that, it is immediately and obviously evident. Do you know find it that way? Do you know why Coaching is inherently systemic? First, it is systemic because from the beginning coaching was designed and presented as a *holistic* discipline. Tim Gallwey and later Thomas Leonard thought of Coaching as a new field that would enable psychologically healthy people to obtain balance in work/life and experience a wholeness in all of life.

Second, Coaching is systemic because by its very nature it facilitates the systemic experience that we in Meta-Coaching call *self-actualization*. That is, it enables people to be "fully functioning" in actualizing their highest meanings and values and best performances. So when you coach, to be truly effective, *you have to think and work in a systemic way*.

"How do I do that? What does it really mean for me to *think* and to *work* systemically? How does Meta-Coaching help me do that?"

Third, as a profession Coaching works with and facilitates develop of human beings who themselves are systems and who live their lives as systems-within-systems. You and I are *systems*. We are mind-body-emotion systems in our functioning and by our nature. This was a significant contribution of the NLP Communication Model— mind, emotion, body, etc. are not separate, they are variables in a single system. And because we are embedded within ourselves as a system and that system within family, linguistic, ethnic, racial, business, etc. systems— we live within systems as the context of our lives, as the environment that we breathe without awareness of. So no wonder we all suffer from *system blindness*. That's because our mind-body-emotion system is mostly unconsciousness.

Given all of that, is there any doubt or question about the importance of *systems and systemic thinking and working in Coaching*? And yet, when you look around, very few of the coaching schools train people to think and work in a systemic way with people. Wanting to make coaching "simple" and "easy" and "quick" they default to an approach to human learning, development, change, as well as organizational development that is non-systemic. You can recognize such approaches because they are linear, treat the "parts" of a person as separate units,

treat them in polarizing opposites and so dichotomous, and seldom checks the ecology of the person's multiple systems.

The approach that we take in Meta-Coaching seeks to avoid these problems and to enable you as a Meta-Coach to *think* in terms of systems and to then *work* in the conversations that you facilitate a systemic approach. How do we do that? First, my introducing and using *The Matrix Model*.

*The Matrix Model* offers you a way to both *think* about systems and to *work* with your clients in a systemic way. To do that, begin by first of all recognizing and realizing that all of us live in systems which are for the most part outside of our awareness. We live in them like we live in the atmosphere. The systems we live within (family, linguistic, ethnic, religious, cultural, gender, racial, business, etc.) are present but we are mostly unaware of them. And yet we can become aware of them and becoming aware of them is not that difficult.

To do that with your clients, simply plant the idea in your mind that when you sit down with your client, he or she is not the only person in the room. There are many other people also in the room with you. Invisible people! Your client has brought into the coaching room lots of people and references and memories and anticipations and, at some level, he or she is aware of these but may not be mentioning them. So ask about them. These are the *context questions* of the well-formed outcome questions and the specificity questions of the Meta-Model.

Who are you referring to? Who else?

When did that happen? When do you expect that to happen?

Where did you learn that? What was the experience that you drew that conclusion?

From there, begin to ask the Matrix Questions. Start with State, then follow your client. Does she mention herself? Go to Self. Does he refer to what he can't do? Go to Power. Does she refer to what others think of her or feeling embarrassed in the presence of other people? Others. Does he mention something about a long term goal? Go to Time. Or Intention. Or Meaning.

Your *Coaching Mastery Training Manual* has a whole list of Matrix Questions and all of them except the State questions are meta-questions. Ah, that means that working systemically, you will be *going in*. You will be going into the persons's Inner Game. We call that the Matrix of meaning frames—the internal invisible world that your client brings with him or her to the coaching session.

We say in Meta-Coaching that “we follow the client's energy through his or her system.” That's one of the questions we ask on Day 8 at “The Neuro-Semantic Assessment Test.” How does that work? What does that mean? It means that you, as a professional Coach, recognize the Matrix Model distinctions and the part of the Matrix that flashes on as your client speaks—that's where you go. You follow and pace and inquire and discover. And with that the adventure begins. And what an adventure that is!

[*Systemic Coaching* (2012) is an entire book on this subject and will be the theme of the next Meta-Coaching Reflections.]

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #8**  
**February 12, 2014**  
**Coaching Systemically #2**

## **FOLLOWING THE ENERGY THROUGH THE SYSTEM**

*Coaching systemically distinguishes Meta-Coaching.* While there are other Coach Training programs and systems that introduce systemic coaching, this is one area where Meta-Coaching truly excels. If you ask, “Why is that?” The answer is that first and foremost because *all* of our models in Meta-Coaching are systemic models:

*NLP* arose from Satir family systems, Korzybski’s non-Aristotelian systems, Bateson’s cybernetic systems work.

*Meta-States* models the self-reflexive consciousness that layers and loops thoughts and feelings upon thoughts and feelings.

*The Matrix Model* built from NLP and Meta-States includes Developmental Psychology and the human system of development.

*The Axes of Change* is a “dance of change” model following four mechanisms of change within the human system.

*The Self-Actualization Quadrants* built from two axes (meaning and performance) models how a person (or organization) can create synergy from the two in a systemic way.

*The Benchmarking Model* makes explicit how to measure intangible values and meanings of the mind into the skills and performances in one’s embodiment of those values.

*The Process Facilitation Model* using the Meaning–Performance axes identifies how a client experiences a coach synergizing challenge and compassion.

### **Now What is a system?**

A non-human system, one that is a mechanical system, it is a set of inter-dependent parts which work together to produce some effect. It created something more than and different from the sum of those parts. Think about the heating–cooling system in your home that’s run by a thermostat. In a human, a *system* is a living, dynamic, moving, ever-in-flux set of processes. And these processes are also inter-dependent and generate human experiences that are more than and different from the sum of those processes.

What’s similar about any system is that it is made up of many variables and these variables are inter-dependent. They effect each other. And what results from a system re-enters the system as the next level cause. That’s why systems can loop, can go in circles, and can cause someone to feel confused about what causes what or what is the effect of what.

## Following a System's Input and Output

Now if you want to “follow the ‘energy’ of a system” find out what data is being inputted into the system, how that data goes through it, and what is created as a result— that is, what is then outputted. A system is “open” if it receives input from the outside and then adjusts itself to that input. It is a “closed” system if it does not. In humans we received input (data) as information and we experience output as emotion, symptoms, speech, and behavior. For a human being, the key variables are these:

Actions, relationships, interactions with others, contexts, goals, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, memories of history, sense of self, beliefs about others, etc.

In listing those variables (and there are many more), I stated from the outside and then moved inside. I moved from *the outer game* to the *inner game*. Now if you *think* about a system in terms of statistics, in linear terms, in either/or terms (dichotomizing), etc. you prevent yourself from understanding a system.

Because the human system *inputs data* and *outputs responses*, when you sit down with your client, you will want to know about both of those.

What is my client inputting? What data counts or does not count for him or her?

What does my client do with that information? How represent it?

What does my client believe about that information and representations?

And when my client believes that— what does he do with it? (Meaning making)

What conclusions does she draw from it? (Generalizations)

What is your program for understanding, comprehending, and interpreting things?

These are the questions that enable you to fully enter into the client's Matrix of Meaning Frames and that gives you insight into the person's strategies and programs. It tells you how the person works, his or her psycho-logics. It enables you to get to a fuller description of the person's Inner Game. To do that, ask lots and lots of meta-questions.

Then find out what happens. Find out what results in the person's mind-body-emotion system when she thinks that way? When he reasons in that way? When she uses those psycho-logics? When he uses his meta-programs and cognitive distortions?

When you represent things in that way, what do you feel?

What state does that put you in?

When you believe that, and you have X-belief about that belief, what do you say?

What do you do?

What part of the Matrix does that send you to? And when you are there, what are you thoughts, understandings, beliefs, decisions, identities, etc.?

What is your program for responding and coping?

Now you are following the person's *information—energy* loop through that person's Matrix. And as you do, you are thinking and beginning to work systemically with your client.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #9**  
**February 19, 2014**  
*ACMC Event*

## **LESSONS FROM ACMC IN KENYA**

We have just completed the presenting of Meta-Coaching in Kenya and I found it the most challenging one I have ever delivered. We had so many challenges with the venue, first and foremost, that any and every other venue is going to feel like a piece of heaven in comparison. And yet this was a paradise—white sand beach on the Indian Ocean, beautiful sunrises each morning, full yellow moon each evening, breaking waves throughout the day, monkeys and baboons in the trees and dogs barking to let us know when they were around(!).

When we arrived at the venue—a backpackers hotel (2 star hotel) that catered mostly to wind-salers and surfers, the so-called “training room” was a shed near the ocean that was partially finished in the front part, like a small bedroom that could squeeze in 17 people and the bad bedroom was a dirt floor that could hold another 17. But the link was a doorway so those in the back could not see. Upon looking at it from the outside, I began shaking my head, “No, no, no. This will not do. Under no conditions would it do.” Looking inside at half-built structure, dirt floor, no air conditioning, narrow doorway, “Definitely not! No consideration of even attempting to make that work.” My next thought was, “Who in their right mind would even *think* that this was a possibility?” [Ten days later there are work people still working on that shed to finish it!]

“So what else is there? Where is your proper training room?” They don’t have one. Opps. Okay, where else? What other hotel or resort nearby or far away has a training room? Nothing. There was no Plan B for this contingency. “Okay where else then?” The team was there, 9 of us and for two days the question was up in the air. “Where would we do the training?” As the Assist Team we did our work the first day on a balcony, outside, in the humidity.

A creative idea emerged. Three or four of the ladies on the team were in a bedroom that they thought would work. So we looked, then when it was obvious that we had no other choice, we decided to go with that. Next problem: How do you get 22 participants and 10 team leaders into a bedroom just a tiny bit bigger than a regular size bedroom?! Beds out. Everything not built into it— out. There were actually two bedrooms, larger one and then very small one that would hold 2 coaching teams of 4 people (8 people) max!

Next problem: no air conditioning. Now I have had enough experience with small rooms and cramming lots of bodies into them— and so I knew about the phenomenon of body heat. I knew that when you do that when the temperature is 32 to 35 Celsius and 100% humidity, I knew that there would be no way at all to do it without air conditioner. Day 2— team leaders are in that room sweating. I’m sweating. Dirk is sweating. We are trying to stay focused on doing one coaching session after the other and learning to get on the same page with the benchmarks and

learn all of the distinctions. That night participants are arriving. No air conditioner. Finally, the unit arrives. Next problem: no one to install it. No electrician.

Now you would think—well, I would think that someone running a hotel/ resort would care about their customers and go out of their way to work with them and help them. *I would think that.* That's the culture I come from. But that thought, that expectation, was not to be fulfilled. As a business person, I would assume that if the venue owner could not, did not, provide a training room as we had asked, he would take responsibility to do the best he could. I talked to him, Martine talked to him, Dirk talked to him, others talked to him. Nothing.

Next morning, first day of training. No air conditioner. Finally a worker arrives. Then he stops working when we arrive. Why? He didn't want to disturb us. We all tell him and his helpers over and over—"work on it, just do it, do not stop. Make whatever noise you have to, just get it working." Two hours into the day, with everybody crammed (and I mean crammed) into the room, the air conditioner starts. Next Problem: the air conditioner is far too tiny of a unit. It needed to be 3 or 4 times the size! And the heat of the day and the stuffiness of the room with that many people in the room had already heated up the room and so we all sweated. Lots. Dirk was the champion sweater. But I was right behind him.

Water? Yes you read the right: no water. The venue did not provide it and when asked, they said that they would not be providing it! I never heard of such a thing. So some of the team had to go to town for water and we provide it for ourselves. You can only imagine how much water was needed to keep everyone hydrated. End of the day: Dirk and I lock up the double-bedroom-training-room, made sure the air conditioner was on, closed the windows and then noticed that there was a whole wall. Now the front wall of that bedroom had glass at the top and on the bottom—some wire that let all the heat in! The outside air was coming right in! No wonder it was so hot. Another thing to fix tomorrow.

Second day. I arrived at the training "bedroom" room at 7 am to find another problem: During the night someone at the venue *had* come after we left at 9:30 pm and *turned off the air conditioner!* So day 2 we really sweated. It was a sweat lodge! "My God, we're doing the wrong kind of training here!" So one of the team got someone to board it up. But whoever did it, put paper-thin cardboard "wood" on the front wall to keep the heat out(!). "Paper thin" meant it was thinner than cardboard. Then on Day 2 in that evening— we had the first coaching sessions. We did not know if it would work— in terms of heat, noise, etc. If not, we'd have to move. Well, we survived so we decided to stay and cope as best as we could.

Day 3 the air conditioner goes all night, and so while not "cool" it was at least somewhat cooler. And yet with 32 people—it was definitely very stuffy and uncomfortable. I myself could not wear the same shirt more than one day or I'd be "losing friends and offending people" due to the smell. Next problem: Now the venue people think that the ladies who moved from the bedrooms should pay a higher price for the rooms that they were moved to. When I heard that my immediate thought and feeling was: "Someone needs a good kick in the ass for even thinking such a thing!" But I kept my thoughts to myself. The venue owners were the ones who failed to

provide the training venue and they were they ones who suggested we use the bedrooms and—they should not, under any conditions, charge us, and especially not those ladies (the Assist Team women) for their mistake. Hearing that, I needed a coach, because I was pissed.

Now while all of that was happening (!), we were attempting to run the ACMC course in a tiny, crowded, hot, stuffy over-size bedroom. And caring about the quality, reputation, and branding of *The Meta-Coaching System*— I was not a happy camper. Yet I managed my state and gave of my very best to the group present as even more so did our team—there’s never been a team that took all of this in stride, and extended themselves without complaints, and made the best of it. Some left the venue for more conducive sleeping rooms, but they were present, all the time, giving and giving and giving of themselves. They could have complained about *so much* and yet they did not. Incredible! And it was not the case that they were unaware. The first night (Day 1), after the training, we all gave our scale of our experience of things and it ranged from 3 to 5 (out of 10). So they were aware. *And they were so absolutely committed to creating as good experience as they could here in Kenya.* In this, we had a truly *great team*.

The poor venue meant that we did not have music— no speakers that were of any consequence. It meant we could not record the coaching session on Day 6 and play it back that night (recorder too small and walls too wobbly and uneven. In this it was very primitive— 6 fans going all the times in the large bedroom trying to keep the air moving and that’s how we kept as “cool” as we did. It was not really cool.

In spite of all of that—*we actually had a very good training and we had a great ending!* Dan Ellappa and some team members went to town, bought food, and then Dan cooked a meal prior to graduation for everyone (!). We went to the hotel next door and the venue owner there was very gracious to host us so we did the graduation in an outdoor hut next to the swimming pool. Everyone on the Assist Team offered their “commission” to the group and later —participant after participant told me that the welcome to the community, the commission from the leaders, the heart-felt training from the team leaders made them feel completely accepted and welcomed.

So a big success in spite of all of the challenges. Just about every single person talked about incredible changes and transformations in their lives. There’s more to say about this— I’ll do that later.

A Great big thanks to a Great Team for their commitment, persistence, resilience, creativity and investment in bringing the Meta-Coaching System to Kenya and launching a group of people who will tremendously impact this country.

Martine Kappel	— Kenya	Manuela Savage	— South Africa
Dirk Nieuwoudt	— South Africa	Cindy Bell	— South Africa
Dan Ellappa	— South Africa	Helene Nordgren	— Sweden
Ehsan	— Mauritius	Kgobati Magome	— South Africa
Silvia Serna	— Mexico, Dohar		



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #10**  
**February 26, 2014**  
**Coaching Systemically #3**

## **THE ART OF ACTUALLY FOLLOWING THE ENERGY THROUGH THE SYSTEM**

When it comes to “following your client’s energy through his or her system” you need to know about the two communication loops. Do you know about those? Ah, yes, one of the questions we ask on Day 8 when we do “The Test.” Remember?

Both of these loops are the same in that both involve the system processes of feedback and feed-forward. Both involve *information* entering the system and *energy* leaving. What distinguishes them is that the first is in the horizontal loop. In this loop, information (data) from outside impacts your nervous system and comes into it as you select things to notice, pay attention to, and then represent within yourself. The loop ends when you feed-forward back to the world with some verbal or behavioral response. A short formula for this is: Stimulus in— Response out.

The second one is the vertical loop. This one involves *the information* (or data) that you create within your mind and which you feed-back to yourself. Doing this creates layers of thoughts upon thoughts, feelings upon feelings (ah, your meta-stating process of self-reflexivity). Then you feed that information forward into your body to create your emotions, your states, your somatic experiences. A short formula summarizing this loop is: Thinking — Feeling. Or: Meta-Stating layers of meta-states— embodiment as the feeling of meaning.

The first loop can be detected on the outside. Someone says something (stimulus), you say something back (response). The second loop is invisible to the outside. It is your thinking, reasoning, psycho-logics, conclusions, meta-stating, etc. and inducing of your self into your states. Unless you have been trained in what to look for, the signs of the meta-states, meta-programs, etc., you can live years with a person and not be able to articulate their vertical loop of communication. Of course, when you have been trained and can do it, you can *see very, very deep into that person’s system*. You can recognize *the code* of their system or Matrix.

### **Watching for and Following a Person’s Feedback and Feed-Forward Loops**

This describes the foundational skill that you need as a coach or a professional communicator. Then you can ask the specific kind of meta-questions and matrix-questions to track where and how a person goes in the Matrix. And noticing, recording, acknowledging where and how they go— that alone can do magic in terms of change. That’s because most people don’t know themselves that well.

Now you know why the meta-questions and matrix-questions are so important. By asking them and learning from the responses you get, you can very quickly come to understand how a given person's Matrix works and where are the leverage points for change. Wouldn't that be valuable?

When you know that causation in the human system is systemic and not a linear cause-effect, then you will shift from looking for things in a simplistic way. "What causes that?" "Why did you do that?" You will move to thinking in a systemic way. You will look for the person's patterns of meaning-making (semanticizing) and somatizing (registering meanings in the body). Then when you feed *that pattern* back into the system, you can observe what happens and invite the client's awareness of the pattern.

Of course, you have to do all of this with rapport, respect, and compassion. This is the foundation that allows your client to know that you are present and have his best interest at heart. Then you will have access to the system. You can enter into it. And once inside, you can observe the system's inner functioning up close.

- What is the system's bias? What has it been set to do or create?
- What are the self-organizing values and intentions?
- How does the system defend itself?
- What is its patterns for adjusting, adapting, and modifying when upset?
- What are the system frames and the system expressions?
- How easily can you detect a frame from a symptom?
- How is your client changing as you talk?
- Given that your client is not static and that he is constantly evolving. Into what?

### **Fully Explore Your Client's System**

How do you do that? By going up the levels! Once you get a frame-of-reference from a person or a belief frame or an understanding frame, hold that frame and go up the whole system of frames. Do that fully in order to enter, explore, and understand the person's Matrix on its own terms. Only then will you be able to truly Coach to his or her Matrix. Enter into it with respect and holding—each level, move until you reach the system's inherent threshold.

- Where does it go? What are the beliefs holding the beliefs?
- How deep does it go?
- What kind of over-all patterns is the system or matrix creating?
- What is being organized in the system? Love, fear, pleasing, getting angry, etc.?
- What patterning are you discovering? "Ah, we are now going in circles. Do you sense that?"
- And given the inter-relatedness of a system, How aspects or parts relate to each other?

### **Disturb a Person's System**

If you really want to understand a given human system— shake it up. Disturb it. Surprise it, shock it, do something weird and unexpected. Challenge it. Again, if you have rapport and you have connected so the person deeply knows that whatever you do is in his or her best interests, then given how human systems are robust and self-organizing, once disturbed it will see to right itself, re-establish its internal stability or equilibrium. And when that happens, you can see the

system at work and its processes.

When you create a little bit of chaos, the system will be open to your awareness and enables you to recognize its dependable patterns. Now you can work with the system as a system.

“When you have a good sense of how that person’s system works and the meanings self-organizing it, then you’ll have more of an idea of what frames need to be addressed and changed.” (*Systemic Coaching*, p. 220)

“You can also practice with your client in taking a meta-moment from time to time for reflection. In your communications, listen for what your client really wants, the resources that can be put to use, the problems that truly need to be solved, the solutions that you hear which you can then snatch and confirm as your client’s hidden wisdom to be mined.” (*Systemic Coaching*, p. 222)

By shaking a system up, what you’ll discover are the self-organizing frames that define it and establish its bias. If that is not working for the purpose, you now know what needs reframing because you now know the meanings driving the system. After all, every human system is driven by meaning. And because the person is never the problem, but if there’s a problem, then the frame is always the problem.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #11**  
**March 5, 2014**  
**Coaching Systemically #4**

## **ARE YOU A SYSTEMIC COACH?**

Given the past posts on *Coaching Systemically*, you now know about how to “follow the energy of a client through his or her neuro-semantic system.” You *know*, but that’s different from being able to *do* and to do *effectively*, and that again is very different from being able to do it with *grace and elegance*. Yet *knowing* is the beginning. And as a Neuro-Semanticist, you know that by mind-to-muscling the principles of systemic coaching and by getting precise feedback so that you can engage in *deliberate* practice, it is just a matter of time until you can *demonstrate* the art of following a client’s energy through his or her system.

This past November I presented a 3-hour workshop at the NLP London Conference and then demonstrated the process of doing so. After presenting the key ideas about systems, system variables, the Matrix, etc., I asked the group to follow along using the following form (The Human System) so that they could begin picking up the distinctions as they hear a coaching conversation. You might want to do the same thing. By focusing on the formats within the worksheet — one at a time and then as you develop your skill, several at a time— you will learn to make the critical systemic distinctions that are present in the coaching conversation.

### **A Human System Format**

The following format offers you a way to observe a coach in the coaching process and check to see if that coach is coaching in a systemic way.

Begin with *the information in— energy out* loops. That’s why it is at the top. This picks up what the coach is exploring and working with in the Meaning/Intention matrices which is then outputting in the state matrix. It’s in these matrices of the Matrix Model that you and I are able to have the deep conversation into the person’s internal mental model of the world and understand where that person “is coming from.”

And do you remember why we do this? Because the key to our lives are our *frames*. The person is never the problem, the frame is. And likewise, the solution always lies at the leverage point of changing the frame.

To detail that with even more specificity, there’s a list of the meta-levels that the person’s self-reflexive consciousness is activating and the specific content that’s been or is being set as the person’s frames. It is here that you need to know the meta-questions and be able to not only hear straight-forward meta-questions, but also meta-levels as presented by the client. At first these will be *invisible to sight and sound* yet as you get more and more familiar with them, then you will begin to see the Matrix in code. And when that happens, get ready for an explosion of

awareness!

Below that are the other matrices. The question for the coach who is coaching is this: Which matrices or matrices are flashing on and off in the coaching experience? When a coach can detect that *in real time*, he or she will have a deep understanding of how the meanings at all of the levels are affecting the various dimensions of the person's "sense of self" (worth, competence, relationships, time, etc.).

As a Meta-Coach, you have been introduced to the fact that coaching individuals or groups involves a whole system of integrated communication loops, and that makes up a self-organizing system. Here is a checklist to check if you do think and work systemically. [page numbers refer to the book, *Systemic Coaching*]

### **Thinking Systemically:**

- Do you look for circles of influence? For circular causation?
- Do you look for processes of creation— how the system is adapting and modifying?
- Do you look to how the system is coping and adapting to its internal/external environments?
- Do you look for inter-connections — relationships between variables?
- Do you look for the whole— and see variables in relationship to the whole?
- Do you look for how the whole is maintained through the inter-relatedness of its parts in the pattern? Do you look for the patterning?
- Do you know that there is not so much a plurality of parts but patterning?
- Do you look for the goal-seeking dynamics and self-organizing attractors?
- Do you look for the information–energy loops?
- Do you look for the time element in the system?
- Do you look for the time of the system processing, how long it takes, the time sequence, the change time? (pp. 105-106)
- Do you look for the embodiment of the system? Symptoms, expertise, self-similarity, patterns (Chapter 11)
- Do you look for the driving and restraining forces? (Kurt Lewin)

### **Talking Systemically:**

- Do you hyphenate words that speak about a system?
- Do you use system terminology: state, feedback, feedforward, input, throughput, output?
- Do you use synergistic words: both-and; process terms, etc.?
- Do you use scaling and degree words?
- Do you use heuristics terminology (if-then rules)?
- Do you use reflexivity language: meta-comment (198), meta-moments?

### **Working Systemically:**

- Do you create chaos, crisis, to de-stabilize (200, 225) and disturb a system?
- Do you enter and observe the system naively (221)?
- Do you look for and set up self-organizing attractors (66-69, 74)?
- Do you distinguish symptoms from causes?
- Do you set up and use paradoxical interventions?
- Do you increase driving forces and reduce restraining forces (83, 168-168)?
- Do you run a systems check (Quality Control)? (199)

- Do you threshold a system and push it to and beyond its limits? 9226)
- Do you change meaning? (228)
- Do you work with homeostasis? (Ch. 16)
- Do you follow the information–energy through the system?
- Do you see the flashing on and off of the matrices? (188) (91, 96-98, 103)
- Do you look for the solutions that are in the system?
- Do you examine the “attempted solutions” for unused strengths?

## THE HUMAN SYSTEM

“You can help your client step aside from his or her system so that your client can see and talk about it as a system. Enable your client to look for how the system works, to identify the communication loops of the system, and to explore the rules that drive the system. What is the information that the person is inputting? What is the energy that the person is outputting? What meanings are going on in the process? What other frames are influencing the information as it is going through their system and creating their felt reality?

*Systemic Coaching, p. 222*

<p><b><i>Feedback — Information-In</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Selection (focus): _____</li> <li>* Representation: _____</li> <li>* Language: _____</li> <li>* Meanings: _____</li> <li>* Psycho-logics: _____</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">__ Too much    __ Too Little</p>	<p><b><i>Feed-Forward — Energy-Out:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* State (Emotion): _____</li> <li>* Symptoms: _____</li> <li>* Talk: _____</li> <li>* Actions: _____</li> </ul>
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### Going Higher — Deeper

#### Non-Linear Processing: *Reflexivity:*

- \* Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_
- \* Associative M.: \_\_\_\_\_
- \* Permission: \_\_\_\_\_
- \* Values: \_\_\_\_\_
- \* Rules: \_\_\_\_\_
- \* Expectations: \_\_\_\_\_
- \* Intentions: \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***Content Matrices:***

Self: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Systemic Patterning:**

- \* Strategy Sequence:
  
- \* *System Qualities:*
- \_\_ Stable \_\_ Unstable
- \_\_ Open            \_\_ Closed
- \_\_ Balanced        \_\_ Amplifying (spinning)
- \_\_ Oscillating (Circular)
- Thinking Patterns:***
- Meta-Programs: \_\_\_\_\_
- Cognitive Distortions: \_\_\_\_\_
- Self-Regulating Processes: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Leverage Points:**

- \* Frames / Meaning:

Power: \_\_\_\_\_  
Others: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
World: \_\_\_\_\_

- \* Information (clarity, planning, creating):
- \* Decision:
- \* Blind spots:
- \* Motivation:
- \* Resource:
- \* Threshold:
- \* State:
- \* Give Permission:

**Inner Game:** \_\_\_\_\_

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #12**  
**March 12, 2014**

## THROUGH RULES TO EXPERTISE

**Rules**—our lives are full of rules. Some of the rules are our own. We set rules about things that we care about which establish our values and enable us to build and stabilize our lives. Then there are the rules that we have grown up with—rules that our parents, teachers, leaders, etc. have presented to us as the way things operate at home, at school, business, etc. The rules that they invent and impose are rules that express *their* values. Then there are the rules at work in the organizations that we work in. These are the rules that we have to follow to keep our jobs and get our pay.

What is a “rule?” It is someone’s description of what that person (ourselves or others) want, believe in, value, and use to establish a way of life. A rule is a policy about what you are allowed and encouraged to do and what you are prohibited and prevented from doing. A “rule” also may be a description of how things work. Some “rules” are created and provided as essentially the way to do something. It is an operational description. These *how to* “rules” about things describe *how to* operate a machine, *how to* lead an orchestra, *how to* program a computer, and so on. These rules are descriptions of effectiveness and even of expert operations.

Each of us have our own rules for how we best want to run our lives. I have a “rule” that I do not want to create do deals that are win/lose for either myself or others. I’m just not interested in that and knowing the damage that can do long-term, I now have a rule for turning down such deals. I also have rules about exercise, eating, reading, coaching, and so on. And so you do!

We launched Neuro-Semantics with a set of some “rules.” We set forth that our vision is to cooperate and collaborate as professionals in this field, that we will operate from abundance as we apply NLP and Neuro-Semantics to ourselves so we can be congruent and be people of integrity. That vision then became our “rules”—our way of being in the world, our accountability to each other to live up to this vision and make it part of our mission.

In putting together the *Coaching Mastery* program in Meta-Coaching as the third module where people are prepared for the ACMC credentials, we set forth a number of “rules” for how we run the program. The rules that we have created are designed to facilitate the training and the integration of the skills so that it develops the coaching attitude, mind-set, and interactive style.

Now oftentimes people ask, “Why all these rules?” “Do I have to do things this way?” And some people really bristle when they encounter these rules as the procedures of Meta-Coaching. “Why do I have to *acknowledge* what the client says? They know what they said. Why do I *have to* repeat it?” When asked that recently, I said that this “rule” was to enable you, as a coach, to communicate that *you have heard him or her*. And in many instances, to enable the client to



*hear herself.* The rule is not just an arbitrary rule, it's there for a purpose, and yes, I'm quite willing to explain that purpose.

"Why do I have to match everything?" was asked recently. I inquired, "everything?" "Who told you that you had to match everything?" "Well, you know what I mean, all of the physical matching. It feels like mimicking." I checked, "Do you really want to know the reason for that rule? If I let you know the reason behind it, would that help you?" Long pause. Then a very honest response. "Well, not really, but go ahead, I do want to know why." And I did.

"Rules for rules sake" is, of course, just deadening bureaucracy and no one but a bureaucrat likes that! Bureaucrats like rules because the rules become a tool of power over others. In the first century, Jesus tortured the bureaucrats of his time (the Pharisees) by constantly breaking the rules. But he didn't break them for the sake of breaking them, he broke them for the sake of a greater purpose or need. "The Sabbath is made *for* man, not man *for* the Sabbath" he explained. Rules are made *for our benefit*, not the other way around. What's the rule for? Good question.

For a musician, the ability to play a high quality piece which the masters play requires that he follow the "rules" of learning and integration. So at first the musician learns the piece by following it exactly. He or she assimilates the composer's score as the composer created it to get a deep understanding of that masterpiece. Musicians first learn that score for the patterns in it.

Once the musician has made the composer's composition, purposes, and style his own, then the playing of the music will not be merely obedient to the external laws (or rules) of the composition. It will be obedient and yet now the beginning of that musician's style and spirit. So following the "rules" of the score to do it "right"—right according to the original composer is not a barrier to liberty. It is an expression of freedom. Now the person is free to be able to play that composition as it is played by the masters. The next level of development is the musician's ability to now play in a free and unimpeded way, no longer bound to the score, but as if he has so thoroughly absorbed the score into his own system that now it is his. Now his understanding, his identification with the piece, his own values and style of music now gives it his own uniqueness.

Following rules—the positive value of this is that it enables us to replicate what experts who have gone before us have learned and then to take it to the next level. Discount those operational "rules" and you slow down your learning and development.

Yes, we have a number of "rules," procedures, guidelines, and directions in Meta-Coaching and Neuro-Semantics as there are in NLP. People with strong options meta-program often times cheat themselves from their own development precisely because they refuse to following the most appropriate procedure for learning the new discipline. They want to do it their way! They reject the wisdom of the ages, the wisdom of experts, and try to re-invent things. And 99% of the time, this slows down their learning and threatens the learning with distorted and untrue frames or actions. Now they not only learn more slowly, but they also learn it wrong. More corrections will then be required in the future! Ah rules! An you have now just read a meta-rule about rules!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #13**  
**March 19, 2014**  
*ACMC Event*

## **WHEN ACMC WENT TO EGYPT**

We have now completed the very first ACMC training, *Coaching Mastery*, in Egypt. This was the vision of Mohamed Tarek who created *Lucid Trainings* some 10 years ago and he persisted in making this happen by attending ACMC's in other places ... twice on the Assist Team to learn the ins-and-outs of what's involved in hosting such a training. The skill-set of sponsoring and hosting a training are critical, and important, and rare. Mohamed is one of the few people in Neuro-Semantics who really understands what's required and is able to make it happen.

The training was conducted in a five-star hotel, Hilton Honors Hotel, which was not far from the Pyramids, some of the Team Leaders stay in the Sheraton Hotel, just down the street and from their hotel, the Pyramids were in the background—a stunning image that they awoke to each day.

Now in bringing the Meta-Coaching System training to any new country, the challenge for the first time is always getting a sufficient Team to make it happen. In Kenya, every single member of the Team came from outside of Kenya. We brought the whole team in from the outside and that's because while we had 3 Meta-Coaches there, 2 had not renewed their license and were not a part of the community, and didn't even participant. I found that very disappointing.

With Egypt, we have 7 Neuro-Semantic Trainers, and the 3 who were already Meta-Coaches were all very much involved: Mohamed Tarek, Hossam Aldin Fahmy (who did ACMC in Hong Kong), and Nelly Yassin (who did hers in Norway). These three were our core team. We then had the other 4 trainers on the Team which required them to *both* be participants and experience the coaching and patterns *and* also lead a team and benchmark the skills: Mustafa El-Masry, Mohamed M.Abdul-Kawy, Hesham Abu Mariah, and Mostafa Aboshanb.

Now these Neuro-Semantic Trainers had been through the benchmarks for NSTT. And while the presentation and training benchmarks are also rigorous and precise— they are much easier to reach. Why? What explains that? They are easier because in presenting— what you do as a speaker or trainer depends mostly on you as the presenter. You are benchmarked on getting rapport, engaging, using your voice and gestures effectively, having a stage presentation, structuring the order of the training, using metaphors, etc. You can prepare, practice, and then do it. Yes, there is some inter-action between you as the Presenter and your Audience, but the quality of the presentation is mostly in your hands.

Not so with Coaching. In coaching, after all your preparations— you don't even know the subject of the Coaching session until you begin asking. In Coaching, the Client sets the agenda. The Client specifies the *kind of coaching conversation*, and then you following. This *following*

*and pacing* eventuates in leading, but only after you help the client clarify and make a decision. So Coaching is much more complex, systemic, and the benchmarking therefore even more rigorous and demanding. And our Neuro-Semantic Trainers discovered this—most of them said it was to their surprise that it was more demanding. Yet they did well as they had the two days of preparation prior to the Training.

Additionally, we had 3 team leaders from other countries — Cindia Wong from Hong Kong, Carlos Martins from Brazil, and BJ Radomski from Thailand. As with myself, we were all asked by family and friends, “Isn’t it dangerous to go to Egypt? Aren’t you afraid?” And we all said, No. And what we found was that it was not dangerous at all. Even when we toured into Cairo and visited the Egyptian Museum right at the revolutionary square, things were just fine and as “tourists” there was more than enough security and protection. None of us ever felt in any danger in the slightest.

I’m pleased also to write that the group was well-prepared by Hossam and Mohamed in their basic NLP and APG modules. So when they came, they knew the NLP Communication Model and the Meta-States model. That enabled the group to ask great questions that facilitated their development of the coaching skills. One of my challenges was to deal with “Egyptian time” as well as Egyptian “I want to do it my way”—a meta-program of options, strong-will, and global (!).

With this training I introduced a new Business Project and one that will be updating the way we do that and Day 7 on Business. Each group created a *Business Model* for a specific kind of coaching, Group & Team Business Model; Personal Coaching Business Model, etc. This drove each group to read through the Manual much more thoroughly to prepare a two-page Executive Summary of *the business model* and then in presenting on Day 7 being able to answer some really tough questions to see if the business model was realistic, workable, actionable, practical, and understandable.

After the training 25 of us did a tour of the Pyramids ... and the Egyptian Museum and we had a tremendous tour guide, Sherif, who engaged us with many, many stories that fascinated and amazed us. You’ll see lots of pictures on Facebook and other places. Check out the one where we are *on the great Pyramid* with hands up for “How Fantastic!” That was our way of Neuro-Semantically certifying that it is a Wonder of the World!

When we next do *Coaching Mastery* here in Egypt (in 12 to 15 months from now), I invite you to come and re-visit and/or join the Team. You’ll really enjoy the warm, accepting, and kind spirit of the people here and their passion for making a difference in this country.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #14**  
**March 26, 2014**

## **KEEPING THE ACMC FIRE BURNING**

We have recently completed ACMC in two countries in Africa— Kenya and in Egypt— and have seen an excitement in all of the participants about the transformational journey that they made during *Coaching Mastery* and that they are now on. As a result, I have been impressed anew about the importance of the Meta-Coach community that is designed to arise after an ACMC to providing ongoing support.

The design and hope of the Meta-Coaching System is that every Licensed Meta-Coach will see the Graduation as *just the beginning*. It is the launch into a domain of transformation for themselves and others as they become professional change agents. The hope is that each will assume personal responsibility for their continual learning and development as well as for the community in which their Meta-Coaching skills were born. To that end, the MCF chapters are to be *a continuation of the Meta-Coaching Boot Camp*.

That's why, from the very beginning, we have said that *any Meta-Coach can start a Chapter*. That's also why we have written descriptions about how to conduct a Chapter. To that end, we have also de-emphasized organization, structure, and formality. The focus is to be on the experience, the learning, and the community. It is to be an ongoing *support* for the development of the coaching skills, the business skills, and working in collaboration to cultivate the Brand of Meta-Coaching in your city or country. So forget about formalizing things, appointing people to roles, giving out titles. When I have heard about or meet groups that do that kind of thing, I always do everything I can to discourage that. That's not what we are about in Neuro-Semantics.

What can you do in your MCF Chapters continue the *Coaching Mastery* course?

- Do coaching practices with benchmarking so that people can continue the practices from the ACMC.
- Examine together a coaching case and have those present, and especially members of an Assist Team to provide supervision and structural analysis.
- Have an experienced Coach do a coaching session, then interview and model him or her.
- Interview an experience Coach who demonstrates high level marketing and business skills.
- Take turns in presenting and teaching the 8 Meta-Coach Models so that it deepens everyone's knowledge.
- Watch video tapes of expert coaches in the Meta-Coaching field, especially those who have reached PCMC level.
- Have a potluck dinner together and provide a support group for each other. Perhaps take turns being a group coach for this support.

As we have made the benchmarking and feedback sessions during *Coaching Mastery* learning experiences rather than assessments, the focus has shifted from the scores and numbers to the

learning. What have you learned? What will you do next time to be a better coach? What new distinctions are you now making?

What do I recommend for you to continue your development? Take the *Coaching Mastery Training Manual* and slowly work through it. Read and study every page. This will take you through descriptions of Coaching, the core competencies of Meta-Coaching, the benchmarks, the Psychology of Coaching, the Matrix Model, the Axes of Change, the business of Coaching, and more. We continue to keep refining the manual so that you can have a hand-book on Coaching that is a treasure-chest of materials. So start there.

How do you start with coaching? One Meta-Coach recently asked me that. The coach said that he wanted to practice with friends before working with others out there in the “real” world. He said he felt a bit strange and that the conversations seemed to fall back to become a “regular” type of conversation and that people just wanted to talk about their past or get some advice or therapy. This is what I wrote back.

1) *Start with your framing.* Go to the page in the manual on Framing (page 43) and begin a coaching conversation with those frames. This is first. Especially if your friends tend to treat the Coaching as a regular conversation. Set the frame:

“Coaching is a not-normal conversation, are you ready for that? It is not normal because it is about challenging you to stretch to your potentials. It is not normal because it is not back-and-forth, it is all about you. It is not normal because I will be challenging you and helping you become aware of things that are normally unconscious.”

2) *Next define your style.* From your framing and perhaps in it, also define yourself as a Meta-Coach and let your client know what that means. Remember, your style comes from your best states. Accessing your best state will help you to feel *your best self when you are coaching.*

3) *Next, decide on your opening and structure.* I recommend that you get the 18 questions and set the frame: I am going to ask you a series of questions about your goals; these are designed to help you create a really well-formed outcome about what’s important for you. When you do this— then you will be able to figure out what kind of a conversation the person wants—clarity, decision, plan, experience for resourcing, or change.

If you’re worried about figuring out what pattern that you should use, or which one will work best, remember that’s unnecessary until the person is really clear about what they want. As you notice what Matrix their goal fits in—self, skills, relationships, time, meaning, state (feeling), intention (purpose), then look in the manual under each matrix. There you will find a list of patterns that applies for issues in that Matrix, then you can choose which one to use.

For practice—set frames with your friends that *what* you want to practice is not advice, not therapy. If they want something— like getting over the past or to understand their past, that could be okay— now help them set that as their specific outcome. And do practice— if you don’t, your hard-earned skills will deteriorate. So keep yourself and your skills fresh!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #15**  
**April 2, 2014**

## **WHY SHOULD I RENEW MY META-COACH LICENSE?**

The time for *renewing your Meta-Coach License* is in the first quarter of each new year (January through March). And now that we have moved into April, our hope is that every Meta-Coach who wants to retain his or her License as a Licensed Meta-Coach has done that. And, as I noted the other day, more Meta-Coaches have done that this year than any previous year. That's really good! It indicates that more and more Meta-Coaches are using and promoting the Meta-Coach Brand ... and, of course, as that happens, the Brand gets stronger.

While no one has written to me asking me the question in the title, "Why should I renew my Meta-Coach License?" I'm guessing that there are numerous people wondering about that. And because they don't have a good answer to that question, they hesitate renewing their license. It's a good question and deserves answering.

What's the value of renewing? How much is the "license" worth? What can I do with it? What does it mean? If I give it up or fail to renew it, what am I actually giving up?

The benefit of the license goes to the subject of collaboration and community. It goes to the principle that *we can do more together than alone or apart*. In a world where anyone and everyone seems to be putting out a sign "Coach," what differentiates Meta-Coaches is that as a Licensed Meta-Coach you are part of an International system, one which is pioneering new developments in the field of coaching, and one which has created a world-wide community that is holding the standards of what real coaching is. By yourself, you cannot claim any of that.

What differentiates Meta-Coaching even from the ICF, another international system, is that our system is not eclectic as ICF claims to be on their website. It is systematic. We work from one consistent set of principles and models in a consistent way. We also hold ourselves accountable to the ethics that we have set forward. ICF has similar ethics, but it has no formal body whereby coaches are held accountable for living up to the ethics. And probably the strongest point is that for the 50 Coach competencies that we have identified, we have specific behavioral benchmarks. No other system has that. And we even have an explicit model for creating behavioral benchmarks. In these ways we are leading the field.

And as a Licensed Meta-Coach, you are a part of that pioneering and part of a system that has the highest quality of competencies and rigor of training. The aim of the Meta-Coaching system is to produce the highest quality of coaches on the planet. That's a bold and audacious claim and we have not actualized that intention yet. But that is our objective. That is the goal that we are aiming for. And why? Because in attaining that—having the highest quality of Coaches on the planet, that fact alone will be the USP and the differentiating factor between Meta-Coaches and

anyone else who claims to be ‘coaching.’”

As a Licensed Meta-Coach, you also have a community, one that exists for the purpose of supporting you. At the local level, these are the MCF chapters, and as a Meta-Coach *you have the right to create a Chapter*. In this way we encourage the development of leaders and leadership. There is also the websites that create the International Presence and Brand of Meta-Coaching. There you will find the Research that has already been done for Meta-Coaching, and there you will keep finding the ongoing research that various people are doing.

Since Coaching is based on Humanistic or Self-Actualization Psychology, the Meta-Coaching System also provides you the most thorough and extensive description of this psychology. Already we have several books on this subject with more coming. We also have the four modules of the Self-Actualization Psychology Diploma that numerous Neuro-Semantic Trainers are now presenting around the world.

This means that you are not only able to effectively distinguish coaching from therapy, training, mentoring, and consulting, you can also distinguish the unique psychology of the psychologically healthy person from the other psychologies: Behavioral, Cognitive, Developmental, etc. It is this psychology that we now know is the historical roots of NLP given that Perls, Satir, and Bateson were members of the first Human Potential Movement and worked together at Esalen prior to being modeled by Bandler and Grinder. And Perls, Satir, and Bateson were in the tradition of Maslow and Rogers.

So the popularity of Positive Psychology is a late-comer on the scene. It arose from the Maslow tradition, yet like the NLP founders, those founders tried to pretend that they invented Positive Psychology apart from all the work of Maslow. The truth is that Maslow was writing about Positive Psychology 60 years earlier.

*“Why should I renew my Meta-Coach License?”*

First, because it will add to your credibility as a Coach and give you lots of resources.

Second, because it is a way that you can be a good team player and a contributing member of the community. That’s important, because a true self-actualizing person doesn’t live only for self, but thinks and acts in terms of giving to others and being a part of a meaningful community.

Third, then, of course, there is the matter of the license. If you do not renew, then your license becomes void. You are then no longer “in good standing” with the Meta-Coach Community.

Every one who graduates from *Coaching Mastery* is a Licensed Meta-Coach, even those who may still have some of the benchmarks to reach and have a [P] after their credentials.

*Exceptions:* Those who serve on the Assist Team have their license taken care of for that year or the next one.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #16**  
**April 9, 2014**

## **USING THE META-COACHING MODELS WHEN YOU COACH**

In *The Meta-Coaching System* we use Neuro-Linguistic and Neuro-Semantic models— we use lots of them. That’s because one of the big selling points is that the entire Meta-Coaching is a holistic and systematic presentation of these models. In Meta-Coaching we do not introduce other models and patterns from other disciplines. It doesn’t need to. Unlike the ICF which presents itself as taking an eclectic approach, we present Meta-Coaching as a holistic and systematic approach. That is, we have a central theoretical position about people, human nature, human functioning, etc. and we have a series of models that enable us to use and actualize that theoretical stance.

### **So What?**

What difference does this make? Lots! For one thing, a holistic systematic approach means that all of the models and patterns *fit together* as they work in unison to achieve their intended objectives. And because of that, a Coach using the models systematically can test the models and benchmark them. Because of that, with each model that you become increasingly skilled in understanding and using, you have yet another aspect of the very same system. All of this also eliminates guesswork, crossing your fingers and hoping that something will work. It means that when you are coaching, you are not operating “from the seat of your pants.”

It also means that with each year of more experience in coaching, more practice, and more learning, you keep deepening and expanding your coaching expertise. And given the number of models that we have at this present time, it will take you years and years to develop full expertise as a Meta-Coach. This gives you lots of development for yours to come.

### **Practicing the Multiple Models of Meta-Coaching**

If the idea of developing full expertise in the entire Meta-Coaching System appeals to you and you want to reach that level of expertise (both the PCMC and the MCMC) levels. What then? How do you do that? Several things.

First, get an overview of the models. The overview is in your *Coaching Mastery* training manual. There you will find the 8 models of Meta-Coaching (see page 23). Remember? That’s one of the questions that we ask during “The Test” on Day 8 of the training.

#### ***Meta-Coaching Models***

The NLP Communication Model: Meta-Model; Representational Model; Sub-Modalities Model  
Strategies Model, Milton Model



The Meta-States Model: Reflexivity; the Frame Games Model  
The Meta-Programs Model: 60 meta-programs of Perceptual Lens  
The Axes of Change Model: Based on 4 meta-programs  
The Benchmarking Model: Based on Extended Meta-Model  
The Matrix Model: Based on Meta-States and Developmental Psychology  
Self-Actualization Matrix: Based on Hierarchy of Needs and Matrix Model  
Self-Actualization Quadrants: Based on Meaning–Performance Axes & 12 meta-programs  
The Facilitation Model: Based on Meaning–Performance Axes  
The Crucible Model: Based on HPM Encounter groups & Meta-States

Now, how long will it take you to master all of these models? Ten years? Fifteen? Well, *mastery* is one thing, what about just developing a basic expertise? When you do, what does that look and sound like? How do you begin moving in that direction today?

### **Call for a Meta Moment**

Here's one recommendation. When you are coaching, from time to time call for a Meta-Moment to do a Model Check. I recommended this to one of our PCMC level coaches recently. How? When the coaching session has gone on for ten minutes or more, simply take a moment for yourself to stop, step back, and go through a check of the models that you know. Given the information that you've heard, explore:

- Which of the matrices has my client been activating? Self? Other? Time? Intention?
- Which meta-programs have been in play in the conversation so far?
- On the Meaning Axis, do I know the four basic meanings that my client has spoken of? What is it? How does it work? What is the significance? What is his or her intention?
- Using the 18 WFO questions: how far down the funnel have we gotten?
- In the Meta-Model, what linguistic distinctions is causing the client's primary challenges?
- Using Representational and Sub-Modality models, can I representationally track what my client is saying?
- And so on.

Don't worry about the models that you don't know, focus on whatever models that you do know. When you take a Meta Moment in this way, it gives you a chance to *use your theoretical base* of NLP, Neuro-Semantics and Self-Actualization in your coaching. If you need a piece of paper with the models on it— create it and use it as a checklist. You'll be surprised at the richness that the models offers you and the creative ideas that you'll generate.

This is an advanced skill. That's why we do not present it at ACMC. Yet if you've been coaching or practicing coaching at a MCF chapter, then here's something you can begin practicing. It will enable you to become much more systematic in your approach and to utilize the models that you have studied.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**April 12, 2014**

## **WHEN IS A BOOK NOT A NEURO-SEMANTIC BOOK?**

Yesterday I got word that another Meta-Coach has written a book and just published it. Now every time I hear about something like that, I am delighted and I look forward to seeing the book. If it is a book that uses Neuro-Semantic models, that presents them and/or patterns and that applies Meta-Coaching to some subject, I know that here is a book on a subject that I can promote, talk about, and recommend.

But today, when I looked at the a PDF file of the book, I felt really disappointed. Why? Because while written by a Meta-Coach, *it is not a Meta-Coaching book*. The words, “Meta-Coaching” occurred twice, but only as a title. Neuro-Semantic does not occur even once. NLP only once. No Neuro-Semantic patterns, no Meta-State patterns, no Meta-Coaching patterns. And it gets worse.

The book is about Relationships yet in the bibliography there is not one of the dozens of excellent NLP books on Relationships referenced. Nor is my book, *Games Great Lovers Play* referenced. So in terms of being able to refer to the book when someone asks, “Has any Meta-Coaches written about relationships and used Meta-Coaching?” I still have to say, “No, sorry. No one has ... not yet.”

I don’t understand this. How could you write a whole book on a subject as broad as relationships and not quote the impressive work of Leslie Cameron Bandler and her two books, or Virginia Satir, or the other dozen NLP books? And to be a Neuro-Semanticist and not refer to work on meta-programs, frames, strategies about love, communication, conflict and a dozen other topics — I just don’t get it. What would be the basis of the book? The theoretical foundations?

Anyway, it is obviously *not* a Neuro-Semantic book. It is *not* even an NLP book. And so the Meta-Coaching branding is not supported or enriched by this book. And so a whole community of people (Meta-Coaches all around the world) who could have supported it— is a lost opportunity. Why am I writing this? Certainly not to embarrass anyone, that’s why no mention of the person or the book. I’m writing because we need good writers and good books and we need writers who use their experience and apply the Neuro-Semantic models and patterns to the specific subjects that they can write about! Here’s to more writers arising to do that! Here’s to *you* possibly being one of those writers!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #17**  
**April 16, 2014**

## **COACHING UP AND DOWN THE HIERARCHY**

Your clients come to you—if they are *truly* coaching clients—for mastery. They come because they are ready for a challenge. They come to be stretched to step up to their potentials and to develop those potentials for excellence or mastery. Yet many of them cannot actually devote themselves to mastery. And why not? Because they are not yet effectively coping with their basic needs.

The fact is that before they can truly be challenged and enter into the self-actualizing life, they have to address how they are coping with their basic needs. In terms of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, we have to coach them for the foundation of their basic needs before we can coach them for the higher levels of the hierarchy.

This explains why we have provided you, as a Meta-Coach, *the Self-Actualization Assessment Scale*, and why it's important to use. With it you can have your clients take the assessment *prior* to the coaching and that will enable you to flush out any of the basic or lower needs that is consuming your client's energy and focus. The problem, as we have pointed out in *Coaching Mastery* and in the *Self-Actualization Trainings*, is that people can have all kinds of problems dealing with their basic needs.

What problems? Here is a list of problems that even psychologically healthy people may have with regard to their deficiency-needs (D-needs):

- 1) *Comprehension*. They may not have the required understanding of what the "need" is, what it means, how it works, and how to gratify that need. Therefore they are not handling or coping with the need in an effective way.
- 2) *Semantically over or under-loaded*. They may have semantically over-loaded the need with too much meaning, thereby turning it into an addiction or they may have semantically under-loaded it so that they do not experience the need as a value that's important enough to take care of.
- 3) *Semantically distorted*. They may have given the need a distorted semantic significance and what was a healthy need has become a neurotic need.
- 4) *Inadequate coping skills*. They may have the right meanings (understandings) about the need, but lack a sufficient coping so that they are not adequately satisfying their needs.

Two things are needed in order to cope well with the D-needs. We need to *understand* the need (comprehend it and give it appropriate meaning) and we need to be able to *gratify* the need in a

way that is appropriate and effective. What we call *coping* is absolutely central to the processes of adjustment and thriving in life. *Coping* means that we have ways to satisfy the need. We know what to do and we know how to do it and we have established a lifestyle of actually coping with the need. Without understanding and coping skills we will not be able to cope with the need in an effective way. And when that happens, our mental-emotional and behavior faculties will be mobilized to deal with the need ... and that takes energy and vitality away from the self-actualization needs.

If what people need for effective coping is both high quality meanings (understandings) and the best performances (activities that make up their lifestyle), then you as a Meta-Coach can use *the Meaning—Performance Axes* in facilitating your clients to develop more effective coping skills. Coping describes a pattern of activities, hence a lifestyle. To support such coping, you will want to coach clients to develop a sense of control or autonomy and a strong social sense of support. Autonomy and support are two contributing factors that accelerate our ability to handle our D-needs effectively.

The sense of control or autonomy speaks about a person's trust in self to figure out what the need is, to understand it, and to figure out how to gratify it effectively. When you coach to this level, you will begin with the Clarity Conversation, move to the Decision Conversation, and then on to the Planning, Experiencing for resourcing, and/or the Change Conversation. Then your client will set up an ongoing engagement with his or her needs and actively set up an outcome by which your client will be able to set up an effective coping style.

The sense of social support speaks to the fact that most of the D-needs requires others in the gratification. Whether it is eating, exercising, sleeping, working, making money, keeping a job, stabilizing life, getting love and affection, etc., client's need the emotional intelligence and social intelligence for creating social support groups.

As you do this, you will be coaching up and down the hierarchy. That's because the *knowledge, information, and meaning* (self-actualization or B-needs) influence and govern the D-needs. Why is that? Because "the meaning you give is the instinct you live." So even when you are dealing with a lower need, you will simultaneously be accessing the client's higher level needs and facilitating the construction of an effective coping style.

As a Meta-Coach, it is important that you do all of this for yourself. The self-application of all of this will empower and enrich your ability to do this with your clients. So if you have not spent a month or two using the *Self-Actualization Assessment Scale* for yourself, then I'd recommend you do that. It will assist you when you then use it with your clients.

Here is the contact information for the website

<http://www.neurosemantics.com/assessment-scale-form>.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #18**  
**April 23, 2014**

## **UPDATE ON THE KINDS OF COACHING CONVERSATIONS**

When the Meta-Coaching System began we did not have any list of *the kinds of Coaching Conversations*. Accordingly, that was one of the first things that Michelle Duval and I worked on. As a result, we made a list and used it for our first book in 2003, *Coaching Conversations*. How did we come up with that original list? We really did not have any criteria or structure to it, we just took what was immediately before us.

### ***Coaching Conversations: Meta-Coaching Vol. II (2003)***

The Outcome Conversation	The Resource Conversation
The Possibility Conversation	The Matrix Conversation
The Fierce Conversation	Narrative Conversation
Time-Line Conversation	The Structural Conversation
The Neuro-Logical Conv.	The Hero Journey Conversation
Archetype Conversation	

As the years passed, I started wondering about the kinds of coaching conversations. From time to time I would be benchmarking a new coach who would ask, “What kind of conversation should I begin with?” Eventually I started cataloguing the kinds and that led to the first 6 Coaching Conversations:

- 1) The Clarity Conversation
- 2) The Decision Conversation
- 3) The Planning Conversation
- 4) The Experience (for Resourcing) Conversation
- 5) The Change Conversation
- 6) The Confrontation Conversation

The next set of six Coaching Conversations began to form as I started studying, interviewing, and modeling Group Coaching. These conversations are described in detail in *Group and Team Coaching* (2013).

- 7) The Mediation Conversation
- 8) The Meta-Conversation
- 9) The Rounds Conversation
- 10) Problem-Solving Conversation
- 11) Collective Learning Conversation
- 12) Conflict Resolution Conversation

Then with the work on Executive Coaching, I catalogued the following Coaching Conversations, which of course, are now in the *Executive Coaching* (2014) book.

- 13) The Sounding Board Conversation (or Clarity Conversation)
- 14) The Outcome Conversation (or Clarity Conversation)
- 15) The Feedback Conversation
- 16) The Systems Conversation
- 17) The Paradox Conversation
- 18) The Potential Conversation
- 19) The Unleashing Potentials Conversation
- 20) The Collaborative Leadership Conversation
- 21) The Integration and Integrity Conversation

Currently I'm engaged in the study and modeling of Political Coaching and as with the others, that's calling forth more kinds of Coaching Conversations— conversations unique to that niche or speciality and will be in the next book, *Political Coaching*.

- 22) The Philosophical Conversation
- 23) The Power Conversation
- 24) The Responsibility Conversation
- 12) The Conflict Conversation
- 5) The Change Conversation
- 21) The Integrity Conversation

### **Why Is This Important?**

It's important primarily so that you know *what kind of conversation* your client wants or needs. If you don't know that, what will you do? How will you proceed? The answer is— you will guess. You will cross your fingers and hope. That's not very strategic and doesn't encourage confidence in your coaching skills. That's why in the benchmarking process one of the things that we are doing these days is interrupting the coach and asking:

What kind of a coaching conversation does your client want from you? What has your client said?

What kind of a conversation does your client need? How do you know that?

*This interruption is designed to help you, as the Coach, to think strategically and systematically, in real time, during the session.* I'd recommend that you practice this in the MCF chapters. If you are deeply listening and listening for structure and patterns—you will pick up on this. If not, then this will help to train that depth of listening. And if you cannot immediately answer these questions, then perhaps your benchmarker can guide you or other observers. They have the advantage of not doing the coaching and can be observing the form and structure of the session—which is a good reason for going to the chapters and watching coaching sessions.

Obviously the coaching conversations in some of the specialities (Group and Team Coaching, Executive Coaching, Political Coaching) will include the core conversations (#1-6) and/or some of the other conversations. The key is knowing these different kinds and knowing what to do and how to coach effectively when using that a particular of coaching conversation. That's where the chapters on each kind come in, offering you an understanding and a set of operations. Now, what kinds of a conversations are you having today with your clients?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #19**  
**April 30, 2014**

## **THE SERIES OF BOOKS ON META-COACHING**

Many years ago I made a decision and set out to write a series of books on Meta-Coaching. When I began I thought I that would involve writing three books, possibly four. I had no idea that it would eventuate in 14 or 15! I began with what is now *Coaching Conversations*. I started there because that is what coaching at its essence is—a conversation. And having read every book on Coaching that was published in English that I could get my hands on during the years that I was formulating Meta-Coaching (2000 through 2002), I had not seen one book that had actual coaching conversations in it. Even to this day, there are almost none like that. *Coaching Conversations*, now Volume II, was first published in 2004 (revised in 2010). Michelle Duval provided two of the actual conversations, I asked Robert Dilts for two of the chapters, and the rest were conversations that I had provided. Within every conversation are comments about what’s occurring that are informed by the distinctions of Meta-Coaching.

In that same year, having completed with Michelle’s assistance, *the Axes of Change Model*, I wrote what is now Volume I, *Coaching Change* (2004). We were proud of that model, being the *only* model that describes how psychologically healthy people change and that is not based on a therapeutic model of change. And we presented it at several ICF conferences, even the International Conference in Quebec City, Canada in 2005.

Next year, I plan to update *The Axes of Change* and more than double the content of the current edition of *Coaching Change*. When that happens, I will take out the first seven chapters of the current book and create a brand new volume. That new book will present an overview of *The Meta-Coaching System* and will be Volume XIII.

*Unleashed* (2007) was Volume III and came from all of the studies into Maslow, Rogers, and the first Human Potential Movement (HPM). It arose also from the unexpected and surprising discovery of regarding “the secret history of NLP”—that Perls, Satir, and Bateson all worked together at Esalen as second generation leaders of the HPM. From that came the Self-Actualization Quadrants based on the Meaning—Performance Axes as well as the Pyramid Embedded Matrix that transformed the pyramid into a Volcano. From all of that also arose the beginning to the Self-Actualization Psychology series of trainings.

*Self-Actualization Psychology* (2008), Volume IV, quickly followed from that study. The design was to ground Meta-Coaching in the only psychology that can inform and govern the field of Coaching. Any other psychology focuses on hurt, trauma, personal disorders, and other psychotherapeutic issues. Self-Actualization Psychology or Humanistic Psychology focuses exclusively on the principles and processes of how people step up to become their best selves.

Any and every strength based or positive psychology (Seligman, et. al) is based on what Maslow and Rogers pioneered.

*Achieving Peak Performance* (2009), Volume V, was also quickly developed from a previous work, *Make It So!* That gave me the chance to detail thirteen *activities* (on the *performances* axis) and describe what it means to achieve peak performance— that is, excellence or mastery in a given area. Because we emphasize in Neuro-Semantics the importance of closing the Knowing–Doing Gap by translating what’s in our mind to what’s in our neurology, this books fully details the mind-to-muscle pattern and processes in Self-Actualization.

*Unleashing Leadership* (2009), Volume VI, was the next natural step. Once you have self-actualizing individuals stepping up to leadership, then you have the possibility of self-actualizing companies, groups, and associations. After all, what’s a self-actualizing leader to do but to bring together people who, as a unit, create self-actualizing families and companies? In that book I framed the unleashing of leadership using the Meta-Model to define what area, dimension, and level of leadership one would like to actualize his or her potentials in, and the Matrix Model for unleashing all of the potentials in a systemic way. In it also you will find the Axes of Leadership which expands the Axes of Change for leaders who lead cultural change.

*The Crucible and the Fires of Change* (2010), Volume VII, presents a second model of change. This change model is more holistic (systemic) and focuses primarily on *unlearning*. Often when a person finds that a new learning is simply not going in, or not sticking, something is in the way. An old learning is preventing the integration of a new learning! So, before the new learning can be fully received, digested, and incorporated, the old learning has to be suspended. *The Crucible* offers a space for a deep encounter with one’s self and one’s old learnings and via that encounter allows the old to melt away and be recast in a new form. *The Crucible* offers a look at how a Meta-Coach “holds the space” for a client for transformational change.

*Benchmarking Intangibles* (2011), Volume VIII, presents the Benchmarking Model of Meta-Coaching. Going back to the essence of the Meta-Model for precision and specificity as well as detailing the structure of meaning making in Neuro-Semantics, this model gives us a way to bring reality to such intangibles as leadership, listening, sensory-based feedback as well as any value, criteria, or skill. Now we can measure the degree of quality in an experience. Today Meta-Coaching is distinguished by the benchmarks we have created for more than 50 skills.

*Systemic Coaching* (2012), Volume IX, took the systemic nature of Meta-States Model and the Matrix Model and went further into systemic thinking, structuring, and working. Pascal Gambardella whose doctorate and post-graduate studies has been in systems supplemented this work with systems diagrams for all of the coaching sessions used as examples in the book. As a result, Meta-Coaching is not only the most systematic approach, it is also the most systemic.

*Group and Team Coaching* (2013), Volume X, opened up a new area for Meta-Coaching, not only its applications to groups and teams, but also for *the kinds* of Coaching Conversations that are uniquely significant when coaching groups of people. Here I introduced for the first time the



*Spiral Trust Model* detailing different developmental levels for groups and teams, how to distinguish different kinds of group coaching (8 of them), and the skills required for this level of coaching. From this has come the benchmarking of Group Coaching and now the Certification training for that level of coaching.

*Executive Coaching* (2014), Volume XI, as with the previous volume has opened up another focused area in Meta-Coaching. Written with the assistance of Master Coach, Graham Richardson, we again discovered some unique Coaching Conversations for those doing Executive Coaching and described life in the C-suite and all of its challenges for those who do Executive Coaching.

*Political Coaching* (2014 or 2015), Volume XII, will move into the domain of politics. It will address both dimensions of politics—small “p” politics as it exists in every group, in the office, in corporations. It will also address big “P” politics as it exists professionally in government and civil offices. Every Meta-Coach who deals with groups, executives, and even couples, will find that *politics* are never far away and how people think about power, influence, decision-making, about cooperation and collaboration, these and many other subjects are political in nature. After all, we are a political species by nature. And as with the other speciality niches, there are also some unique Coaching Conversations that set Political Coaching apart.

*The Meta-Coaching System* (2015?), Volume XIII, as mentioned earlier is my plan for updating what is now in Volume I. So much has developed in Meta-Coaching since 2004 and it is certainly time for a much fuller presentation of the entire system.

*Getting Real* (2016?), Volume XIV, is what I’m thinking the next volume. After all, this is the whole purpose of self-actualization and the highest levels of coaching (PCMC and MCMC), namely, challenging people to become *authentic*. Authenticity, after all, is the ultimate end of what Maslow conceptualized as the purpose and goal of self-actualization— becoming your *real* self. That’s not easy. There’s a thousand influences in our lives and societies seducing us away from being real. Yet the ultimate vitality and joy of life is precisely that which scares us so— being real.

That’s as far as I have planned at this moment. Your suggestions for additional volumes are always welcomed. And why do all of this? The design of the whole series is to *create the entire curriculum for Meta-Coaching and to present it fully*. No other Coach Training system anywhere in the world has done that and so Meta-Coaching will be the first in this area as well. We were first to set up a self-governing body to enforce the ethics of Coaching; that’s what Michelle Duval sat up with the MCF in 2004. We were first to establish behavioral benchmarks for all of the competencies. And we are even now the first to fully present the whole system and make it available.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #20**  
**May 7, 2014**

## **COACHING— THE NEW LEADERSHIP**

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and now into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, *a brand new leadership* has been developing. Actually, it has been in the works for thousands of years, but usually the voices calling for it were faint and easily ignored. Why? Because over the centuries, the idea of leadership was entirely dominated by the idea of “the leader is the strong man.” This understanding of leadership grew out of the times when human culture was primitive and when “might made right.” In those times the rule of the jungle was also the rule of human affairs and human government. The person in charge was the person who was the strongest, and at first, this was strictly physical and as groups gathered, it was the strongest in the sense of who was the most ruthless, who could and would use fear, threat, and might to get his way. That’s when the military idea of leadership prevailed— that’s when leadership was bossing, ordering, commanding, controlling.

But the times they have been changing. Command-and-control management and leadership has been giving way to an entirely new way to think about leading and leadership. It began when it became obvious that while a forceful, controlling “leader” might get compliance of behavior, command-and-control methods can never truly win *the minds* of people, let alone *the hearts*, and even less so *their spirits*. To move beyond winning compliance with control and threats to winning the hearts and minds of people, then to winning their allegiance, and finally to winning their loyalty requires a lot more. It requires an entirely new and different paradigm. In Neuro-Semantics, we call that new paradigm: Self-Actualization.

This new way of leading requires using a force that goes beyond fear and threat. It requires *being* the kind of person that people pay attention to, learn from, understand, feel connected to, believe in what he or she presents, wants to be a part of something bigger than themselves. This kind of leader calls forth the best in people, inspire them, taps into their human capital of intelligence and creativity, treats them as colleagues, relates to them as equals, as colleagues, and creates a winning team with them. This is the *self-actualizing leader*.

Now, where do you learn these kinds of skills? The amazing and surprising answer is in the *core coaching skills*. That is, today and into the coming centuries, the great leaders will be those who *lead* people by enabling them and doing that through what today we know are the core competencies of coaching. This is *Coaching Leadership*.

That explains one of the central reasons why you find lots of leaders attending the Meta-Coach Trainings. They know that they will lead best when they are skilled at connecting with people, actively and deeply listening and supporting people, and when they can explore with people for n

their ideas and contributions. They know that they will lead best when they are competent in receiving and giving high quality feedback, when they can frame situations, induce people to feel, inspire, awaken, align, collaborate, etc. The surprise is that these are the skills of coaching.

The powerful flexibility of these skills is that you can use them one person at a time as you influence people or with a group and transform a collection of individuals into a high performance team. This also reveals something else about leadership— leadership occurs at all levels and dimensions of human experience. Not merely at the top; but all the way up the levels and in every domain. And if there's anything that's really missing today it is *good leadership. It is healthy, self-actualizing leadership that brings out the best in people.*

So if you want to improve, enhance, and empower your leadership skills, a great beginning place is with the core coaching skills. Start there. Experience coaching and how it can create clarity and decisiveness for you as you identify and unleash more of your leadership potentials. Then you'll be in a great place to begin to groom leaders around you. Because, as Warren Bennis noted many times, the purpose of leadership is not to create followers, it is to create more leaders and the next generation leaders.

This is one of reasons we regularly have business owners, senior managers, and CEOs at *Coaching Mastery*. Are they planning to become coaches? No, of course not. They are there to become better leaders and they will become more excellent as leaders by the coaching process and methodology. And if you are ready to unleash your core leadership competencies, I'd recommend learning the coaching skills as the fundamentals of effective leadership.

### **What Does This Mean for Coaches?**

It means that in coaching, you are leading. You are exercising leadership. After all, you are working to bring out the best in people— and that's what a self-actualizing leader does. So this means that when you coach Leaders, you first demonstrate that. You are the exemplar of leadership to the leaders you are coaching. In coaching, you awaken people to a vision— their vision for their life. You then call out the potentials within for actualizing that vision and then you equip people so that, using their innate “powers” they construct and develop the required skills. That's leadership in its purest form.

### **Meta-Coaching News**

- Mark your Calendar for Friday October 5, Brussels, Belgium. Right dab smack in the middle of *Coaching Mastery* we are taking a day off so that we can do *A Day of Mastery With Graham Richardson*. Germaine Rediger has prepared a flyer for this event and we are selling this *one special day* event to anyone who wants to see a Master at work. This is the first time for this and we hope to have a home-gathering of Neuro-Semantic Trainers and Meta-Coaches from all over Europe, the UK, and Africa. Friday Oct. 5. Come and be amazed.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #21**  
**May 14, 2014**

## **WHAT'S THE STORY ABOUT THE COACHING CREDENTIALS**

In the Meta-Coaching System, we have three levels of credentials, ACMC, PCMC, and MCMC. This was modeled after the structure of the ICF: ACC, PCC and MCC. It's easy to say what these letters signify—the letters stand for *Associate, Professional, and Master*. Yet what do we mean by these letters? What do they stand for and signify? If someone asks you, here are some things that you can say.

### **ACMC Standards and Benchmarks**

In Meta-Coaching, to attain the ACMC credentials, one has to complete 180 hours of “coach” specific training. This training covers the eight models of Meta-Coaching beginning with the NLP Communication Model (ideally the full NLP Practitioner course). That's Module I which we call *Coaching Essentials*. Then the Introduction to the Meta-States Model which is variously named as APG (Accessing Personal Genius), Self-Leadership, and *Coaching Genius*. Module III is *Coaching Mastery*. It covers several models: the Matrix Model, Axes of Change, Facilitation Model, Benchmarking, Self-Actualization Quadrants, and Meta-Programs.

Within the context of this training is the experiential learnings from the actual running of patterns and supervised coaching sessions. It's in the benchmarked sessions that a person discovers *where* one is operating in terms of the seven core Coaching Skills and what's needed in order to reach the basic competence of 2.5 on the benchmark scale. We run this as an intern process—experience, feedback in real time, more experience, feedback at the end of the session with discussion for next steps.

For the foundational skill of coaching, the key to the first credentials is two-fold— *connect with the person by listening and supporting and exploring the person's model of the world*. What we focus on in the Coaching Boot Camp is slowing down, releasing judgment, and learning to *be present* with the client. Listening here is the key, the challenge, and the great missing ingredient when most people begin. Mostly, a new coach has to *unlearn* all of the poor listening skills that most of us have be culturalized for, stop listening to self (!), and learn to actually hear what the client says. After hearing what the person actually says comes deeper listening skills— truly hearing *the person*.

### **PCMC Standards and Benchmarks**

For the credentials of the next level there is a requirement for hundreds of hours of actual coaching with clients in the real world. That's the reason for at least 400 hours of professional coaching (you get paid), ten hours of coaching *by* a Meta-Coach (buddy coaching), and a case

study of a client that you take through your coaching program. PCMC is granted after ACMC coaching for at least two-years, although most of the PCMC coaches so far have taken more time than that. It is in this process that a person gets lots of actual real-life experience in coaching in which a Meta-Coach works repeatedly with a wide range of clients in identifying a client's actual outcome and facilitating him or her to achieve those objectives.

For this reason, getting the KPI is required for the PCMC level, as well as tasking, framing, and pattern detection. In addition to these four coaching skills, the standard to reach is 3.0 on the seven core skills. That's the benchmark for *full competency* of these skills. What distinguishes the Profession Level of Meta-Coaching is the person's *sense of structure*— the coach is able to see patterns in the client and call them out in the coaching process. This pattern detection skill along with the giving feedback about it is typically experienced as a “fierce conversation” as the coach focuses in with a laser-beam focus to get to the heart of things (the person's structure and content of meaning) and confronting the person with it.

To achieve this level of *structural awareness*, the PCMC coach also has to complete NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner certification.

### **MCMC Standards and Benchmarks**

After the PCMC level, another three years has to pass (minimally) and then a coach will be able to document at least 2,000 hours of coaching and be ready to move to the Master level of Meta-Coaching. That means five years after ACMC. At this level a Meta-Coach is able to operate at a 3.5 on the core skills and 3.0 on the four skills of PCMC.

What then truly distinguishes the Master level from the PCMC level? The answer is the focus on authenticity at this level. Here the quality of the coaching conversation moves beyond merely being a fierce conversation to one where the coach is experienced as being “ruthlessly compassionate” which is how Graham Richardson describes it. The challenge of coaching at this highest level is for the client to get real— to get real in all aspects of life. And to facilitate that, the coach has to get real, demonstrate authenticity, and challenge the client for being real and authentic.

Coaches are truly masterful are those who have worked on their own authenticity (i.e., applied to self) and now are able to facilitate the same quality and level of authenticity of their clients. Operating from and being able to address human “authenticity” lies at the heart of true mastery. The reason for this is because every benefit of coaching is either made possible by being real or it is amplified, strengthened, and taken to the next highest level.

The benchmarks for this level now include many of the benchmarks that we use in the Self-Actualization Psychology. These are benchmark for the qualities, values, and skills of being open, vulnerable, direct, responsible, and truthful.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #22**  
**May 21, 2014**

## **MODELING A MASTER COACH**

### **Modeling Experts**

The Meta-Coaching System arose, and has continued to develop over the years, by interviewing and modeling expert Coaches. I began with four highly skilled coaches, three of whom were present at the very first training and essentially co-trained with me. Over the years I have had the privilege of interview many, many more; over 30 additional “expert” coaches and a few highly successful entrepreneurs. With some of them I have learned *lots* and used the new insights and/or distinctions to refine the Meta-Coaching system.

If you ask, “Why?” It’s because I wanted Meta-Coaching to be based, not only on theory and research, but also on the practices of actual coaches who had made a name for themselves and were skilled at transformational change. So that is what we did.

Now over the years, the person who has *most often* come to Meta-Coaching as an Expert Coach, who I have interviewed many times, and who has provided Coaching Demonstrations for us to video-tape and observe has been Graham Richardson. He has done that in Sydney on a regular basis, and a couple times in New Zealand.

### **Modeling Graham Richardson**

In October, he has agreed to come to Brussels, Belgium and to do a special day of Coaching with Interviews. That will be ***Friday, October 3***. Because we have never done this before, this will be an entirely new thing ... and one I hope that we can do this kind of thing once a year with other Expert Coaches. Our plan this year is to video-tape the sessions with the debriefing that I will do, to create some professional DVDs of the experience, and to build up a library of Master Coaches at work.

What will be the schedule for this special day? The plan is to have Graham Richardson do four coaching sessions on that day. We will have four two-hour sessions which all of us will observe first hand, then I will highlight key distinctions and learnings, interview Graham to see if we can peek into his mind to understand his understandings about coaching, his client, himself, and his decision points in the coaching. I will conclude my part by relating and applying the Meta-Coaching Models that enable us to learn and integrate the expertise demonstrated. After that we will open things up for questions.

Now one of the wonderful things about Graham and the challenge of modeling him is that he keeps learning and developing. Every time I’ve interviewed him, he has read another half dozen formative books that has, in turn, influenced his coaching. So keeping up with him always

makes the interviews fascinating. In recent years he has also attended the Executive Coaching Congresses in Europe and so keeps on top of the trends that's in the field.

When I talked with him two years ago about the book on *Executive Coaching* that I wanted to write, I asked if he would be willing to be a part of it. He would. And once I began sketching out what to include, he began reading through the manuscript, not only providing feedback for the text, but also writing stories and examples to flesh-out the concepts in the book. I mention this to give evidence to Graham's commitment to Coaching, and to Meta-Coaching in particular, and his willingness to transfer his knowledge and skills.

**Mark it down in your calendar — October 3, 2014, Brussels, Belgium**

Then plan to be there. We are making that day open to anyone interested in Coaching, but especially to Licensed Meta-Coaches in Europe, the UK, Africa and to Meta-Coaches around the world who are willing to meet us in Brussels.

That day, Oct. 3, is in the very middle of the *Coaching Mastery* course that we will be running there. This Module III of ACMC begins Sept. 29, then on what would be Day 5, we will take a day off from *Coaching Mastery* for a day of observing and modeling a Master Coach. If you are signed up to revisit Coaching Mastery — *this is a big extra just for you!* If not, come for this day and stay for our actual Day 5 (Oct. 4) when we do Axes of Change. If you want to be on the Assist Team — here is a really *big extra* for you!

Anyway, you need to contact Germaine Rediger to get your name on the list, and the sooner, the better.

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For the Website and Flyer about the event — go to:

<http://www.metacoachtrack.com>

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #23**  
**May 28, 2014**

## **WHO WANTS TO PRACTICE GROUP AND TEAM COACHING?**

We have just completed on Sunday the training for *Group and Team Coaching* in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. And as with the other presentations (Hong Kong, Shanghai, Manila Philippines), this one was similarly full of people really committed to learning how to handle groups and facilitate the coaching of a group so that it becomes a high performance group or team. We had people present who had no coaching experience, or NLP experience, or Neuro-Semantic experience, and at the end, many of them were talking about getting those trainings especially when they saw what the Meta-Coaches were able to do.

There will be two more *Group and Team Coaching* trainings this year— In Mexico in August and then in Italy in October. Then after that we will do our very first competency-based and benchmark training for *Group and Team Coaching Certification in Meta-Coaching* in Hong Kong. That will be a six-day training, three extra days for the benchmarking of Group Coaches. The key prerequisite for that is the ACMC Certification. That will be at the end of the year (Dec./ Jan. In Hong Kong), contact Mandy Chai about the GTCMC Credentials (Group and Team Certified Meta-Coach) ([mandy@apti.com.hk](mailto:mandy@apti.com.hk)).

In Rio I put everybody into groups 15 times in the 3 days. That is a lot! Over and over they were put into groups to experience various group dynamics, to achieve different group objectives, and to get hands-on-experience with designing outcomes, solving problems, planning, dealing with conflict, etc. Several commented that they really liked the experiential nature of the training and the amount of the experience that they got. Several others asked, “Where else can I get this kind of experience?”

Well, one place — obviously, or maybe not so obviously— is at the MCF chapters. Why not? In fact, the *Chapter* itself is a small group and you as a Meta-Coach along with other Meta-Coaches and/or other people that you bring together can certainly use your *Group and Team Coaching knowledge and skills* to create an effective MCF Chapter, can you not? If you do that, you will not merely be role playing and learning to handle the dynamics at play, you will be doing it “for real” and the evidence will be that you create a dynamic and robust group.

Would you want to practice *for real*? Then get your MCF chapter together and propose this idea. It will test your understandings and competencies in creating a group where people get their needs met when they enter — truth, safety, inclusion, control, respect, fun, achievement, and peak performance. It will give you hands-on practice with forming, norming, storming, norming some more, and performing. It will enable you to see and experience from a front-row seat the



twin-drives of wanting to be *a part of* the group and also *apart from* the group. And that experience will make you a much more insightful and empathetic Group & Team Coach.

I talked with a couple Meta-Coaches about all of the possibilities that lie before you in creating a robust small group of your MCF chapter. Obviously, you can make your first objective enhancing each person's coaching skills. You can also make an objective becoming a Chapter that supports each other in your business as coaches— networking, contact people, writing proposals, developing your business plans, etc. You could also take on a project in your community— something that would allow all of you to give back and make a difference. It's up to you. Can you coach yourself as a group? Can you become a team?

*Group and Team Coaching* is already a major area of Coaching and everything indicates that it is going to become a bigger and bigger area in the coming years. There will be a lot more demand for it. There's lots of reasons for that. Perhaps the most obvious is that most groups and teams in organizations are not very effective and are wasting so much of their potentials. There's so much rugged individualism, too little skill in being a good team player, and too much ineffective leadership in the groups. Boards are like that. Senior management teams are like that. And they need help.

Don't think that *Group and Team Coaching* is the same thing as individual coaching, just more so. It isn't. The presence of group dynamics introduces many new factors that a coach doesn't have to deal with in individual coaching. So with *Group & Team Coaching* there are additional "Conversations" to the first six for individuals: Rounds, Meta, Collective Learning, Problem-Solving, Mediation, and Productive Conflict. These are details in the book that we published last year. There's also the need to distinguish different kinds of groups: intact versus ad hoc groups, groups with leaders versus groups in which the coach will lead, work groups versus learning or study groups, etc.

And what about the Skills for *Group & Team Coaching*? In setting up the feedback form for this level, I kept the basic format that you are already familiar with although these have many new sub-skills within them. One difference is that we start with *Framing*. There is then *Group Support, Group Listening, Group Questioning, Group Feedback, and Group State Induction*. Three additional skills that we focus are: *Group Functioning, Group Leadership / Governance;* and *Group Closure*.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #24**  
**June 4, 2014**

## **CREATING AND SELLING YOUR GROUP AND TEAM COACHING PRACTICE**

I mentioned in the last post that there is now a demand for *Group & Team Coaching*, and that in the coming years that demand will be increasing. Given that, if you want to create this as your coaching focus or add it to your focus, how do you do that?

- How do you build up a “Group and Team Coaching” business? How do you sell it?

When it comes to any kind of selling of yourself as a Meta-Coach and/or your Coaching Practice, it is always best to develop a focused niche with an unique speciality. What’s much harder to sell and even to describe is the generalist approach.

“But what if I don’t know my niche? What if I have not enough experience to even know what to make my speciality?”

Then pick something that you *would like to make a speciality or that could possibly become a speciality*. Just pick something! By doing that, you at least have a place to start. From there, begin to format your “ideal client” and the unique contribution and value that you would add to that person’s life. It’s a beginning. That’s the important thing. Then study that speciality. Read books on it, interview people who have made that their speciality, search the internet for those who focus on that area. Collect ideas about what they offer, how they make their offer, how they frame their unique proposition of value, how they think about the needs, problems, and challenges of those people, their personality distinctions (meta-programs, perceptions, beliefs, etc.).

Starting there doesn’t mean that you will only be dealing with that area. You won’t. You probably will be a generalist and take on just about anyone who is a legitimate coaching client. The difference is that you *have in mind where you are going in terms of your niche*. Of course, as you study and interview and get experience, you may very well change your mind about your speciality. The reason for the decision is not that you will carve it in stone, but that you have a place to begin focusing.

Next, begin thinking about how you want to package your offerings and how you want to develop your “coaching package.” Depending on your other talents and skills— you will be a Trainer/Coach; Consult/Coach; Mentor/Coach; Coach/Trainer, etc. Some use training to get in, others use some consulting expertise to get in— what will you use to *get in*? At first, you will probably use connections. Who do you know that’s in business? In management? In H.R.?

Begin there. Most business, and especially coaching and training business, operates from who you know and your skills in making connections.

Nor do you go in seeking to get in, go in seeking to add value with any and every conversation you have. Go in *interviewing people*. Ask for their help—their insights and advice. Now that doesn't mean you don't do your own homework. Do! Learn the terminology of the industry, learn the vision and values of the business, learn as much as you can about the structure and who's who in the organization.

Now when you meet with people in organizations, interview them about the quality of their groups and teams. Ask them how much the groups are learning teams, effective teams in terms of productivity, tapping human intelligence and creativity, generating a sense of belongingness, recognition, appreciation, etc. And, if you really want to *sell this understanding* to get into organizations, give out copies of Patrick Lencioni's *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. It tells a story and so is an easy read for people who do not read self-help or non-fiction books.

[As an aside, not too long ago a former Meta-Coach used the following dysfunctions of a team and presented it as if it was his own discovery, doing that kind of thing is plagiarism and unethical. You show yourself professional and scholarly when you give credit to your sources!]

Here is Lencioni's description of **The Five Dysfunctions** in his own words and a good description of why businesses need Group and Team Coaching:

- **Absence of trust:**  
Members of great teams trust one another on a fundamental, emotional level, and they are comfortable being vulnerable with each other about their weaknesses, mistakes, fears, and behaviors. They get to a point where they can be completely open with one another. This is essential because ...
- **Fear of Conflict:**  
Teams that trust one another are not afraid to engage in passionate dialogue around issues and decisions that are key to the organization's success. They do not hesitate to disagree with, challenge, and question one another, all in the spirit of finding the best answers, discovering the truth, and making great decisions. This is important because...
- **Lack of Commitment:**  
Teams that engage in unfiltered conflict are able to achieve genuine buy-in around important decisions, even when various members of the team initially disagree. That's because they ensure that all opinions and ideas are put on the table and considered, giving confidence to team members that no stone has been left unturned. This is critical because ...
- **Avoidance of Accountability:**  
Teams that commit to decisions and standards of performance do not hesitate to hold one another accountable for adhering to those decisions and standards. They don't rely on the team leader as the primary source of accountability; they go directly to their peers. This matters because ...
- **Inattention to Results:**  
Teams that trust one another engage in conflict, commit to decisions, and hold one another accountable are very likely to set aside their individual needs and agendas and focus almost exclusively on what is best for the team. They do not give in to the temptation to place their departments, career aspirations, or ego-driven status ahead of the collective results that define team success. (p. 7)

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #25**  
**June 11, 2014**

## **WHY GROUP & TEAM COACHING?**

Why should organizations be interested in group and team coaching? What's in it for a business, an association, or a government? What will be the benefits and return on investment (ROI)? When you sell yourself as a *Group and Team Coach* and the *Meta-Coaching System* for resolving conflicts in groups and enabling the functioning of a group, people will ask you about the value and benefits. Here are a few answers.

### ***1) Effective and Productive Groups***

Given what I wrote in last week's post, the first and probably the most important reason for introducing *Group & Team Coaching* into an organization is that most groups are dysfunctional. They do not work very well. They not only are not very effective or productive, they are all too often, positively hurtful to the organization. They undermine the effectiveness of the business.

Yet managers and business owners hire people for their talents and skills in order to improve the quality and quantity of products and services. Yet the essence of business is the ability to work *with others* and *through others*. That's what business is. So the people we hire have to be able to create products, services, and information for clients by working in a coordinated, cooperative, and collaborative way. So if we discover that the people in the organization are not communicating well, are not coordinating their efforts, clarifying their communications, understanding each other, understanding what the customers are asking for, and getting information in plenty of time, then we know that the business will be putting along at half speed.

To solve these problems, *Group & Team Coaching* works to enable people to understand the importance of cooperation and develop the skills to do so. Otherwise there will be a great waste of human capital of intelligence and creativity. This is where a Group Coach can interactively facilitate a group to learn how to communicate with each other so that there is precision and clarity. This is not easy, that's why a well-trained Coach is needed.

### ***2) Reduction of Conflict and Dysfunction***

In addition to straightening out and cleaning up the language of people, a Group Coach also facilitates the ability of a group to face and work through conflicts in a respectful and effective way. This also is not easy. It can be quite demanding. Yet if a manager, or business owner, spends a lot of your time settling conflicts and misunderstandings, if managers have to deal with the political maneuvers of keeping secrets, undermine another's success or reputation, gossiping, playing favorites, etc., then you also know that the group (or organization) will not be operating at its optimal best.

When we consider all of the ways that people in groups can be ineffective and can create stress and problems for each other, it's a wonder that any group is very effective. *Group & Team Coaching* offers business the chance to enable people to work more effectively with each other by confronting the issues, by talking about "the 500 pound guerilla" that's in the room, and working through the differences. This typically means facilitating people to change their neuro-semantic about "conflict" and "differences" and then develop the skills for being curious, respectful, responsible, and open to correction. Only then

can a group become truly effective and productive in getting results. And isn't that what companies are in business for?

### ***3) United Efforts***

Additionally, because there are many different kinds of groups—there will be differences in the *Group & Team Coaching*. I have listed seven different kinds of groups in the book *Group and Team Coaching* (2012). At the highest level is the executive team. Yet most often the term “team” is more of a label rather than a description. Take each of the individual senior managers apart and ask them about the vision and values of the group, and you'll probably get as many answers as you have individuals. Is it any wonder then that the overall group isn't aligned, focused, and integrated? Then there are all sorts of department groups and inter-department groups. And are they any more unified?

There are also work groups—projects, committees, quality control circles, etc. These are groups which have been commissioned to accomplish a specific outcome, to get a specific result. And again, the inner fighting, politicking, and vying for either control, influence, status, budget, resources, etc. is a frequent occurrence.

### ***4) Unleashing Group & Team Potentials***

When groups and teams work effectively together, they can achieve great things—achievements greater than what any individual can do alone or apart from the group. Further, an effective thinking and learning team will be smarter (more intelligent) than the most intelligent individual. By such collective thinking, learning, and deciding, we not only unleash potentials but attain a higher intelligence. To facilitate this, groups need to be safe, inclusive, empowering of members, respectful, fun, effective, and unleashing the highest and best in all.

This is especially critical for you, as a Licensed Meta-Coach, because you are a Self-Actualization Coach and operate from a much fuller understanding of Self-Actualization Psychology than coaches from other schools. You know about the processes of unleashing, about holding the space for a crucible experience, about unleashing self-actualizing leaders and companies, and much more. Sell that!

### ***5) Create a Warm and Welcoming Social Context***

Groups in organizations, associations, government, and everywhere are social entities and the quality and feel and mood of the group establishes the group's culture. So *Group & Team Coaching* is an excellent methodology for renewing, rejuvenating, and empowering an organization's culture. And when there is a warm and welcoming culture wherein people work—people will want to be there, want to be a part, take more personal responsibility, and enjoy the experience. That will improve their learning and development. It will create a team-spirit in the organization. And all of that will improve retention of the best people in the organization. And all of that will improve the bottom-line of the business.

### ***6) Unleash greater Creativity and Innovation***

To stay current in today's market, every organization that wants to be on the cutting-edge has to be a learning organization and that means that the communication system within the business has to be fluid, quick, and accurate. That enables people to be “in the know” and trusted to handle the information and activities in the organization. In this way *Group & Team Coaching* improves the groups within a business to be more creative and then more effective in innovating new products and services.

These are a few of the key benefits. Are you ready to sell them?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #26**  
**June 18, 2014**

## **THE ART OF REAL LISTENING**

Four days into APMC again and the realization is beginning to really dawn on people— real listening is hard work. It's not easy. It requires a lot of effort. It requires a lot of personal preparation— mostly and centrally it involves releasing preoccupying thoughts, evaluations, judgments, etc. This happened last week in Mexico and it is repeating this week here in Hong Kong. Nor is it a matter of intelligence. Here in Hong Kong we have two medical doctors and nine psychiatric nurses. Intelligence isn't the problem or the solution. So what is?

Truly listening to a person requires several things. It requires the ability *to give one's presence* to another person, to enter into that person's world and entertain what that world must look like from that person's perspective. We call that "taking second perceptual position" in NLP. And while a person could do that superficially, to do it authentically one must be secure enough in oneself to let one of one's own world and perspective and try on another's. In other words, it takes a lot of ego-strength and self-esteem to deeply listen to another person.

Further, doing it authentically also requires our heart—we have to care. To do this means extending your heart beyond yourself and wanting the best of the other. That's why we do the *Releasing Judgment* and the *Decontamination Patterns* on Day 1 of APMC training.

Giving one's presence, being quiet in oneself and calmly patient must then be supplemented by certain skills. This is the active part of listening. When you've created the environment within yourself that you give to the other, you can then actively listen for all of the distinctions that make up the sub-skills of listening— noticing the representational predicates, the value words, the linguistic assumptions, the meta-programs, the physiological expressions, and so on.

In this intense, personal, active listening, you are asked to be responsive to the other person. This means making yourself sensitive to the other person. Of course, if you are sensitive to yourself, to getting your needs met, to doing a good job, to getting an outcome, to showing yourself brilliant, then you won't be sensitive to the experience of the other person. This is to be the kind of person who can adapt yourself to what is relevant and significant to the other person.

"But I'm hearing all of the words" one participant said today. Ah, here is one confusion, the difference between hearing words and *listening to or hearing the person*. You can hear all of the person's words and never truly *hear the person*. Listening is deeper. And yet it begins there. First you have to come into sensory-awareness ("lose your mind and come to your senses" Perls) so that you can detect what is said and the actual words used in saying it. Then repeating those words back precisely enables you to communicate to the person that you have heard them. This is the skill of *acknowledgment*, the beginning place.

Next, by taking second-position and imagining sensitive that person's experience and world, you listen for the person's heart. To do that, plant explorative questions in your mind that will sensitize yourself to that person:

What is it like thinking and feeling like that? What must it be like to be that person? What is the person's highest and most positive intention? What is he or she trying to do? If I was in his or her body, what has to be true given these words?

Over these days of working with dozens and dozens of coaching sessions, I have focused the Assist Team and others to focus on *the semantically loaded words*. And from the meta-position of observing coach and client, I have the privileged position where I can write down the semantically loaded words and phrases and feed them back to the coach later on. But what is a *semantically loaded word or phrase*?

There are three signals that help us detect them:

- 1) What words does the client repeat over and over? The repetition is a verbal way of highlighting something that's important to the client.
- 2) Words that are said with emphasis. Perhaps the client stressed the word, set the word aside by raising the voice, using a different tone of voice, or marked it out in some other way.
- 3) The word or phrase indicates a value, a belief, or is emotionally volatile. If I hear "stress, constrained, ultimate, success," etc. then it is very likely to be a semantically loaded word.

None of these indicators are absolute, so we have to check. Feed them back to the person and see if it "activates" them, that is, if it seems to induce a state or elicit a strong response. Also, watch to see if two of these occurs at the same time.

*Semantically loaded words and phrases* are signals about what's important and meaningful to the person. So knock on that door. Ask the person more questions around those words and notice what happens. When you find a truly semantically loaded term and feed it back to a person, that term will give you entrance into their Matrix.

Finally, when you listen—intentionally keep mis-matching yourself as you ask yourself: What am I missing? What have I not heard? What has the person been saying to me that I haven't picked up on?

To your ever-developing excellence in deep listening!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #27**  
**June 25, 2014**

## **WHY WE INVITE EXPERTS TO VISIT META-COACHING**

Meta-Coaching began with the interviewing and modeling of experts and Meta-Coaching continues to grow today in the same way. Is that surprising? I had an interview recently when I said that and the interviewer was very much surprised, and he said so. He said he was stunned because he didn't think that a program as systematic as the Meta-Coaching System would be able to integrate new discoveries.

“I prepared myself for this interview by reading the articles and other interviews and seeing how systematic Meta-Coaching is, and I just didn't think a structured system like this would be or could be that open.”

At other times, different people found it surprising for another reason. They told me that they view Meta-Coaching as based primarily on Cognitive-Behavioral Psychology (NLP) and then upon Humanistic Psychology (Self-Actualization Psychology). When I asked how that made it surprising, they said that a psychology-based approach seemed solid and basing a systematic approach on actual coaches did not.

In conversations with people from both of those perspectives, I inevitably point out that while NLP began by modeling three world-class experts, they used the formulations from the Cognitive Psychology model of George Miller, Eugene Galanter, Karl Pribram, and Noam Chomsky as well as the Cognitive Psychology within Gregory Bateson's work and Alfred Korzybski's General Semantics. Similarly, Abraham Maslow modeled two self-actualizing persons (Ruth Benedict and Max Wertheimer) as he began his decades-long modeling project.

So how do we integrate new discoveries into a structured approach that's already set up? Most of the time the new discoveries are finer distinctions that fit into the structures that are already mapped out. For instance, in the last couple of years, I had several expert coaches express “deep listening” by *inference listening*, and “support” by *priming*. Consequently, I have added these to the sub-skills of each.

When expert coaches visit Meta-Coaching, we interview them and if we have time, we ask them to do a short coaching session so that we can see them in action. Within these experiences I constantly switch my meta-program filter of matching—mis-matching back and forth. I first search for what fits with what I know and the structures that we use in Meta-Coaching. I do this to highlight and reinforce those learnings to the group. I then use my know-nothing state and mis-matching filters to look for what I don't know and what I don't expect. Then from a state of refusing to “know” what the expert is doing, I wonder as curiously as I can about it— supposing



that maybe he or she is doing something else, something unexpected, something other than what I think the person is doing.

“If this person is doing something else, something unexpected, what could it be?”

“What else is happening in addition to what I’m assuming is happening? What am I missing?”

It is in this way that many of the new distinctions keep appearing on the sub-skills sheet that we use in benchmarking. I also put them on the new feedback forms that we are creating for the PCMC and the MCMC levels. This requires the meta-detailing skill and, as such, is unavailable to anyone who has not expanded his or her meta-program to details. This reveals one reason for the statement, “Mastery is in the details.”

Sometimes, however, the discovery is much bigger. It occurs at a macro-level rather than at a meta-detail level. This happened a few years ago with the creation of the Crucible Model that we use in Meta-Coaching and that’s part of the Self-Actualization trainings. It happened in this following way. First, I encountered several people in Meta-Coaching who seemed to be unable to learn something new. That was their presenting challenge. Somehow the new learning, which many of them could comprehend intellectually just didn’t see to “go in.” Or if it did, it didn’t “stick.” With them, even the Mind-to-Muscle pattern didn’t drive it in. With others, they couldn’t even get their minds around the new idea and comprehend it.

Then one day I said, “It is as if the old learning is in the way and won’t let the new idea in. It’s as if the old learning is a ‘chunk’ that’s blocking the entrance of the new. If only that block of old learning could be dissolved into its component elements then we could re-arrange those elements and remake things from the inside out.” Later, I was reading about those in the first Human Potential Movement and how Fritz Perls and Will Schultz used the Encounter Group as their primary way of unleashing potentials. Each of them would compete to see who could “break a person down” in the counter until “the person would become mush” and could now be rebuilt into a decent human being.

“Hmmm. The ‘Encounter’ exposed the person’s block that was interfering and Perls said it was an ‘introject’ that had not been ‘digested’ but was a ‘hunk’ of information or learning taken in whole that needed to break down which he did by challenging the person to be ‘here’ and ‘now’ and this encounter would free a person from that block... What if we did *an internal encounter* and allowed the person to *encounter him or herself* using truth, responsibility, and appreciation?”

Then, out of all of that came the Crucible Model that you can find in the book by that title. So we added it to the Meta-Coaching system as a second model of Change; this one focusing on the outside-of-conscious changes that can occur in a context of safety using a particular state induction.

This last week in Hong Kong we invited two expert coaches, Tony Dickel who is the ICF President in Hong Kong this year and an Executive Coach and Lee Wai Lan (“Coach Lee”) who as a Consultant/Coach is a Parenting Coach and a leader in Hong Kong ICC (International Coaching Community). In terms of style, they were very, very different. In terms of coaching, both demonstrated a great heart of compassion with an attitude of challenge— giving more refinement to the ideal Coach as a person who *compassionately challenges*.

From: L. Michael Hall  
2014 Morpheus #28  
July 2, 2014

## META-COACHING & SACRED LISTENING

*Sacred listening* is the very special kind of deep, attentive, and active listening that we encourage Meta-Coaches to develop in Meta-Coaching. Now the word *sacred* here has nothing to do with religion or even spirituality. It comes from a sociological distinction as it distinguishes instrumentality and non-instrumentality. When you do something for an *instrumental purpose* you are some end in mind. You are doing something *in order* to achieve some other objective. The instrument is a *means* to that end. So to understand sacred listening, turn this around and non-instrumental refers to *doing something without a means in mind*. It is to do something in such a way that *the process itself* is your objective. The process is valuable in and of itself.

In terms of listening, *instrumental listening* refers to the kind of listening when you listen as a *means* to some ends. Low level listening is listening to someone to catch a weakness in the other's argument so that you can argue against that person's point. Or it is to listen in order to find a solution to a problem. Or it may be to listen to demonstrate what a great listener you are. The problem with each of these is that the listening is almost irrespective of the person. The person just so happens to be the object that you listen to. The design of the listening is to serve yourself.

*Non-instrumental listening is sacred listening to the extent that it listens for no purpose other than to stand in awe and wonder and respect of the person being listened to.* It is "sacred" in that the listening arises from a sense that the person and listening to that person is an *end* in itself, it is not a *means* to something else. Sacred means that the person is precious and valuable per se. It means that the listening is a precious gift in honor of the person

This is not easy. All of our learning and experiencing regarding *listening* has oriented us almost entirely to *instrumental listening*. To listen otherwise represents a paradigm shift. It requires an entirely different orientation and set of skills. It requires an entirely new frame of mind and some new supporting beliefs.

*Sacred listening* springs from a deep conviction that when you are allowed entrance into a person's life— it is a special privilege, it is a precious opportunity, and it is an invitation to listen to the person's very heart and soul. And for what purpose? None. Just to listen. Why? Because you can. Because the person is available to you. Because it is a sacred trust.

So what? Why do this? Well, here is the paradox. After emphasizing that we *just listen* and we *listen to the person as a special privilege* the irony is that when you do, you will hear much better, much more, much deeper and in doing this, magic often happens. Perhaps for the first

time, the person hears him or herself. Perhaps you hear with crystal clarity what the person is really saying, really wanting, and/or really needing as a solution. I say *perhaps* because given that this kind of listening has no agenda, you never know what you might hear or discover or what the person may discover. Because you were not listening *for any particular purpose*, because you were *just listening* and being *present* to the person—you make yourself open to what happens, to the moment, to the relationship, and to the adventure of the moment.

How do you *learn* this kind of listening? Ah, if only I knew! I don't. I only know what to release, what to give up—your agendas. My agendas. Again, that is not easy. So I know I have to keep doing it—whenever one of my agendas arises (and it does repeatedly!), I keep catching it and letting it go.

“Just be present ... remember the special privilege you've been given ... so just listen ... just listen...”

I know I also have to be aware of and resist the seductiveness of instrumental listening—even when I have well-intentioned agendas: “I just want to be helpful to my client. I just want to facilitate the processes so my client obtains her outcomes. All I want to do is to be an effective and caring coach.” Seductive, right?!

With any and every form of *instrumental listening* we limit our listening. We limit our filters to listening for and trying to catching things that fit what we are trying to do. If you are trying to find a solution, then you listen and try to grab onto anything that sounds like a problem to solve or a bit of a solution. Yet in doing so you are *not* listening to the person, you are listening for your solution. No wonder many clients will later say, “I didn't really feel heard; I just wanted to talk and my coach kept trying to fix me.”

I often remind myself, “Instrumental listening limits me from hearing my client as a person. My filters are trying to put the client and his words in a box so I feel comfortable. But coaching is not about me or my comfort. It is much more about being present to my client.”

How do you learn it? Be sure to develop a healthy relationship to uncertainty and ambiguity. Give up the need to be right, to be perfect, to be respected, to be seen as effective, to feel in control, etc. All of these things will contaminate the listening so that it is not sacred. Your listening is more about you!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #29**  
**July 9, 2014**

## **SEMANTICALLY LOADED**

In Neuro-Semantics we are keenly aware that words, phrases, gestures, events, references, and so on can be *semantically loaded*. We are aware of that because, at our essence, we are semantic beings. We make meaning. We make layers and layers of meanings. We call those layers of meanings, a matrix. It is “a womb” (“matrix”) where we “give birth” to meaning. Here we invent our world as we load things up with understandings, knowledge, beliefs, values, decisions, permissions, prohibitions, memories, imaginations, expectations, and all of the other meta-levels.

The field of NLP discovered and presented how we create the meaning of “time” and how we represent it, language it, believe it, value or disvalue it, etc. And after the creation of that concept, we then *externalize* our matrix of time so that we create *semantic space* around us that encodes “time” for us kinesthetically. That’s why we all are able to point to the “past” or “future.” That’s why we are able to experience the extensiveness of “time” as the events that have happened and will happen. Our time-line grows longer as we live more years depending also on our beliefs, understandings, hopes, anticipations present our sense of the future that we are moving into.

A Trainer in the field of NLP, a Sociologist, then took this template of creating and externalizing a particular concept and applied it to another concept— people and relationships. This details many of the facets of the Others matrix. When Lucas Dirks created the Social Panorama he suggested that as we put “time” in various places according to what we think and believe about people. He suggested that we put categories of people in various places: loved ones, lost ones, good people, bad people, authority figures, friends, colleagues, etc.

Yet as we know in Meta-Coaching, there are many, many concepts that we invent and externalize. We do the same with dozens and perhaps hundreds of other concepts. The Matrix Model contains the essential ones: meaning, intention, self, power, time, others, etc. And so when we talk about something being *semantically loaded* we mean that we have taken various experiences and the way we code and talk about them and invested them with lots of meanings.

Now when we semantically load something, we then feel strongly about that thing. And in order to *feel strongly* about something, the meanings about it in our mind are transferred to our body. We do that by embodying those meanings (somatizing the meanings). When we do, they show up in our soma (body) as emotions and as response patterns (habits) as our way of operating or way of being in the world. What is “programmed” in the body shows up in our physiology— breathing, posture, movement, gestures, eye accessing cues, etc.

People who do not know better erroneously call this “body language.” Yet it is not a “language.” The smaller movements do not come together in a similar way that words come

together to create a sentence. Nor is there an authoritative dictionary about what gestures mean. Gestures mean according to the person at any given moment in any given context with any given person or persons. In and of themselves, gestures do not *mean* anything; *people mean things and express their meanings via their gestures*. So we look and listen to see if we can detect their patterns of meaning.

In Coaching we use *semantically loaded* words, gestures, and experiences by noticing what is and what is not loaded with lots of meanings (beliefs, understandings, values, identities, permissions, etc.). We distinguish what is loaded with lots of meaning that operate as a door into that person's matrix. The following criteria helps us recognize what is semantically loaded:

- Intensity: Does the expression have more intensity than usual? (Voice emphasis, shift in tone, tempo, etc.)
- Repetition: Does the person repeat the gesture or movement?
- Association: Does the person connect a word or idea with a gesture?
- Embedded: Does the person use an embedded statement, question, or command in expressing him or herself?

When these things happen simultaneously you can then pretty much anticipate that you are in the presence of something that is semantically loaded for your client. Use that as a cue to explore it. Ask clarification questions, testing questions, checking questions, exploration questions, and meta-questions.

Everything, of course, is not semantically loaded. Sometimes what is should not be. It doesn't help; it does not support a person. It does not unleash potentials. It may even do the opposite: it may create limitations and problems. And sometimes what is neutral should be semantically loaded. This is the case with things that a client finds boring and uninteresting and/or unmotivating. What's needed is to assist the person to load that thing up with more meanings, maybe even inspiring meanings.

To be an effective Meta-Coach, you will want to be able to recognize the degree that any given experience is semantically loaded or not. With that awareness, you can then invite your client to either load or unload the meanings, change the meanings, and shape the meanings so that it enables the person to more fully experience his or her highest and best.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #30**  
**July 16, 2014**

## **HOLDING THE SPACE IN META-COACHING**

One of the most unnatural experiences and skills that a person learns in *Coaching Mastery*, the Coaching Boot Camp is that of “holding the space.” I was reminded all over about this during the last week during our ACMC training in Colorado. If you have read *The Crucible and the Fires of Change* then you will know what that means. If not, then what we mean by “holding the space,” whether for yourself or someone else, is to create a context by your presence so that you or another has a safe place for self-discovery and unleashing of his or her potentials.

I say “unnatural experience” because this *space* does not seem very common and most people seem to only rarely experience it, if at all. For most people it only occurs in those moments when they are with a very close friend who, for a few moments, become to them a confidant to their humanity and vulnerability. What makes it so unnatural is that it is a place without judgment. And being able to be with yourself or another *without judgment* is a very unique and special space!

That’s why on Day 1 of *Coaching Mastery* we run two patterns— Releasing Judgment Pattern and The De-Contamination Pattern (for getting the ego out of the way). What we say on the first day of the coaching boot camp is this: You cannot create the interpersonal context for coaching if you enter that context with judgment. If you have judgments about yourself, your skills, your competence, etc., you will not be fully present. If you have judgments about the other person, then you will not be able to make the space safe for the other. Nor do I want to leave the impression that all you have to do is to run these patterns once and you’ll have it. It’s not like that. Typically you have to run them numerous times. Many people find that it is only in re-visiting do they really get it.

Why do we want to “hold the space” and create a place of safety, one in which you are able to offer your full presence to the other? The overall design is to facilitate self-actualization. That is, the *space* that we hold is a place for yourself or another to identify potentials, develop them, and unleash them. In Meta-Coaching we begin by facilitating this ability to *hold the space* through the development of the core coaching competencies— intense and deep listening, supporting, questioning, mirroring, etc. All of this helps with the self-actualization experience.

Yet within this overall design of self-actualization, there are several sub-designs. One is to create a personal *encounter* for transformation. This word *encounter* actually comes from the first Human Potential Movement (HPM) and was during the thirty-year period of that movement the central mechanism they used in their attempt to facilitate self-actualization. The way they sought to do that was to gather 8 to 12 people, put them in a circle, encourage them to “be real,” “speak

the truth,” “let it rip,” “don’t hold back” and so as they held an “encounter” for a participant, the thought was that if we could be real and authentic with each other and tell each other the truth, people would let go of their personas and masks and come out and get real.

While that was the idea, it didn’t work out that way. And why not? Because the space was not safe. It was not without judgment. The participants had not learned out to give clean, uncontaminated, sensory-based feedback. Having learned from those mistakes of the first HPM, we’ve designed the “holding the space” process as a way to create a genuine encounter. We’ve designed it to be clean and uncontaminated of judgment.

Another sub-design of “holding the space” is that this gives us a space wherein we can *unlearn*. This is critical for actualizing your highest potentials because one thing that can undermine self-actualizing is old learnings that are in the way and that prevent the new learnings from really taking. To that end, in the book, *The Crucible*, I designed the space to be a *crucible*— a place where we can bring old learnings, beliefs, decisions, identities, habits, ways of operating, etc. and melt them down so that they can be reformed and molded into a new way of operating. In this, unlearning as a core competency is as important as learning.

The ability to be fully present to yourself or another and *hold the space* means that you will be able to invite a meta-moment for stepping back and catching the assumptive frames that’s controlling your experience. Then you can get into the matrix of meaning frames and find the leverage point of change.

*Holding the space* is an important skill for every leader, every manager, every parent, every trainer, consultant, and every professional communicator. If you cannot do this in your interactions with others, you cannot be truly effective. If you cannot do this, that really undermines your leadership at all levels. Conversely, the ability to hold the space enables you to earn the right to be heard and to be trusted.

How are you at your capability to “hold the space” for someone in the coaching relationship? It is a capability that you can develop, if you so desire. Think of it as a meta-skill for your coaching skills. Once you are able to engage your client with your clean, non-judgmental attitude and create the crucible space, you can then use your core coaching skills and your advanced coaching skills to facilitate your client’s unleashing. Actually, your *presence* as your full and complete engagement with your client will also amplify your core coaching skills so that they take you to the next level.

Here’s a subject for your next MCF chapter meeting— holding the space. Talk about it. Explore it. Set it as one of your goals in *being the coach* you want to be.

From: L. Michael Hall  
2014 Morpheus #31  
July 23, 2014

## WHY THERE IS NO “HYPNO-COACHING” AND, HOPEFULLY, WILL NEVER BE

If I’ve been asked once, I’ve been asked dozen of times, “What’s the relationship between Hypnosis and Coaching?” In fact, several years ago I added “hypnosis” “hypnotherapy” on the page in the ACMC training manual about the *helping professions* and how they relate to coaching. Recently this year (2014) when the question came up, I made the comment that makes up the title of this post, “Thank God there is no hypno-coaching.” Afterwards several asked me to explain what I meant and why. So here goes.

### Hypno-Therapy

Hypno-therapy works primarily because the person needing the *healing* (therapy) is already in an altered state and needs to be de-hypnotized. The person is already operating from being inside, having *transitioned* from the outside world of sensory-awareness and into the inside world of their own matrix where they are living by the post-hypnotic suggestions that they or someone else created. Their trance may be, “I’ll never amount to anything.” “Why don’t people ever love me?” “The world owes me fortune and fame and I am here to collect!” Etc.

Hypno-therapy works very well with such persons because they are already used to being in a trance and living from a set of post-hypnotic commands. “Don’t try to improve yourself, it won’t work, you’re not worth it.” “Expect the worst, that will keep you from getting your hopes up.” The problem is that the *content* of the old trance sucks. It represents a map of the world that does not and cannot work. They need to wake up from that trance. And that’s what the healing is designed to do.

### The Hypnotic State

This highlights what hypnosis or trance is— *it is a state*. In this experience we *transition* (hence “trance”) from the outside world of sensory-awareness to the inside world where we represent and construct that inner world. From the outside the person can appear asleep, hence the word “hypnosis” (sleep). But the person is fully awake to the inner world and asleep in appearance to the outside world.

In Neuro-Semantics we also recognize something else about the hypnotic or trance state— *it is a meta-state*. In that state, we move beyond merely representing some aspect of reality at the primarily level, most often we are at a richly meaningful level. We have constructed an inner world of peace, tranquility, healing, growth, self-actualization, spirituality, etc. We are off on an inner journey to an experience that’s richly meaningful to ourselves.



What then is hypnosis? It is a state, an induction into a state that differs from your current state or your regular state, it is the altering of your state so that you transition from the outside world to the inside world. It is also a language experience by which you use a special kind of language that facilitates this transition to the inside. We call the patterns of that language, hypnotic language patterns. In NLP we have the Milton Model patterns, in Neuro-Semantics Bob Bodenhamer and John Burton introduced the language patterns from the field of Developmental Psychology in the book, *Hypnotic Language* (2000). And in Meta-States we have the hypnotic language patterns of meta-stating.

What is hypnosis? It is calibrating to a person as you elicit a state or as you facilitate the creating of that person's response potential. In this it begins with priming, then pre-framing, then framing and all of this is to more effectively influence the person to reach his or her goals. To do that, the priming and framing facilitates the person complying with the requirements of the goals and sometimes even pretending "as if" the desired experience was already present.

### **Is Coaching Hypnosis or Not?**

If we use the linguistic and communication definitions of hypnosis, the coaching partakes of the nature of hypnotic phenomenon as does all communication experiences—from everyday conversations, to lectures, to storytelling, to reading a good book. To say words about things that are not present is to invite people to create pictures and sounds in their minds and that inevitably partakes of the nature of hypnosis. And to speak of conceptual understandings using unspecified process words and nominalizations especially elicit hypnotic experiences.

As you sit back now and consider, really consider what you want your future to be and the success that you want in your relationships, in your career, in your ability to create value, enter a marketplace and seize opportunities that you are only beginning to imagine and actualize them....

Yet if we think about hypnosis from the definition of guiding them where we know they should go (an audacious assumption in itself!), or asking them to close their eyes, or go back in their history to fix problems— that's *not* what we do in coaching. Coaching is preeminently *a conversation* that people have *with their eyes open* that have very little to do with problems and pains and much more to do with challenge and stretching forward into the future.

That's why even the word *hypno-coaching* strikes us as a contradiction. *Hypnosis* tends to be about relaxation and about relaxing one's guard, relaxing one's critical faculties, and relaxing one's focus to drift and to be guided by another. *Coaching* tends to be about stepping back to use one's critical faculties to quality control one's life, behavior, choices, etc. and about stepping forward to be all that one can be. In *hypnosis* a person steps back to give oneself to the direction of another, to access compliance with the instructions of another. In *coaching* a person steps back to expand consciousness, make more focused choices, actively choose resources to add to one's life, and to become self-directing.

So while coaching involves some of the features common in trance and hypnosis, it also stands in contrast to many of its features. The features that are common make the *conversation state of coaching one of more consciousness, not less, more intention and self-direction, not given to another, and more challenging as one stretches to the future.*

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #32**  
**July 30, 2014**

## **THE PROBLEM WITH HIGH SELF-ESTEEM**

If a person ever tells you that they have high self-esteem, the best response is to say,  
“I’m sorry to hear that. I’m available if you want some coaching on that subject. With  
Meta-Coaching you can certainly be unleashed from that and liberated to a much healthier  
life-style.”

Of course, they will then do a double-take.

“What?” “I don’t understand.” “What are you saying?” “Is there a problem with high  
self-esteem?” “I thought that you’d be delighted to hear that I have high self-esteem.”

By inducing a state of confusion like that will dis-orient the person enough to begin this kind of  
questioning and, hopefully, put him or her in a position to consider a better alternative. But don’t  
save the person from their confusion too quickly. The PR on “high self-esteem” is so dominate  
in our cultures around the world that it’s good to keep and even deepen the disorientation in  
order to get a more thorough hearing for what you have to say.

And what do you have to say as a Meta-Coach? Namely that the modifiers “low” and “high”  
*both* presuppose a continuum and that self-esteem is *conditional*. And that frame is the problem.  
To conceptualize this concept of self-esteem as a conditional phenomenon that can be low (ah,  
that’s the problem) or as high (ah, that’s the cure) is to view it as *conditioned upon something*.  
But what? What shall we posit that self-esteem is conditioned upon and relative to? Here’s a list  
of common conditions:

- Intelligence: being smart, being clever, having degrees, having certificates.
- Strength: being fast, strong, athletic, etc.
- Possessions: having the latest fashions, having a fancy car, a big house, etc.
- Beauty: being recognized as pretty, attractive, handsome, etc. according to the  
current fashions.
- Money: having a big income, having lots of investments, having a high line of  
credit, etc.
- In-crowd: being in the most desirable groups, clubs, organizations, being able to  
drop names, be a “friend” to those most popular, etc.
- Family and Friends: having a happy family, having lots of friends and associates.

In these and many other ways people seek to esteem, give value and worth to, themselves. They  
conceptualize that they are “a someone,” “important,” and “worthwhile and valuable” *if and to  
the extent that they satisfy these conditions*. That is conditional self-esteem. What’s obviously

undesirable is *low* self-esteem. Nobody wants that. What's not so obvious is that *high* self-esteem is just as problematic. The reason is that if it is high it can be lowered. And if the conditions that support it being high are taken away, then it will go down and if the conditions are completely demolished, so will the self-esteem. That makes it susceptible to attack and loss. And that's not a good thing. Who would want that?

The power of *unconditional* self-esteem is that since there are no conditions that make it so, there are no conditions that can unmake it. If it is *unconditional*, then it is *a given*— *a fact* of our existence and being that comes with being born, with being alive, with being human. This means that you, and everyone else who is born human, is already *a Somebody*. You already are valuable, worthwhile, and have all of the esteem and dignity that you will never need and that it can never be taken away from you. You can never lose it.

Yes, you can attempt to deny it, repress it, and fight against it. But the truth is that you can not *be* without personal esteem. You simply may be unaware of it. You may be under the self-delusion that you don't have it. You may posit that you need money, status, friends, beauty, strength, etc. in order to have it. But that is simply a limiting and a toxic belief.

Now that you know the problem with high self-esteem— that it is conditional and therefore subject to the ups-and-downs of human experience— are you ready for *unconditional self-esteem*? Are you ready for an esteem of your self and your human *being-ness* that cannot be valued as higher or lower, but that just is? Are you ready to stop forever putting your "self-esteem" on the line and giving others the power to threaten it or lower it?

If so, imagine the difference this will make as you go into the world. If your self-esteem is unconditional, then you have it and you cannot lose it. Talk about a belief and understanding that will ground you, center you, and give you a solid foundation for living your life! Talk about a way to be able to effectively receive feedback, handle criticism, stay undaunted in the face of rejection, and courageously bounce back with resilience when you're knocked down!

This solution is the solution of unconditional self-esteem and stands in dire contrast with the problem of low and high self-esteem, that is conditional self-esteem. Now that you know all of this, are you ready, as Meta-Coaches to unleash people's innate value? If so, go for it!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #33**  
**August 6, 2014**

## **WHAT MASTERY LOOKS LIKE – UP CLOSE & PERSONAL**

I began Meta-Coaching by studying the literature of the field at the time to understand what this new field was, what it was about, its boundaries, who were the influential thinkers formulating the field, etc. After that I had the unique privilege of meeting three very talented “Coaches” who were in the field, who had already created a reputation for quality and effectiveness, and best of all, who based their coaching in NLP. And as luck would have it, it just so happened that two were taking the Master Practitioner that I was running in Sydney and one was on the Assist Team. The timing was perfect. I wanted to interview some experts in the field prior to beginning. I had already interviewed Dan Bagley, Ph.D., Executive Coach, in Florida a few years previously.

What then happened was meta-fortunate. All three of the highly successful and credible Coaches were fully willing to come to the first Meta-Coaching Training (ACMC) in Sydney, Australia (2002) and co-lead the training with me. That allowed me to continue interviewing and modeling them. I asked each to write a piece to some basic questions about Personal, Executive, and Group & Team Coaching— which they did and which continues to this day in the ACMC Training Manual.

One of those Coaches was *Graham Richardson*, Executive Coach of *Horizons Unlimited* of Sydney. Over the years Graham has revisited Meta-Coaching numerous times, usually showing up for 2 or 3 days and then being our Expert Coach on Day 5 or 6. Graham has done this in Sydney and Auckland and this year Brussels, Belgium. Graham’s ongoing support of the Meta-Coaching System has led us to record coaching sessions that he has done with participants— coaching sessions which we continue to use. Graham also agreed to reading the manuscript I wrote on *Executive Coaching* and contributing stories and insights to the book, which he did. Yet this year something brand new is about to occur.

What is going to occur was the original brainchild of Mario Mason of Paris. When *Coaching Mastery* did not take place there last year, Germaine Rediger decided to do it this October at the ACMC training. What is it? Not only will Graham show up to be at the *Coaching Mastery* training in Brussels, but he will also do an entire day of Master Level Coaching. He will do 4 coaching sessions. That will be followed as I interview him and model out some of the skills and the structure of his session. After that we will open it up for open questions from those present. For those attending *Coaching Mastery* this will be a tremendous value-added benefit. They will get this Mastery Meta-Coaching experience and so get 9 days of training rather than just 8. After

Day 4 and before Day 5, on Friday Oct. 3 we will present Graham Richardson Live and let people see what is yet possible in Meta-Coaching.

This is not just for the participants of ACMC — it is for anyone and everyone who wants to come. That's right. You can come *just for Friday Oct. 3 in order to see a Master Coach at work*. You can come so that you can see and hear the elegance of an Executive Coach who spent two decades as a Senior Manager, a CEO, and who then moved from those executive positions to make it his business to coach executives. And, of course, 4 persons will get a Coaching Session with this Master Coach.

Is this open to everyone? *Yes, of course!* And it is especially offered to Licensed Meta-Coaches. So if you are anywhere within 5,000 miles of Brussels— I urge you to make your way to Brussels for this event. It will be worth it far, far beyond the money and time that you invest in doing this!

If you are seriously considering reaching the PCMC level of Meta-Coaching — and we have plans in December to run the 6 day PCMC training, to repeat that in Mexico in Jan. 2015, and again in Brazil and elsewhere —consider this a primer. In the past few years I have continued to identify advanced coaching skills and sub-skills in Graham and expect to find some hitherto unknown skills in this concentrated experience. Would you like to be there and help out in that modeling?

The Meta-Coaching System has created the most systematic approach to coaching anywhere in the world and yet the adventure is not over. New things have been and are continuing to emerge. And as part of the Meta-Coach System, you can be a part of that ongoing discovery. If you have lost “the fire in the belly” for your coaching, if you are in a dry spot or on a plateau of your development, I can assure you that this experience will more than likely rekindle your inspiration and expand your personal vision about what's possible in Meta-Coaching. Come and join the revolution!

Contact: Germaine Rediger

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #34**  
**August 13, 2014**

## **ACMC TRAINING— 8 YEARS LATER**

I had the privilege recently to talk to some *former* Meta-Coaches about Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching and where it is in 2014. [*Former* because they have not kept their license renewed and had not stayed in the Meta-Coaching community.] I meet them on an evening when they had come to a free evening event and heard me speak about Meta-Coaching. Afterwards their comments went like this: “This is sooo different from what I remember!” I thought about teasing them about having amnesia during the training which would explain their current shock. But I decided against that.

Instead I asked about when they last studied Meta-Coaching or were exposed to Neuro-Semantics. They said 2007.

“Ah, yes, ancient history!” I said being playful. “A lot has changed in Meta-Coaching since 2007. We completely redesigned the *Coaching Mastery* training program in 2009 and since then, there have been so many refinements to the skills and models that I would hardly know where to begin to describe them.”

Actually their response is not all that uncommon of a response. And that’s because *the Meta-Coaching System* keeps growing. Every year it continues to evolve and change. Those who know this best are those who keep translating the ACMC training manual. I send them updates several times a year— and with each one, eliminating some pages and introducing new pages. The truth is that I even hear this comment from people who are only two years out from their initial experience at *Coaching Mastery*.

There is also another factor at play here. The training itself is actually designed to give a person far more than they can consciously remember or act upon. That’s by design. Just as APG is similarly designed, there is far too much to be able to learn all of it in a single go. And that’s why when people re-visit *Coaching Mastery* it is very common for them to swear that certain patterns, processes, exercises, and insights were *not* delivered when they first took Meta-Coaching! Yet it is the same dynamic that we experience when we see a movie the second time or third time. With each viewing, we see and experience different things. We see things as if for the first time.

Now if you want to really get a lot out of re-visiting *Coaching Mastery*, get a lot of coaching practice. Work on collecting the hours of professional coaching so that you can be ready for the PCMC level. Write up a case study of a coaching client. Then come back. *You will hear so much that will seem new and fresh and impactfully relevant!* The changes in you will prepare you to have eyes to see and ears to hear what previously you were not ready to see and hear.

Two years ago we took the KPI emphasis, demonstrations, and practices out of *Coaching Mastery*. All of that is now in the PCMC training. It was just too much for the ACMC level. So while we tortured people with that for years, realizing that people needed much more practice with questions we introduced *the energizing questions*. So today, we do exercises and practices to train into a person's repertoire how to ask the questions that make the well-formed outcomes questions really work in the mind and state of a client. Similarly, we speak far less about framing and pattern detection at the ACMC level and focus much more on getting people to become skilled at the meta-questions. In fact, this past year many of the Team Leaders who had never experienced the *Energizing Questions Drill* or the *Meta-Question Drill* were absolutely excited about the new drills.

At the ACMC level, the focus is increasingly more and more on being able to listen, to be present to and with a client, to be in the *here and now* and to be in a witnessing state. We have learned, well, I have learned, that before a person can truly and effectively use questions in an *instrumental* way, one must learn to use them in a *non-instrumental* way. It is the non-instrumental way that is the foundation for sacred listening. And for those coming into the field, this is not easy. Why? Because it especially goes against the grain of anyone trained to be a consultant, trainer, or therapist— which is most people who come into coaching.

Yes, *Coaching Mastery* as an intense eight-day coaching boot camp is not the same today as in 2002 or 2007 or even last year in 2013. It keeps evolving. We have not created “the final word” about coaching or the core skills or the foundational understandings that are needed. But we are getting closer and closer with each year.

So the adventure continues. It continues not only at the Coaching Boot Camp, it continues also at MCF Chapters which are going on around the world every week. In fact, feedback from the local chapters is constantly filtering back to myself and to the other Meta-Coach trainers and leaders and influencing all of the five levels of Meta-Coaching.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #35**  
**August 20, 2014**

## COACHING AND HUMAN NEEDS

Why is it that some people seem to be almost *incapable* of acknowledging sources or recognizing the value of a well-established model? I began asking that question some years ago as a response to seeing so many NLP people (trainers, writers, practitioners) who do not so much as put a bibliography at the end of an article or book. From the way these people write, you would think that they came up with all of the ideas that they present— that all knowledge began with them!

“No doubt you are *the people*, and wisdom will die with you.” (Job. 12:1)

Over the years, I have seen many examples of plagiarism in various so-called NLP articles and blogs. Perhaps one reason people will take someone else’s insightful ideas and present it as their own is to get credit for it as a creative thinker. Not too long ago this happened in one of our publications. A writer plagiarized Patrick Lencioni’s *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, presenting it as five dysfunctions he had discovered as he had worked with teams. Such gall! The problem was— I had read Lencioni’s works and immediately recognized it. So I fed that information back to the Editor who immediately deleted the article and replaced it with a short one that I quickly wrote. I wrote a summary of Lencioni’s book giving him full credit.

I bring that up to point out a similar way writers sometimes try to create credibility for themselves by falsely criticizing someone else’s work. Recently an article appeared in *The Coaching Psychologist* with the impressive title: “The case for basic human needs in Coaching: A neuroscientific perspective—the SCOAP Coach Theory.” To make a case for their model, the authors did what I consider unethical. Andy Habermacher, Argage Ghadir and Theo Peters first trash Maslow’s work to clear the way for their own model and worse, they present an over-simplified version of Maslow’s model.

What I found really frustrating with their article and presentation is how they cavalierly dismissed Maslow. They presented his hierarchy of needs in such a diluted form that it gave them a “strawman” argument by which they could easily dismiss. Here is their “description.” Notice how it prejudices a reader against Maslow’s Model:

“Maslow’s model is, of course, the most famous and the one most likely to be encountered in popular literature (1943). It is a simple model and at first glance, particularly to the layman, seems to make sense. This does not hold up to closer scrutiny or scientific research (Wachter, 2003).” (Volume 10, No. 1, June 2014, p. 7).

To prejudice the reader against Maslow’s model, notice how they use such words as “*popular literature*,” “a *simple* model,” “at first glance *seems* to make sense,” “to the *layman*”(!), and “does not hold up to closer scrutiny.” They quote one person who also did not do his research into Maslow’s model and used that to prove their point that it “does not hold up to closer scrutiny



or scientific research.” The authors here is demonstrate the kind of poor research that they are criticizing(!).

“... the popularity of Maslow’s model lies in its simplicity and ease of interpretation by *not* having 20 needs” (Volume 10, No. 1, June 2014, p. 7).

Here is another example of fallacious reasoning. The mere fact of a model’s simplicity and ease of interpretation does not, in itself, argue against the model. What about  $E=MC^2$ ? Isn’t that just too simple to explain a theory of relativity? Nor does popularity argue against a model. This is the *lack of critical thinking*, not an expression of it!

Further, the fact that the authors *think* that Maslow’s model only deals with five needs shows that they have never read the 350 pages of *Motivation and Personality* (1954, revised 1970). It shows that they did not research the fact that Maslow entered into the 1930s debate about human needs and integrated the 130 needs, drives, and so-called “instincts” at the time into his famous five levels of human needs. Nor did they discover that Maslow spent 30 years researching the hierarchy of needs, or that he and Everett Shostrum created the POI (Personal Orientation Inventory) in 1964 for measuring self-actualization which by 1976 had been used in over 1000 Master theses and Doctoral Dissertations (*Self-Actualization: An Annotated Bibliography of Theory and Research*, 1987, by David Welch, George Tate, and Donald Medeiros).

The authors next quote other theories that supposedly improve upon Maslow’s hierarchy. Yet they are shorter and similar categories that they mention(!). For these I have related Maslow’s hierarchy: For example, they quote ERG Theory (1969) — which simplify needs to three broad categories:

*Existence* (survival and safety needs)  
*Relatedness* (social and self needs)  
and *Growth* (self-actualization needs).

They mention Deci and Ryan’s formulation in Self-Determination Theory (1985):

*Competence* (survival and safety needs)  
*Relatedness* (social and self needs)  
*Autonomy* (self-actualization needs).

They end with quoting Anthony Robbins six human needs— as if Robbins is on par with Maslow or Deci and Ryan! This is very poor reasoning!

Certainty (safety)  
Variety (self-actualization)  
Significance (self and self-actualization)  
Connection (social)  
Growth (self-actualization)  
Contribution (self-actualization).

Finally they quote Klaus Grawe’s Consistency Theory and Neuroleadership and five needs which makes up the SCOAP model which they think is the most important one of all.

Self-esteem (self)

Control (safety)  
Orientation (self-actualization of knowledge)  
Attachment (social)  
Pleasure (occurs at all levels)

And why do they think it is so much more valuable? Because “building self-esteem was noted as number one reason for entering into a coaching relationship in the ICF’s 2009 Global Client Study.” Again, that is about as weak an argument as I can imagine. The fact that a particular survey found that many people enter coaching because they want to “build self-esteem” is not, in itself, a legitimate reason for saying one model of human needs is better than another. Using that argument, the “best” model of human needs *depends on* and will keep changing depending on surveys.

I don’t know who edits *The Coaching Psychologist* or how articles are selected, but that if a person uses the basic critical thinking skills of the Meta-Model, that article would never have made it into the journal. Yet it is a common example of how so many people in the field of Coaching have no actual knowledge or experience with Maslow’s original model. I hope you do.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #36**  
**August 27, 2014**

## **TIME TO REVISIT**

If you once reach competency on the core skills and once you have an understanding of the basic philosophy and psychology of Meta-Coaching— are you *always* a Meta-Coach? And the answer is “no.” You can lose it. After all, skills do deteriorate if not used. And knowledge not used becomes less and less familiar and available.

Actually, the first time through *Coaching Mastery* is usually experienced as simply an overall exposure to the Meta-Coaching System, not a thorough understanding and certainly not a skilled competence. Your first time through typically gives you an idea of the depth and range of the Meta-Coaching system. It is actually in your ongoing exposures every 3 or 4 years when you revisit that you start linking up how the models and aspects of Meta-Coaching fit together. Then you can answer the relational questions:

- What’s the relationship between the core competencies (the 7 core skills) and the NLP Communication Model?
- What’s the relationship between the Meta-States Model and the NLP Communication Model?
- What’s the relationship between the Matrix Model and Meta-States and NLP?
- What’s the relationship between the Axes of Change and the core competencies and the Matrix Model?
- What’s the relationship between the Benchmarking Model and the core competencies, NLP, and the Meta-States Model?
- What’s the relationship between the Meaning—Performance Axes and Meta-States, Axes of Change, and NLP?
- What’s the relationship between Meta-Programs and Axes of Change, Meta-States?
- What’s the relationship between the Self-Actualization Quadrants and NLP, Meta-States and the Matrix Model?
- What’s the relationship between the Facilitation Model and Meta-Programs, Meta-States, NLP, and Benchmarking Model?

These multiple models of Meta-Coaching gives the system *range* and one facet of the Meta-Coaching System in comparison with other Coach Training systems is its thoroughness. That’s why a well-trained Meta-Coach can answer the systematic question— *How do you know what to do, when to do it, with whom, how to do that, and why do that particular intervention at this time?* There is one page in the ACMC training manual about this and it gives you a basic orientation for answering this question. Yet when you can answer that question, then you have moved beyond guessing to confidently understanding the coaching process and how to choose your intervention.

From that *range* of Meta-Coaching which enables you to be systematic in your coaching rather than chaotic or happen-chance, you can then add *depth* in your coaching. In part, the depth

comes from the redundancy of the models. That is, when someone gives you a response, at the simplest level— they *say* things and *do* things. Yet for the well-trained Meta-Coach, these surface responses have an incredible depth.

What the person *says* indicates distinctions in the Meta-Model of Language. What they *do* indicates distinctions in the NLP Communication model regarding neurology, gesture, state, eye accessing cues, etc. How the person *frames*, and the person's meta-comments, indicates their Meta-State frames, patterns, hidden assumptions in their meaning and intention matrixes. These responses also indicate various meta-programs that the person is operating from at that moment.

The responses also indicates where the person is on the Meaning—Performance Axes and hence, the Self-Actualization Quadrants. You can use the responses also to recognize which ends of the Axes of Change the person will easily do and which will be their area of challenge, and possibly the person's blind spots. For the ever-learning Meta-Coach, the richness of a person's response provides so many diagnostic tools. Did you know that? And now that you may know that or are beginning to suspect that, how have you been doing using the Models for deepening and quickening your diagnostic skills as a Coach?

After diagnosis comes intervention. What you will do given the rich information gleaned from the client's responses. An intervention refers to the way you will respond to facilitate the client to become aware, make a choice, develop a resource, discover an insight, act on that insight, etc. This is where *patterns* come in. These are processes that have been discovered and invented to assist a person to use a learning or insight and “run his or her brain” in a certain way to achieve a certain response. I was so impressed with the NLP patterns that after a decade in the field, I wrote a book and put 77 of NLP's best patterns together in a single source— today it is the book, *The Source Book of Magic* (1997). Then later, I put together Volume II with 143 Meta-State or Neuro-Semantic patterns, *Source Book of Magic, Volume II* (2007).

The key to “running” a pattern is using the elicitation questions. That elicitation questions give you the ability to know when and with whom to use it. And at first, you will “run” the pattern in the sense that you will get your notes out for the pattern and simply follow its steps. It is very similar to what a musician does when first learning to play some music. At first, the musician will get out a score of music and play it by following it precisely. Only later will he or she do it from memory and then be able to improvise one piece with another piece. Similarly run a pattern a dozen times, then another dozen times, and you'll be ready to use it *conversationally*. Then you will be able to quickly and naturally shift to the pattern when you hear the appropriate context in a client. That is, the client will mostly present to you the elicitation question in his or her responses.

All of this speaks about the value of revisiting and how regular revisiting will both expand your range of responses and your depth of understanding.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #37**  
**September 3, 2014**

## **COACH AS A FRAMER AND REFRAMER**

*To coach is to frame and to meta-coach is to be exquisite in framing.* And if you want to develop true expertise in framing, then you'll learn to frame in all seven of the ways that is possible to frame using Neuro-Semantics. To coach most effectively is to deframe, reframe, preframe, post-frame, counter-frame, analogously frame, and to outframe.

When I originally put Meta-Coaching together as a system, I seriously considered putting the *Mind-Lines* training inside of Meta-Coaching. Why didn't I? Because at that time, the Mind-Line training was three days in length and if we had added that many more days would have made the original *Coaching Mastery* too long.

In 2005 when we did the training in the USA, Bob Bodenhamer commented to me one day, "You need to include Mind-Lines in this training." I agreed. Yet while we did not and have not add it to *Coaching Mastery* for APMC credentials, we do require it for the PPMC level. That's because Mind-Lines training is inside of the prerequisite—NLP Master Practitioner Certification. Having said all of that, it is still true that the skill of framing is essential to coaching. It is in fact, *the essence of coaching*. So from time to time I am still tempted to put the basic Mind-Line training into Meta-Coaching.

### **The Mind-Line Model**

What is the Mind-Line format and template? It is the realization that you can regard *the structure of meaning as a formula* or recipe and then dance around that recipe. Dancing around it gives you 7 directions in which you can "send a brain." That means 7 ways to reframe. That means 7 ways to change meaning. That means 7 places to update and/or transform the way a person interprets and experiences reality. And when meaning changes, people change. Their emotions change, their behaviors change, their states change, and their attitude change. It's that powerful!

**Deframing** is the beginning place. To deframe, ask Clarification Questions. Ask questions that demand precision and specificity. Ask grounding questions which requires the person to put his or her abstractions and vague terminology in empirical, see-hear-feel language. Then sort out what's first, second, third, etc. This is obviously built into the precision questioning in Meta-Coaching, the Well-formed Outcome, and the Well-Form structure of Problems, Solutions, and Innovation, and the grounding questions.

**Reframing** is contrasting current meaning and potential desirable meaning. “You say it is X (failure) what if it were Y (feedback)? Would you like that? Would that put you in a better state?” The structure of a reframe is, “It is not X, it is Y.” And you can only do that if you know that meaning is fluid and that you can create multiple meanings at will.

**Preframing** goes after the *positive* intention or cause of a belief statement. “The reason you did that was (X intention)...” “The actual cause for Y involved the following factors...” The design of this preframing is to connect with the person, get rapport, and create a sense of safety and respect. When you do this, you enable the person to stop self-judgments and criticisms and to be kinder and gentler with oneself.

**Post-framing** does the opposite of pre-framing. It uses future consequences to get the person to see the negative results that will occur if the meaning isn’t changed. You post-frame in order to evoke the aversion feelings necessary so the person will move away from an undesirable future. “If you keep thinking this way and therefore responding as you are, what will happen in 5 years, 10 years, etc.?”

**Counter-framing** tests the validity of a meaning by applying the interpretation back onto the speaker or onto the listener. If the meaning is sound, it should apply as much to the speaker as to those to whom the speaker is addressing. If not, something is wrong with the meaning. “I’m glad that you say ‘X leads to Y or equals Y’ because are you aware that you are doing X right now with me?”

**Outframing** refers to stepping out and above the meaning to set frames about that meaning from a multitude of different ways. This is an essential meta-stating process. Here you transcend one level of meaning to a higher level to then texture or qualify the first with the higher levels. “Are you aware that *the X* → *or = Y* belief that you just mentioned is inside of a Z frame? And if so, are you aware that it textures things in the following ways...”

Example: You say that when you don’t reach a goal, you are a ‘failure.’ Do you realize that this indicates you have over-identified your person with a behavior? If this is not an empowering idea (ecology frame), are you ready to see it as a learning (new frame) rather than an identity, and refuse it to be connected with your identity?

**Analogous framing** uses a metaphor or story to do the reframing. Speaking about a different subject with seeming no connection can frequently so engage a person and offer a change of meaning that occurs at a different level to the content. This kind of framing can contain all of the other kinds of reframing.

This model began in NLP and is, to this day, still unfortunately called “sleight of mouth” patterns. What Bob and I did in 1997 was to organize the patterns into a structure of *seven distinctions*. We described them as seven directions in which you can “send a brain.” That is, with statements or questions you can get people to consider a meaning structure (a belief) from seven different perspectives. And when you do, this can change a person’s construct of meaning— the way the person *interprets* things.

That meaning can change, and change easily is central to coaching. And it arises from the fact that *nothing has meaning until a human being attributes meaning to something*. So when a person attributes a new or different meaning, the significance of that item or activity changes. True enough, sometimes we have to dismiss or release or suspend an old meaning so that a new meaning can have its rightful place in our minds. This also is the wonder of the Mind-Lines Model which provides a way to think about this subject. If you are ready for framing elegance—check out the book and/or the training — *Mind-Lines: Lines for Changing Minds* (1997).

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #38**  
**September 3, 2014**

## **GROUP & TEAM COACHING IN MEXICO**

One of the things that simply do not get as much communication time as it should are some of the people stepping up into leadership roles in Meta-Coaching and Neuro-Semantics around the world. As a result, many up-and-coming leaders in this field are unknown except in their immediate areas. This is the case with Emilia—or more formerly, Maria Emilia Coria Bleck in Mexico City.

I mention her now because the last weekend of August she sponsored the very first *Group & Team Coach Training* in Mexico. She will also sponsor *Group & Team Coach Certification Training* next August (2015). This was Emilia's very first time at sponsoring an event by herself and she filled the room with 78 persons. Pretty good for first time, eh? While this was the first time by herself, she has been intimately involved in assisting David, Ivan, and Omar in hosting *Coaching Mastery* in Mexico for several years. Over the past two years she has volunteered to translate my weekly posts to the Coaches egroup into Spanish and so has been sending them out to our Spanish egroup. For the past two years also she has been running a monthly and sometimes bi-monthly training in Benchmarking. This is an excellent example of leading out, pioneering, and contributing to the community.

With the book *Group & Team Coaching* (2014) which has now been translated into Portuguese (Quality Mark Printing Company) and the *Group & Team Coach Trainings*, I am now ready to turn this information and attendance-based training into a competency-based training. The next presentation will be in October in Italy, and after that, I will do the first *Certification Training* in Hong Kong in this coming January (2015).

One of the exciting things about the training in *Group & Team Coaching* is how intensely experiential, hands-on, and practical it is. In the past 9 months, I've designed a number of group process exercises and average putting people into groups 5 times every day. We mostly mix it up, getting the participants to form new groups and choosing someone to be the *group coach*. Each time also the newly formed group has a task to perform within a specific time-frame. What participants have said every time—in Hong Kong, in Shanghai, in Manila, in Rio de Janeiro, and in Mexico City—is that the information that seems so obviously clear during the instruction period becomes much harder to put into action when in the group! Ah yes, the mind-to-muscle, closing-the-knowing-doing gap challenge!

On Day 2, I introduce the role of *Group Observer* and the *Group Observation Form*. This tool provides a very discrete way for every group member to get the experience of stepping back from



the group and observing the group processes (the group dynamics)— communication, the kind of conversation, the atmosphere, the level and quality of participation, etc. Then after a given time (7 minutes, 10 minutes), the observer steps back into the group and gives feedback on the group dynamics for 2 or 3 minutes. Learning the skill of taking a Meta-Moment for stepping back, observing structure and process, and giving feedback, of course, adds richness to these group coaching skills. It enables a Group Coach to become much more aware and mindful of what's happening and what to do to facilitate the coaching.

If you are wondering how we will *benchmark* a Meta-Coach *coaching* a team, that's what I wondered about and thought about for a long time. Finally, I figured out that I'll use the following procedure.

- 1) Each Meta-Coach (with at least the ACMC credentials) will be given a team of 6 or 7 people, a task to achieve with that group, and one hour (60 minutes) to achieve the task.
- 2) Then unknown to that coach, some of the group members will have instruction cards giving them directions about what to do and how to behave in the group. These instructions are designed to put the group coach to the test to see how he or she will handle the various challenges that will arise.
- 3) While all of this is happening, those of us in the training role will be using the Group Benchmarking form to record the skills that are being demonstrated.
- 4) We will then spend 30 minutes providing feedback about the skills demonstrated during the group session regarding what worked, what demonstrated excellence, what did not work, and will take the coach's skills to the next level.

Group coaching involves all of the core competencies of individual coaching and more, a lot more. Additionally it includes a stronger leadership role as the group coach also has to administer the functioning of the group, guide the group to operate more effectively within its guidelines, and facilitate the communication skills within the group, observe and nudge the group dynamics so that they are in service of the group, etc.

The list of skills for the Group and Team Coaching now comprise nearly three pages in the Group & Team Coaching Training Manual and we also have there the 11 skills that will be benchmarked. The new credentials that we will be providing for this Certification is, Group & Team Certified Meta-Coach — GTCMC.

**From: L. Michael Hall  
2014 Morpheus #39  
September 10, 2014**

## **THE ART OF GOING SLOW IN ORDER TO GO FASTER**

Not long ago, one of our Chinese Meta-Coaches, Wei Yao, whose English name is Will, wrote and asked me the following question about *going slower*.

“In lectures you've given, you often mentioned ‘slower is faster’. It seems very different from what we are talking in business, which is often like "winning by being fast", especially in high tech industry. So what is your idea about "slow down"? Why do you say "slower is faster"? Is it only applicable in coaching, or is it also applicable in business and our life?” Thanks. Will

What Will brings up here actually plays a critical role in coaching given that *the quality of your coaching is the quality of your listening*. And the quality of your listening rests upon your ability to slow yourself down, slow your internal dialogue down, and slow down your need or compulsion to “do something, quick!” When you are *going fast* inside your mind and emotions, you will feel pressure and impatience to do something. And while that’s going on, you will not be fully present to your client. And that means you will not be truly, actively, and fully listening.

This is the *slowing down* part. It is this aspect of your experience as a coach that allows you to pick up on so many of the aspects of your client and especially aspects that are subtle and hidden if you are going fast within yourself. That’s why people who overly value “going fast” so often miss critical details.

How is this going slower part able to make you go faster? How does that work? The paradox of getting more done and going faster works because when you slow yourself down and begin to really and deeply listen is that you then avoid the mistakes that you make when you are going fast. The mistakes of speed means you now have to spend even more time cleaning up the messes and re-doing things. When you go fast, not only will you miss things, not hear the person’s heart, but because you are going quick and not checking on the person’s words, calibrating to response, later on when your client is not getting results, you then have to go back and find out what you have missed. Then you have to re-do something that you could have done much earlier if you had gone slower and if you had been more deliberate in paying attention to everything the client has been presenting.

This principle applies to many other things. With regard to leadership, leaders who go fast, rapidly making assumptions, quickly jumping to conclusions, impatiently pushing to get results, and other “fast” responses— often find that when the dust has settled, they have succeeded!

Only they solved the wrong problem! Going too fast, they didn't take the time to clearly define the problem and get a well-formed description of the problem.

This principle applies to the field of wealth creation. There, the “get rich quick” mentality is actually one of the biggest saboteurs for wealth creation. Impatiently wanting to move quick and to make lots of money in the shortest time possible typically sets one up to be the ideal sucker for opportunistic scams. What causes a person to buy-in to these “it seems too good to be true” wonderful and fortune opportunities that’s knocking on your door is a person’s own impatience and belief in getting rich quick. By way of contrast, what I present in *Inside-Out Wealth* (2010) is a “get rich slow” strategy. It is one based upon researching and modeling successful wealth creators. It is also the strategy that I’ve personally used to move through the stages of financial stability to financial independence and then to financial freedom.

The same principle of *going slower in order to go faster* applies to the area of creativity. In fact, if you want to sabotage your ability to generate creative solutions—get impatient, put the pressure on yourself, and demand that you create “great solutions fast.” That mentality will actually undermine your creativity rather than move it forward. In business this is not the best strategy if you want to be on the cutting edge of creativity and innovation. That’s why cutting-edge companies give their employees creative time to work on what they choose (see case studies in *Unleashing Leadership*, 2009).

The principle applies for the area of health and fitness. Imagine adopting that mentality when it comes to losing weight and/or getting more fit. If you do, you’ll be impatiently jumping on the scales every few hours to see if you have lost any weight! Instead of helping, that will make things worse. So also with going to the gym for a workout that you expect will re-shape your body, give you six-pack abs, and twice as strong as when you started. Trying to go that fast will actually defeat your good intentions. The differences will not be detected by looking in the mirror every hour or every day. Better to hold a picture of yourself when you began and compare it once a month. Go slow and steady persistently and resiliently over time and you will achieve your goals. Otherwise the going fast approach will cause you to be off-and-on and typically never reaching your goal.

In these examples, and many others, there is an unique and paradoxical power of *going slower to go faster*. It especially makes sense with those experiences that require patience, persistence, resilience, commitment, and long-term intentionality. So next time you coach, slow yourself down so that you can focus on being fully presence, in the here-and-now and nowhere else.

From: L. Michael Hall  
2014 Morpheus #40  
September 17, 2014

## THE QUESTION ABOUT THE COMPLEXITY OF COACHING

One of the things that sometimes puts some people off from Meta-Coaching is complexity. “Meta-Coaching is complex.” When I hear this I always smile and say, “Yes, and your point is?” Then they say, “Well, I mean that it is just too complex.” Now I get to respond by saying, “And what is it that makes it *too* complex? How do you know it is *too* complex? How complex is okay? When it is too much?”

I make these responses for clarification because people who make this kind of a complaint typically operate from a particular assumption. Which is? They assume that if something is complex, then it must be difficult, hard to understand, hard to learn, and therefore this is not good, perhaps it is even “bad.” The question that I ask, “... and your point is?” is designed to flush out that assumption, make it explicit, find out the person’s criteria for “complex,” and then check the belief and meaning frames which the person is operating from.

A follow-up question to these first clarification questions continues the exploration. “What do you think is *complex* about Meta-Coaching? How is it complex?” Frequently, the term *complex* is their way of saying that there are a lot of factors or variables, perhaps beyond the  $7^{+/-2}$  chunks of information, and so when they are first exposed to Meta-Coaching, they are overwhelmed with the number of factors involved in coaching.

This is actually the way it is with every field and so this complaint is not unique with Meta-Coaching. Go into medicine and see how many factors are involved in diagnosis, healing, and even well-being. Go into music and see how many factors there are in music, instruments, reading a score of musical notes, etc. Every field has lots of factors if a person wants to develop expertise in that field. Accordingly it is not uncommon for people brand new to a field to get overwhelmed.

I heard a report on the radio just a couple days ago about people entering nursing programs and having to take a course in “Human Anatomy” as one of the first classes in that training. Around the United States, 70% of people “fail” the class (make a “D” or less on the tests). Only 30% “pass” on the first go. Most who continue their studies take the course 2 to 7 times! And that’s just one class in the whole curriculum for eventually a degree in Nursing.

Lots of variables is natural and to be expected whenever we are considering *a system*. That’s the very nature of a system—lots of interactive variables and variables that affect the workings of

the system in many different ways depending on the strength of the variable, the positioning of the variable, etc.

In Meta-Coaching, one of the factors that make *the human system* complex is that we experience our lives at multiple levels. First and foremost is *the behavioral level* and this is where most coaching begins. There's a behavioral need or problem. We need to be able to do something or to stop doing something. We need to improve our performance in some way so that we can be more effective, efficient, and/or productive. This is probably 90% of what initiates the coaching conversation or program. But that is only one dimension—and the simplest. It is the most obvious because it is external. And it is the easiest because you can see, hear, and sense it. It is empirical and therefore open to our senses.

Then there is *the emotional dimension*. When we move from the behavior to the internal—external *state* from which the behavior arises, we move into the emotional dimension. This is the dimension of neurology, physiology, kinesthetics, feelings, and emotions. It is the dimension of the somatizing of the person's beliefs, meanings, and understandings and so it is a symptomatic dimension. This is the dimension that we talk about in terms of Emotional Intelligence. Here we at least can calibrate to the person's physiology to pick up clues about what the person is feeling.

Yet within and above that dimension is *the meaning or semantic dimension*. This is the key dimension because it is here that we meaning-makers construct meaning. And, as we construct, invent, and appraise meaning about things—so we call our world into existence. Here we are the creators of “reality”—not external reality, but internal reality. Here we create our mental models of the world, and it is via our maps that we operate—that we feel, talk, and act. This “inner game” of our meanings drives and determines how we play the “outer game” of performance.

Nor does it stop there. There is within and yet transcending the first semantic dimension another one, *the intention dimension*, and also *the self-dimension* (our self-system), and so on. So to coach in a way that is multi-dimension, and not in a flat one-dimensional way, we have to move up to these other dimensions. This is one of the real advantages of Meta-Coaching and yes, it does raise the complexity level. But what shall we do? Deal with one-dimension level of humanity and try to reduce what a person is and how a person functions because we don't want to deal with the complexity of human experience.

While there are factors that are complex that we consider in Meta-Coaching we also have models by which we can handle the complexity. In fact, the more thoroughly you learn the models, the less “complex” you find your clients. The models organizes behaviors and patterns into structures. Peter Senge says that in a system the phenomenon of *dynamic complexity* creates a simplicity that differs radically from *detail complexity*.

What then should a Meta-Coach do? Learn to think and work systemically with the dynamic complexity of how people communicate, create their experiences, change, unleash potential, etc. Learn to use the Matrix Model for thinking and working systemically. For more, see *The Matrix Model* and *Systemic Coaching*.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #41**  
**September 24, 2014**

## **FORGET RESULTS IF YOU WANT RESULTS**

It's paradoxical. Yet like many paradoxes, it is the secret of effectiveness. And for you as a Meta-Coach, this is one of the treasures of the Meta-States Model that gives you a tremendous tool or process for effecting transformational change. *Paradox*, in the Meta-States Model, is the confusion of levels. If you fuse levels and do not distinguish, you won't know members of a class and confuse the category with the members.

Last week at our ACMC training in Shanghai China, we have a great many if not most of our new coaches in training who were very strongly *results oriented*. Several even announced that about themselves. "I'm a very much a results-oriented person," said one. Others struggled so much to *just* listen and repeat back words in acknowledging the client before them— what interfered so much was that they wanted to *do something*. Some felt anxious and uncomfortable in *not* doing something!

Yet as with the realization that *by going slower you can go faster*, we can express this paradox in this way: *If you really want high quality results, forget results*. A seeming contradiction, right? A paradoxical command, right? So what does this mean and how does this work?

On the surface it seems that if you put your focus and attention on *results*, this will be the key to success. This will enhance your chance to succeed at reaching your goal. And you can even think of lots of examples where that seems to be true:

- Sports. Put your attention on knocking down the pins when you are bowling. Put the ball in the basket (basketball) or across the line into the net (soccer), etc.
- Shooting. Aim the bow-and-arrow at the target, specifically the bulls-eye.
- Driving. Focus on keeping the car in your lane to go to your destination.

Yet what do we really mean by "results?" Ah, the clarity check! *Results* generally means the end result, the effects that you want to create at the end of your efforts. In sports— getting more points and winning over the opposing team. In shooting— winning the match, getting the prize. In driving— getting to the destination.

So what's the problem? The problem with focusing on the end results is that you send your attention *forward in time* to all of the final objective and its benefits (making money, being successful, getting recognition, etc.). Yet in doing so, you miss *the present*. And if you are not here in the present, in *the here-and-now* then what you are doing *now* will not have your full attention and energy. And if what you are doing now doesn't have your full attention and energy,

you will not give full attention to the very processes that are required to be effective. And this, in turn, will undermine the processes by which you'll achieve your long-term goals.

There's another problem. If you are focused on making money, being successful, getting recognition, getting your client results, etc., *you are actually focusing on yourself*. And if you are focused on yourself—you are again *not* focused on the very processes and experiences that will enable you to be effective. Results are important, but are not of primary importance.

Bringing your focus and attention to what you are doing so that you are fully present, in the here-and-now enables you to become conscious and mindful of what's happening and then to take charge of what you are doing in response. It is this level of *mindfulness* that actually is the secret to success. If you are not present ... and you are off in the future thinking about “Am I getting results?” “Am I ranking up points?” “How am I doing?” “What does my client think about my coaching skills, my intelligence, and the wisdom that I'm demonstrating?” . . . If that's where your mind is—you are missing *the person, the moment, and the experience*.

To change all of that, begin by remembering one of the most basic principles of coaching: *The coaching is not about you*. Remember? It is all about the client. *The coaching is through you, but not about you*. Get that principle deeply established in your mind, then mind-to-muscle it into your neurology, then coach your body to feel it. If you need help with that, get a buddy Meta-Coach and do this with each other.

Next, *set your frame to focus exclusively on the experience*. “I am here in service of my client. Whether I succeed with my client or not is irrelevant. My goal is to be present, to listen, to seek to understand, to hold the space, to ask questions, to challenge, to be compassionate, to love. If something more happens because of this— great.”

In this way you can *forget about results and focus on the experience*. You will then be present to the experience in a way that puts more emphasis on the process than on the final product. Do this and do this regularly and by so forgetting the results, you'll get much more and much higher results.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #42**  
**October 1, 2014**

## **ANSWERING THE ROI QUESTION WITH LEADERS WHO STRUGGLE TO GET IT**

In the past couple months I have heard about coaches who are dealing with small thinkers at various companies. So when they propose *Coaching* as a methodology for assisting the company, the people in HR, or the leaders, or the business owner will say there is no real need. I received the following recently from one of our Meta-Coaches in Norway, Kristin Langnes. She wrote the following:

“I have had discussions with one company with several leaders —challenging them on the possibility that they don’t get the best out of people and thereby waste resources. The answer I get is that they ‘don’t care,’ because it’s cheaper money-wise— because these peoples wages are not that high anyway. . . . It is sufficient if the perform 70 %. So what I’m interested in is— How do you meet this argument? And how do you respond to that?”

Obviously what these leaders are not seeing and recognizing is the ROI which is implied in the aspects of the low productivity of people. In other words, inside the low productivity and the inefficiency of the people at that company, there is value being wasted. And that amounts to money being wasted. So begin there and ask lots of exploration questions to get details and clarity about the leaders, their understandings, and their orientations.

“What is the level of productivity of your people? If it is 30% below what it could be, how much does that cost you? How much does it cost every week? What is the cost when you multiple that times 52 weeks? When you multiply by 10 years? At what point would it be worth it to address the low productivity?”

Another hidden place where the ROI is affected is in the satisfaction level of the people who are providing the products and services. After all, what will result if you have employees who are not satisfied and who are perhaps becoming less and less satisfied?

“If you were to gauge the *satisfaction level* of people in your company, where is it? What does that level do to the culture and atmosphere that’s within your company? How does that atmosphere influence the new hires? Does it encourage them to do their very best or to just be mediocre and get by?”

Similarly with the engagement level, the energy and involvement of management, and the issue of time allocation:

“If you were to used the Engagement Questions and gauge the level of engagement, how engaged are people in your company? How disengaged are they? How many people are highly disengaged? What are the symptoms of the disengagements? Are they using up sick days to take days off? How is that affecting the work groups and teams in the organization?”



Management:

“How much extra time and effort is managers using to deal with the lost of one-third of the employee’s productivity? What is the effect of this upon their attitude?”

Time:

“While managers and employees are spending one-third of their time dealing with all of this, how much creativity and innovation is not being developed? How much is being passed over and missed because they are focusing on those other things?”

Industry:

“If one characteristic of top leaders in any and every industry, and especially in cutting-edge companies that are number one in their industry, is that they seek full engagement of employees, what does this say about this company? Who would want to join a mediocre company?”

As all of these questions in all of these areas are seeking to understand the situation in a given business, by asking them you are simultaneously inviting a greater awareness for those who are in leadership. Questions do that. They raise awareness. So start there and as you ask simply for our own understanding and clarity, it will work wonders in them as they attempt to answer the questions.

Of course if you get a chance to share your perspective or make a presentation, then you can let them know that, in terms of financial return on investment, the best investment is in people. That’s because the greatest *capital* of any organization today is in the people, not in the buildings or machines or bank. Why is that? Because it is *people* who create the products and deliver the services, it is *people* who come up with creative ideas and who have to innovate those ideas. It is people who make the workplace a heaven or a hell.

It is also people who can become disgruntled and not only not carry their own, but work positively to undermine and sabotage the business. From creating shoddy products to offending customers in how they deliver services, people can make or break the business. And while right now 70 percent productivity may be acceptable, what happens if something goes wrong? What happens if times get hard and cut backs have to be made?

Sometimes today, those who find themselves in leadership roles struggle to understand many of the changing factors of business. And this seems especially true for how capital has changed and is changing. Many struggle to get the connection between the quality of the people creating the products and services and the profit of an organization— as if profit is somehow disconnected from those who create the things and experiences of value.

The following material may be of use for those following a recent “Meta Coach” article as well as NS Trainers. Michael has asked me to forward it to both groups in plain text.

## Measuring The R.O.I. On Soft Skills Coaching & Training

Coaching is as much a part of the strategic planning required to develop and maintain a business as is the financial, process and marketing development and refinement. The quality and effectiveness of staff is a prime asset of any business yet it does not appear on the balance sheet. Human capital is a vital part of a business structure and it needs to be developed and maintained. This development of human capital is far greater than merely developing skills and processes. It reaches well into the tacit personal and interpersonal qualities of the people involved. Skills and processes alone will only provide mediocrity. Real success is very much a state of mind.



This raises the question, “How do we measure the results of our investment into the soft skills development of our people?” Whenever a business makes a capital expenditure, it typically expects a return on that capital. This return on capital is also known as a Return on Investment or “ROI”. Coaching is a capital expenditure. This expenditure should produce results and these results should be quantitative and qualitative. This may seem difficult at first blush, but with a little creativity it is very possible

The basic equation to use is:

$$\left\{ \frac{\text{Change in Productivity} - \text{Investment In Coaching}}{\text{Investment In Coaching}} \right\} \times 100 = \text{R.O.I. \%}$$

On the following pages we look at areas where the effects of coaching are likely to be seen.

### POSSIBLE RESULTS:

#### AS MEASURED BY:

#### Financial

- | Revenue increase (\$ up)
- | Cost reduction (\$ down)
- | Profitability = (revenue – costs)
- | Improved strategic planning

#### Customer

- | Customer satisfaction survey scores
- | New/Repeat customer acquisition volumes

### **Productivity**

- | Time spent in specific work activities
- | Total output/time

### **Recruitment**

- | Becoming a sought after employer of choice
- | Attract the very best graduates and operators

### **Employees**

- | Employee satisfaction survey scores
- | Performance review scores

### **Innovation**

- | New product/service introductions
- | Idea to sales profitability

### **Personal**

- | Personal satisfaction with work
- | Compensation/reward increase
- | Promotion/career achievements
- | Work/Life balance
- | Family and friends satisfaction
- | Health-related costs

### **Improved communication**

- | Less repetition, second-guessing and rework
- | Reduced conflict and resultant dispute resolution

### **Streamlined meetings**

- | Less time spent in meetings
- | Greater percentage of meeting agenda completed
- | Less rework after meetings

### **Time Efficiency / objectives**

- | On-time delivery of goals and objectives
- | Less breakdown during delivery

### **Effective decision-making**

- | Success rate of decisions
- | No passive aggressiveness post decision-making

### **Increased creativity**

- | Number of new ideas generated
- | Ratio of new ideas to profit

### **Learning and growth**

- | Achievement of development plans
- | Frequency and speed of skill acquisition

### **Well-being**

- | Less absenteeism and lateness
- | Lower medical premiums
- | Happier workplace atmosphere

### **Work satisfaction / morale**

- | Improved employee survey scores
- | Lower turnover

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #43**  
**October 8, 2014**  
**Report on “The Graham Richardson Experience”**

## **THE AMAZING THING OF WATCHING AN EXPERT AT WORK**

Yesterday (Friday Oct. 3), here in Brussels, we (50 of us) watched with delight, amazement, emotion, curiosity, and awe as Graham Richardson did five coaching sessions. They were five very different coaching sessions with five very different clients with different needs. And watching the five sessions, while we saw a consistency in his basic skills and style, we also saw an incredible flexibility to go where the client is, step into his or her world, “experience what the client is experiencing,” and begin to connect and coach each client. The ability to adjust to the client was very well demonstrated—one of the things people said that they would be taking away from the session. Graham was brilliant and we all learned a lot.

At the heart of the experience was both the compassion and the challenge which Graham demonstrated. This, of course, is his signature branding, his “ruthless compassion.” In the early sessions, his compassion was dominant as he held the space for the client to go through and experience what they experienced. Then in the last session, especially, Graham’s directness and challenging and confronting really stood out and impressed people with just how far a person who had created the rapport could go.

While we had done this before to a much smaller degree, I had never set it up before for an executive Coach to coach session after session for a whole day. Truthfully, I really didn’t know if it would work. If people would get too overwhelmed by a whole day. I found out that not only that they did not, but it was the session after session that led many of the new people, the visitors who came in for that day, to begin to see and to realize the power of what was going on.

A couple coaches from outside of Meta-Coaching, from ICF and other coach training organizations, at first did not know how to interpret what they were seeing. One or two didn’t go into a learning state, but used their own frames to judge what they were seeing. One said, “That’s not so special, I could do better than that!” Later, however, they began realizing that what looked simple in the hands of an expert were truly advanced skills. That’s the way it is with expertise: an expert makes the difficult look simple. The advanced skills are so integrated with their style and therefore so “natural” for them, that it looks simple. Easy. Something anyone could do.

Yet it is not. The expertise that looks simple because it has been integrated into style through hundreds, even thousands of repetitions. And the learnings over years and years, even decades that inform the experts has now dropped down into the unconscious part of the mind, so that

even the expert doesn't know how it's all happening. He or she is operating by intuition. They just "know" what to do. The lessons are deep inside ("in" - "tuition" knowing) and so no longer available to conscious explanation.

By mid to late October the DVDs should be ready edited and I'm anticipating that we will have two DVDS- one of the Interview of Graham as an Executive Coach (60 minute interview) and then two of the coaching sessions. The Second DVD will be of the three coaching sessions that were in the afternoon. When they are available, I will send out a notice for how to get your hands on them.

After each coaching sessions, I asked Graham various questions about the session, what he was thinking at a given point in the session, what state he was in, what he was thinking, etc. After that we entertained questions from the audience. A really big thank you to **Germaine Rediger** for making this happen at the ACMC and also one to **Mario Mason** for the original idea.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #45**  
**October 15, 2014**

## **META-COACHING AND CONSTELLATION WORK**

NLP arose from the *Family Systems* work of Virginia Satir, sometimes called *Constellation* work. Later others picked up the theme and today there are three (at least) versions or formats for *Family Constellation* work. All claim to take a systems approach, but at least one of them contains premises, practices, and dimensions that contradict the basic NLP presuppositions.

I bring this up now because a couple people involved in some form of *Family Constellation* asked Germaine this at the end of the day that we had with Graham Richardson. They asked, “Did Graham do Constellation work?” And the short answer is, No. Of course, the longer answer is, “It depends on what you mean by ‘Constellation work’.” So we have to ask, What do you mean? What are you referring to? Where in the Coaching did you think you perceived Graham doing that?

Now because I did not have that conversation with any of the ones who brought that up, and because I therefore didn’t have the chance to ask such questions, I can only guess at what they were asking. This also seems to be much stronger in Europe than anywhere else, the others doing this or some form are in Latin America.

*Family Constellation* work generally refers to asking about the original experience or event that is still “alive” within a person’s thinking and emoting. They are still carrying around within them some situations from their original family situation and perhaps even trying to “finish” some business that’s been unfinished. Now *if* the person is *living in the past, stuck there, not okay, and lacking the ego strength to face it* and so in denial and using other ego-defenses, then the person needs therapy, not coaching. See the series of articles that I have been currently writing about Neuro-Semantics and Therapy on “Neurons” ([www.neurosemantics.com](http://www.neurosemantics.com)).

Our premises in Neuro-Semantics and in NLP is that if a person still keeps something of the past alive and dynamic within them—they are keeping some old movies as their mental maps (consciously or unconsciously) and using them to navigate today’s territory. What makes them ineffective is that the old map no longer fits today’s reality. What makes them dysfunctional is that the person mentally maps him or herself as 5 years old or 11 years old rather than being the adult that they are today.

Our premises in Neuro-Semantics is also that to change the past maps has to occur today—in the now and that any metaphor about “going back to the past” and finishing the unfinished business

is just that—a metaphor. It is not what is literally or actually happening. That’s because the past does not exist any longer. It only exists in the person’s mind-body-emotion system who keeps it alive by replaying it or referring to it. There’s also another premise. Richard Bandler stated it best: It is not that the business is unfinished, it is that you don’t like how it finished. It is finished, you just dislike it. Accepting that it is finished (a meta-state, by the way) enables you to release it (another meta-state).

So, simply talking about a past event, gathering information about when and where something happened, and who was involved—that is simply identifying the referent experience. It is not the same as what people do in Family Constellation work. They have the premise that comes originally from Psycho-Analysis that the only way to finish, fix, and end the past event is to re-experience it fully. So they want to take the person back and have them “go through it again” so that they can finish it. Accordingly many also tend to believe that there is hidden information that is in the system that you cannot get to unless you act out the drama of the constellation.

So there are definitely different premises in these different models. Do I think the Family Constellation models are bad, or good? Do they work? What I believe is that *sometimes with some people* the drama, emotion, and acting out of the old structures will work. I also believe that there are faster and more efficient ways of doing it, that we don’t have to use this Model-T when we have BMW and faster models.

What changes in a person when change occurs is the person’s mental map. Therefore change can occur quickly and without a lot of emotion if the change-agent knows how to get to the critical information and is skillful in facilitating the change. If not, then doing a psycho-drama of “going back to the past,” “re-establishing the original event” in which, from which, the person learned something that has become the problem—a limiting understanding, belief, decision, identity, etc.

Those who believe that big change has to have big emotions, from the NLP and Neuro-Semantic point of view, confuse a symptom with the cause. Emotions are symptoms. They are the somatizing or embodying of some meaning, some mental map. After all, thoughts are signals to the body about what to feel and beliefs are commands to the nervous system about what to feel (Bandler, 1985, *Using Your Brain for a Change*). So send those signals and commands and your body begins to feel—incorporate the message into muscle memory and breathing and posture, and other somatic expressions.

In the brilliant coaching sessions that Graham did, he sometimes inquired about past events, times and places where a person may have learned or mis-learned something, but that did not mean he was doing Family Constellation work. He was simply grounding the experience and getting factual information so that he could then find out what the person made of it—how the person interpreted it.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #46**  
**October 22, 2014**

## **META-COACHING AND THE GEEK**

A few years ago I was asked to work with the senior managers in a family-based business for the purpose of helping the whole company step up to become more self-actualizing as a company. The invitation came from the CEO who so-happened to attend an APG I conducted in Canada, one he attended actually quite by accident. Yet he found it compelling, especially the applications for how to enable a company to bring out the best in all of their people and become self-actualizing. It was also an opportunity to do some Shadow Coaching and because I had very little experience doing that, and because I wanted some experience, I accepted the invitation. Out of that experience I had several adventures—here is one of them.

Altogether I spent a full week at that company. I arrived so that I could start on Monday and then left after our closing event on Friday evening. The I.T. guy in the company was the only non-family member on the executive board. My work mostly focused on the quality of communication that was occurring within the small company of 60 some people. So I spend three days observing and interviewing. That's all I did for those first three days.

On Thursday they had a meeting with the executive leadership team of seven people (all men) for long-term planning. The questions that they entertained had to do with “next steps” for each of them, new learnings, new responsibilities, etc. One of the group said that they wanted Mark, the I.T. guy to step up to do more managing. He had a small staff of three people but he didn't provide any guidance for the others, each were self-directed, but there was a desire for some management. When they said this and began talking, I asked, “You are talking about Mark?” They said yes.

I turned to Mark. “Is this what you want?” Long pause. Then a hesitation and a hem-and-hawing “Well kind of ...” statement. Now I had previously interviewed Mark so I had established rapport with him, and so I asked the CEO and the three brothers who were part of the leadership group, “Would you want your son or daughter or nephew to be managed by Mark?” Dead silence. Finally after a long, very long, pause the CEO said, “Well, probably not. ... But we need someone to be managing the I.T. team.” “Mark, what do you think?” I asked. He said he needed to think about it.

When I later had time with him alone, I asked, “What are the pros and the cons for you when you think about stepping up to management?” It turned out that he wanted the management position for the status, for the increased money, for the opportunity, etc. When I asked about the disadvantages, he said he didn't “know people” and was “very impatient with people,” and really didn't know how to get people to do things, and didn't like to communicate with them.



I complimented him on his honesty and said that he had just demonstrated one of the greatest gifts and skills of a true leader and manager. He had spoken the truth when it was not in his best interest, he was being honest, he was demonstrating integrity rather than take the easy way out of covering-up. I did that to validate him as a person—and his heart. To that he then said, “But I’m still not very good with people.”

“Mark, do you know about how people are programmed?” No, he didn’t. “Well, what I’m going to tell you is a secret and I have to have your absolute promise that you will keep this absolutely confidential and not tell anyone.” He said okay. I said, “I need more than an okay, I need your sworn commitment that you will never tell anyone what I’m about to tell you.” He gave his sworn commitment.

“There is a programming language that people use in thinking and communicating.” He said “Really!?” with a tone of fascination. “The zeros and ones in that language come down to the empirical sensory systems and to the distinctions in each system. And when people think and communicate, they use these systems.” “Really!?” “Yes, and you can hear it in their language if you listen to the structure— visual predicates, auditory predicates, etc.” “Really!?”

“And their hardware— as neurology— the soft tissue of their bodies, reveal their computer programming language.” “No shit?!” now he was sitting on the edge of his seat really interested. “Yes, watch their subtle eye accessing cues, up for vision, side to side for auditory, and down to the right for kinesthetic sensations and down to the left for values.” “No way! You’ve got to be kidding? Really!?”

“Yes. And then when you put this together, you can catch the algebraic formulas that they are operating from. Think of them as their ‘strategies’ for doing things like remembering, motivating themselves, fixing a problem, creating a solutions, things like that. Just watch if they make a picture, then say words to themselves about it, then have a sensation that they can exit their program or re-process it one more time.” “Really?!”

“Yes, people are actually very systematic in this. They run their algebraic formulas, or strategies, regularly and most don’t even know it. But they know they have ‘habits,’ and that they develop regular ways of doing things and when they are asked to do it differently, they feel uncomfortable. It just means that they are outside of the program that they regularly run.”

Well having paced Mark using a language (that of computers and IT) that he knew best, I figured that the best way to assist him would be to direct him to the NLP Communication Model.

“This is the content information of NLP and that if you studied the NLP practitioner course, you would be able to get really good with people and then managing people would be more within your grasp. Whether that is where you want to go or not, I don’t know, but this would at least enable you to make a more informed decision about whether you should, or should not, go into management.”

I had not thought about that for a long time until a week ago when I was in Brussels on the ACMC there and someone asked me, “How do you communicate with a Geek?” Then I remembered and told this story.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #47**  
**October 29, 2014**

## **THE ART OF BEEPING A CEO**

At the time when I was invited to work with the senior managers in a family-based business, which was some years ago, not only did I meet “the geek” who I wrote about in last week’s Meta-Coach Reflection, but I also learned how to effectively beep a CEO for the first time. That’s right, I beeped a CEO.

“And how are you using the word ‘beep’?” you ask as a Meta-Coach asking a clarity question.

The *beep* was my signal to a group of men (they were all males) who were gathered around a board room and engaged in the business or their organization. By *beeping* I let them know that one of them had just committed a communication error. Typically the *beep* came during the communication error and so it called attention to the speaker at that very moment.

And why would I *beep*? I beeped because I had set up with them a set of ground-rules for the executive team. We had taken an hour and had come to a consensus about how they wanted to talk to each other and how to be talked to by the others. Because this had been a problem and because they felt bad about how they had been communicating, we first elicited the guidelines that they wanted. So with that as a basis, and because I had forgotten to bring my whistle (!), I told them I would beep—I would make a loud whistle-like sound as I say the word “beeeeepppp!!” That would then be the signal for: “Someone just violated one of the communication ground-rules.”

Now the ground-rules for this group were really basic:

- No talking over each other when members of the team are presenting their case.

- No name-calling or cursing at each other.

- No threats or ultimatums in the conversation.

- No insults that personalize or make judgments on another.

- No sarcasm or sarcastic humor which puts another person down.

- The right to call a time-out if one member got too upset or stressed.

- The right to ask each other for an explanation of their thinking or conclusion.

- The right to “play devil’s advocate” and strongly question a position.

- We will be respectful by listening, looking at each other, and hearing each other out.

The problem with the small group of seven people was that they had gotten into a combative habit of insults, put-downs, talking-over, mind-reading, and stinging or zapping each other with covert put-downs. And this had become so intense that all but two of them absolutely dreaded the meetings and tried to avoid them and didn’t think they were useful or helpful at all. And that’s why the CEO invited me in initially.

“We have some communication problems and try as we may, we just have not figured out how to fix the problems.”

With the ground-rules in place, everything was set. I told them I would sit away from the boardroom table ... off to the side so I could watch and hear their conversations. My only input was to *beep them when they violated a communication rule*. I would then identify who did it, what they said or did, and hold the person accountable to do a “re-take” ... perhaps two or three re-takes. They would do it repeatedly until they could communicate whatever they were trying to communicate but now in a way that would enable the others to hear them and respond without it turning into a fight.

Then the games began. And almost immediately, I began beeping. And it was almost exclusively the CEO that I beeped. Again, and again, and again. And almost every single time the shock response was, “What?” Then, “What now?” “Again? No way.” What was I beeping? The statements were mostly “stinging” or “zapping” statements that subtly criticized or judged or made something personal, or that did a little attack of a person’s character:

“Can we just move on and get beyond these silly complaints?”

“Here we go again. ... Okay, go ahead and get it off your chest.”

“We’ve been over this a thousand times, it’s time to get your head out of the sand.”

“If you were up on what’s happening in this industry, you wouldn’t even think that.”

Now after a half dozen, and then a dozen *beeps to the CEO*, an interesting dynamic began to occur in the group. My mind-read is that when we began the others were certain that I was brought in to correct them, to put them in their place, and to give credibility to the CEO’s complaints against them. I had been introduced with glowing accolades as this great expert, etc. by the CEO and I’m guessing that was to reinforce things when I would start pointing out their sloppy communications. But now various members of the board began to adopt a very small and subtle smile with every beep. They were beginning to see as a group that the person introducing the hostility and aggression into the group was the CEO. He was the person who had been attacking them for their poor communication skills!

At first, with every beep I explained, “It is the fourth ground-rule that you agreed upon” and I would quote it and offer, “maybe you don’t want to keep this rule?” “No, no, we want to keep it.” Eventually, all I would say is “Rule #5.” “Rule #7.” “Rule #1.” And after that, I would beep and a chorus of voices would say, “Rule #3.” They were getting it. So as the rules were being drilled into them in this way, they were becoming very conscious of them.

And to his credit, eventually the CEO got it. Not at first. At first, he was pretty upset—and I think mostly with me! As his secret weapon against them, I was mis-firing and shooting the wrong person! But because he had committed to the ground-rules which he had co-created, and because he was in a situation where I was consistently asking him to rephrase his point, eventually he began violating the rules less and less. He began adjusting his own behaviors and after three days of doing that a new set of linguistic habits were being adopted as well as an accountability system was being set up with the whole board. It would never be the same. And it wasn’t.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #48**  
**Nov. 4, 2014**

## **THE BENCHMARKING MODEL IN *COACHING MASTERY***

When we first created the benchmarks for the core coaching competencies (2003 London), we also began actually teaching and training *The Benchmarking Model* itself. In fact, until 2007 we also gave each of the teams a benchmarking project to do. That is, they were to identify a value or skill and then, as a team, to benchmark it. In that way the group members would learn the process of taking an intangible experience and finding the behavioral equivalents that show up in the external world indicating the experience.

Now we still have much of that material in the *Coaching Mastery* training manual and you can see it there. But we no longer teach the Benchmarking Model as such. There's two reasons for that.

The first is because most of the coaches will not be creating benchmarks and so will not need that skill set.

The second is because the skills required for creating benchmarks are advanced skills and is best developed after a person has mastered the seven core coaching competencies. So today we focus primarily on those core skills.

And yet ... we still provide some exposure to the Benchmarking Model although in a less direct way. Recently I said this and several of the Meta-Coaches as well as those on the Assist Team asked about that.

“If Meta-Coaching is based on the seven distinctions of coaching and uses the seven models, where and how do Meta-Coaches learn the Benchmarking Model?”

The answer is that because the Benchmarking Model is based on the Meta-Model of precision questions—as Meta-Coaches learn to use the precision questions, to ask the clarity questions, and learn to use the Well-Formed Outcome questions—they are learning how to mark and measure experiences. The benchmarking processing is presupposed by all of these clarification questions as a coach explores how a client thinks about and represents things. And because coaching is about creating and inventing and innovating new things—to be able to point to the new thing and say, “I have actualized it; I have made it real in my life” requires the ability to specific behavioral equivalents of that experience.

The benchmarking process is also assumed in the coaching as the coach explores with a client his or her present experience. By modeling what and how the client creates and experiences one's present state—this sets benchmarks for recognizing where the client is today. By locating these milestones and then extending out into the future where the client wants to go and the milestones

along the way to that objective, the coach inevitably discovers some of the benchmarks that will convince the client.

In fact, in the process of coaching, everything that helps both the client and the coach to measure where a person is today, where a person wants to be, and the steps and stages along the way—these are the things that are fundamental to benchmarking. So most of *the how questions* of the Well-Formed Outcomes questions are inherently benchmarking questions — “What do you have to do to get what you want? How many steps and stages are there along the way? What feedback do you need to monitor to indicate the milestones along the way?”

Benchmarking is about measurement. And measurement answers the epistemological question: How do you know that you are here, or that you will be there? It enables us to answer the measurement questions: How can you measure leadership or respect or collaboration or any other nominalization of a skill or value? And the answer is always outside in the outer game.

It is outside in actual behavior. This is the outer game. And if the inner game is actually translatable to the real world outside of one’s mind and consciousness, then we have to translate our ideas and concepts into actions. And if actions— then there are see-hear-feel behaviors. And if there are empirical behaviors, then those behaviors can be seen and evaluated along a continuum from low level or incompetent behaviors to moderately competent behaviors, to high level expertise behaviors. This enables us to now put the behaviors on a scale and gauge or scale them— that is, benchmark them.

So Meta-Coaches learn the essential features of the Benchmarking Model— specificity questions, getting sensory-based descriptions, using the specificity of the Well-Formed Outcome questions, looking for ways to measure an experience or a change, etc. From there, and with that as a foundation, then specifically studying the Benchmarking Model as presented in the manual or if you want a more extensive understanding, in the book, *Benchmarking Intangibles*, that will give you, as a Meta-Coach the ability to create and use benchmarks.

Why is this important? By benchmarking you provide empirical evidence for the value of your coaching. By benchmarking you can mark and measure the change, the difference and thereby justify the ROI that organizations invest in your coaching. By benchmarking you set up standards so that people have a measurement system. And by the benchmarking that you can do and use in Meta-Coaching, you are way ahead of every other Coach Training system in the world. Only now are some other Coach Training systems beginning to try to figure out how to benchmark.

To your joy and fun and financial success in Benchmarking Intangibles!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #49**  
**Nov. 12, 2014**

## **THE WONDERFUL THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH WORDS**

There are magical things that you can do with language if only you know what they are. Of course, if you do not know what they are— then you'll not know that “magic.” Language in the hands of humans and in the mind of a human being operates as one of the meta-processes above and beyond (hence *meta*) primary experiences. Because of that, language operates in governing role to experience. That's one of the reasons that language can do some pretty incredible things in our lives.

A number of years ago I mentioned that there are all kinds of things that we can do with words in the book, *Communication Language* (1997/ 2001). I began by quoting Austin (1955) who described the “performative” role of words in his classic William James Lecture at Harvard, *How to do Things with Words*. For Austin, much of our language use involves *performative language*. What does that mean? It means this:

“To say something is to *do* something, or in saying something we *do* something.” (p. 108)

Church (1961) took this idea even further:

“Words do not have meanings, but functions. The ‘meanings’ assigned to words by dictionaries are abstractions drawn from the way words function in various contexts.” (p. 217)

Church here emphasizes *the functional role* of words. That's probably why he stated things here in either/or terminology. Yet the fact is that words have both meanings and functions. What are all the things we can do with language and with symbols, whether verbal and non-verbal? What are some of the things *you* can now do with words every day as you move through the world?

Here's list which comes from *Communication Magic* (2001, pp. viii and ix).

Gather Information	Learn something new
Understand another's perspective	Inform another
Seek clarification when confused	Influence people
Bond with another person	De-hypnotize old trances
Express endearment to another	Validate, affirm
Reinforce behaviors and responses	Advocate a position
Extinguish behaviors and responses	Solve problems
Create pattern of persuasion	Formulate a problem
Experience a catharsis of emotion	Apologize for creating a hurt
Confessing faults and problems	Negotiate an arrangement
Taking responsibility for oneself	Confuse someone
Hypnotize into various states	Insinuate
Create an engagement or absorption	Swear, offend, insult

Disclose a secret	Show off
Soothe, nourish, comfort	Meta-communicate
Joke, create humor, jar consciousness	Express intentions
Declare, make a declaration	Promise

As a Meta-Coach, what are all of the things that you are doing with words with your clients? What are all of the things that you could do with your clients? After all, as we emphasize in *Coaching Mastery* over and over—“the tools of your trade are *what* you say and *how* you say them.” The wonder of coaching begins with the ability to get a client back to the foundational level of experience. How? Get the person to *describe in sensory-based terms* whatever it is that he or she is experiencing.

When you do that, the performative function of their words enable them to get out of their head and the conceptual level and back to the senses. It enables them to “lose their mind and come to their senses” (Fritz Perls). And probably half of all human problems are solved by this singular activity.

With words you, as a Meta-Coach, can verbally pace your client by *acknowledging* what is said and in doing that, you perform the incredible act of enabling your client to feel heard. And for most people, this borders on the miraculous. With so many people not feeling heard, not feeling understood, not understanding themselves, and not feeling appreciated, all you have to do is feed back their words to them and presto! They can access a state that millions, even billions, of human never access— feeling heard.

With words, you as a Meta-Coach, can ask some simple open-ended and closed-ended questions and enable your client to create a well-formed outcome for themselves. Amazing! In a few minutes, the fog of confusion and lift, and the images of a bright future can arise and the person can get a new lease on life— all because of the words you utter in the Well-Formed Outcome Questions.

What else can you do with words? You can confirm and validate. You can expose blind-spots. You can challenge a person to step up to new levels of possibilities. You can invite the unleashing of potentials. Just with some carefully chosen words.

All of this is the promise of Neuro-Linguistic Programming with its emphasis on the *neurological impact* of our linguistics. Our words affect our neurology. In fact, our words arise from our neurology and then send messages to our neurology which can then *program* our responses. And what is true of our neuro-linguistics is even more true of our neuro-semantic. The meanings that we encode in words at the meta-levels of beliefs send commands to our nervous systems.

So the next time you discount words, when you or someone says, “It’s just a word.” You might want to think again. What are those words doing neuro-semantically within a person’s embodied experience?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #50**  
**Nov. 18, 2014**

## **COACHING FOR ACCELERATED LEARNING**

One way to think about *coaching* is to think about it as a central way that adults learn and especially about how they *accelerate* their learning. Does that make sense? Is that what you are aware of as you begin a coaching session? Now most of the time we begin a coaching session by asking,

“What is the most important thing that would make the most transformative difference for you?” Or, “What change would you like to make?” Or, “What do you really, really want that will make your life more heavenly?”

Yet what if you began your coaching session by asking about learning?

“What do you want to learn in this coaching session today?”

“What are you struggling to learn and fully incorporate in your body?”

“What are you learning about business or health or relationship that you would like to accelerate?”

Now in speaking about *learning* we may have to do some framing and reframing as we begin. After all, how exciting and passionate does the word *learning* induce in you? When you think about *learning*, does your heart speed up, do your eyes open wide, do you feel an excitement rising with so that you just can’t stand the suspense of waiting to find out what you get to *learn* today? Probably not. For most people, school has ruined things. The way they experienced learning in school dulled the experience, made it seem like a chore, made it feel like a necessary burden, and made it seem like something to do as fast as possible so we can get back to real life.

Yet what is *learning*? How can we think about it so that it does excite us? What is learning? Learning is the meaning-making process itself. It is the process by which we construct mental maps that we then use to navigate the territory of the world. So in learning, we construct ever-more useful and effective maps that allow us more power to do what we desire, more freedom for greater flexibility in adjusting to reality as it is, and more fun so that we succeed and enjoy the process. Now how is that for a definition of learning?

*Learning* also is our primary “instinct.” Because we have no actual “instincts” —not in the same way that animals have instincts, we do not “know” how to function effectively as human beings. All we have are left-over “instinct” remnants—Maslow called these “instinctoids.” These are the urges and impulses that show up as “feelings” of need and lack in our neurology— moving us (motivating) us to fulfill our needs (necessities) so that we can be healthy and energetic.



If there is an “instinct” it is an instinct to learn. And when it comes to newborn babies— *learn is what we do*. And we do so passionately, intensely, powerfully. A child is a ferocious learning machine! We are born open to information, receptive to feedback, and hungry to understand. This is our innate nature. Yet as the human race, we have learned powerful ways of killing this urge. We have invented schools and “teaching methods” that are very effective at framing learning as boring, hard, and not-fun.

Yet learning is how we actualize our highest visions and values and our very best performances. In other words, *learning is your key tool for self-actualization!* How about that? And that’s why when you coach—you coach people to learn. You coach people in more effective learning, learning that updates what they have already learned, learning that expands their learning, and beyond that—you enable people to engage in a higher form of learning, *meta-learning*.

*Meta-Learning* is learning how to learn. And given the poor job of *learning to learn* that most people experience in school (even University) one of the things that frequently happen in coaching is a new appreciation and skill in learning and meta-learning. So we begin by using the NLP model. Here meta-learning is learning multiple strategies for learning and learning to access your best states for learning. With different materials and kinds of information we have to have different learning strategies. We need a different strategy for reading, for spelling, for mathematics, for learning emotional intelligence, for creativity, and so on.

Then using the Meta-States Model, meta-learning goes to a whole new level as we facilitate higher levels of learning. Here we can approach the meta-levels of understanding, knowing, model-making, meaning-making, using metaphors, using inductive thinking and deductive reasoning, and much, much more.

Today we even have some Meta-Coaches who make *learning, accelerated learning, and meta-learning* the focus of their coaching. They enable adults who need to be staying up with their fields and industries to be able to keep a passion for learning by helping them to become much more competent in learning.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #51**  
**Nov. 26, 2014**

## **THE POWER AND IMPORTANCE OF RE-VISITING ACMC**

Whenever we conduct ACMC trainings we almost always have some Licensed Meta-Coaches present *re-visiting the training*. Sometimes we have just one or two and at other times we have had eight to ten. I'm always delighted and proud of the Meta-Coaches who return to revisit because it says so much about them. It says that they are truly committed to their own learning and development. It says that they believe in themselves and in building up competence with the coaching skills.

It also announces that these are the people who will be able to reach the PCMC level if they so desire. And that has been the case. We keep saying, "It is just a matter of time; it is just a matter of commitment; it is just a matter of discipline and deliberate practice." And that's true. The coaching skills are the *communication and relational skills* that enable a coach, consultant, trainer, therapist, etc. to hold a transformational conversation that gets to the heart of things (his or her meanings and layers of meanings) to unleash potentials.

Now if these skills were "easy," anyone could hold that kind of high quality conversation. Unfortunately, these skills are not easy, they do not come "naturally" for anyone, and for those who learn them effectively—they are learned and practiced deliberately under supervision. After all, *the coaching conversation is not a normal conversation*. It is a very special kind of conversation that is informed by multiple models. In Meta-Coaching it is informed by the NLP Communication Model, the Meta-States Model, the Matrix Model, the Facilitation Model, the Self-Actualization Quadrants Model and sometimes by the Axes of Change Model and sometimes by the Benchmarking Model. That's a lot!

And because it is a lot—Meta-Coaches who are truly committed to developing high quality expertise in the field of coaching and becoming a professional (PCMC) in coaching and an expert in this discipline (MCMC) —revisiting is a natural and a very wise choice. Of course, as you know, to encourage this we have made your ongoing professional development very affordable, charging only 30% for revisiting. We made that decision at the beginning because our vision is to turn out as many top qualified Coaching Professionals as possible. Doing that will build the brand of Meta-Coaching probably more than any other single thing.

Revisiting ACMC as a participant allows you to learn at a different level than when you do your first training. By design, the coaching boot camp of *Coaching Mastery* presents far too much to "get" it the first time. It is more of an *introduction* that initiates your journey in the Meta-Coaching system. It is not designed, and we do not expect anyone, to get it all on one-go. That's just not possible. As a Profession, coaching is a discipline that involves far more than what

anyone can pick up in an 8-day training or adding the NLP and Meta-States background, a 14-day training or even 30-days. The Universities which are now giving out degrees in Coaching treat it like other disciplines and are presenting the content — in a very much extended time frame — over 2 or 3 years.

When you re-visit, you will be hearing the Meta-Coaching system and methodology at a completely different level. Because you already know a lot of the content, you will experience much less information overload. Now you get to pull the information apart, go into it in a deeper way, pick up on distinctions that you may have missed the first time, and deliberately practice the pieces that you most need to supplement your coaching approach and style.

What can you expect when you revisit? My observation is that when people revisit, almost everyone starts at a lower level than where they were when they left ACMC. That is, they were probably at or very close to the 2.5 level when they left their last *Coaching Mastery* experience. Yet when they return, they are now operating at or around the 1.5 level. What's happened? The most natural thing in the world—the deterioration of skills not practiced on a daily basis and not practiced with some high quality feedback from skilled benchmarks.

Yet I have also observed something else. Typically those revisiting will be back at the 2.5 level within just a couple days and some of them will even excel the 2.5 level. And why? Well, they already have the foundation— intense active listening and calibrating and the exploration skills— so now it is a matter of refinement. It is a matter of eliminating bad habits that have developed, refining one's style to fully own one's way of doing coaching, deliberately practicing specific sub-skills, integrating the skills so they work together, and adding in new distinctions.

Revisiting also allows you to discover all of the new things that we are constantly adding to the Meta-Coaching System. In this year of 2014 we have several new practices: the energizing questions that enable you to more effectively use the well-formed outcome questions, the meta-questioning drill for going inside to the inner game, the teaching of the business model for operating a coaching business, etc. And who knows what will be added in 2015? Even I don't know... not yet.

Where will the new stuff come from? From the ongoing modeling of experts! This is one of the things that keeps me fascinated, motivated, and committed to the Coaching track in Neuro-Semantics. By modeling experts, I'm always finding more distinctions. This was true of what happened in Brussels when Graham Richardson did the coaching sessions there. It is true when I sit and watch other experts. And while most of this is being put into the PCMC training level, I am bringing some of it back to the ACMC level because it can save the learning time of new coaches and prevent misunderstandings or blocks later on.

When are you ready to do your revisiting as a participant? Yes, you get to revisit when you are on the Assist Team although when you are on the team, you don't get the seven coaching sessions for practice and feedback. We have lots of opportunities for you to revisit in 2015 and I really encourage you to do so — as a commitment to your own Professional Development.

# 2015 Schedule

## February 2015

**Feb. 14- 21: Cairo, Egypt** — *Coaching Mastery for APMC*  
*Module III of Meta-Coaching, The Coaching Boot Camp*

**Feb. 12-13:** Team Leaders

Contact: Mohamed Tare — [m0h@m0h.net](mailto:m0h@m0h.net)

## March, 2015

**Bali, Indonesia** — *Coaching Mastery for APMC*  
*Module III of Meta-Coaching, The Coaching Boot Camp*

**March 6-13: Coaching Mastery for APMC credentials**

**March 4-5: Team Leaders**

Contact Person: Marini Ng — [mariani\\_ng@meta-mind.com](mailto:mariani_ng@meta-mind.com)

## April, 2015

April 24– May 1: — *Coaching Mastery for APMC*

**Oslo, Norway**

*Module III of Meta-Coaching, The Coaching Boot Camp*

April 24-30, May 1: **Coaching Mastery for APMC credentials**

April 22-23: **Team Leaders**

Contact: Lene Fjellheim — [lene@coachteam.no](mailto:lene@coachteam.no)

## May, 2015

May 2-9: Johannesburg, South Africa

April 30, May 1 — Team Leaders Training

Meta-Coach Trainer: Lena Gray

Sponsors: Gloria Mbokota — [gloria@mindlib.co.za](mailto:gloria@mindlib.co.za)

## July 2015

July 5-12 — *Coaching Mastery for APMC*

**Guangzhou, China**

*Module III of Meta-Coaching, The Coaching Boot Camp*

Contact: Mandy Chai — [Mandy@apti.com.hk](mailto:Mandy@apti.com.hk)

July 3-4: Team leaders Training

## September 2015

Sept. 10- 17: *Coaching Mastery for APMC*

**Mauritius**

*Module III of Meta-Coaching, The Coaching Boot Camp*

Sept. 8-9: Team Leaders

Contact: Sandra Viljoen — [sandra@newb.mu](mailto:sandra@newb.mu)

First time in Mauritius!

## October 2015

Oct. 3-10: *Coaching Mastery for APMC*

**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

*Module III of Meta-Coaching, The Coaching Boot Camp*

Contact: Jairo Mancilha — [jairo@pnl.med.br](mailto:jairo@pnl.med.br)

Maira— [maira@pnl.med.br](mailto:maira@pnl.med.br)

**Manila, Philippines**

Oct. 24-31— first time in the Philippines

*Module III of Meta-Coaching, The Coaching Boot Camp*

Contact: Aldem Salvana — [brkthru.coaching@gmail.com](mailto:brkthru.coaching@gmail.com)

Vanessa V. Salvana CEO. Senior Consultant

+632.920.9502863

Breakthrough Coaching and Consulting Inc (BCCI)

**Oct. 22-23: Team Leaders Training**

**November 2015**

Nov. 22-29: *Coaching Mastery for APMC*

**Hong Kong**

*Module III of Meta-Coaching, The Coaching Boot Camp*

Contact: Mandy Chai — [mandy@apti.com.hk](mailto:mandy@apti.com.hk)

**December 2015**

Dec. 4-11: **Sydney Australia** – *Coaching Mastery for APMC*

*Module III of Meta-Coaching, The Coaching Boot Camp*

Dec. 2-3: Team Leaders

Contact: Jay Hedley — [jay@coachingroom.com.au](mailto:jay@coachingroom.com.au)

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #52**  
**Dec. 3, 2014**

## **WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE ON THE ASSIST TEAM?**

When volunteer to be on the Assist Team at *Coaching Mastery*, you become part of the Meta-Coaching Community which helps to create brand new Meta-Coaches. It is a great way to give back to the community and to make a difference in the Meta-Coaching System. That's what you contribute.

### ***So what do you get?***

Lots! Because you will be learning how to receive feedback and give feedback at a very high level, you will receive two full days of Training by the Meta-Coach Trainer or Trainers in this. You will be part of a very intimate group (10 to 20 people) and go into great detail about the specifics of the core coaching skills. You will probably get to coach one or more times and be coached so it is a time for deepening and enriching your own coaching skills. Then by benchmarking 21 times in the following days, you will be challenged to raise your listening and calibrating skills to a new level. Most Team Members come out of the experience saying that it was like turbo-charging their coaching skills.

You will also get someone hands-on preparation for Group and Team Coaching and then lots of experiences to put you to the test. If Group and Team Coaching is new to you, this will introduce the challenges and skills and if it is something you are already doing, it will give you a chance to refine your skills and talk about handling a group with the entire team.

When you are on the Team you get to learn Meta-Coaching System and models from a meta-position. Most Team Leaders say that they learn an incredible amount from this perspective and from their experience of benchmarking. They say that they begin to *see the structure that's within the processes*. You will receive a Certificate for 100 hours of Group / Team Coaching as you work with your Team watching and helping those who need help and learning how to apply your skills to a group rather than just an individual.

### ***What's required for you to be accepted on the Assist Team?***

We have set prerequisites for the Meta-Coaches that we want on the Team. Overall, we want *people who are good models of the spirit and passion of Coaching and Neuro-Semantics*. We want people who are excellent role models of the coaching skills and role models for how we think about *leadership* in Neuro-Semantics. The following criteria is what we have set for being on the Team:

#### ***1) Coaching Practice.***

Do you have a coaching practice and seeing at least 10 hours a week in coaching and making at least a good part of your living by it?

Are you a good Role Model of coaching so that people who follow your example will be asking questions, actively listening, supporting, holding space for another, etc.?\

Are you running a successful coaching practice financially, have your own business plan, etc.?

## **2) Coaching Methodology**

Can you coach a group of people by "coaching" them in asking questions, and not giving advice, teaching, training, etc.?

Can you stay focused on details? Can you shift to the detail meta-program, and meta-detail in attending to a person for giving high quality feedback?

Can you stay focused on supporting the team and working as a team member? (matching for sameness, cooperation)

Can you stay focused on coaching and not shift to other things (the focus of the genius state)?

## **3) Benchmarking**

Can you think and speak in terms of structure and form so you do not get lost in details?

Do you know the benchmarks of the 7 Core Coaching skills inside out? (content knowledge)

Will you learn the benchmarks of the 7 Core Coaching Skills and the 100 sub-skills prior to the training?

## **4) Knowledge**

Are you thoroughly knowledgeable about the 7 models of Meta-Coaching?

Are you knowledgeable about the Axes of Change? Do you know those benchmarks of these?

Do you have a Master Practitioner Certification in NLP? (This is not required, but helpful!)

Do you have a Neuro-Semantic Certification of both APG and the 4 days of Living Personal Genius?

What percentage did you get on the *Gauging Your Coaching Skills* Checklist?

Are you willing to read and study the Assist Team Leaders' Manual?

## **5) Leadership Criteria**

Also refresh your knowledge of the criteria for *leadership* in Neuro-Semantics by seeing the article on the website ([www.neurosemantics.com](http://www.neurosemantics.com)) because you will be a team leader and you will be developing your leadership skills in this role.

## **6) Commitment Level**

Are you will to commit yourself to the time and energy investment of being a Team Leader or Assist Team Leader? This means 8:15 am most mornings to 9 pm and the two days of training prior to the beginning of *Coaching Mastery*? Are you willing to take instructions from the Meta-Coach Trainer and ask questions if you do not understand some instruction? Are you willing to sign the Team Leader Agreement form?



### GAUGE YOUR CURRENT LEVEL OF SUCCESS AS A COACH

L. Michael Hall and Michelle Duval

#### ***Coaching Skills:***

- Do you work on your coaching skills on an ongoing basis?
- Do you have a plan for developing your skills?
- Do you have one or more specific skills that you're currently working on?
- Do you know 10 of the meta-questions by heart?
- Are you being coached on your coaching skills?
- Do you know the Axes of Change by heart and the 9 coaching roles?
- Are you having your skills benchmarked at least once a year?
- \_\_\_ T-score out of 7

#### ***Personal Development and Growth:***

- Have you been coached on your intro. session in the last twelve months?
- Have you explored and broken through your fears about business?
- Do you have a robust identity as a coach?
- Do you have a set of goals for your own personal development?
- When you experience business challenges do you see them as an opportunity to develop a stronger sense of self and more business acumen?
- Do you feel congruent and aligned selling yourself and your business?
- Do you have the identity of a beginner moving toward mastery?
- \_\_\_ T-score out of 7

#### ***Business Skills and Acumen:***

- Do you have a clearly defined niche for your coaching practice?
- Can you describe your niche in a compelling way in two minutes?
- Do you have a plan for developing credibility in your chosen niche?
- Do you stay focused to your niche?
- Do you have simple jargon-free language for describing your coaching?
- Can you talk the language of your niche?
- Are you marketing yourself to your niche?
- Do you ask for 2 or 3 referrals every day?
- Do you have a referral process and network system?
- Do you respond to all of your calls and emails within 24 hours?
- Are you punctual, dependable, and on time with your promises?
- Do you have a closing ratio (from your intro. sessions) higher than fifty percent?
- Do you have a business development plan?
- Do you consistently spend time each week on business development?
- Do you consistently spend more than one day each week on your business development?
- Are you being coached on that business development plan?
- Do you spend money on branding your coaching practice?
- Have you sought legal and accounting advice for your coaching practice?
- Can you and do you say *no* to opportunities outside your niche?
- Do you have well-developed consulting skills for contracting business?

Write **T** for true and **F** for false to the following questions. The higher your T-score, the more likely you are on your pathway to success in your coaching practice. Every F-score identifies an area of weakness or challenge to be addressed personally or in your business strategy. If you are in doubt, gauge the percentage of your answer, if over 80% check T, if below F.



- Are you fostering “centers of influence” who are your raving fans?
- Have you created collaborative alliances with companies who can refer to you?
- Do you look professional in your dress and demeanor?
- Is your wardrobe in rapport with your niche?
- Does your clothes, look, speech, and demeanor look like a professional coach?
- Do you have a professional telecommunication services (i.e., emails, phones, etc.)?
- \_\_\_ T-score out of 26

### ***Fees and Fee Schedule***

- Did you begin by charging a low fee and slowly rise it over time?
- When you began, did you charge lower than the leaders in the field?
- Does your rate of fee reflect your experience and demand level?
- Do you have permission to ask for what your skills are worth?
- Have you broken through any and all fears about asking for your fee?
- Do you feel 100% comfortable for charging for your services?
- \_\_\_ T-score out of 6

### ***Coaching Program:***

- Do you have a coaching program for your niche? (e.g., a three month program)
- Do you do breakthrough coaching sessions (one off sessions)?
- Do you have an introductory session?
- Do you sell and market the uniqueness of your coaching program?
- \_\_\_ T-score out of 4

### ***Personal lifestyle:***

- Are you maximizing your time and coaching capacity in your scheduling system?
- Do you have a structure to your scheduling that supports you and your lifestyle?
- Does your scheduling structure fit your desired lifestyle?
- Does your schedule fit your niche?
- Are you and your lifestyle a reflection of someone who has applied coaching to yourself?
- Do people generally think of you as a good model for how you live your life?
- Are you living an authentic lifestyle that reflects your talents and passions?
- Are you living your dream?
- \_\_\_ T-score out of 8

### ***Personal psychology and preparation:***

- Have you identified your own core meta-programs that serve and inhibit your business success?
- Do you have full flexibility and choice within the following meta-programs:
  - Either or/ both and thinking
  - Matching – mismatching
  - Global — specific
  - Possibility — Necessity
  - Self — Other
  - In time — Through time
  - External — Internal
  - Strong will — compliant
- Do you use (or have you ever) any of the patterns to change or adjust your meta-programs?
- \_\_\_ T-score out of 10

### ***Coaching as a Lifestyle:***

- Are you self-coaching and/or do you have a coach?
- Do you think of your coaching relationships as an opportunity for your own growth?

- Is your “ego out of the way” enough to be dis-liked and to receive disapproval?
- Are you following the coaching models that you learned and are in alignment with?
- Do you have many magic moments in your coaching sessions?
- Does your coaching experience still excite and thrill you?
- Are you continuing your coaching education?
- \_\_\_ T-score out of 7

***Personal Biology / Health and Well-Being:***

- Are you keeping fit and healthy so you have plenty of energy for your coaching?
- Are you maintaining your health and well-being?
- Are you controlling your food and getting regular exercise?
- Do you eat for optimum performance?
- Are you generally healthy and able to work every day?
- Are you aware of the influence of your diet on your mind-body system?
- \_\_\_ T-score out of 6

***Personal Relationship to Client***

- Are you warm and friendly with clients and others?
- Do people think of you as open, friendly, inviting, and warm?
- Do you prioritize relationships over the transaction of coaching?
- Do you let go of all of your emotions and issues prior to a session so that you are fully present to the client?
- Are you now comfortable and expressing your own feelings to a client?
- Do you consistently invite and see your clients expressing their feelings?
- Do you have a follow-up process for maintaining a relationship with your clients after the coaching ends?
- Do you like people and get a real kick out of exploring frames and seeing transformation?
- \_\_\_ T-score out of 8

***Professional Relationships:***

- Are you involved and participating in the larger coaching community?
- Do you network within the community of your chosen niche?
- Do you give people and your clients more than what they paid for and expect?
- Does your behavior show abundance?
- Are you writing and publishing articles in your field or niche?
- Are you speaking and make presentations in your field or niche?
- Are you contributing to the Meta-Coaching community via practice groups.
- Do you regularly contribute to the Meta-Coaches egroup to share your experiences and ask for support?
- Do you give credit to and quote to the sources, especially from Neuro-Semantics?
- Do you the credentials ACMC following your name?
- \_\_\_ T-score out of 11

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) ___ <i>Coaching Skills</i>                 | 7) ___ <i>Personal psychology and preparation</i>      |
| 2) ___ <i>Personal Development and Growth</i> | 8) ___ <i>Coaching as a Lifestyle</i>                  |
| 3) ___ <i>Business Skills and Acumen</i>      | 9) ___ <i>Personal Biology / Health and Well-Being</i> |
| 4) ___ <i>Fees and Fee Schedule</i>           | 10) ___ <i>Personal Relationship to Client</i>         |
| 5) ___ <i>Coaching Program</i>                | 11) ___ <i>Professional Relationships</i>              |
| 6) ___ <i>Personal lifestyle</i>              |  |

**Total:            \_\_\_    Percent out of 100**

# TEAM LEADER AGREEMENT

The following is the *Agreement* between yourself as a Team Leader and the Meta-Coach Trainer or Trainers. Please read carefully, ask any questions that you need to and then sign and date the agreement.

- I will follow and keep to the schedule and processes of the Meta-Coach Training System.
- I will follow the daily instructions in the Leader Team Meeting each morning and evening.
- I will asking questions if I don't understand what I'm supposed to do.
- I will use questions in coaching and leading my team (rather than teaching, lecturing, training, etc.).
- I will bring 3 written KPIs statements with me to the Training Day prior to *Coaching Mastery* for what I want to gain from the training as a Meta-Coach and/or Team Leader.
- I will be on time and keep my group on time during the training.
- I will give a Commission to the graduates at the Graduation Ceremony.
- I will get my ego out of the way as I work with my team and with the rest of the Leadership Team.
- I will facilitate the development of my group through the group-development stages (forming, storming, norming, and performing) so they will become a team.
- I will coach my team on their performance of the Benchmarking Project.
- I will spend 15 minutes with each member of my team sometime during the training.
- I will be actively involved with my group as a Coach.
- I will follow the lead and guidance of the Meta-Coach Trainer/s.

year, and in previous yeas

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #53**  
**Dec. 10, 2014**

## **COACHING AS A LEARNING METHODOLOGY**

If *coaching* entails adult learning and if it accelerates adult learning (*Coaching and Accelerated Learning*, Meta-Coach Reflections #50), and if learning is how we actualize our highest and best potentials, then how are you— as a Meta-Coach— in coaching in such a way that you accelerate your client’s learning? Are you an *Accelerated-Learning Coach*? To answer that question, let’s start with some basic questions about learning and then move the questions to more advanced levels.

- *Learning States*: In terms of state induction, does your style and approach enable clients to develop a natural curiosity and passion for learning? Does your questions get them to think about things that they otherwise don’t even consider? Does your questions elicit the “I never thought of it in that way before!” response?
- *Learning Strategy*: Does your coaching conversation enable your clients to become aware of their learning strategy and states so that they adjust both in an effort to become more skilled and competent as a lifelong learner?
- *Critical Thinking Learning*: Does your coaching enable your clients to become better critical thinkers so that as you are yourself an exemplar of the Meta-Model type of questions, they begin to think with more precision and clarity? Do they start catching their own cognitive distortions and biases?

Given these questions, we could probably benchmark an effective Coaching Conversation in terms of it eliciting these kind of distinctions and experiences in clients. That would certainly separate the coaching conversation from a “normal” conversation. It would make the coaching conversation unique and not-so-normal as people would learn from the experience itself how to think and reason at a higher level. This is precisely what Colin Cox is working on with his new work in the Neuro-Semantics of Critical Thinking.

Yet when it comes to learning, and accelerating adult learning via coaching, there is much more. After all, at the heart of success, productivity, effectiveness, getting along well with others, etc. is learning. This means that the quality of our learning determines a great many of these facets of our lives. For the human being learning does not end when school is out. It actually just begins. School is supposed to be what prepares us to learn in adult life. It is suppose to prepare us so that we know how to learn and can manage our learning. Yet school all too often does not do this. And that’s another reason people are opting for coaching.

Adults who are high potentials, high achievers, who are change-embracers, who refuse to sell themselves short, who are hungry to create and experience the best version of themselves—*learning is an absolute prerequisite for living*. We find this true for entrepreneurs, highly creative people, early adapters of change, wealth-creators, and many others who make actualizing their highest and their best the way they want to do life. So for them, they not only want and need to learn, they are passionate about it and even define themselves as life-long learners. And for them there are several challenges that life-long learning provides.

One big challenge of learning for anyone wanting to self-actualize is the disturbing news that the best learning comes from challenge and struggle. Isn't that true for you? When you already know something or when something is too easy, then the learning tends to be superficial. It is when we really struggle with something—a significant problem, a big challenge, an impossible situation—that we learn the most, the deepest, and the most thoroughly. Then a person has to reach deep inside in order to stretch to new levels.

This explains the value of stretch goals, the creative use of competition, and the enjoyment that comes after struggling to understand something. It is when we face a steep learning curve in order to gain competency in a particular skill that we truly thrill in effort and sweat that we put into it. So given that, what are you doing as a coach to stimulate high quality learning in your clients? What could you be doing?

If you are rescuing your clients from effort, from challenge, from facing a steep learning curve, are you really serving them? If you are asking easy questions for your clients. Soft questions. Comfortable questions— for whose benefit are those questions? But if, on the other hand, you are asking challenging questions, exposing questions, questions that force a person deeply inward, then you are probably integrating a good bit of challenge with your compassion.

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**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #54**  
**Dec. 17, 2014**

## **THE POWER OF TAKING SECOND POSITION Mirroring as a Coach**

In the Meta-Coaching modules, you learn about the concept of matching another person and discover how NLP modeled Virginia Satir and found that this is the very heart of rapport. So in *Coaching Essentials* (or in *NLP Practitioner*) we began to ask you to match people as precisely as you can. There you learned about the many primary level aspects that you can match in a client: posture, breathing, movement, gesture, tone, volume, tempo, and so on.

Then when you entered into the Coaching Boot Camp of *Coaching Mastery*, we took all of that to a whole new level. In the first days we put a lot of emphasis on physical matching. We asked you to do that as thoroughly and as precisely as possible. And yet, whenever we do this, no matter how well some people may have been trained in NLP, or heard that matching is the structure of rapport, there are always some who just don't like it and don't believe it.

Now there's many different ways to address this dislike and/or this dis-belief. Over the years, I have learned several ways to respond to it. But one of the best ways to answer this came to me recently when Bob Bodenhamer sent out the following link on youtube. This is an experiment which Derren Brown did on theme of physical matching. So click on this and watch it.

Now to avoid mis-understanding what this means— it does *not* mean that we can “read minds.” It does mean that when you empathetically seek to be with someone, and take the time to fully match that person ... you begin to experience what Erickson talked about as “deep trance identification.” The video shows just how strange and weird this can be and yet how powerful:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1a-gBGcgRh0>

Try it yourself! After watching the video, you might want to use a five minute silence period with a client and do a similar experiment as the set up that you saw in the Brown Video. Ask your client to recall, and just be with some challenging experience which the client wants some new resources for— and mirror it as best you can. Or try it with by asking your client to think of some great outcome which he or she wants. Then see what happens.

How does this work? I think it works because *we can and do embody our thoughts, meanings, experiences, and emotions into our body*. We can and do incorporate these awarenesses in our body. It's the mind-to-muscle process. Obviously we do this when we practice something and

repeat it over and over. The repetition means that you are running your neuro-pathways in a certain way and eventually the pattern becomes habitual and once it becomes a habit, the conscious part drops out of conscious awareness. Now all you have left is an action-tendency in the body, in your neurology that manifests the meanings that you expressed and put there.

Of course, the physical matching is just the beginning. It is the ground level that deals with the primary state. Above and beyond physical matching is matching your client's words, meta-programs, meta-states, value words, belief statements, conceptual understandings, and assumptions. When you match these meta-levels of a person, you build rapport between yourself and the deeper (or higher) levels of that person's experience.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #55**  
**Dec. 24, 2014**

## **8 DAYS AND 8 WEEKS**

Can you learn the core competencies of effective coaching in eight days? Is that possible? Okay, yes, technically that is possible. Is it probable? No. Even with your preparation and background in NLP (*Coaching Essentials*) and in Meta-States (*Coaching Genius*) it is not really all that probable. Even if you had the full NLP Practitioner course it would still not be probable.

“But,” you say, “the actual skills of the seven core competencies are not that difficult to understand or do.” And yes, you are right. They are not. So what’s the big deal? “Why is it that even those who have worked with people in a helping role, perhaps as a consultant, a therapist, or a trainer, find it challenging to reach the benchmark of those behaviors indicating competency as a Coach? What makes demonstrating them in a coaching session so seemingly difficult?”

The answer is several things. The biggest challenge lies in all of the things that you have to *unlearn* in order to become skillfully competent with these seven skills. What do you have to unlearn?

***First, you have to unlearn your current ways of listening.*** Almost everyone who comes into Coaching *listens with an agenda*. They listen to *do* something that will fix or help a client. They listen in order to get an outcome or run a pattern. They listen to hear a problem that they can then address with some NLP resource. And to the extent that a person listens in these ways, *they cannot listen as a coach*. A coach doesn’t listen with an agenda. The agenda that you bring to a coaching session is the agenda of your ego— of what *you* want, of what you will tend to *impose* on the client.

To coach effectively you have to *learn a whole new way of listening*. We call it by several names: know-nothing listening, sacred listening, listening by being fully present to your client, getting your ego out of the way, non-judgment listening, etc. All of these expressions refers to non-instrumental listening— listening without an agenda so that you can truly hear your client. This is not natural and not easy. It takes practice— lots of it.

***Second, you have to unlearn your current ways of supporting.*** Again, almost everyone who comes to Coaching *supports inappropriately*. The person may support by being sympathetic and wanting to save the client from feeling bad, from feeling uncomfortable, from feeling anxious or challenged, or many other negative emotions. So they “support” by emotionally rescuing their client and getting the client to stop being negative. Or the person may go in the other direction and “support” only intellectually and not emotionally. They try to “support” by doing the right things and so they do not initiate an I–Thou relationship with the client and say things that



validate or empathize with the client.

***Third, you have to unlearn your current way of questioning.*** I've noticed over the years that most NLP-trained people have a very similar way of asking questions. They tend to jump over rapport-building process of connecting with the client and ask NLP pattern type of questions, questions designed to quickly resolve any difficult and get the person to feel good. Whatever the client brings up, this person asks if the person has ever experienced the subject, "Have you ever felt confident (or resilient, strong, decisive, healthy, etc.)?" They then begin an induction process and if they can get the person into state, they then anchor it and try to apply it to the person's situation. Of course, that is not coaching, that is, at its best— Superficial NLP!

Know-nothing questioning is an entirely new and different kind for most people— again, questioning without an agenda except to understand the client *on the client's terms*. To do that effectively requires the interaction of precision and meta-questions along with testing, checking, and open-ended questions.

***Fourth, you have to unlearn your current way of receiving and giving feedback.*** Given the experience that most people have with "feedback," they think of it as summary judgments on performance. It's a whole new and very strange idea that the client will be giving feedback to you as a coach *while you are coaching*. It's an entirely different process to be receiving in every sensory system all of the things that your client is doing in the conversation and then reflecting back those things. *Being a mirror to your client* (which is what receiving and giving feedback) is describes a process that is completely outside of conscious awareness when the coaching journey begins.

***Fifth, you have to unlearn your current way of inducing state.*** As mentioned earlier under questioning, you have to unlearn the NLP way three-step quick solution technology: Induce State—Anchor—Connect to current situation. Actually, that is "manipulative NLP on steroids" and is as wrong as it is disrespectful and uncaring. *State* is already occurring— if you have eyes to see and ears to hear. But what state? And how much? Are you paying attention? And what states does your client need to learn, to explore, to create, to experiment, to change, etc.? When you unlearn the old way of state induction, then you can begin to get ready for conversational state induction. Now your pacing and matching, your calibrating and mirroring, your voice and tone and tempo — all of these things becomes your new tools for inducing state.

So, how much *unlearning* did you have to do and do you still have to do in order to get ready for truly learning the skills that make the not-normal experience that we call Coaching? This is a key reason why we question being able to learn the competencies of Meta-Coaching in 8 days and why we do expect that you can learn them and reach competency in 8 weeks— if you are committed to yourself and your development.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**2014 Morpheus #56**  
**Dec. 31, 2014**

## **PCMC TRAINING**

This past weekend I completed my last training for 2014—the PCMC Training in China. This was the first time that we have included a specific *training* as part of the PCMC assessment. Previously we used the APMC Coaching Mastery as the context. We invited those who had the prerequisites for the next level to revisit, coach seven times, get warmed up, and then set for assessment on one of the days or the day after. Or we gathered a small group 4 to 10 who were ready for PCMC and did an intensive set of coaching sessions with everyone benchmarking and learning from the actual coaching sessions.

But during the last year the time had come to have a formal training for PCMC. So that's how I spent my Christmas this year—in Guangzhou China with 30 participants, 12 of which came to set for assessment and the others who came to get themselves more ready for assessment which they will do at a later time.

We spent the first three days focusing on the Advanced Sub-skills within the seven core skills—that is, those higher level 3 and 3.5 skills and also on the four additional skills— framing, pattern detection, getting the KPI from the outcome questions, and tasking. Then we did coaching sessions, we had 10 triads and so the first session went from 25 to 35 minutes, then 20 to 30 minutes of feedback from either Mandy Chai and myself or from one of the participants. Then we re-gathered and did 30 minutes of debriefing. Later we did the second coaching session which also took one hour and then half-an-hour of debrief. We repeated that at the end of the day for the third session.

This allowed the coaching sessions to be longer and the feedback to focus specifically on what the coach needed to do to improve. It also allowed for a group debrief after each coaching session. Frequently I would hear about something that did not go well and do a quick demonstration. Each morning I devoted 90 minutes to a presentation, first on the Advanced sub-skills, then on Framing, then on Pattern Detection, then the KPI, and finally Tasking and the Detecting the Coaching Moment. On the last day we played one of the Graham Richardson videos to see a real master at work and notice how he caught and developed a coachable moment, and called the client forth to be authentic.

These practice sessions during the first three days were framed as experiments—play around with these skills, focus on them, see what you can learn, what works, what does not work. But most of the people didn't take me up on that, they got too serious, too focused on getting the KPI, too focused on themselves ... and so there wasn't as much experimenting or curiosity as I had hoped.

With only two of us as Meta-Coach Trainers to do the benchmarking and with myself leading out

on how to benchmark at the PCMC level, we could not devote as much personal attention as I would have liked or that we did in the smaller groups. But we did see and benchmark each person who sat for assessment prior to Day 4 when we began the assessments.

Now what I really enjoyed about the PCMC experience was that we had really “the cream of the crop” in the audience— those people who not only had studied coaching and learned Meta-Coaching, but more than 60 percent had been on the Assist Team at least once, and some many times. These also are the people who have a coaching practice or are in the process of launching a coaching practice. So they are earnest. It’s important to them. The fact that they spent the holidays— Christmas eve and Christmas day engaged in this!

The Assessments occurred on Day 4 to 6. Each person coached for 45 to 50 min., then I and Mandy gave feedback for 30 minutes, scoring, and opened up for questions which we focused on the learnings people made or needed to make. With each session, new issues, challenges, and questions arose.

### **Discoveries in PCMC Training**

I think it was obvious to everyone that all of the advanced skills of coaching are based on the basic skills. At the PCMC level you cannot coach better than you can listen or better than you can support or better than you can question! The core competencies at the ACMC level not only still count—*they count even more*. You cannot move to the more advanced skills if you do not have the foundational skills. This also applies for the well-formed outcome questions. These are still just as relevant— if not more so. Advancing to the next level of expertise is *not* outgrowing the core skills, it is learning them so well, over-learning them, so that they are completely at the coach’s access. It is *fully integrating* them so they become your way of being as a coach.

### **What distinguishes the PCMC level coaching?**

Many things. At the PCMC level of coaching, the coach will be more challenging and direct because this is the heart of coaching. And with that directness, there will be much more succinctness as the coach quickly and in a brief ways asks questions or set frames that facilitates getting to the Inner Game. The coach will be doing more inferential listening and so listening much more deeply which allows her to get to the heart of the client’s meanings with more speed and elegance. At the PCMC level, the coach will be calling for meta-moments to slow the conversation down, clarify the semantically loaded words and statements which are entrance ways into the heart. And because of all of this, the coach’s timing will be superb in catching the coaching moments and utilizing them effectively.

We emphasize getting inside to the Inner Game from the beginning of Module I, *Coaching Essentials* and through *Coaching Genius* and all the way through *Coaching Mastery*. This now becomes essential and the center of PCMC coaching. And because of this— the Coach now is benchmarked on his skills of framing and pattern detection. These are Inner Game meta-skills without which a person cannot coach at this level.

If you listen to someone who truly is at the PCMC level, you will hear someone constantly

checking his understanding, testing the client's words and commitment, clarifying the inner semantics of the client's words and mental map, and locking down what they want and the kind of conversation they want. The conversation like none-other will be focused, direct, fierce, intense, intimate, challenging, confrontative and leading the client to where the client has said she wants to go.