

MORPHEUS

**QUESTIONING, LISTENING
INSPIRING**

VOLUME VIII

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“MORPHEUS” — 2016

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From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus #1
January 6, 2016

HOW TO RUN A MCF CHAPTER

I thought the best way to start the new year was to write about the MCF Chapters. So here goes. “As a Licensed Meta-Coach, *you have the right and privilege to start a MCF Chapter.*” That’s what I say on Day 8 at every ACMC and have since 2003. Why? Because one of the key principles of our Neuro-Semantic vision is to create an international community of professional men and women who are colleagues and collaborators in something bigger than themselves. We want to create as flat an organization as possible. And one way to do that is to encourage every licensed Meta-Coach and Trainer to take responsibility and leadership according to their skills and interests.

MCF Chapters

A chapter is most fundamentally a meeting of Meta-Coaches for the purpose of supporting each other in the practice and experience of Meta-Coaching. As a Meta-Coach, you have the right to start a Chapter, the vision and mission of each chapter is simple: *Support and Promote Meta-Coaching and Meta-Coaches.*

There are a lots of different ways to run a chapter. Primarily a chapter is a *Practice Group* and so what you did in the *Coaching Mastery training for ACMC credentials*, you can do in the practice groups:

- Present 15 to 30 minutes of some facet of Meta-Coaching: Axes of Change, the definition and sub-skills of Listening, a common Meta-Program in clients, etc.
- Set up triune coaching groups (groups of three people): coach, client, and meta-person and do 30 minute (or 45 minute) coaching sessions.
- Then do a review where questions and concerns are addressed.

That is what most often occurs at MCF chapters. But you can design Chapters to do many other things:

- Focus a particular Chapters meeting (or meetings) on a specific topic. You could focus on each of the eight (8) models of Meta-Coaching. Spend one week or more on each model. Ask different members to make the presentation.
- Focus on the Business of Coaching. You could spend one meeting each month on some aspect of the business of coaching (e.g., first week of each month). Or do a series: five weeks on completing your Business Plan.
- Focus one meeting a month as an open meeting and use it to invite people who you want to influence: HR people, managers, business owners, etc. Have one to three participants present an “Introduction to the Meta-Coaching System.”
- As the years pass and the Meta-Coaches in a Chapter become increasingly skilled, they can use the Chapter as a “Master Mind” group for working on the advanced Coaching Skills of PCMC and MCMC.

Additionally, you can use the Chapters for developing the Meta-Coaching Community.

- Meet once a month for a meal. It could be potluck (everybody brings a dish) or meeting in a restaurant. Use the meeting as a social so people get to know each other on a more personal

basis.

- Plan a Conference. The MCF chapters in Mexico, Panama, New Zealand, Indonesia and other places have done this. They have conducted One Day Coaching Conferences, dividing the task of keynotes speeches and workshops among their members and make it open so that it promotes Meta-Coaching in that area. Conference had been conduct with as few as 50 people attending to as many as 160.
- Take Meta-Coaching to a Coaching Conference or Congress. Other MCF Chapters have scheduled to have a booth at a conference, printed copies of the Meta-Coaching Brochure (that is on the website, www.meta-coaching.org), and manned the booth to talk Meta-Coaching to those attending.

Considerations

- Leadership is the key. The key to any successful venture is leadership and this is true for running effective MCF chapters. Those that work best do so because *there is one person who cares about it, is passionate about developing high quality Meta-Coaches in their city or country, and leads the way*. Without a single leader or a leadership team, the MCF chapters sputter along without someone to be pushing it.
- Attitude is another key. The attitude of the people at the chapter will determine if the spirit of the chapter is positive or negative. Don't let a pessimist take charge! Nor a mis-matcher! These are valuable meta-programs, but not for leadership. Those leading need to have an optimistic, resilient, passionate, and caring attitude.
- Reframing is a central skill. As concerns and problems arise that need to be addressed, the skill that's required is reframing. Then those leading can put a positive spin on what happens and not be a victim of someone else setting a negative frame. Otherwise a Chapter could become a place for complaining and griping.

Meta-Coach Foundation

Written by Cheryl Lucas
2012 MCF President
Adapted, 2016 by L. Michael Hall

The secret of the success of the MCF is that its leadership and commitment is community driven. This is vital to the ongoing growth and the professional development of the Meta-Coaches and to the Meta-Coach System®.

The MCF, through its chapters and its Regional Directors role, are integral parts that ensure on the visibility of Meta-Coaching in every city and country. To be a MCF Chapter and to be recognized, recommended, and advertised as a MCF Chapter, the following practices are to be followed:

- The Chapters are designed primarily for Meta-Coaches, their ongoing development and success.
- Coaches from other Coach Training School are welcomed to attend the chapters and to learn about the Meta-Coaching system.
- A primary focus of the Chapters is to operate as a Meta-Coach practice group and therefore to practice the Meta-Coach models, skills, and processes.
- Any Meta-Coach has the right, and then responsibility, to start a Chapter. To do so, contact the Regional Director and let him or her know your intentions. That Director is there to support all of the Chapters in that region.
- Another basic design of the MCF Chapters as well as the Regional Director (RD) meetings is to develop the 3-fold focus of Meta-Coaching, and the systemic thinking of the Meta Coach System®:
 1. Who you are as a Coach
 2. What you do as a Coach
 3. Your Coaching Practice as a business.
- Some Chapters in the past have over-relied on getting speakers from other groups to come in and present. As a result, we have decided that 75% of presentations during a year are to be delivered by Meta-Coaches and should be about Meta-Coaching. This leaves 25%, at most, to be about or from other disciplines.
- For the speakers who are not Meta-Coaches, whatever Model is presented needs to be related to Meta-Coaching. In this way they need to examine the Neuro-Semantic and Meta-Coaching websites to be informed about who they are talking to, and to be able to ask informed questions.
- When someone from another discipline presents something, a Meta-Coach needs to do a summary in conclusion to show the similarities between that other model and Meta-Coaching. This is to prevent the Chapter for becoming a vehicle for those from another model to infiltrate and/or take over.

The Foundations of the Meta-Coaching System and therefore of the MCF:

As a Licensed Meta-Coach and a member of one of the MCF Chapters, the foundation for our success and our high standards in the field of Coaching require the following:

- Follow the Ethical Guidelines for Meta-Coaches. These are in the *Coaching Mastery* (ACMC) manual.

- Conduct the Chapter in alignment with the ISNS License and Certification Agreement and the ISNS Vision, Mission and values.
- Stay in “good standing” with the MCF and ISNS. Yearly fee, and resolving conflicts if or when they occur using the Conflict Resolution Process.
- Familiarize the members of the Chapter with the ethical guidelines, agreements, conflict resolutions, and criteria from time to time.
- Use the MCF Logo for all communications posted about the MCF chapters.

The focus of the MCF Chapters as practice groups are for coaches to practice and develop their coaching skills, to receive feedback, and to gain more depth in their understanding of the MC Models. The sessions are structured in this way as the benchmarking of each session counts towards Continued Professional Development and addresses requirements to keep an ACMC License current and will count toward the next level of the coaches development. An example for how to structure a MCF Chapter session could be this:

Schedule the Chapter meeting for 2.5 hours every other week:

- Welcome (5 minutes)
- Presentation of chosen topic (MC skills, MC models,, etc.) (25)
- Questions and discussion (15 min.)
- Tea and coffee break (15 min.)
- Coaching session (25 min)
- Feedback (15 min)
- Coaching session (25 min)
- Feedback (15 min)
- Take aways and Learnings.

As the intention of these session are for *skill development*— for the skill development of those in the coaching session and second for those in the benchmarking role. It’s good to use these sessions to support Meta-Coaches in developing the next level set of skills: Framing, pattern detection, tasking, management of time, wrapping up, etc.

As Meta-Coach Chapters, these are opportunities for Meta-Coaches also to develop their skills of presenting, developing a strong personal knowledge base about coaching, learning the MC models, etc. These opportunities are to provide a safe learning environment for receiving coaching for personal development and receiving feedback.

MCF Chapters should be held regularly and consistently so that Meta-Coaches and others can depend on the meetings. It’s up to the Chapter Leader to provide information about when, where, and other details of the Chapters.

Regional Director Role:

The Region Director (RD) for any given area is to hold and support the translation of the Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching vision. The RD meetings are recommended to be held every 8 to 12 weeks with the intention of staying in touch and knowing the needs and development of each local MCF Chapter and the implementing of the MCF Chapter Policy. The role is to support the upholding of credentials and implementation of the Meta Coach System®.

- Continued Education prerequisites and standards.

- Promoting and marketing Meta Coach Brand.
- Research projects. An environment and space were research and projects are developed and presented.
- Motivating and managing the intake of annual MCF renewals and membership fees.
- Promoting the values and benefits of keeping APMC Licenses current.
www.Metacoachfoundation.org

BRANDING META-COACHING

L. Michael Hall

While I think you already know this as a licensed and certified Meta-Coach, I think it bears repeating: Your success in your own practice and our success together as a community depends on all of us working together collaboratively. Doing that enables us all us to build the brand of Coaching that we do— the fully systematic approach that we call Meta-Coaching.

If you are making presentations in your community or at Coaching conferences and want materials on Meta-Coaching, they are available to you. All you have to do is ask. Most people present the “World Class Coaching” materials (that you have in the back of your Coaching Mastery training manual). Recently several Meta-Coaches have presented at conferences or at various Coaching practice groups— The Axes of Change, the Meaning/ Performance Axes, the Matrix Model (those are the ones that I know about).

In building up the brand of Meta-Coaching or Self-Actualization Coaching under the auspices of the ISNS, it’s important that we develop and expand the world-wide Foundation —The Meta-Coach Foundation. To do that, we have designated the annual fee to go to the Meta-Coach Foundation (MCF). That money supports the websites and helps to create the validity and credibility of Meta-Coaching. Ultimately, the money will also be used for research.

Every time you help run, participate, or create a Meta-Coach Foundation Chapter in your community, you are helping to build the brand. Every time you use the terminology and introduce the idea of coaching at a higher level, you are building the brand with the rest of us.
www.Metacoachfoundation.org

From: L. Michael Hall
2015 Morpheus #2
January 14, 2016

SURPRISES IN THE BOOK

ACHIEVING PEAK PERFORMANCE

Recently I reviewed the 2009 book, *Achieving Peak Performance* which was the fifth volume of the Meta-Coaching series. Why? Because I was working through the new training and manual on *Unleashing Productivity*. I will be delivering that training in May in Moscow and needed to deliver to the Russian translators a more current manual. So I read the book for the first time *as a book*, and several things surprised me about it. I had really not looked at the book in over six years and with the passing of that much time, I had forgotten about many of the things I put in that book.

1) *Lots of Patterns*. The first thing that surprised me was that I had absolutely filled that book with coaching patterns—some 39 patterns in that single book. If you do Performance Coaching, here is a book that will give you a wide-range of focused conversations to help people close the knowing-doing gap. In fact, *closing the knowing-doing gap* is the central theme of this book. To that end, chapter three has 15 patterns designed to “Get Yourself to Take Effective Action.”

Chapter four focuses on “The Art of Implementation” and offers seven implementation patterns. Then, because we ask the interference question, “What stops you?” chapter five is on “Eliminating Performance blocks and Interferences” and yet another seven patterns. One thing I forgot that I put in that book was an entire chapter on “Life in the Zone of Peak Performance.” That chapter (chapter seven) presents the Self-Actualization Quadrants.

“Self-Actualization is the center focus of Neuro-Semantics because our aim is to embody meaning as we perform our highest and best meanings.” (p. 201)

2) *Details about Deliberate Practice*. Another surprise was a full description of the secret ingredient given by Anders Ericsson, the Swedish Psychology who did the longitudinal study on *expertise*. Chapter eight is titled, “Who Wants to be an Expert?” and delves into the concept of *deliberate practice*. This does not refer simply to practice, but to a very special kind of practice. It is the kind of practice that we coaches to learn, and engage in, with the supervision at *Coaching Mastery*. When we provide feedback and identify one or two things to do as “next steps” for upgrading your skills, we attempt to give it in specifically precise terms so that you can then deliberately practice.

That chapter has extensive information about the variables involved in acquisition of expertise. Most of it comes from Ericsson, his “ten year rule,” and emphasis on a supportive social environment, adaptability, meaningful patterns, habitualizing the basics, and meta-cognitive skills like reflective learning (p. 221).

3) *Advanced List of Well-Formed Outcome Questions*. Probably one of the key things in the book that will really help you as a Meta-Coach is the section on *The Meta-Levels of Performance* (pp. 176-185). I had never noticed it before, but the 35 questions in the checklist (183-185) as “Neuro-Semantic Questions and Meta-Questions for Exploration” in helping a person establish the steps and performances so that he or she can be fully successful and productive ... makes up an advanced form

of the WFO questions.

When I originally put that list together, I was not even thinking about the Well-Formed Outcome Questions. Yet in now revisiting the list, it's obvious that this is a more extensive list of the key questions for designing a strategy that will increase a person's productivity. Check it out for yourself. *Should you get the book?* Yes, if you are a Meta-Coach and a Neuro-Semanticist. It's all about getting what you know into what you do and your "way of being in the world." I'm sure you will be glad you did.

Patterns in the book — *Achieving Peak Performance*

- * Mind-to-Muscle Pattern

Do you have a Strategy? Strategy Elicitation & Delivery

- * New Behavior Generator
- * Skill Development
- * Representational Clarity
- * Meta-Stating Ownership
- * Responsibility To / For
- * Intentionality
- * Meta-Stating Decisiveness
- * Feedback: Riding the Loops
- * Accountability Shaping
- * First Step Approximations
- * Propulsion System
- * Creating Anti-Wiggle Room
- * Apply to Self
- * Taking Performance to the Next Level
- * Performance Reviews

The Art of Implementation

- * Meta-Yes-ing
- * Personalizing
- * Rehearsal
- * Swishing
- * Meta-Stating Proactivity
- * Time Management
- * Time for a Change

Eliminating Performance Blocks

- * Meta-Stating Emotions
- * Dragon Taming / Slaying
- * Excuse Blow-Out
- * Meta-stating NO
- * Fear Blow-Out
- * Meta-stating courage
- * Meta-Stating Procrastination

Experiencing Peak Performances

- * Accessing Personal Genius
- * Gestalting Higher States
- * Super-Charging Attitude
- * Meta-stating Efficiency
- * Meta-Alignment
- * Stretching
- * Leveraging High Return Behavior
- Persistence

Measuring Performances

- * An Implementation Plan
- * Key Performance Indicators

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #3
January 20, 2016

THE ART OF ASKING META-QUESTIONS

“Meta-Questions! Meta-Questions! I know them, I can ask the ten meta-questions that we practiced at Coaching Mastery, but when I start coaching, I forget them. What can I do to be better at meta-questions?” That question was recently sent to me by a Meta-Coach. Nor was it the first time I’ve heard it. It seems that many Meta-Coaches struggle with being skilled in asking meta-questions.

So, what’s the story that makes asking meta-questions seemingly difficult?
What can I do to integrate meta-questions into my coaching style?

In answer, I will first re-state what a *meta-question* is, our understanding of *meta-questions* in the coaching experience, and why they are so important. Our working definition of a meta-question is that it is a question about how you are experiencing your experience. Regular primary questions start the process by asking about the experience:

When did you have that experience? Where? With whom?
What was the context? What was the experience like?
What did you think and feel?

All of these precision questions help to *ground* the experience and give you sufficient content and context about the experience. When you then follow up with meta-questions, you *move inside the experience* and invite your client to go into *the inner game* of his beliefs, values, understandings, expectations, memories, imaginations, permissions, taboos, and more.

What do you believe about experience X?
Do you value or dis-value experience X? If so, what do you value about it?
As you have experience X, how does that affect your sense of yourself?

As you can probably tell, these meta-questions enable the conversation that you’re having to become intimately deep. You are now moving toward what’s really important and significant to the person. You stop skating on the surface as you move inside to the heart of things—the person’s attributed meanings. Usually this is where the coaching becomes *real*, becomes *personal*, and your client starts to come out from behind his personas and masks and gets *real*.

If you don’t ask meta-questions, then your coaching stays superficial and a regular kind of conversation. It fails to become what Coaching should be—a *conversation like none other*, one that allows a client to confront her inner reality and make the life-changing alterations to free the person and unleash best potentials.

The art of asking meta-questions begins with the NLP modeling thinking. Start with the realization that *every experience has a hidden structure*. When you realize this and operate from this realization, you will want to be eliciting the person’s strategy for how he does his experience. If he says he procrastinates, think, “How do you do that?” If she says she makes excuses, think, “What is the structure of excuse-making?” *This modeling perspective* enables you to accept what the person offers without getting caught up in the content. It enables you to use the know-nothing perspective to find

out how this incredible person before you creates her reality. The experience is a process, has steps, and it works. Your job? Find out how it works.

The art of asking meta-questions entails this meta-perspective. So dis-engage from *your need* to fix things, help, succeed as a coach and focus on *seeking first to understand your client on your client's terms*. That will enable you to explore with your client and ask questions whose answers lie outside of their conscious awareness.

What the positive intention behind making that excuse?

And let's say that's true, so what? What's the meaning that's governing that intention?

Now the art of those questions lie in *holding the content* and going deeper (higher) with a fascinating curiosity, not knowing what you will get and all the while staying in a state of being amazed and caring for your client.

“You say the positive intention is living up to your responsibilities, what do you believe about living up to your responsibilities?”

The next aspect of the art of asking meta-questions is to listen— really listen— did the person answer the question? Frequently they do not. Frequently they do not go inside and up into their meaning structure. Instead, they go out. They talk about what they will do, should do, what they feel, etc. Instead of going to the meaning frames governing their experience (which your question invited them), they go out trying to fix something out in the external world.

To ask meta-questions, you've got to notice this and come back to the question. It's precisely because most people do not easily go inside and access their meanings, that they need you— need a Coach. As a coach, this is what you have to help them do that.

“Let me come back to your beliefs about ‘living up to your responsibilities,’ can we do that? [Yes.] Okay, so if this is your intention, there must be some belief about that. What is that?”

In summary, the art of asking meta-questions entails the following:

- 1) Set your intention to evoke a conversation that goes inside to the inner game. Aim to elicit our intimately deep conversation like non-other.
- 2) Adopt a modeling perspective. “My client's experience is X, so how does he do X?” “What is his internal strategy for doing X?”
- 3) Disengage your need to give advice, fix, and “help” your client. Embrace the idea that your client has all the needed resources to do that herself if only you evoke and facilitate the unleashing and coaching process.
- 4) Hold the meta-frame and keep noticing if your client goes inside or not, and keep asking the meta-questions to expose the hidden structure that the client is using to create his reality.

And if you have questions about this, write to me at meta@acsol.net.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #4
January 27, 2016

NEVER ASK “WHY?” WHEN YOUR CLIENT IS IN A NEGATIVE STATE

During *Coaching Mastery* you have heard it said many times— “Don’t ask ‘why’ when your client is in a negative state.” And you probably heard the reason why: If your client is in a negative state and you ask “Why are you feeling that?” “Why did you do that?” the person will give you reasons! That is, the person will justify it, rationalize it, come up with some understanding to validate it. Simple enough.

Well, it is actually more complex than that. That’s because the *why question* does more. What the *why question* assumes is that there is a *cause* for the person’s state or experience and that the person consciously chose it. “Why did you not get this report in on time?” “Why did you get upset and say those cruel words?” *Why* invites a person to think that there’s a single, and simple reason for why things happened, and that all we have to do is understand the why, then we would change. Yet that’s a very big assumption, one that frames things in ways that really do not support the coaching process.

Further, is that true? Consider typical why questions: “Why did you get depressed?” “Why did you yell at your kid?” “Why did you do that wrong?” The problem with all of these why questions is that they frame human experience far too simplistically and as if knowing why solves the problem. But does it?

The problem with exploring the reasons why something happened is that merely *knowing why* very seldom ever provides a solution. This is actually one of the biggest problems with Psychoanalysis. Even today, the “average” length of psychoanalysis is over 700 sessions or over seven years. Seven years! An hour session two or three times a week! Yet for all of that exploration, all of that trying to understand *why*, the person still has to live with the condition and deal with it.

Why doesn’t provide the same thing as a solution. *Why* gives you reasons, “understandings,” justifications, and explanations and then after all of that, you still have to deal with the situation. That’s why Fritz Perls put a tremendous emphasis on *not asking why*. That was Gestalt Therapy. And in the book that Richard Bandler transcribed, *The Gestalt Approach and Eye Witness to Therapy*. (1973), this is what Perls said:

“Therapy oriented to the past is invalid because the *whys* of the patient’s neurosis really explain very little. ‘Why’ opens up an endless series of questions which can only be answered by a first cause that is self-caused. How will an explanation which makes the aunt the villain in the piece solve his problem. Such an explanation only gives the patient license to project all his difficulties onto the aunt. It gives him a scapegoat, not an answer.” (Perls,

“The ‘why’ questions produce only pat answers, defensiveness, rationalizations, excuses, and the delusion that an event can be explained by a single cause. Not so with the ‘how.’ Those inquires into

the structure of an event, and once the structure is clear all the whys are automatically answered. ... If we spend our time looking for causes instead of structure we may as well give up the idea of therapy and join the group of worrying grandmothers who attack their prey with such pointless questions as ‘Why did you catch that cold?’ ‘Why have you been so naughty.’” (p. 77)

“In our electronic age, we don’t ask why anymore, we ask how. We investigate the structure, and when we understand the structure, then we can *change* the structure.” (p. 122)

Those powerful arguments against asking *the why questions* originated with Perls and came directly into NLP. If you ask *why questions* as a coach, you are moving away from the uniqueness of coaching and heading back to the assumptions of psychoanalysis.

It’s for these reasons, that we ask *how questions*. With *how questions* you will get much richer information, structural information, and information that your client can then use to find solutions. The *how question* invites a person to look at the entire process that has led to a certain result. In Meta-Coaching, when you hold this frame about *how* and ask sufficient number of questions, you begin to elicit the person’s Strategy Process and when you can *hear* that, you are engaged at a Level 3 competency level of Listening.

How elicits strategy. *How* gives you an inside look at the person’s inner game which then enables them to step up to the point of responsibility and choice. “Responsibility” because they begin to realize how that their response is within their powers. “Choice” because now they can begin to make new and better choices. All of this is because whatever your client is experiencing, your client is creating. Present tense. Your client *is currently creating* it. Sure, he probably doesn’t know that. Sure, she isn’t aware of it. To try to persuade them of that will usually elicit resistance. That’s why you ask questions. That’s why you ask curiously and not rhetorically. That’s why you start from not-knowing and seek to find out. And as you find out, they find out.

Now *the why questions* I’m addressing here are the why questions about history, cause, and explanation. There’s an entirely different why question, when you ask about the why of importance, of value, and of intention. That’s entirely different. Ask that one.

When a person is not in the best state, not highly resourceful, but in a negative state— then *why* will deepen that state, make it worse, and amplify it. That’s why in the supervision at *Coaching Mastery* and at MCF Chapters, we train those on the Assist Team to listen for this kind of why and interrupt the coach to ask, “Do you really want your client to answer that question?” “Where will that question take your client?”

The principle of Meta-Coaching derived from basic NLP: *Do not ask why when your client is in a negative state*. This will be good for you, and it will be great for your client.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #5
February 3, 2016

THE ART OF CHALLENGING

If you are going to coach, you are going to have to challenge people. It comes with the job. So, how are you at the skill of challenging? A coach who doesn't challenge is like an electrical plug that's dead. A coach who doesn't challenge cheats the client of what a coaching client needs and wants—challenge. Last year I wrote about “challenge” several times, you can check out the 2015 series: Feb. 11, #6; Feb. 18 #7, Feb. 25 #8; August 26 #33.

Why the Importance of Challenging?

We need challenge because without something to push against, we won't grow. Everyone who has worked out at a gym knows that. Muscles grow and develop when they are challenged, otherwise they atrophy. Challenge means pushing yourself, it means expending the effort to do more and/or to do better. Challenge then is required if we are to develop as persons and develop our skills. That's why it is so important. And that's why clients come for coaching!

Challenge is involved in all athlete events and there it's obvious to see the need for a strong opponent. If all we test our skills against weak opponents, our best will not come out and will not arise. We need to wrestle against a worthy opponent, someone who is our equal, and who will test our mettle. That's why challenge is the basis of all competitive games. While it is fun to play chess, tennis, basketball, etc. with a child, such play will not push you to do your best. You need more of a challenge than that.

Where there's a challenge, there is a risk. Where there challenge there is also the phenomenon of taking a risk. So ask yourself or your client some risk questions:

Is there a risk? What's at risk in what you are doing? What are you putting at risk? Are you risking time, effort, money, personnel, your reputation or what?

The contrast is playing it safe. The person who “plays it safe” by choosing small and easy goals is risking nothing and therefore playing small. Yet life becomes meaningful when there is risk. When there is risk, we seek to come more alive, more present, and more focused. We often measure the value of an experience in proportion to the risk that is taken. When a person plays himself small, he is risking success. That's also one way to not “fail” since if you are not taking on much, there little chance of failing. Of course, that's the coward's way to live life.

At the point in his life when Abraham Maslow discovered that a non-directive approach to self-actualization does not work. That it will not occur “naturally,” he noted this: “The good of other people must be provoked.” (1966, p. 31). That is, people have to be challenged! They have to be provoked, called upon to extend themselves in order to bring out the person's best. That's what you facilitate as a coach—the direction where self-actualization occurs.

Further, to get into the flow zone, guess what you have to do? That's right— *take on a challenge*.

Rise up and you push yourself to the edge of your skills. That's what Csikszentmihalyi discovered in his research about happiness. In the end he created a diagram to illustrate the dynamics involved in finding flow— challenge and competence. The integration of these two elements creates the “flow zone.” Yes, when you experience flow that is the sense that everything is just right and you are in the zone of optimum performance. Yet that flow is not “easy,” or “soft.” In fact, during the experience, people say that they feel that it was one of the toughest, most challenging things they have ever taken on. The happiness comes later. It results from knowing that you took on a challenge and met it.

In the experience of flow, you sometimes confronts daunting odds that you never thought you could handle and yet, in the end, you come out of it having demonstrated your mettle. By persevering in facing difficulties you enter the flow zone and becomes more of yourself.

How to Challenge As a Coach

1) Stop and check.

The most simple thing to do is to ask, “Is this challenging? Do you feel this coaching conversation today as a stretch for you? Am I provoking you sufficiently? What would need to happen for you to feel challenged in a way that will serve to unleash more of your potentials?”

2) Challenge your Client's Clarity.

When you ask a clarity check question, then follow up. “Is that now clear? Can you make a picture from the words that describe the solution?” “Yes? Then tell me about what you see.”

3) Challenge your Client's Sensitive Areas.

Challenge what is unspoken or sensitive in your client. Ask, “What are you thinking about that you have not said? What are you hoping that I won't ask about or bring up? What about X—could that be emotional for you to go there?” “How would that be emotional for you?”

4) Reflect after the Coaching.

How am I doing in terms of awakening this person? Did I invite her to stretch? Is it time to do a little teasing with my client? How would I do that best? What does this client need to be challenged about?” “Am I disturbing my client's peace and inducing states of discomfort?”

5) Challenge your client to face Reality.

Challenge your clients to face reality on its terms and check out if his or her mental maps and expectations are realistic. “Is that realistic?” “If you think it is, how is it?” “How will you be able to do that in that time-frame or with your current skills?”

Here's a challenge to you as a coach— *develop your challenging skills and create a great coaching practice!*

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #6
February 10, 2016

THE ART OF ASKING DISTINCTION QUESTIONS

Last year (2015) I began noticing another new category of questions. I'm going to call these, *Distinction Questions*. These are the questions that invite a client to make a distinction that the client may not be making. In a sense they are Socratic Questions because by asking the question in just the right way, and that sometimes means a series of questions, you lead and facilitate the person to learn a distinction that the person may not have known. Yet when you do, it unleashes in the client all sorts of new possibilities and potentials. Because of this the person will *want* to answer the question. And in answering the question, or series-of-questions, will be learning something that taps into new resources and/or de-confuses. This is what makes these *distinction questions* so powerfully profound.

I first noticed them when I caught myself asking them. Now I have to admit that, at first, I felt “bad,” as if I were cheating and doing too much leading. Later I discovered that it was mostly due to my inelegance in asking the question. As I started collecting these *distinction questions* and meditating on their structure and effect, I realized that they are sometimes similar to many of the *torpedo questions* that we introduce at the PCMC level.

As the phrase indicates, a *distinction question* is a question that calls forth an important distinction. As such it leads a person to avoid confusing things that he might otherwise fuse-together (literally, *con-fuse*) and treat as if they are one and the same thing. By asking this kind of question, you invite the person to make a new distinction. By asking the question, you facilitate the person to create a mental map of more precision, specificity, and therefore clarity about things.

The first time I asked a *distinction question* that I was *conscious* of asking, I asked a lady this: “Do you know the difference between self-esteem and self-confidence?” But that was far too clumsy and awkward. The question was a “yes/no” question, and even in asking, I felt it was too direct and too controlling.

The next time I rephrased it to make it more elegant, “How well do distinguish your *value as a person* from what *you do* as an expression of yourself?” The person said, “What? [pause] ... I don't get what you are asking.” I continued, “Well you do things as expressions of yourself [“yes”] and you esteem yourself as a human being. That's about your value as a person [“oh, yes, I get that.”]. Okay, so how clear is that distinction in your mind and in your emotions— your self-value as a person and your activities, your self-confidence in what you do?”

In that instance, the person had one of those sudden *Eureka! Moments*. “Oh! Oh my! I never thought of that in that way. That's great! What I do is *not the same* as my value as a person!”

That's how I stumbled upon *distinction questions*. Since then I have been collecting a series of

distinctions that you, as a Meta-Coach, can use to enable clients to avoid confusing things that are unequal, and that are not the same. Then, by distinguishing what they confuse, they develop a new level of clarity about something critical to their development, resourcefulness, and self-actualization. Here is a list of *distinction questions* that we teach in APG:

- *Self-Esteem / Self-Confidence*: How do you distinguish you as a person, your self-esteem, and you as having developed confidence in what you can do, your self-confidence?
- *Responsibility For / To*: Are you actually responsible *for* that or are you responsible *to someone* “for” something that is part of your agreed-upon relationship? Is that a responsibility that you have? How exactly are you responsible *for* her response?
- *Reasons/ Excuses*: Is that statement a legitimate reason that you can’t do X or is that an illegitimate reason, actually an excuse that you are using to get out from doing X? If it is legitimate, what standards or criteria are you using that legitimizes it?
- *Cause / Blame*: You say that ‘X caused Y.’ Are you holding X responsible because X’s response directly caused Y or are you just blaming X? What did X do that directly made Y happen?
- *Feel / Emote*: You say “you feel X.” Are you speaking about a sensation in your body, some kinesthetic sensation, or are you referring to an emotion?
- *Total / Degree*: When you say that you are angry (or experiencing any other emotion), what is the degree of that emotion? Is it low, medium, or high? Is it manageable or unmanageable?
- *Cause / Symptom*: I hear you speaking about X, what is that for you, a cause or a symptom?

Distinction questions invite clarity. They are great to ask when a person lacks clarity about something and needs that clarity in order to succeed in reaching an outcome or in being able to manage one’s life more effectively. Ask *clarity questions* about some terminology from your experiences in NLP, Neuro-Semantics, Meta-States, etc. Then when you recognize that there are finer distinctions, critical details, that the person may be missing, use that as an excellent moment to ask a *distinction question*. Doing this puts you on the level “3” of Questioning. You are asking a high quality question!

Now you have to be careful. If you are too direct and inelegant as I was in the story above, your question may come across as rhetorical, or worse, manipulative. So beware! Think about *how to ask the distinction* that you think your client needs to make. Also, you may want to frame what you are about to do:

“I have heard some things in our conversation that there may be a missing distinction and which could be helpful to you. It could possibly make all the difference in the world to you. So here is a distinction question or two for us to check. The questions are designed to identify a difference that makes a difference. Are you ready for this exploration?”

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #7
February 24, 2016

WHEN A CLIENT EXPERIENCES CONFLICT

One of the characteristics of coaching clients and one of the challenges they typically face involves *conflict*. Either they are in conflict with themselves, or they are in conflict with others, or they are in conflict with something in their world. Coaching clients come to you in order to get resources to deal with such conflicts and to unleash their resilience, perseverance, hidden talents, and more. So, as a Meta-Coach, when you get a new client, in addition to establishing what they want—what they *really* want, and especially if they do not know, check with them about the conflicts they have in their lives. “What do you currently experience as a conflict in your life?”

Levels of Conflicts

One of the first explorations to have with your client regarding conflict is the level of conflict. “At what level are you experiencing conflict in your life?” “Are you experiencing inner or outer conflict?” In distinguishing inner and outer below, in the following I have used the Matrix distinctions.

Inner Conflicts:

- 1) *Self*. The deepest conflicts are the conflicts within—the conflicts that a person may have with his self, his understanding and values as a person.
- 2) *Meanings and Intentions*. The conflicts here are over the person’s mental mapping (or modeling) of understandings about things, how things work, what they mean, and what intentions he should set as his purpose. It may be conflicts about staying focused.
- 3) *Powers*. Less deep, but still inside are the conflicts a person may have with her powers of thinking, emoting, speaking, and acting. Here the conflicts may also be in one’s body, neurology, and health.
- 4) *Powers // States*. Still within and yet less deep would be conflicts of the person with regard to responsibility, to self-control, to discipline, to being proactive, to taking the initiative, following orders, etc.

Outer Conflicts:

- 5) *Others*. The next level of conflicts have to do with other people, it may be about relationships, groups, getting along with people, communicating effectively, etc.
- 6) *Others / World*. Then there are conflicts with one’s culture, whether the ethnic culture, business culture, family, etc.
- 7) *World*. Then there are the conflicts with one’s physical environment, conflicts over politics, policies, regulations, etc.
- 8) *Time*. Conflicts over memories of the past, imaginations about the future, being able to manage being present in the present moment.

Conflict Resolution Understandings and Skills

Once you have identified the context of the conflict, the next question to explore relates to what your

client thinks and believes about the conflict. Does your client have a healthy attitude about life's conflicts? Does he have an unhealthy attitude? What skills does she have in dealing with conflict in order to resolve it.

“What do you understand about this conflict? What do you believe is causing it or contributing to it?” “What do you understand that the conflict means to you and to your life?” “What skills do you have to address this conflict and resolve it?” “What have you already done and what do you think are your next steps?”

All of this is information gathering. It is identifying the need and gaining some awareness of the need and enabling your client to have a *Need Analysis Conversation* with you. Your challenge during this process is *not* to solve it, and *not* to jump into going for a quick fix. Embrace the conflict, accept it, and explore it with your client. If you let your client talk out his understanding, he will often come upon his own solution which will then enable him to own the solution and apply it.

A dependable principle when dealing with conflicts is that the *outer* conflicts are much easier to distance oneself from and deal with than the *inner* conflicts. With them it is easier to gain perspective about them and see them clearly. Not so with the inner conflicts. In fact, the deeper the inner the conflict, the more the person's participation in and responsibility for it, will tend to be the person's blind spot. It will also seem more “personal” and therefore more threatening.

As you engage in the Conflict Conversation, note if your client has a basic move-away from pattern or a move-toward conflict pattern. Here an overly strong and dominate meta-program can amplify the conflict due to the person's response style. You may therefore want to gently call your client's awareness to this pattern and see if the pattern itself is problematic and needs expanding to give him or her more flexibility.

Conflict at every level usually entails conflicting *frames*. There's a frame war underway. So flush out the frames that are in conflict to bring them into conscious awareness. At that point, go slow. Don't jump into the either/or choice, don't polarize the choices. They could be aspects of the same system and you may need a both/and approach to resolve what is a paradox, and not a true problem. Here's to some great Conflict Conversations with your clients!

From: L. Michael Hall
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Exclusive for Meta-Coaches
February 24, 2016

THE ART OF STAYING ON POINT

“*Staying on point*”— speaks about relevance and being succinct. If you do not stay on point in a coaching conversation, then you are letting the conversation become irrelevant. And if it is irrelevant, then it is *not* in service of the client and the conversation is failing to be what it should be— a conversation like none other. So, how about you? How well can you *stay on point* with a client in the coaching conversation? And if you want to learn this art, how do you do that?

To do that, you have to first of all *know the point*. So as you begin the conversation, keep asking yourself, “What is the point of this conversation? What does my client want and what kind of a conversation is my client wanting and needing?” Do you know? If not, then find out. Ask your client. And if your client also does not know, then begin with the Clarity Conversation.

Then as the conversation continues, from time to time call for one of those wonderful *meta-moments*, step back and explore:

“Are we on the right subject for you? Is this conversation relevant to what you want? How do you think the conversation is going? Is it going in a direction that’s giving you more awareness, insight, and understanding? If not, what kind of a conversation would you prefer?”

You can also check out by directly asking, “What is your point in this conversation?” Doing this will help you and your client to focus the conversation on what is most relevant to the client’s outcome. Use the *Kinds of Coaching Conversations* as a menu list: Clarity, Decision, Planning, Experiencing or Resourcing, or Change. This will help to orient both of you so you can have the best and most relevant conversation possible.

Now in listening and supporting, new coaches frequently “chase words.” This is at Level 1 on the Listening Skill. When you chase words you are constantly being sidetracked from the point. It’s therefore important to catch yourself getting seduced by the words your client uses and chasing after those words. A great way to expand your awareness of that is to record your conversation and listen back to it. In that way you can stop the recording, write down— “The point right now is ____.” And then notice if you *hold that frame* or if you keep letting it go and get sidetracked from it.

Being succinct also provides you a way to stay on point. How we often get off point is by using lots and lots of words in trying to summarize the client’s point and in doing so we confuse ourselves and misdirect ourselves. It happens! The solution? Set yourself to be brief and to the point. We call this *being succinct*. So how do you learn that? Several ways.

Get into the habit of regularly summarizing your point or another person’s point. “So your point is ...” Then state it in one sentence. State it as a bullet point. You can practice this when you read. Read one page, then go back and write three-words at the top of the page that summarizes what’s on that page. Yes, you can use four words, or five words. The idea is to *briefly* state what something

is about. And as with everything, the more you practice that, the better you will get at it.

Opposite to *staying on point* and being *succinct* is getting overwhelmed. That happens a lot in coaching when you first begin. Expect it. This usually happens because you are asking *open-ended questions* and not enough of the checking and testing questions to *close* the subject. We teach this on the second day in *Coaching Mastery* about questions. Ideally you *open up* a subject and then you *lock it down* with a testing or checking question. “Is that what you want to talk about?” “Really?” “Is that the most important thing to talk about right now?”

When you get overwhelmed, what’s happening in the coaching context is that you are getting too many subjects, themes, points on the table, and you literally don’t know which one to go with. In learning to ask the right questions, you need to grab the client’s theme or point, hold it, check with your client about what he or she means, and then test. “So this is what you want to work on? Is that right?” Once you get that, the next supporting skill is that of *holding the frame* —and in this case, holding the frame that the client has given you about what’s relevant in the conversation.

We know that questions direct consciousness. Questions focus and elicit certain responses. We also know that at the essence of coaching is asking questions. And the “right” questions are those that stick to the point, hold it, and explore it. The danger of asking the wrong question essentially involves losing the client’s point and then getting sidetracked into areas that, while they may be interesting to both of you, are off the point.

Now, what was my point in all of that?

From: L. Michael Hall
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STOP HELPING, START FACILITATING

Here's some Help for your Helping!

When coaches begin, many of them frequently use the word “help” when talking with their clients. Sometimes it seems that some of them use it dominantly to describe everything they do in the coaching relationship.

“How can I help you today?” (Wimpy opening) “What help do you need?” (Invitation for therapy) “Now for me to really help you, you need to ...” “Let me help you with that.”

But, there's a problem with this. The problem with “help” is that it presupposes you are weak and I am strong. You are unresourceful and I have the resources that can *help* you. You are uninformed and perhaps even unintelligent, and I, the intelligent one can *help* you understand. In other words, the word *help* is not helpful at all in terms of creating a sense of mutual trust and collaboration in the coaching experience. Because we “help” those who cannot help themselves, think about the coaching conversation and relationship in terms of *helping* them creates an unequal relationship. And that undermines collaboration.

So what's the solution? *Stop helping! Stop using the word “help.”* The word help does not help. It hinders and hurts. Instead think about **facilitating**. After all, that is the focus of Meta-Coaching. As a coach, you facilitate. And that, obviously, is why we developed the Facilitation Model in Meta-Coaching. That is why we train Coaching Mastering in terms of facilitating. Each day of *Coaching Mastery* highlighted another aspect of the facilitating we do in coaching.

- Facilitating relationship (Day 1) because coaching is a relationship.
- Facilitating exploration (Day 2) because the essence of coaching is asking questions.
- Facilitating performance (Day 3) because effective coaching gets results.
- Facilitating systems (Day 4) because coaching is holistic and ecological.
- Facilitating change (Day 5) because coaching is making something new and different.
- Facilitating self-actualization (Day 6) because coaching unleashes potentials.
- Facilitating business (Day 7) because coaching is a business.
- Facilitating professionalism (Day 8) because coaching requires professionals.

“Helping” doesn't help. In fact, as a coach, you can be too helpful. If you are so helpful that you are preventing your client from discovering on their own the insights and developing the skills that they need, then you are actually preventing them from growing and taking charge of their own lives. You are cheating them from the struggle. And why would you do that? Why would any coach do that? Because they care. In this case, they care *too much*.

“Helpful” coaches in this way are “helping” clients to quickly get out of emotional upset or anxiety or anger or fear or whatever. And it is usually because *the coach is uncomfortable* being in the presence of someone so emoting. This “mothering” (or fathering) is a form of co-dependency wherein a person is extending their boundary of *Responsibility For* too far and assuming

responsibilities that belong to the client.

How do you stop “help” in these unhelpful ways?

- 1) Take time to set your own boundaries for responsible for yourself and to your client. Go through the pattern in the ACMC manual on this subject (in the Power Matrix section) until you *feel the distinction in your body*.
- 2) Next, take time to mind-to-muscle the principle that your coaching clients “have all the resources they need within them.” Until you are convinced of this, you will be seduced to reach out beyond your boundaries and try to “help” them.
- 3) Begin listening for and catching your use of the word “help” as you relate to your client. When you catch it, replace it with “facilitate.”
- 4) Set a frame in your own mind that as a coach, you are *not* there to help. “I am not there to help, I am there to facilitate processes, then my client will be able to help himself or herself.”
- 5) Remind yourself that “helping” can be irritating and annoying and that most clients won’t tell you that explicitly, they will just not return for more coaching.
- 6) Remind yourself that “helping” violates the essence of coaching as *challenging*.
- 7) Consider what Maslow wrote about how “untutored people” respond when people (clients) are exploring the existential questions about life. Then decide to not be an untutored person!
“The questions that people ask in search for identity, real self, etc. are very largely ‘ought’ question. What ought I to do? What ought I to be? How should I solve this conflict situation? Should I pursue this career or that one? Should I get divorced or not? Should I live or die?”
“Most untutored people are quite willing to answer these questions directly. ‘If I were you ...’ They say, and then proceed with suggestions and advice. But technically trained people have learned that this doesn’t work or is even harmful. We don’t say what we think another ought to do.” (p. 106)

The bottom line? Stop “helping” your clients and focus on *facilitating* them in such a way that they learn how to “help” themselves through their own self-awareness and ownership of responsibility.

From: L. Michael Hall
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Exclusive for Meta-Coaches
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TAKING YOUR SKILLS UP TO GROUP AND TEAM COACHING

If you think one-to-one coaching is challenging, and that in the Meta-Coaching System we have an extensive list of skills and sub-skills (nearly 100 sub-skills for the basic 7 skills), then take a look at all of the skills and sub-skills which we have set out for Group & Team Coaching. There are many, many, many more skills! This reflects the challenge when you move from individual coaching to group coaching. Now the amount of focus you have to maintain multiplies exponentially. In addition to that there are also additional skills to learn: framing, governing, opening and closing a meeting, and challenging.

Now over the past 3 years, the process of the training of Group and Team Meta-Coaching has developed into two parts. This is the current program for Group & Team Coaching:

Part I: The Training of the Skills for Coaching a Group. In those three days we focus first on the individual psychology that comes into the group, then on group dynamics present in the group, then on the skills and the nature of conflict in a group. Then you experience group experiences 14 times as you learn the various “slices” of skills and knowledge about groups.

Part II: The Integration into Practice of the Group Coaching Skills. The “parts” of group coaching learned in Part I are here pulled together in Part II and unified as we do complete Group and Team Coaching sessions. The second part invites you to learn to think and work systemically with a group. You get practice in anticipating the Group and Team Structure. Sometimes you are inside the groups, sometimes as part of the audience watching, sometimes as you participant in learning the benchmarks for effective group coaching.

Last week we completed the Assessment in Jakarta, Indonesia. We had 43 for the 3-day training and 17 for the last 4 days, and 10 of them sat for assessment, six reached the competency level. Those who did not pretty well knew that they would not because they had also *not* reached the competency level of ACMC. So they struggled with the core skills of state induction and meta-questioning. They will set for assessment again next year in Bali after the ACMC. What I think became obvious to all is why we have set ACMC and the core skills as prerequisite for GTMC.

Now what is fascinating is the psycho-drama that occurs on the stage with the group sessions. At first I thought that since these are “role plays,” they may not provide the coach sufficient challenge or may not be realistic enough to prepare a person for real life. How wrong I was! Participants here, as in the previous assessments, step into the roles and within minutes they “lose frame,” and then reality hits the coach: disagreement, conflict, stubbornness, cross-talking, etc. — all of the things that happen in groups “out there in the real world.”

When you come to this training, whether to be in the audience or as one to be given a group for 45 minutes and a task to achieve, the Group & Team Psycho-Drama during that last 3 or 4 Days is *a very dramatic learning experience*. You will learn about how to think strategically about group coaching.

That's because we keep asking the same questions over and over to the coach handling the group:

- What kind of a session will this be?
- What is the nature and structure of this kind of session?
- What state can you anticipate that people will be in?
- What could go wrong?
- What frames to set to manage what could go wrong?

In Jakarta during the first day, I gave feedback to the Group Coach and I did that until the audience of Meta-Coaches began picking up on what I was doing— what I was focusing on and highlighting. Then they began contributing to the feedback and were able to see when and where the skills were used or not used. After that came the debriefing on the structure of the session, the kind of session, and what a person could do to make the group and team coaching more effective.

We have two more of these trainings this year— all 6 or 7 days that include both parts. In May we will be in Sweden and in August we will be in Mexico. Come and join us!



**May 10-15: —
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From: L. Michael Hall
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THE FIRST “POLITICAL COACHING” WORKSHOP

I have been wanting to do a workshop on *Politics, Political Coaching, and/or Political Change Processes*. So I've been looking for opportunities. I had the first one last September in Mauritius when Sandra Vijoen set up a presentation on Self-Actualizing Leadership and invited key political leaders as well as heads of various business organizations. Then last week in Manila Philippines, we had our very first *Political Coaching Workshop*. It was a one-day “training” (or semi-training) on this subject.

First we had to define *politics* which is probably mis-understood by 99.9 percent of the world's population. So we began by de-mystifying the term and the reference. Contrary to what most people think, politics is people and if people, then relationships. Politics speaks about how we get along (or don't get along) with each other. It's about how we manage our conversations, decisions, resource, and organize ourselves into groups.

Now does that sound very similar to group and team coaching? Ah yes. And so it is. What we do when we “politick” is construct the way we organize ourselves. In businesses and organizations, we call that organizational development (OD). In coaching we call that group and team coaching or group dynamics. In sociology and anthropology this refers to the very development of groups, how they grow and create their cultural patterns. Many perspectives of the same phenomenon— how humans get along with each other.

If politics is relationships, then that describes the focus of Political Coaching. After all, things get “political” because people bring into a group experience (family, company, corporate, government) interests, agendas, paradigms, styles, values, visions, etc. And these often conflict with each other. If the communications are open and transparent, then so also the politics. If not, then the politics become unclean and dirty— people hide information, communicate in covert and secretive ways, try to get their way by buying influence, etc.

At our first Political Coaching workshop, we had people who were mostly concerned with office politics— the politics that go on inside of organizations and companies. We also had a few people who were interested in government politics and who played different roles in that arena. We had a sitting judge from the superior court—the Honorable Rowena Tan, a Judge of Supreme Court of the Philippines and Officer of Alumni Association of National University on Public Policy of Singapore. Also Hermenegildo A. Gualberto, vice mayor of San Fernando, la union, Province of Benguet (Northern part of the Philippines) along with his staff. We also had some others involved in the political process of government, and others interested in how to influence government politics. My focus in the one-day training was to begin with *what it is* and then *how it works*. That took up a good bit of time as we looked at the design and focus (creating a good society) to how that design can get corrupted— what is “corruption” and how it works. I then focused on the vision of healthy,

positive, enlightened, or Theory Y politics (self-actualizing politics). In the afternoon we focused on *political dynamics*. That, just as there are individual dynamics that govern how a single individual experiences oneself (thinks, feels, speaks, acts, relates, grows, etc.), and as there are group dynamics, so also there are political dynamics—the processes and mechanisms that govern a body politic. This part is designed to increase a person’s P.Q.— Political Intelligence.

Then from one’s political intelligence comes political skill. What can we do and how can we do those things that influence the political context. This led to presenting and describing a series of political skills as well as discussing how to develop these skills. As with any domain, there is the knowledge and understanding of a realm and then there are the required competencies for translating the



intelligence into practical action. In “politics,” we move from political intelligence that enables you to be informed and knowledgeable about how it works to the personal competence to make a difference.

I learned a lot in the process and from the feedback, I think so did all of the participants. “What did you learn?” was the question at the end. “What will you take away from this?” One lady’s eyes sparkled as she said, “There is hope!” And of course, being in Manila Philippines which is in their election cycle with candidates that most people say makes the choice “the lesser of evils,” and the person who will do the least damage to the country, a proclamation of hope is saying a lot! Another said, “There are specific steps for what we can do to make things better.”

The focus that Political Coaching uniquely addresses is the unhealthy side of working out differences. Wherever that occurs— in the home, in the office, or in government, then Political Coaching becomes a valued resource. The resource is a conversation —one of the numerous political conversations that can facilitate people having a productive conversation.

From: L. Michael Hall
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March 23, 2016

MCF INDUCTIONS A BOLD IDEA!



I never thought of doing it this way! So when I arrived in the Philippines and was told that I'd be at a special gathering of the MCF there ... and that there would be an "Induction of Officers," I really didn't know what to expect. When I arrived there was a banquet room set up with 4 tables, each for 10 persons ... and after some presentation and a Q&A session, they asked me to read something that they had written. "Oookkaaay," I said. "What is it?" "Just read it." So I did. The MCF group of Meta-Coaches had written a swearing in description and the words for the Officers to repeat as well as for all Meta-Coaches to repeat. The words were a commitment to the standards and ethics of Meta-Coaching and each person's commitment to be responsible and accountability.

In the end, I was very impressed with all of the Meta-Coaches that met together for the event, it represented sometime like 98% of all of the Meta-Coaches in the Philippines. And that's a good example of working in a collaborative way. So I hold them up as a good example for what I'd like to see around the world with the MCF.

The Neuro-Semantic Vision for working together, cooperating, and even collaborating grew out of the opposite. In 1996 when we launched "Neuro-Semantics" as a Community, the field of NLP was in a lot of disarray. Bandler had just filed his \$90,000,000 (ninety million) dollar lawsuit against "the field." That threatened to take complete ownership of the field and put everybody who didn't sign his contract out of business. His contract, by the way, was that anything you developed was his intellectual property and that you agreed to give him 5% (five percent) of everything you earned.

Among the other problems facing the field, and still facing the field of NLP, was the bad publicity caused by those using NLP to manipulate people. There was (and continues to be) no way to stop them and the longer they continue, the darker the create the PR for NLP.

That's why Bob Bodenhamer and myself decided to set a new Vision— one of collaboration, one of high ethics and standards, one of accountability. It has now been 20 years and look at what the Vision has created— a worldwide community who share that Vision and who is living that Vision. And it is all by *association*. There's no hierarchy or franchise, there are people voluntarily working together because of a unifying frame, namely, *we can do so much more together than alone or apart*.

This is not to say that it is easy and without struggle. It is not easy. And we do struggle with collaborating. As individuals it is sometimes fearful and seemingly risky to work *collaboratively* in an association. "What if someone competes against me and takes my clients?" "What if someone

is more talented than me and people go with that person rather than me?” These speak to the deep fears within and why it is easy to default to competition and to speaking ill of others. The usual thought is, “If I speak ill of the other Meta-Coaches or Trainers, then people will not work with them, it will give me more business.” And mostly, this is unconscious. Yet it is what we have to fight against in order to be open to each other and to follow the vision of collaboration.

To live up to the *Collaborative Vision of Neuro-Semantics* requires a belief in people. Luckily for us, we base Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching in the Self-Actualization Psychology of Maslow and Rogers which is based on the bright side of human nature, not the dark side. The bright side says that within all of us there is a drive—a deep drive to become our best selves—caring, loving, striving for excellence, being responsible, being a part of a winning team, etc.

Is it a risk to believe that? Yes, of course. Is it easy to believe that given the greedy competitive and gossiping nature of some people? No, it is not. Yet that is the thing about an empowering belief—it sets up a self-fulfilling prophecy so that we can increasingly make it real in our lives. The brand of Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching is brand about *collaboration*—about using our models, applying them to ourselves, and practicing being good team players with each other. If we can do that—we have a message that our world desperately needs. If we can do that—we become our own credibility. Here’s to our increasing collaboration!

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #13
Exclusive for Meta-Coaches
March 28, 2016

CLOSING YOUR COACHING SESSION WITH A LIGHT TRANCE

When I present Coaching and especially Meta-Coaching, I strongly emphasize that *Coaching is not hypnosis*. You have undoubtedly heard me say that. I also make the point throughout the *Coaching Mastery* training. So, what's with the title of this article? Have I changed my mind? Is this a new thing coming for Meta-Coaching?

The short answer is no. Check out the 2014 Meta-Coach Reflections (#31, July 23, 2014). It was titled: Why There is No “Hypno-Coaching” and, Hopefully, will never be.” That’s a form of *therapy*. Further back, in 2012, I wrote two articles in the Meta-Coach Reflections (#11 and #12, March 13, and 20) that I titled, “Hypnotic Coaching.” Obviously, there’s more to say, so let me see if I can explain more clearly.

First, the reason to distance “trance” from Coaching today is that we are still a long way from the general population understanding Coaching and appreciating that it is for psychologically healthy people, for challenging, and for stepping up to self-actualization. If we were to explain that coaching is also hypnosis, that will confuse people even more because of many of the myths about hypnosis. So for now, it is much better to *not* link the two.

Now it is true as noted in the 2014 article that the hypnotic state is simply *a state* and we work with states in coaching. The term trance refers to *transiting* from the outside world to the inside world—which is also what we do in coaching. Further, a hypnotic trance state is also a meta-state. In it, a person is responding to a primary state from a higher-level state. How does a person access such? By language and when it comes to language, you induce such states by the way that you use the language that we call “hypnotic language patterns” which in NLP is the Milton Model.

Is Coaching hypnosis or hypnotic in nature? Yes. Coaching partakes of the nature of hypnotic phenomenon just 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 invites people to create pictures and sounds in their minds and that inevitably partakes of the nature of hypnosis. 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...”

Coaching is preeminently *a conversation* so we want people to dialogue about their hopes and visions and values *with their eyes open*. This separates what we might call a conversational trance from a formal one.

Coaching differs also in that it invites people to step back in order to use one's critical facilities to make high quality decisions and mental maps for moving forward to be all that one can be. We invite people to go inside to expand their consciousness, make more focused choices, actively choose resources to add to one's life, and to become self-directing. In these ways, Coaching certainly shares many of the features common with trance.

Closing with a Light Trance

What does it mean to close with a light trance? Why would you do that? And how can you, as a Meta-Coach, close a coaching session with a light trance? To do that requires your full presence of listening, sacred listening, and value-listening. Then, with all of the treasured values of your client in mind, you can invite an integration moment just before the session ends.

“You’ve worked very hard today ... and a lot of things have been stirred up, consciously and unconsciously that you have found or will find extremely useful and positive ... so over the next days and weeks, you can begin to notice new understandings emerging, even creative insights, and you can begin to wonder what will surprise you the most and what will delight you as you find new potentials emerging and especially the release of new levels of energy so that you feel more alive and experience more vitality as you live your life.

“Now as we bring our session to a close today, you can take a deep breath ... that’s right ... and appreciate your ability to take on a challenge and to discover many things that will make your life more meaningful because you have made yourself vulnerable and transparent and that will only allow your authenticity to grow in the coming days and so as you draw on the resources that you’ve been discovering, you can use them now to experience a few moments of refreshment and renewal ... and return here ... at your own rate ... joining me back here ...”

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #14
Exclusive for Meta-Coaches
April 6, 2016

THE SESSION YOU CANNOT COACH

There are some sessions that you just cannot coach. Do you know what they are? Not long ago a coach wrote to me and asked the following: “My client said that she wants to change her husband to be more creative, romantic, active, etc. What am I to do?” At another time, another Meta-Coach wrote this to me:

“I am finding that the concern of a lot of executives and even CEOs in organizations that’s causing their stress is that they want employees to change and be more productive, to do things on time, to do less procrastinating, etc. What am I to do? How can I handle these topics so that I can help my clients get what they want?”

In each case, the problem in these questions is that *what the client want is not within his or her control*. As such, it violates the critical question number eight in the Well-Formed Outcome Questions. “Is it in your power? Is this something that you can control? Is it something that you can start and sustain?”

When the answer is *no* to these questions, then what is being considered is not *coach-able*. The person may be coachable, but the subject is not. What the person wants, the person cannot control or manage. It lies in someone else’s power. And because it does, that’s why it is not without the scope of coaching. That’s why, if you attempt to coach it, you are engaging in a self-defeating pattern, in an impossible dream for the client.

That’s why you have to ask a whole series of questions that go in a different direction. You have to ask: “What is within your control? What can you do that would help or make a difference or that would raise the probability of working? What influence do you have? Do you know how to increase your power of influence?” Then, with these questions, there may be something to coach. For example, if the person wants others to like him, you can ask “What can you do to influence others to like you?” Or “What can you do that raises the probability that others will like you?”

The answer can then be a number of things *within* the client’s power: I can be friendly, I can ask about the other, I can smile, I can use the person’s name, I can take the time to listen and understand, etc. These are things in the person’s power. It does not guarantee anything, but these behaviors can raise the probability. And if it raises the odds, then enabling the client to realize that it enables the client to now do something that improves the odds in his or her favor.

All of this addresses the *responsibility to/for* issues in the client’s life. If something is not *inside* the client’s circle of responsibility, then the client cannot speak or act to make something happen. That power belongs to someone else. Yet the situation is not an all-or-nothing one. Just because I cannot “make” someone like me does not mean that there’s nothing I can do. There are things I can do! There are actually lots of things. And by doing those things, I can influence the other person. The questions now shift to a new series of questions: “What can I do that will influence others? What influences them? What convinces them about something?”

As a coach, to handle these things—think in terms of two circles. First is the circle of power or control. That's your *responsibility for* circle. In this circle are the person's power to think–feel and speak and do. In the center of that circle is the person. Here your client can develop skills, take action, and assume responsibility. Then there is the circle of influence. The person is *not* inside that circle, but instead, the circle is outside and beyond the person. Here the person's words and actions spread out and reverberate further and further out.

Once you establish that *what* the client wants falls into the area of influence—you can now coach to the person's understanding of influence and skills of influence. And that, in turn, invites the client to focus communication and character.

Knowing the sessions that you cannot coach gives you another critical distinction as a Meta-Coach, one that will increase your effectiveness and challenge the client about what's realistic and what is not, what is achievable and what is not.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #15
April 13, 2016

GETTING CLIENTS TO EXECUTE AND TO SUCCEED

As a coach, one of your highest and most dominating goals and attitude should be to enable your clients to execute their goals and plans and to succeed in achieving their dreams. I would guess that that is obvious. What's not so obvious is *how*— *how do we do that?* And, of course, this is where Neuro-Semantics comes in with our focus on transferring things in the mind into those in one's neurology (mind-to-muscle) as well as our focus on moving from Quadrants I, II and III into Quadrant IV of self-actualizing meaning and performance. To that end, as a Meta-Coach, you start with the well-formed outcome questions and then the refining questions.

Recently, I read another book on the subject of executing what you know, a book from FranklinCovey Co., *The 4 Disciplines of Execution* (2012). And in that book, I have just learned a new distinction about the process of measuring which can have a tremendous impact on getting people to successfully implement what they know. Now while it is actually a familiar distinction, it is not one that I thought about using and especially using in a coaching conversation. Yet like many highly insightful distinctions, once you hear it and learn about how to use it, it seems so obvious that you will probably say, "Why didn't I ever see that before?" This distinction will also have a tremendous effect on *how we train coaching skills* in *Coaching Mastery* in the future.

Think about a goal, any goal. How will you know that you have achieved your goal? "Well, that's obvious, I will look at the results that follow from what I do." Did I get the results that I wanted? Did I reach the outcome I set out to reach? If so, then you have one way to measure the success of your goal.

Set Goal — Engage in Activities —> Get Results [Point of measurement:
Did I succeed?]

Measuring the effectiveness of the goal setting and striving process in this way is *measuring after the process*. You are looking to see *if* you succeeded when it is all over. This way of measuring is an *after-the-process measure*. It is obviously important and yet the problem with measuring things in this way is that the measure *lags* behind what you do. And because it lags, this measure cannot change or influence the goal-achievement process. It is a measure that indicates what happened historically. It is totally powerless to affect the future.

Another way to measure takes a very different approach. You could *measure the activities* that you use in going after the goal. You could look to the things that need to happen *prior* to reaching the goal and measure how you are doing on those actions. Are you doing what needs to be done? How are you doing in those activities? The benefit of measuring *prior activities* is that these are the actions that influence the results. Therefore these measures give you the ability to adjust your actions and control the results you get.

In the 2012 book, *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*, the authors call the first measure *lag measures* and the second one, *lead measures*. They describe these *leading measures* as operating like a lever thereby giving a person leverage to influence the results and to predict what’s going to happen. That’s because the *lead or leverage measures* lets you know what to do to influence what eventually you will get. The lever metaphor suggests that when you have a massive rock to move, and you cannot do it with brute force, a lever on a fulcum will enable you to move it.

Set Goal — Engage in Activities —> Get Results [a lag measure]
✓measure – ✓measure – ✓measure [Leading measures]

With *leading leverage measures* you can predict what will happen *and* change what you are doing before the end and thereby influence the results you get. Now you can even set up experiments to see what works and what doesn’t. “If I do X, then Y should occur, let’s see if it does.” And best of all, this gives you an area to focus on: What can I do that will give me the highest leverage in order to achieve my goal? What actions will let you know that you are moving forward, getting better in what you are doing, and assure you that you will reach your goal? McChesney and his co-authors call this the “secret of excellence in execution” (p. 136).

Now in the Well-Formed Outcome pattern (WFO) we ask for the *lag measure* when we ask Question #18, “How will you know that you have reached your goal? What will be your evidence?” That gives us the KPI for the goal.

It is Questions #7 and #11 that—in a hidden way—ask for the *leading measure* although we have not framed it as a *leading leverage measure*. “What do you have to do to get what you want?” That gives you the critical actions needed for achieving the goal. Now if you list all of them (“How many things do you need to do?”) then some of these will probably be the *leverage measure* by which you can control the results you want.

Even more empowering is picking just one *leading leverage measure* and focusing on that. If you do, you now have a specific action that will contain within it high leverage for success. And if you set up a scoreboard for that one specific activity, you will have a possible leverage behavior that will predictably assure you of success. By then tracking that one behavior, you have a scorecard and that will let you know — moment-by-moment — how you are doing.

Set Goal — Engage in Activities —> Get Results (Final measure, lag)
✓measure – ✓measure – ✓measure (Leading measures)
One Key Leading Measure

This is the second “discipline” of the four disciplines of execution. The first is the discipline of focus— deciding on a wildly important goal. Then the discipline of leverage— the key behavior that influences reaching your goal. Then the discipline of engagement— using the scoreboard which wins a person’s commitment to the goal because he or she can tell when they are winning. The fourth discipline is the discipline of accountability or ownership— being held accountable by one’s immediate peers. [More next week]

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #16
April 20, 2016

DISCIPLINES YOU NEED TO SUCCEED

Writing about *The 4 Disciplines of Execution* (2012) I ended last week's article with a description of these four disciplines:

The first is the discipline of focus—deciding on a wildly important goal. Then the discipline of leverage—the key behavior that influences reaching your goal. Then the discipline of engagement—using the scoreboard which wins a person's commitment to the goal because he or she can tell when they are winning. The fourth discipline is the discipline of accountability or ownership—being held accountable by one's immediate peers.

This is how you get things done: Focus—Leverage—Engagement—Accountability. The authors present these disciplines as the science and strategy which supports the ability to actually *implement* goals. Since this speaks to the very heart of what you do as a Meta-Coach, I summarize it here to expand your understanding of the implementation process. After all, this is not only a key theme in Neuro-Semantics, it also determines your success with your clients which will get your clients coming back for more.

Consider the way these four disciplines work together, how you can use them, and how you can enable your clients to use them to reach their desired goals. The authors call these “disciplines” meaning a regimen or a structured process you set up to effectively achieve each. I have here related them to the Well-Formed Outcome pattern.

Focus	Leverage	Engagement	Accountability
Wildly important Goal Compelling Inspirational	Identify a <i>Lead</i> measure – Key Activity that controls & predicts success	Create a scoreboard Easy and simple to read so you know if you are winning or not	Take ownership Set up everyone in your team or life to hold you accountable.

Discipline 1: Focus. You already know that this is about the opening coaching question, “What do you really want?” Make sure it is highly desirable, compelling, and inspirational for your client. Is it aligned with the person's values? To generate an engine of motivation so a person acts on and carries through on the goal, the goal must be compelling and mobilizing one's highest intentions. Write what you want using the template: “From X to Y by when.” This details most of the landscape: What you are moving away from (X, present state), what you are moving toward (Y, desired state), and the time-line (by when).

“Improving our ability to multi-task actually hampers our ability to think deeply and creatively ... the more you multi-task ... the less deliberative you become; the less you're able to think and reason out of a problem.” Jordan Grafman, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

“An objective well stated is at least half the answer to reaching it.” Charles Hughes, 1965, p. 29

Discipline 2: Leverage with lead measures. You know how to do this if you know how to ask questions 7 and 11 of the WFO questions. “What do you have to do to get what you want?” “How many other things do you have to do?” Once you make a list, identify the key activities that give you leverage over your ultimate outcome. What actions are most critical? What behaviors predict that

you will achieve your outcome? The critical activity could be something very small and simple like “15 minutes of cardio-vascular exercise every day.” The key is that it gives you leverage on your big compelling goal.

“To achieve a goal you have never achieved before, you must start doing things you have never done before.” Jim Stuart

“If you want to achieve a certain goal, don’t focus on the goal itself but on the lead measures that drive the goal.” (p. 19)

“Management was swimming in data, but not focusing on the data that would really make a *difference*. The key is to isolate and consistently track the right levers.” (p. 55)

Discipline 3: Create a Scoreboard with the lead measure. This is new. We have never emphasized this. Set up a visual way to track how you are doing as you activate the *leading leverage activity*. Create a scoreboard or dashboard or visual representation so that you can quickly look at it and tell if you are winning or losing. Do you need to write four pages every day for six months to write the book you want to write? Then do you have a scoreboard that lets you see in a glance if you are doing this *leverage action*? The scoreboard could be a checklist— so a check means you have done the activity. I have a “running book” that I began in 1975. Each page represents three months—12 lines, one for each week and seven vertical boxes, one for each day of the week. I record the number of miles I run each day. One glance at the book and I can tell, “I’m doing it. I’m achieving my goal.”

Long ago (1965) Charles Hughes wrote about this: “Yardsticks and target dates must be determined before the work has actually been finished; otherwise it will be impossible for the individual to know when he has done a good job. This is particularly important for the highly motivated goal seeker who, with her strong need for feedback about his progress, always want to know how ‘the game will be scored.’” (*Goal Setting*, p. 115)

Discipline 4: Ownership via peer Accountability. This is the discipline of making sure your social context (e.g., your family, your team, your community) knows your goal and regularly asks you about it. This is the discipline of monitoring how you are doing, testing it, and accepting responsibility for how you are doing. Are you following through? In one organizational survey, a staggering 81% said they were not held accountable for regular progress on the organization’s goals (p. 6).

“Great teams operate with a high level of accountability. Without it, team members go off in all directions with each doing what he/she thinks is most important.” (p. 78).

When you have all of these things in place then you or your client knows:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| What you want, your goal or outcome | — Question #1. |
| What you need to do to get what you want. | — Questions #7 and 11. |
| How you will own the goal. | — Questions #8, 9, and 17 |
| Why you want to do it, what drives you. | — Question #3. |
| The resources needed to make it work. | — Questions #14, 15, and 10. |

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #17
April 27, 2016

ENABLING PEOPLE TO PLAY TO WIN

*“I have a score; I am not my score; I’m more than my score,
and most important— I need my score!”*

The following statement will probably seem obvious to you. It sounded obvious to me when I first read it, but then something strange happened when I said it out-loud recently. I said it aloud to some people as I was explaining a point that an author had made. In saying it aloud it sounded to me like a lost truth, one which I once knew, had forgotten, and now recovered. Here it is.

When people play tennis or basketball or football or any sports or other games, chess, video-games, watch what happens when they begin to keep score. They come alive! They get focused and purposeful! What this means is incredible: *People play differently when they are keeping score!* If you watch a bunch of kids playing a game, just notice how things significantly change the very minute score-keeping begins. And even more revealing than that is the change when *they* are keeping score.

I was reading *The 4 Disciplines of Execution* (2012) and the authors wrote about this phenomenon and its converse:

“The highest level of engagement comes from knowing the score, that is, if people know whether they are winning or losing. It’s that simple.” (p. 13)

“People disengage when they don’t know the score. It’s the sense of winning that drives engagement and nothing drives results more than a team that is fully engaged.” (p. 168).

Without a scoreboard, and without the inability to tell who’s winning, any and every game loses its energy. People disengage when they don’t know the score.

“Great teams know at every moment whether they are winning. They *must* know, otherwise, they don’t know what they have to do to win the game. A compelling scoreboard tells the team where they are and where they should be, information essential to learn problem solving and decision making.” (p. 66)

What about you? Isn’t that true for you when you consider anything that you are doing and/or any interaction that you’re engaged in, for a “game” is what you do individually or with others. When you are marking and measuring what you are doing, in other words, *keeping score*, things seem to matter a lot more. Somehow they seem to *count*. And because they seem to have more significance, more meaning, we engage in them more intensely and more seriously. We put more effort and discipline into them.

That’s the positive side. The negative side highlights an unpleasant and unuseful consequence of this, namely, *performance anxiety*. You make yourself nervous with self-conscious thoughts and thoughts about an undesirable future, “What if I mess up.” “What if I do it wrong?” “What if people laugh?” Here you may be over-conscientious, or you may not yet be competent and therefore unsure of yourself. Here you may hold perfectionistic standards about what you expect for yourself. All of these are excellent strategies for stressing yourself out, making yourself nervous, and creating

performance anxiety.

Getting what you want (your final KPI, WFO question #18) is your reward—the final result that you are after. And while what you are going for is important, even more crucial is knowing what you have to *do* to get what you want (question #7). Without knowing that, your goal is a mere dream— not practical or doable.

For example, to write a book, once you have your idea, plan, and content—you have to write. You have to do it regularly, you have to be able to pick up where you ended, you have to do it continually, you have to keep yourself inspired, you have to say “no” to lots of things that would otherwise interrupt your flow. There’s lots of things you have to do. Yet which 1 or 2 or three things are so essential that they give you a lever so you can move the mountain of your goal? Which behavior is a prediction of success? Which is most influential in reaching your goal which behavior is predictive of success? Which is most influential in reaching your goal?

For writing it could be 30 minutes every day. If it is, then use it as your *leading measure*.

Then, using that as your *leading measure*, you can now set up a scoreboard. You can keep score on the thing or things that you need to do that will enable you to reach your final goal. How will you set up your scoreboard? Will it be on your bathroom mirror? On your refrigerator or computer? Will it be a calendar and days to check off? Will it be numbers for the minutes that you write each day? If a calendar, then simply put a check (✓) for each day of the week in which you wrote for 30 minutes. For every 10 extra minutes, you could put a check and a plus at the top of the check (✓⁺).

What matters is not the design, the structure, or the artistry of the scoreboard. It is the *Scoreboard* that matters. What matters is that *you have a way to quickly and vividly see the score* which lets you know that you are winning. Like a scoreboard on the football field, you can quickly glance at it and immediately know who’s winning, by how much, and what the score is.

Isn’t this way of thinking about the scores that you get in the feedback and benchmarking process a much, much better way to think about it than using the score for feeling bad or for taking it personal? Further, now you can get into *the game of experimenting*—getting feedback, learning, adjusting, etc. as a way to score and to increase your scoring. Then when you look up to see your score, it tells you how you are doing in the Developing Competence Game.

You now know what counts as little daily wins in the game. And this is a significant part of how to be more successful and more productive. Your score lets you know how you are doing in the Game of Coaching Excellence.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #18
May 3, 2016

COACHING AS MODELING

What's the relationships between Coaching and Modeling? Do you know? Is there a relationship or are these two distinct and discreet disciplines for which there are no interfaces? If there is an interface, which I'm assuming there is, then what does both a coach and a modeler have in common? What does a coach do that's similar to what a modeler does and what does a modeler do which corresponds to what a coach does?

In beginning to map out the common territory between coaching and modeling it is obvious that both deal with the subjective experience of individuals. The person who models does so from the perspective of its structures—*how does this experience work?* How does the person act to create his or her experience of X (resilience, leadership, motivation, etc.)? The coach has an entirely different focus. She wants to facilitate the person to have the experiences that the person does not now have, but wants to have. So the coach has to find out where the person currently is and map out the person's understanding of where to go. Here you can use Landscape Mapping.

A great deal of *coaching effectiveness* lies in the process of modeling how your client does whatever he or she is doing. Why is that? Because when you facilitate yourself and your client becoming aware of *how* she is doing something, often your client will immediately know what to do to change things. And sometimes, just sometimes, the client immediately changes. In other words, there are times when awareness alone is sufficient for transformation. This is one of the compelling reasons for using *awareness questions* as a coach.

When you engage in modeling your client in your coaching questions as you are gathering information about your client, you are getting *the strategy process* [this is at level 3.0 on the Listening Skill]. When you do this, you are getting your client's process for *doing* whatever he is doing. Is he interrupting himself so that he doesn't concentrate and so that he loses focus? Then inquire, "How do you do this?" You will need a fresh example, so ask for it. "When was the last time you experienced losing focus?" As you get that, now you can do some in-depth exploration:

What were you attempting to concentrate on? How long did you concentrate? Then what broke the concentration? When that occurred, what was your immediate thought? What do you believe about that?

These are coaching questions. A follow-up modeling question while you are coaching would be: If I was to take your place for a day and do this behavior, teach me how to do it. What do I need to do? What first, then what?

By these questions you are doing multiple things at the same time. Not only are you getting his strategy process, you are keeping him *at cause* as he discovers what he is doing and how he is doing such. And that enables him to feel response-able as well as experiencing his self— because you are helping him to get to his real self and the untapped potentials within.

NLP highlighted the importance of asking *how* rather than *why*— a focus that originated from Fritz

Perls. In the book that Richard Bandler edited when he was 22 years of age, he transcribed Perls as saying the following about “why” questions:

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

Coaching inevitably involves some modeling. You model your client’s experience so that he has more awareness and therefore more choice. You model in the coaching process so that both you and your client have the critical information that’s needed for your client to make a change and/or release new potentials.

Modeling, as a separate discipline, involves a lot more than this, and yet this is the core of modeling itself. What then to do as a Coach? Put yourself into the know-nothing state so that you can clear yourself of assumptions, expectations, and “shoulds.” Then wonder, really wonder how your client is having the experiences that he says he is having. As you then ask yourself the questions, “How does this work? What is my client doing to generate this experience within her?” you are on your way to getting the strategy process. And when you know that, the magic begins.

From: Femke Mortimore
May 4, 2016
Morpheus #19

ACMC IN OSLO NORWAY

Last week Lene Fjellheim and I welcomed 25 new Meta-Coaches into our community. We had another great ACMC in Norway, thanks to all of the participants and a rock solid assistant team.

This year was both challenging as well as incredibly rewarding. Challenging because I had my 7 month old son with me and he had not been away from me for longer than 1 hour. On top of that I got the flu, kept the fever in check with paracetamol, and my son got his first tooth. I am so grateful for my mom and aunt coming over from the Netherlands to watch him. This is where the power of teamwork and having a support system really comes into play.

Over the years I have grown very fond of my "family" in Norway. Lene and her entire team at CoachTeam as House of Leadership are amazing hosts. Their generosity, their love for the participants and dedication to high quality shines through in the atmosphere at the training. On top of that, Norwegians are some of the kindest people I have ever met and they always make me feel at home.

For the past several years we have stayed at Renskaug, a farm turned conference center. Everyone stays on location in little cabins and this makes the bootcamp experience even more special. In the evenings there is a common area where we can hang out and relax. There is also a fire pit on the courtyard, so on good night you can even sit outside.

Training side-by-side with Lene is truly a joy. She is engaging, has great stories to support what we are teaching, and we are able to both play to our individual strengths. The participants mentioned that we work well together and they were happy with our "Keep It Short and Simple" way of helping them integrate the Meta-Coach models in their coaching conversations. As you well know, the 8 days are intense and often overwhelming with all there is to learn. So we helped our participants with what to focus on first and think in incremental steps. Together with CoachTeam as — House of Leadership and the assistant team we were able to teach the participants the Meta-Coach system in a fun and practical way. It helped that they had a preparation day earlier in the year, received their manual before the training, and that we gave the assistants as well as the participants access to some of my training videos, so they could go through the materials beforehand.

One of the main reasons why I admire Lene, is her big heart. She has a great business sense (I think many Meta-Coaches would benefit from modeling her) and she combines that with being an attitude of abundance. She isn't afraid of letting someone else shine. In fact, she wants others to shine in their talents. And that is a rare trait.

You might wonder why I am putting Lene in the spotlight here. Well, that's the reason this training was so rewarding. We have both been very dedicated over the past several years to provide a high quality training. This year, Michael gave me the honor to assess whether Lene was ready for certification as Meta-Coach trainer. There were a few points for her to focus on, and she more than delivered. So at the end of the 8 days I was able to hand her the certificate, which Michael will sign when they see each other next. She very much deserves this. I am grateful and proud to work with her.

So congratulations to my dear friend Lene Fjellheim for becoming a Meta-Coach trainer, and a very big welcome to the new Meta-Coaches. Here's to your highest and best!



From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #20
May 11, 2016

COACHING IN A PROCESS WORLD

If you want to know where the power of coaching lies, the power of NLP, and the power of Neuro-Semantics, it lies in understanding that we live in a process world. That's why we say we coach to structure or process much more than to content. That's why we say that we are listening for structure in order to understand the client's *processes*. These are not two unrelated things, they are related. *Content* is what you deal with when you listen to your client's stories about what's happening in his life and/or when she tells you the specific details that she would like to be different and better in her life.

- He wants a fifteen percent increase in his salary.
- She wants to lose ten pounds.
- She also wants to re-arrange her schedule so that there's more family time.
- He says that he also wants more family time and also time to spend on his motorcycle.

All of this is content. Details. Story. So where is *the structure* and how does one get to the structure which is hidden out of sight? The answer is by questioning, by information gathering.

- What will you have to *do* to add more value in your job that will bring an increase of 15% for your salary? Or if you work for someone else, how much more value will you have to bring to the job in order for them to give you 15% increase? Who do you need to convince that you are already adding that much value? These are structural questions. They relate to the unspoken structure that enables "increase in salary" to work. What do you believe or understand about business that will enable you to do this? Any new decisions that you will need to make?
- What will you do to increase your exercise, activities, and movements to lose ten pounds? What changes will you make in your eating habits and/or lifestyle? Will you have to change any of your beliefs, understandings, and/or decisions? Which ones?

When we talk about *structure* we are really speaking about *process*. How the process is put together or how you act out the process is what is called in common language "structure." At the heart of the problem here is the way we talk about things. For the things that we are referring to, we use nouns. These are "persons, places, and things." They are things you can see and hear, things you can handle—grab, taste, smell, interact with, etc. They are sensory-based or empirical. Then there are the processes. For these we use verbs. Go, stay, turn, jump, wonder, care, ask, plead, etc.

But we do not stay with verbs. We slide off into false-verbs called *nominalizations*. That is, we name the verbs or turn them into false nouns. Doing this gives us a short cut, but in the end it makes our talk more vague, imprecise, shifting, and uncertain. *Relating* becomes *relationship*. *Move* becomes *motive* and then *motivation*. *Esteeming* one's self becomes *self-esteem*. What these bigger words do is to give us something that seems more substantial to use when referring to some process. And that's the problem—the referent seems more solid, substantial, and real and this occurs at the same time that the actions and processes which the original verb described gets increasingly lost in the process.

What also gets lost in the process is an awareness of *how* a person is actually *doing* the process.

Take *depression* as an example. Sounds like a real thing. But when we turn the nominalization back into a verb (de-nominalize it), we discover that we have less information than we thought we had.

“Who is depressing? When is he depressing? What is he pushing-down (de-pressing)? When does he do this most often? When does he not do this? What is his understanding that leads him to think that depressing will be helpful?”

Take *fist*. Again, sounds like a real thing. Now open up your hand. Where is the fist? Gone. Vanished. Poof! In this case we do not even have a word that refers to the action, “fisting,” we have to say “making a fist,” “bringing fingers together.” With the name or label, “fist,” we so easily forget that the name is not the thing. There is no thing there. There is something that a person does at a given time. He clenches his fist. He pushes down his hopes and dreams and refuses to allow himself to take actions that would imply hope and anticipation.

De-nominalizing awakens us to the process world and when you do that as a coach with your clients, you awaken them to the fact that they live in a process world—a world of motion, movement, activity. Clients wake up to the fact that all is in flux and that the things that they are doing occur in certain places, over a certain period of time, in interaction with other things in a context—many variables that make an experience what it is.

Coaching in a process world involves this new orientation—an orientation to process, to how things work, to how you and I and our clients are involved in what we are experiencing. No one just “gets depressed” or suddenly “suffers a bout of depression” as if it happens to a person and the person had nothing to do with it. How preposterous! You are the de-presser. Or I am the one doing the pressing-down of something (what?) at a given time (when?) and for particular reasons (why?). Flushing this out helps to identify the person’s *strategy for creating a given subjective experience*.

Oftentimes coaching gives a person a new lease on life precisely because the coaching questions re-directs the person to discover his part in generating an expression of his life. The de-nominalizing questions send a person back to experience to create new mental maps ... and in the process updates and eliminates the old maps that made everything so solid and unchangeable.

“So you say you have a *motivation* problem? And what do you want to be motivating you? If you experienced it, you would be moving out from where and to where? Would you want to be moving yourself in this way all the time or just at certain times? When? For what outcome?”

As a Meta-Coach, use your NLP Meta-Model and learn to listen for nominalizations. And when you hear key ones that define a client’s experience and where and how the client is not unleashing her potential, ask de-nominalizing questions. Keep putting yourself into a know-nothing state of absolute curiosity so that you keep asking questions until you sense *how to do it*. What you are doing is inviting the person back into *the process world* where things are constantly changing.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #21
May 18, 2016

THE MAGIC OF MEASUREMENT

As you so very well know, one of the distinctive features of the Meta-Coaching System is that *we measure things*. With clients, we use the Well-Formed Outcome pattern to facilitate clients measuring their goals. They measure them in terms of time, process, and then the evidence that will convince them that they have succeeded in reaching their outcome. With ourselves, we measure the coaching competencies, from the seven core skills to the 40 additional coaching skills. ICF does not do that. In fact, even to this date, no other coach training system does that. Meta-Coaching stands out head-and-shoulders above all others in this regard of measuring.

But why? Why this emphasis on measuring things? In a word, it goes to the basic principle that is often repeated in just about every field and discipline, in business, in organizations, in sports, in education, and so on. It is the principle— *You cannot manage what you cannot measure*.

This had a revolutionary impact on organizations beginning in the 1970s when manufacturing learned that they could measure just about every aspect of the processes and as they did, they could bring it under their control. They could then manage the processes— improving them, streamlining them, eliminating waste, speeding up processes, building quality control into the process, etc. The result of this is that almost every book on benchmarking is about benchmarking the factors of manufacturing. I say “almost” because I want to leave room that maybe someone wrote a book that included intangibles. But in 2011 when I was studying and researching benchmarking and measuring, I did not come across a single book on measuring intangibles. So I wrote it.

I wrote *Benchmarking Intangibles* because we had been doing since 2003 when we first benchmarked the seven core coaching skills. Recently I came across one of our original benchmarking sheets and was shocked by how few items we had on that sheet. It had five or six behaviors (sub-skills) for each of the seven skills. Today we have 15 to 20! And that’s just for the ACMC level, we have more for the PCMC level.

Measuring something is a prelude to managing it. Without precise measures, you are left with vagueness, imprecision, indefiniteness—fluff. Take something as common as the goal, “I am going to spend more time with my family.” How will you measure that? At the end of the week, how will you know if you did or did not? “More” time means one-minute more? One hour more? Is that daily? Is that weekly? “Family”—is that with your spouse? Your children? Your parents? Your brother?

Previously I wrote about end-measures and means-measures. The easiest is the *end*-measure because it is typically your goal and you can then tell, did you reach it or not? The more useful and effective measurement is the *means*-measure. Once you get that and set up a scorecard for recording it, you can use it as feedback that you can monitor while you’re in the process of going after your goal. That will give you a lot more control and management of yourself and your life *during the goal-striving process* thereby increasing the probability of reaching your goal. My *means*-measurement for writing is a minimum of 30 minutes a day. By using that *time* goal, I can increase it as appropriate when

seeking to achieve a particular writing goal. Another *means*-measure I use is proof-reading one chapter of the current manuscript that I'm working on. When I complete that, I have a measurement for how far I have come and how far to go to complete that particular draft of the book.

In his latest book, *Mojo* (2009), Executive Coach Marshall Goldsmith created a Scorecard for measuring one's meaning and happiness which he define as your *mojo*. To create it he asked: What are the qualities that you have to bring to an activity for you to succeed in performing it and get the results you want? He answered five things: Motivation, Knowledge, Ability, Confidence, and Authenticity. He then listed five *benefits* that the activity can bring you: Happiness, Reward, Meaning, Learning, and Gratitude. With these ten features, he has you make a list of *activities* that you do at work during the day and then score it (from 0 to 10). Then add up the scores for what you bring to the activity and do the same for what the activity brings to you.

Activity	What You Bring to the Activity					What the Activity Brings to You						
	Motivat.	Knowl.	Ability	Confid.	Authenticity	Happiness	Reward	Meaning	Learn.	Gratitude		
1. Phone call to ...	5	8	8	5	6	32	2	2	3	1	3	11
2. Writing report	7	8	8	7	8	38	8	6	9	7	7	37
3. Meeting with ...												

You cannot manage what you cannot measure. But if you do, then you can use it to focused on *what* you're doing and *how* you are doing. That focus then enables you to keep doing what works and to more quickly shift from what does not work. And if you keep the score yourself and then, as research has demonstrated, self-measurement keeps you more motivated. And these things (focus and motivation) increase your sense of the meaning and meaningfulness of what you are doing.

“Very few people achieve positive, lasting change without ongoing following-up. Unless they know at the end of the say that someone is going to measure if they're doing what they promised to do, most people fall prey to inertia. They continue doing what they *were* doing.” (p. 36)

“The simple knowledge that you're going to evaluate any activity will alter your experience of that activity. It makes you more mindful and awake.” (p. 37)

There's magic in measurement. When you specify what you want with precision and set up a structure for observing what you do that makes a difference in your performance and productivity, you have a way to control both your performance and productivity. Now you can make things happen. Now you can do something about those potentials clamoring within you.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #22
May 19, 2016

GOING PROFESSIONAL

When you get your ACMC credentials by being able to demonstrate competency level on the seven core skills, you are on your way to becoming a truly *professional coach*. But you are not there yet. You have the foundation. You can connect with your client via your intense and deep listening skills—you are beginning to listen for structure and you are beginning to be able to *use* what you are hearing to support your client. But there's more.

You also are now able to question at primary and meta levels to enable your client to really explore his or her experience. With the primary questions, you now have the ability to facilitate precision and specificity with your client—something that puts you head-and-shoulders above 90% of all Coaches on Planet Earth. You have the Meta-Model of Language and you know how to use it to deepen the conversation. Further, you know how to move above the client's experience by asking meta-questions that enable your client to turn inward to the inner game and win it there in her mind-set. That again puts you way ahead of most Coaches. But there's more.

Primarily there are two more fundamental skills to add to your repertoire— *pattern detection* and *framing*. And these are the skills that we train for three full days in the PCMC training. While we speak about these at ACMC, we do not focus on them. With *Pattern Detection* you learn to listen for even more distinctions (“mastery is in the details”) and even more important, to develop a *pattern recognition* kind of mind-set when you are coaching. That allows you to listen far more deeply into your client's processes. Clients are often astonished, amazed, and blown-away when you are able to do this— and feel heard at much deeper levels.

Then with *Framing*, which includes priming, pre-framing, reframing, outframing, deframing, and much more, you are able to use the patterns you are catching to facilitate the client's experience. This allows you to set frames that are leverage-changing frames and to ask questions that we call torpedo questions. Sometimes (not always) this enables you to perform what looks to someone on the outside as “magic.” It facilitates the desired transformation in incredibly quick and profound ways.

Are you ready to go professional? If you are serious in being earnest and committed to becoming an outstanding Coach in your area, then stepping up to these two skills is absolutely required. And if we as the Meta-Coach Community really want to put a stake in the ground and demonstrate the value and benefit of the rigorous standards that we hold—then we need lots of Meta-Coaches stepping up to the Professional Certified Meta-Coach standing. Will you be one of those persons?

If so, we have two opportunities for you this year— one in Mexico and one in South Africa. I would love to see 50 to 100 Meta-Coaches join us for the first three days of training. In that advanced training the focus will be on *Pattern Detection* and *Framing* along with *Tasking* and *KPI*. While the training is advanced and highly focused ... and you get lots of designed practices ... it is also fun and enjoyable ... because with the foundation of ACMC behind you—your focus shifts to the refining what you do.

And still the best is yet to come. The last three days of PCMC training enables you to observe 45-minute coaching session on stage. You will see the Meta-Coaching supervision and mentoring process at work, how we encourage and shape the coaching so it moves to the professional level. Ideally, we will have people coming in for the sessions — “real” clients who know nothing about NLP or Meta-Coaching but who have a need or desire. This makes the sessions “real” in a way that you did not see them at ACMC. And no worry, if a client is left without getting his desired results, I will step in to complete the process.

These real live sessions on-stage— even if you are an observer is an incredible opportunity for picking up distinctions you may possible not be able to learn anywhere else. Many, many people have said that they have learned more by observing the on-stage sessions and going through the debriefs. Afterwards we debrief — first with the Coach and then with the audience.

Will you help Ivan Robles in Mexico and Dirk Nieuwoudt in South Africa to fill up our *Professional Meta-Coach Training*? By giving of your time and energy and investing in your own professional development, you contribute back to the Meta-Coach Community. So my heart-felt request to you is that you do this and help all of us!

Iván Robles — irobles@cglobalmexico.com August 19-22

Dirk Nieuwoudt — Dirk.Nieuwoudt@transnet.net September 9-14

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus #23
May 25, 2016
Going Professional as a Meta-Coach

GETTING YOURSELF TO GO PROFESSIONAL

If you have set the goal to *go professional as a Meta-Coach*, then how do you get yourself ready and prepared? What is the single most important thing to deal with? From what I have seen in those who come to PCMC training—the biggest thing that separates those who come and step up to level “3,” and those who do not is this: *They have learned to get over themselves!*

Is there a *big difference* between these levels? Yes! At the professional level you know that the coaching is not about you and you do not make it about you even when you are being assessed in terms of your skills or when you are doing it in front of your peers. Yes, of course, you *know* that from the first day of the ACMC training (“Releasing Judgment” pattern, “De-Contamination” pattern), but *knowing* is not *living*.

What makes the ACMC level so difficult for almost everyone is *not* the benchmarks. It is *not* the scoring. It is not the intensity of the eight-day program. What makes it difficult is something much more personal—*you*. The problem is that of your self! You are so *self*-conscious as you begin. You are in that stage of *conscious* incompetence. You worry about how *you* will do and are doing. You are worried about someone seeing *you* mess up.

So, the biggest problem to conquer at the ACMC level is *getting over yourself*. It is not the skill of listening as important as that is, it is being *self*-focused. It is not the skill of supporting or questioning, or knowing the specific way to do any of the two dozen sub-skills, it is being nervous and worrying about *yourself*. It is the prevalence of your own *self* dialogue that focuses on *you*: “Will I do a good job?” “Will I make the grade?” It is your performance anxiety about being watched. So if you could only get over yourself, that would make an incredible difference in your performance.

Curing the Problem of Your “Self” Getting in the Way

This is where the 400 hours of paid professional coaching comes in. When you have set down with clients that many times, then what you are doing now is something that you have become *very familiar* with, something that you know how to do, and almost anything that happens—well, you’ve seen it before. This level of familiarity enables you to take it easy, relax, let go of your worries and do something radical—*focus on your client*. With that many hours, you can now be comfortable with the process and realize that you know what you are doing.

With that experience and that familiarity, because you now relax into your best coaching state, you can listen so much better. And because you are listening better, you can support better and follow your client’s point easier. In other words, by not focusing on self and by focusing on your client—you can now *get* your client. You can also now be *owning* your space and use the fuller range of your skills—silence, summarizing, acknowledging, empathy, clarification questions, etc. You now have

the space and room to tap into these skills that you know. You will tend to go slower in the session and miss very little. And that's amazing when you start doing that!

By the time you get in these hours of coaching, whatever fears you had when you completed the ACMC level have now disappeared. That's because you have seen and experienced it all. Whatever can go wrong has probably already gone wrong several times and you handled it. You survived! That now gives you an advantage—a lot less fear. Much less fear about what could go wrong. The 400 hours has given you lots of experiences for when various things come up. This now makes up your repertoire of choices.

Even more positively, having faced all of the basic challenges that typically arise in coaching, there's much less to throw you off your game. So when you start to coach, you will now probably hear things that you have heard before. Probably many times. Depending on how many times you've heard these things, you have a good sense where it is going and what you'll have to do. You are developing your intuitions about the flow of things and where your client goes, wants to go, and needs to go.

All of this underscores the value and importance of experience. The 400 hours is designed to fully prepare you to go professional and to step up your Meta-Coaching experience so that you can demonstrate on cue what it is to coach at that level. This makes you truly special since so few Coaches on the planet can do that.

The other preparation is doing the Case Study. Doing that deepens your understanding of the structure of your client's experience and the structure of coaching. I recommend that you always be doing one Case Study with one client ... that will give you example after example and keep your pattern detecting skills fresh. That will be the topic of the next one on *Going Professional*.

You can and you should *prepare* to step up your skills, your attitude, your understanding, and your heart about coaching—you should if you are planning to go professional. Attending the PCMC will confirm all of this and deepen it. Nor do you have to be ready for assessment to attend, many attend for the training and the ongoing development as the next step after ACMC. Many who have done that have told me that it gave them a brand new inspiration about coaching—enabled them to recognize that they can step up and that it is possible for them. The PCMC level of training differs considerably from the first level and I'll also be writing about that soon.

To your professional development as a Meta-Coach! To contact the sponsors for the next PCMC trainings in 2016, write to the following Trainers who have the vision to sponsor the trainings:

Iván Robles — irobles@cglobalmexico.com August 19-22

Dirk Nieuwoudt — Dirk.Nieuwoudt@transnet.net September 9-14

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #24
June 1, 2016
Going Professional as a Meta-Coach

GOING PROFESSIONAL BY SEEING THE INVISIBLE

In writing about the critical value of *pattern detection and framing*, the question arises, “What is so great about these skills?” “How does pattern detection improve coaching, coaching skills, and the experience of the client?”

The secret for you as a coach is that with *pattern detection* you are now learning to *think structurally and systemically*. You are now beginning to see, detect, and recognize how your client is operating and how your client’s experience is organized. And if you can do that— well, *when* you can do that—then you can see in the moment while you’re coaching *how* your client is creating his or her experience. This enables you to then detect the processes that are critical to the current experience and perhaps interfering with the person’s desired experience.

Oulala! Here we have the content—context distinction again! And most people, including client and coach get caught up in the content so easily and to such an extent that they cannot even see the context, structure, and processes. That’s, in part, because structure is mostly invisible. Well, it is invisible until you learn how to see and recognize it. This is true of the structure within a building, a street, a piece of music, an athletic activity, a game like chess, and a thousand other things. The structure is there all the time, but hidden. Only she who has eyes to see can see it.

Literal Structures

If you are inside, look at one of the walls in the room or if you are outside, look at one of the walls of a building. Inside the wall that you can see is a structure. What is it made up of? Inside the wall I’m looking at are studs (two-by-four pieces of lumber) that made up the hidden framework by which the wall was constructed. These studs are set at 24 inches apart and on top of the eight-foot 2-by-4s is a larger piece of lumber (two-by-eight); it rests on them and thereby connects all of the individual studs. The wall is twenty-some feet long and covered by sheet rock. I know that because I saw the house in its construction before it became my office. Today I cannot literally see it with my eyes, but I can see it in my mind’s eye remembering what it looked like before the outer pieces were put on and then painted.

Those who set up that framework are called framers. They could have framed it with steel or stone. When finished, there’s a wall and a hidden structure within it, behind it, that makes it what it is. The structure determines the outward form. If you tear into the wall and rip pieces off, you can begin to see what’s behind it. If the wall is a supporting wall, then the roof or the floor above sits on it.

Psychological Structures

People also operate by structures, but with a difference. With people the structures are dynamic—they are on-going processes and so are continuously being organized or operational. Even habituated processes which seem stable, solid, and unchanging are living, moving, and fluid experiences. If you

stopped the process, blocked it, or interrupted it—the experience would change. Another difference is that these “structures” (or better, *structuring*) is comprised of thoughts (images, words, tones, voices, etc.) and complex thoughts (beliefs, understandings, concepts, etc.). They are also comprised of neurology and physiology—how one breathes, gestures, one’s posture, movements, etc.

These processes are actions and activities within a *system*. For us, it is the human system—the mind-body-emotion system of a living person using a structure (his mental map or model) of reality to navigate through the territory of various domains of life like relationships, career, etc. These variables in the system (and there are many variables) interact with each other to create all sorts of new experiences. That’s because of the system’s principle of emergence: new properties emerge as a system operates.

All of this is what we call in coaching, *a pattern*, or more accurately, *patterning*. When a person puts one or more of the mind-body variables together into a process that he repeats over and over to generate an experience, it habituates. The neuro-pathways are activated and repeated so that what the person does becomes a habit, a regular way of operating. Do it often enough, the person loses awareness of it and does it without thinking. We say that it “drops out of consciousness and becomes unconscious.”

Now, what if you could learn to *see* these patterns? What if by asking a few questions and observing a person, you could *recognize* the person’s structuring and patterning? That would give you an unique perspective on the person as you could *see the invisible processes that create the person’s experiences*. And knowing that, you would have an unique understanding of what to do to facilitate change. You would be able to recognize to person’s leverage point of change. This is the purpose and design of *pattern detection*.

As you consider going professional as a coach, this is the next step after ACMC level. Once you have the foundational skills (the seven core skills), you are ready to add to your repertoire the skill of pattern detection. And that’s what the training at PCMC focuses on—catching the basic patterns. As a side note, once you begin seeing the invisible structures that create your client’s experience, your sense of confidence in handling the coaching session jet-propels. I have had some coaches say that it is as if they now have *the key to the game*. Now they can, as it were, ask questions to stimulate the client’s system ... so that they can see it in operation. Now they know what to do!

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #25
June 8, 2016

GOING PROFESSIONAL ETHICALLY

From time to time I put out a statement about *the ethics of the field of Coaching*. The reason is to remind ourselves of the ethics that we need to be living by and the importance of each of us holding each of us accountable to these ethical standards. This is critical for the field to be a profession and especially for the field of Meta-Coaching to be recognized as a legitimate profession. After all, every profession has a code of ethics. And so do we as the Meta-Coach Foundation.

But having a code is not the same as the field of Meta-Coaches *living* that code. That's why we put into place the conflict resolution process and why we ask every Licensed Meta-Coach to sign the Conflict Resolution Agreement. "Why?" you ask. Because the only way to effectively enforce the code of ethics is for every Meta-Coach to accept responsibility to hold every other Meta-Coach responsible to that code of ethics. Did you catch your responsibility in that statement? This means that we need *you* to be engaged in this as a kind of peer accountability. Will you do that? Are you doing that?

"But how?" you ask. *Peer accountability* is the terminology for each of us in a community of colleagues to hold each other responsible for what we have committed ourselves to. To do the opposite is to set up a hierarchy system of persons to "police" the community which, of course, means that there would be suspicious people running around trying to find us do something wrong. And what kind of a culture would that create? Instead of doing that, we have sought to create a community of colleagues who care about our standard of ethics and who have the skills of open communication, direct communication, and the willingness to challenge each other.

It was in Patrick Lencioni's book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, that I came to truly appreciate "peer accountability" and what it means for a company or community. It is one of the five key factors for a high performing team and the lack of it is one of the dysfunctions of a team.

The ethical code that we live by governs simple things like giving credit and not claiming to be the source of the models—which is to this day still a big problem in the field of NLP. This ethic includes giving credit to models and information that comes from other sources. That's because everything we do is *not* NLP. When it is not, it is your responsibility to say so. Give credit. And when you quote from Neuro-Semantics, say so. Don't leave the impression that maybe you developed or wrote what you're presenting, give credit to the source. Others will perceive you as more professional when you do this. Only the insecure need to booster themselves in that way.

Another common ethical breach is when a trainer is using manuals and not paying the royalties for such. That usually eventually comes back as people take their certificates and want to do the next level. Then we find out that the person has been skimping and that then creates a situation highly embarrassing situation for him or her.

Worse is when a coach or trainer is speaking ill of a colleague. This is really not acceptable and very easy to fall into. We have all made a commitment to each other to go to the person that we have an issue with and work it out. To talk bad about someone violates that and does something that none of us want others to do to us. So using “The Golden Rule” of doing to others what we want others to do to us, is an ethical rule that helps prevent that. The next time you might find yourself criticizing or talking down about someone, ask yourself the question, “Would I want others do what I’m doing right now, would I want them to do it about me?” If the answer is no, then immediately stop what you are doing. Here is the ethical standards of the MCF.

ISNS ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR META-COACHES

We have adapted the following from the ethical standards used by the International Coach Federation (ICF). This is the Ethical Guidelines for the MCF (Meta-Coach Foundation).

Overall Vision:

As coaches, we believe in the dignity and integrity of every human being and we are committed to eliciting the inherent resourcefulness of every client. Through an interactive process, we aim for the development of strategies and solutions that the client designs and moves toward. As coaches we are respectful and protective of each client’s vulnerability and constructively hold the client to a high standard of responsibility and accountability. As coaches we work to be objective and competent in our practices.

Coaching Relationship and Contract:

Every coaching relationship begins with the articulation of the terms of the coaching- client relationship in a clear, written communication or agreement. This will include the nature of the services, limitations, boundaries, the coach’s perspectives, a statement of the client’s rights, terms of the contract, times, frequency, methods of communication, and fee schedule.

Client Protection:

The client’s well-being is the central focus of a coaching relationship and thereby obligates the coach to maintain a high level of integrity and trustworthiness throughout the contract. As coaches we are respect of the client’s needs and requests, constructive in feedback, attentive to boundaries and limitations of each person, mindful of confidentiality issues and conflicts of interests, forthright and authentic in addressing any such issues as they emerge.

As coaches we will not take advantage of a client personally, socially, sexually, or financially. As coaches we will disclose any and all personal gain accrued by the client-coach relationship, including but not limited to, useful knowledge, personal growth, fees received for referrals or recommendations made to and/or pursued by the client. As coaches, we will not only communicate, but will continuously demonstrate that the intended outcome of an exchange of information, discussion, referral, or recommendation is the client’s growth and well-being, not the promotion of the coach’s self-interest.

Confidentiality:

As coaches we will make every effort to honor the client’s confidence. As coaches, we will advise the client of circumstances that might influence our objectivity or judgment, and any decision or factors relating to a decision to reveal the client’s confidence is not privileged under law and could be subpoenaed via the coach.

To the extent that a coach is uncomfortable holding a client’s confidence, the coach is advised to consult a mentor coach in an effort to jointly determine how best to handle the situation. In rare cases, if the confidential information is of an “outrageous,” “illegal,” or “dangerous to the client or others” nature, the coach is obligated to again consult a mentor coach or attorney to determine whether to notify authorities. The client is informed and agrees that any materials provided by the coach may not be resold, published, or used outside the coaching relationship with the explicit permission of the coach.

Client history: Sometimes a coaching client will go from coach to coach, caught up in the same pattern and always leaving when the coach gets too close to something. To prevent this and to create a higher level of accountability, we recommend that you include in your intake information, “Have you ever been coached before? By whom? Have you been coached by a Meta-Coach?” Then to ask for the right to speak to the previous coach about the client. In Virginia Satir’s Family Therapy, the principle is, “A family is as sick as its secrets.” So with individuals, groups, and people seeking self-actualization. Secrets undermine responsibility and accountability.

Conflicts of Interests:

Any conflict of interest is to be discussed and resolved with the client’s best interest in mind. Whenever a conflict becomes apparent, the coach is ethically obligated to identify it and attempt to resolve it. If, during the coaching relationship, we as coaches cannot serve the client objectively, respectfully, or without internal or external conflict, we recognize our ethical obligation to terminate the coaching agreement. Such termination provides reasonable advance notice and a reasonable explanation of the conflict at the center of the decision.

Referrals and Terminations:

Whenever internal or external conditions arise that seem “uncoachable” or unworkable, as coaches we are ethically committed to reveal our own observations and opinion to our client. As coaches we will suggest a viable solution to the problem, making every effort to avoid injury to the dignity of the client. If the solution includes a referral to another coach, the referring coach is ethically committed to refer to three more suitable coaches. If the coach’s suggested solution includes termination without referral, or postponement of the coaching contract until a more suitable time, as coaches we are ethically committed to a clear explanation of the rationale underlying the recommendation.

Ethical Violations:

If a coach knowingly, consistently, or outrageously breaches these ethical guidelines, the coach will be asked to work with a mentor coach and/or be expelled from the Neuro-Semantic association and society. A coach who receives a reprimand by the ISNS is encouraged to train with a mentor coach for a period of time until the essence of the complaint is corrected.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus #26
June 9, 2016
RE: Update on the Coaching Movie
Confidential

BACK-STORIES INSIDE THE COACHING MOVIE

May 25

This is to up-date you on the Coaching Movie. I have debated about writing it and sending it out, but given that we—*The Meta-Coaching System*— have invested heavily in the movie, I thought that the responsible thing is to let you know what has been happening even though it is really not good news.

Over the past two or three months there has been a big controversy going on about the Coaching Movie. I am not exactly sure about *what exactly is the problem*, I have my mind-reads and hallucinations about it, but I do not know. About three months ago a torrent of emails started going around. The sponsors and the director were arguing over the movie. At first I figured this was par for the course, no big deal. But then over a two week period nearly every one of the coaches who are in the Movie, and all of the coaches who have invested in the Movie have taken a position against the sponsors and hosts of the Movie—Ptryk and Kasie Wezowski. At first the position was simple: we all thought that Betsy Chasse, who had been directing the movie, should finish the movie. Now this is the same Betsy Chasse who directed *What the Bleep* and many other self-development type of movies.

The controversy seemed to me to be between Betsy and Ptryk and Kasie was mostly over money. Surprise, surprise! Apparently, they are not transferring \$90K to her, they are changing some of their expectations, they are putting some last minute coaches into the movie asking for more filming, etc.

So for several more weeks, the controversy rage as each side wrote loonnngggg emails (pages and pages long!) arguing for their side. Back and forth emails flew between director and sponsors and sent to a distribution group of all of us— 25 or so people. From my perspective, Betsy put everything out on the table, and the others did not. Then about five weeks ago, the emails to and from and among the 25 coaches started going crazy, 30 to 40 emails a day! Four weeks ago (while conducting training in Brazil) I was the first to respond by saying, “enough,” and I offered to mediate between the two sides. That was set up for June 1. But then some of the coaches who were also investors (as myself) got anxious, fearful of losing their investments, and started threatening ... eventually law suites were mentioned, then the rush of emails and the civil “discussion” went to hell.

The sponsors pulled back, refused to speak and in one email seemingly “fired” the director. But she said she had not quit so she could not be fired. I again called for calm asking the sponsors to reflect on the fact that of all the world-class coaches that they had pulled together for their legacy film on coaching, every one wanted Betsy to continue ... where could they get that kind of “wisdom” of judgment and perspective? There is a meeting this Wednesday, June 1, but not a mediation as we originally established.

Now I do not know who is creating the conflict and who is acting unprofessionally, but my sense is that it was the sponsors. But again, I do not know. That's only the impression I get from reading everything. (Why did I read everything? Well, *we* have more than \$20,000 invested!) The funny thing is that they are "coaches" (well, by self-description) and yet they are the ones who are behaving in a fashion that is not coach-like. The accusations flying is that they want to change the movie so that they are primarily featured in the movie, that they want all of the recognition and credit. Those are the allegations. It's funny because I did not even know until this week that they were in the movie. I thought their role was sponsoring and organizing the vision of the Coaching Movie, now called LEAP.

The movie is supposed to be wrapped up in July and ready to go to the Sundance Film Festival in August. Why they are still wanting to film two other coaches ... and get that material in the movie ... seems strange to me. The sponsors apparently are doing it for the money that will bring in (20K each). (At least that's my understanding at this point.)

If this demonstrates anything, it highlights that conflict is everywhere, and that even being a professional coach does not eliminate it! Some of the coaches started their emails saying that they were "taking off their coaching hats." Then the next words they wrote were, "Bull shit!" As if somehow, in some way, *that* would help! It has been a lesson in how shallow some of these "expert" coaches in various Coaching Schools their "coaching state" is. A few of them (two or three right now) have taken off their hat and gone into insults, attacks, mind-reading, judgments.

I read that kind of thing as an indicator of just how shallow, superficial, and un-integrated is their "coaching" mind, state, and understanding. So for all the work that ICF and MCF and other coach training systems invest in creating a system of ethics and standards, they seem to "go" very quickly with a few of them. For me that calls in question the authenticity of their integrity and congruency.

What will happen? I don't know. But I'll keep you informed. My hope is that they will work it out and Betsy Chasse can finish her work and the movie will be produced in August/ September as planned. Some months ago the sponsors named the Coaching Movie, LEAP. I asked them to *leap over* this conflict and get the job done! We shall see.

June 2

The sponsors, director and the 6 executive producers apparently have called a truce and are trying to work things out. That's good. It seems that most of the conflict is over money(!). The sponsors made choices about where to do the filming, the expensive Malibu House, and other things that have sent the budget up several hundred thousand dollars.

They also had an unexpected problem arise when one of the coaching clients attempted suicide! After that she spent a month in a psychiatric ward in New York. So they paid to have one of her coaches go there and do sessions for damage control. I had a private call with the director, Betsy, to ask about how they chose clients and if they did any checking. They did use a form, far too general, but the client lied on the forms! She lied about not being on psycho-active drugs (she was), about not having been diagnosed as manic-depressive (she was), about not being under a doctor's care (she was)!

June 6

The group (sponsors, director and executive producers with a mediator) reported that they are getting

close to a solution and wanting some of the coaches to be on the executive board. Two people volunteered as I did. That's where things are today.

Confidential

My sense is that we ought to keep this in-house—just among us. I'm writing this for your information and it is not really for public consumption. The lesson from all of this—even coaches need coaches at times!! :)

Friday June 10

Today a rush of many, many emails indicated that Betsy Chasse has been fired from the Movie. Patryk and Kasie sent out an email asserting repeatedly that she had not been “fired,” but that she was no longer a part of the Movie. After that five of the Coaches who had paid another \$5,000 for the “book” that Betsy would edit and put together, wrote to ask for their money back. I originally considered investing in the book, but when I read the small print (always read the small print), I decided against it. Getting a chapter in the book and a 90 second (maximum) trailer highlighting me just didn't seem worth it. When I read the small print the trailer could be as short as 10 second and as long as 90.

There's a call planned for Tuesday June 14 for all Coaches and Investors that one of the coaches is putting together. There's a call planned for the following Friday by the sponsors and the five Executive Producers to explain where they are and what's going to happen.

Tuesday June 14

There was a call among 15 of the 25 Coaches and two of the Executive Producers of the Movie “Leap.” The 2 hour conference call focused on what to do and what options for continuing. Much of the talk was about the legalities in Belgium Law for a lawsuit to reclaim the money that individuals had invested. Carol Koziol who organized the call proposes three options, another coach suggested writing a behavioral contract for the Organizers. Finally, the group decided to ask the organizer's to postpone their Friday conference call. Later that night, Carol wrote “A Public Letter” To Patriyk and Kasia to that effect. After that, two dozen emails went around asking about that and confirming that.

The next day, Patryk wrote and said that those who had invested the \$5,000 for the book and trailer project would get their money back. That strikes me as a somewhat surprising, but good, development. He also reaffirmed the Friday call for everyone.

June 15 and 16

More rush of emails. Many calling for P&K to hold off on the Friday Conference call. Carol Koziol posted a long letter to P&K to that extent and suggesting three possible choices for going forward.

On Thursday June 16 Patryk put out a 4 or 5 pages of a single space letter saying that Betsy had not been “fired,” but discharged(!), that the Letter sent by Carol was not acceptable and full of distortions.

He said that he has decided to separate the Coaches and Investors into two groups, the Passive Contributor and the Inner Leap Circle. The Passive Contributors would not get the insider's information. Everybody has to make up their mind by June 22 and no one can change categories thereafter(!). I will be on the call tomorrow to hear how the sponsors plan to go forward. They have already picked a new Director for the movie, Leap.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #27
June 15, 2016

A COACHING BOOK

I hope that you are constantly reading books, journals, and articles about coaching. I am. Last week I read a new book with a great title, *Unlocking Potential*. The foreword was by the celebrity coach, Marshall Goldsmith. With his recommendation, how could you go wrong. But . . . the book does.

Now the author has an impressive background, which is one thing that motivated me to buy it. He is a senior consultant to FranklinCovey; he has “spent twenty-five years training executives to become effective coaches.” Yet the author, Michael Simpson, gives no indication about where the idea of unlocking potentials came from, not a single word about Abraham Maslow or Carl Rogers. It is as if the whole Human Potential Movement of the 1950s, 60s, 70s and 80s never existed. Now he does touch on key coaching skills—asking questions, seeking clarity, building empathy. That’s good.

He also does quote several significant works and gives credit to the authors. That’s very good. For example, he quotes Jack Welch’s *Winning*, Covey’s *The Speed of Trust*, David Burns’ *The Feeling Good Handbook*, Porter’s *Six Disciplines of Execution Revolution*, Marcus Buckingham’s *First Break All Rules*, Jim Colin’s *Good to Great*. From these he talks about lead measures and other effective tools. From this perspective, he has eclectically brought together a lot of great ideas. Yet that is about as much as I can validate in the book.

Simpson devotes the second part of the book on “Seven Coaching Skills.” That’s interesting! We also have seven coaching skills. I wonder how closely they overlap? Well, let’s see. Here are his seven coaching skills— in his words.

- 1) Build trust.
- 2) Change paradigms.
- 3) Seek strategic clarity.
- 4) Execute flawlessly.
- 5) Give effective feedback.
- 6) Tap into talent.
- 7) Move the middle.

But do these skills have any benchmarks attached to them? No, of course not. Are these skills clearly defined in the chapters so that a person could *do* them? Again, no. Instead what he does is tell numerous stories in each of the chapters which does give each “skill” a personal touch. Of course, I love his fourth one, “executive flawlessly.” Oh, that’s all we have to do?! Just deliver, implement, execute *flawlessly!*

Finally, “move the middle” comes from Jack Welch’s book and refers to the fact that 70% of the people in an organization is in “the middle” and if you work with them to move them upward, your coaching in an organization will be effective. Of course, that assumes that you are working in and with an organization, and that the organization has given you permission to “move the middle” 70% of people in that organization to the top! This one has no application for the coach who does individual coaching.

Now the good news for you as a Meta-Coach is that this is the kind of thinking that you are up against in the workplace. Really! And that means that people being trained in these skills will certainly *know something* about some of the basic coaching skills, but they will not know *how to do them*. So what books are you reading?

Comparing the Seven Skills

How do our *Seven Skills* in the Meta-Coaching System relate to these seven coaching skills?

- *Trust*. For his first skill of “Build trust” we focus on listening and supporting and have identified 30 sub-skills for how to become trustworthy so a client will trust us.
- *Change*. For his second skill of “Change paradigms,” we describe this in terms of framing and all of the forms of framing. This is about meaning-making as well as meaning-suspension. It is about changing beliefs, understandings, mental strategies. We also have two change models, The Axes of Change and The Crucible.
- *Clarity*. For the third skill, “Seek strategic clarity,” we use the Well-Formed Outcome pattern to get specificity on what the client wants.
- *Execute*. For the fourth skill, “Execute flawlessly,” we talk about implementation, and do that through the Mind-to-Muscle process. And we also know better than framing it in terms of “flawlessly.” Instead we aim for continuous improvement, experiments, step-by-step processes.
- *Feedback*. For the fifth skill, “Give effective feedback,” we have a dozen benchmarks for giving feedback.
- *Unleash*. For the sixth skill, “Tap into talent,” we do that through using the WFO pattern, building up a person’s “power zone” since every skill is made up of the four human responses. If this refers to unleashing people’s potentials— we have 19 specific mechanisms for doing that which is in the *Unleashing* trainings.
- *Engagement*. For his seven skill, “Move the middle,” because that seems like an organizational strategy rather than a specific skill, we don’t have anything that corresponds to that. In Neuro-Semantics we focus on getting people *engaged* in what they do, using the “genius” pattern of engagement.

The Book:

Simpson, Michael L. (2014). *Unlocking Potential: 7 Coaching Skills that transform Individuals, Teams, and Organizations*. MI: Grand Harbor Press.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #28
June 22, 2016

SETTING UP A COACHING PROGRAM

In the field of Coaching, the great majority of coaching sessions are part of a *Coaching Program*, and not a one-off event. I don't know and have never seen statistics on this, but my sense is that this is true of 95% of Coaching Conversations. And when it comes to *Coaching Programs*, there are two broad categories.

- 1) You set up a series of Coaching Sessions based on your niche, your style, and your subject. This may be as few as three sessions and as many as 20 or 30. Typically Coaching Programs run from 7 to 10.
- 2) You are invited into a business or an organization and given a Coaching Assignment to coach one or more persons. You may work with front-line people, middle managers, senior managers, groups in the organization, or high potential individuals. Such *Coaching Assignments* also range from just a few sessions (3 to 5) to sessions over half-a-year or over an entire year.

Designing Your Coaching Program

Part of your “business development” should entail designing a *Coaching Program* so that when someone asks about how to move forward, you have a “program” ready to go. Have you designed yours yet? If you have not and you need some guidance, use the following as your initial framework. Then as you coach and learn from your experiences, you can change it so that it fits you and your targeted market more effectively. The following is suggestive and you can adapt it as appropriate to your clientele. This is essentially the “Coaching to the Matrix” approach. Obviously, you could spend 1 to 3 sessions on each one.

Meta-Coaching *Coaching Program* format:

- 1) *Introductory Session*: Design is to establish your long term outcomes in all of the areas of life. Use “the wheel of life” and talk through what your client wants in career, finances, health and fitness, relationships, parenting, partner, spirituality, etc.
- 2) *Well-Formed Outcome Session*. Establish what your client wants most of all, what will make a transformative difference in his/her life.
- 3) *Intentionality Session*. Establish with your client her highest intentions in the outcome that she wants. Do this with five goals, then step back to identify her highest objectives and hierarchy of values.
- 4) *Empowerment Session*. Establish with your client his sense of personal power, control, and self-determination. Explore his style of response (from inactive, reflective, active, proactive, reactive), his responsibility style (under-responsible, responsible, over-responsible), his ability to tap into his powers to build skills, establish healthy boundaries, and take control of his life in terms of discipline and productivity.
- 5) *Solid Sense of Self Session*. Establish with your client a solid sense of self—self-value as distinct from self-confidence, social self, self-efficacy, etc. Develop a healthy sense of self that can invest self in one's potentials and skills and get self out of the way as appropriate.
- 6) *Effective Relationships Session*. Establish one's social skills, emotional intelligence with self and others, ability to create great relationships, handle situations of conflict, work through

differences, etc.

7) *State Session*. Establish the ability to access desired states at will, especially the “flow” or genius state. Develop the ability involved in emotional intelligence: state awareness, monitoring, regulating, and relating.

Consulting to the *Coaching Program*

Once you have your Coaching Program in place, you are ready to *consult* with a potential client to determine if the person is coachable, ready for coaching, ready for *your* coaching program and style, and if *you* want to work with that person. Think of it as *you qualifying the person* rather than trying to *sell* your services.

What’s involved in the *Consulting Introduction Session*? Here are key things you will want to achieve in that session.

- You will inform the potential candidate about what *coaching* is and is not and *your style* of coaching and if you and the person have the right chemistry. Provide materials and information that defines “Coaching” so the person knows what she is buying. Use the Circles Diagram from the ACMC manual. Read the definition of Meta-Coaching.
- In the session you will also be co-determining with your client— *what* he wants, the *criteria* for measuring success, and each person’s *expectations*. Here you will use the coaching methodology as you ask questions and co-create the answers.
- You will be review the person’s *application* for coaching. This application gives you the person’s demographics and psychographics.
 - Name, address, age.
 - Occupation. Time on the job. Other jobs.
 - Education, professional history.
 - Relationship now, in the past.
 - Children, ages, living conditions (living with you or away from you).
 - Previous experiences of self-development. Therapy. If yes, name and number of therapist, right to confer with.
 - Medication. Under a doctor’s care? Use of alcohol.
 - Personal history important to understand you: who you are and what you are about.
 - General goals: health, finances, career, productivity, discipline, relationships, etc.
- The logistics of Coaching: length of sessions, number of them, schedule, investment of cost, arrangement of costs, what happens when you miss a session or cancel a session, confidentiality, place of the coaching, etc.
- The way forward: How the process of contracting for coaching will work after this session. You can decide in that moment to accept the person as a client or you can delay that decision for a day or two and then contact them. You can use a simple *Coaching Contract* and have it available— two sheets of paper which summarize what you have talked about and how you will move forward.
- Once a *Coaching Agreement or Contract* is accepted, you will want to have the administration papers ready to go. Payment invoice / receipt. Payment schedule. Confidentiality statement. Disclosure statement. The last two of these are in the ACMC manual and were some of the files sent to you after *Coaching Mastery*.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #29
June 29, 2016

DEALING WITH DIS-ENGAGED CLIENTS

Have you ever had a *disengaged* client? Sometimes what is challenging in coaching is the disengagement of your client. It's challenging when you end up sitting with a client who doesn't seem all that motivated to engage in the coaching. It's challenging when the conversation doesn't seem to be going anywhere. It's challenging when you are given a person to coach who doesn't want to be coached! So what's a Meta-Coach to do?

First of all, you will want to detect and calibrate to the person's unique form of dis-engagement. That's because all disengagement is not the same. How does the disengagement show up in your client? Does he have low energy? Does she give lackluster responses? Is he distracted and unable to maintain focus in the conversation? Is she complaining but not setting forth any goal or willingness to do something about the complaints? Is he uncertain, not-knowing, not caring? Does she give such vague responses that you can't get ahold of anything specific? Does he offer small little goals that are hardly worth your time even talking about?

While there are more, these are among common aspects of dis-engagement. What kind of dis-engagement are you facing specifically? Once you calibrate to it, then identify it. Classify it so that you know the general area in which it fits.

- *Tiredness:* The person with low energy, low motivation, low levels of vitality and aliveness. Is this in character with the person? Are they always or mostly like this? Do they get excited about anything? If so, what? How do they take care of their physical well-being: sleeping, exercising, eating, etc.?
- *Distracted:* The person may lack the ability to stay focused in a conversation. Perhaps he suffers from "intrusion of thoughts." Perhaps she has ADD or hyperactivity and it is now a habitual way of being. Perhaps he has other things on his mind and is pre-occupied.
- *Complaining:* The person may have few if any goals, but have developed a life-style of complaining and grumbling about things. When you begin to explore one complaint, the person shifts to yet another complaint. These are presented in a whiny, fussing tone and without much energy or rage about it.
- *Vagueness:* The person may live in a world of vague concepts, generalizations, and overly abstract ideas and seem to be unable to offer any specific sensory-based descriptions. Sometimes such people actually think they are being specific and don't have a clue as to the vagueness of their communication style.
- *Conflicted:* The person may have other things on his mind and is pre-occupied because there are internal conflicts tearing him apart. There's a war between different meanings, frames, wants, desires, fears, etc.

- *Boredom*: The person may find the whole coaching thing irrelevant and/or boring especially if they are being “forced” into the coaching by someone who thinks they need it. They don’t want to be there and their low energy effectively shows it!

Coach Awareness

Once you get a sense of the kind and quality of dis-engagement, you will have at least some clarity about what you can do as a Coach . With all of them, begin with a meta-comment about their state. This will help to call your client’s attention to his or her experience. Using feedback, mirror what you see and hear.

Coach Linguistic Matching

With the disengaged you will not want to match their disengagement at the physical level. At least, do not pace it with your energy or state. You could match it *verbally* by putting their state or experience into words. “So you are tired— worn out, exhausted, and you just don’t have the energy to X.” When you say this, use a congruent voice so that it matches theirs. “Is that right?”

Coach Awakening

As a coach, remember that often you need to be an awakener. In this role you facilitate your client in raising awareness. It may involve inspiration. It may involve something more shocking—sometimes to awaken someone, you have to throw cold water in your client’s face to get their attention to their state or situation. That’s because everything habituates. Their state may have habituated so much that they are simply *not* aware of it. As an awakener, call their attention to their state of disengagement. Test to see if they are aware of how they seem disengaged. “Are you aware of the disengagement that you are expressing?”

Coach Decision for a Commitment

Next, check to see if they want to change their state, their lifestyle, or their habit. “Do you like what you are experiencing? What would you like to experience?” Challenge them to make a decision and commitment.

With *the tired*, challenge them regarding *what* they are doing that drains their energy. Call on them to wake up to life’s excitements and pleasures.

With *the distracted*, challenge them to become intentional, to rise up to their highest intention and apply it to their attention, to enter into the flow or genius state.

With *the complainers*, challenge them to become responsible in taking effective action to make the world a better place.

With *the vague*, challenge them to become specific and empirical in their descriptions.

With *the conflicted*, challenge them to deal with the conflict and to become more integrated and congruent.

Coaching a highly engaged client is a lot of fun. It’s what makes Coaching exciting. But we can’t always expect that our client will start out or continue to be highly engaged. Sometimes your client is disengaged. But that should be no problem for a Meta-Coach! In fact, that’s when the adventure begins— for both of you!

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #30
July 6, 2016

COACHING SOMEONE ON WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW

“It’s not the answer that enlightens, but the question.” Eugene Ionesco

“To be a great coach, you need to be able to ask great questions.”

(Starr, *The Coaching Manual*, p. 147)

“Coaching does not mean changing lives;

it means changing the questions we ask and being open to what happens...”

Teri-E Belf, *Coaching with Spirit*

When it comes to questions, there’s power and wonder and magic in them. Further, questions provides you your *primary tool* as a coach. Once you create connection with a person or group, the most powerful thing you can do is to ask questions: precision questions, meta-questions, matrix questions, meaning–performance questions, well-formed outcome questions, and Socratic questions. Now with Socratic questions, you can especially avoid any temptation to give advice, suggestions, or to teach. They are that powerful.

Socrates believed that you can lead or facilitate a person to discover and to learn what he or she doesn’t know. His assumption was that people know things implicitly which they do not even know that they know. Consciously they say, “I don’t know.” Yet they do. They just do not *know* that they know, and they may not even believe that they do or could know.

Further because Socrates believed that there is within people this implicit knowledge, he believed that by the use of explorative questions, he could lead them (or as we would say in Meta-Coaching, facilitate them) to discover those implicit understandings. What do you think? Could you coach someone into understanding and knowing what they do not consciously know? Actually, we do this in Meta-Coaching! That’s why a skilled coach can “draw” knowledge “out” of a person by a series of questions.

But most coaches do not seem to know this. For example, here’s what Julie Starr wrote in the new version of her book, *The Coaching Manual*. Now I very much like Julie and, in fact, I wrote a recommendation in the new edition of the book. Yet here is a flaw that far too many coaches in various coach training programs believe.

“You *can’t* coach knowledge. When someone has little or no knowledge in an area and needs to acquire that quickly, the simple instruction or advice works best. This is because basically we *can’t* coach knowledge.” (p. 17, italics added)

Ah, so she thinks that “advice works best!” That’s what she wrote! Nor is she alone. A great many “coaches” believe that. Now my aim here is not to pick on Julie for this statement. I could have quoted similar statements from lots of coaching books. My aim is to focus on this idea that “you can’t coach knowledge” which is so common—and *so wrong*—in the field of Coaching.

This is where *Socratic Questions* come in. As you probably know, Socrates played “the gadfly” for his fellow Athenians stinging them into awareness of their own ignorance and stupidity. As a philosopher, he was fully a “lover of wisdom” [which is what *philosophy* means; *phileo* – love, *sophia* – wisdom]. For the ancients in that long ago time, he had no system. Systematic philosophy was just at its beginning, but he did have questions. And with his questions he played “the midwife” to bring to birth the knowledge they had within themselves. That’s how he thought about his questions, by his questions he could lead a person to discover within him or herself *knowledge*.

He once demonstrated the power of questions by asking a series of questions of a common and uneducated boy who a group of elders choose from off the streets. He did that to show that the boy actually “knew” geometry. Now yes, the questions were leading. And yet by simply asking the Socratic questions, he was able to show that the boy implicitly understood geometry. Socrates interpreted this as meaning that the knowledge was inside the boy. I would say that by the questions, the boy learned the principles and structure of geometry and followed the logic that the question led him to.

Interesting enough this is what the word “education” literally means, “to draw out” what is within. Education is not to *put into a person* something that is not there. It is to *draw out what is there*. So Socrates was literally an educator with his questions. With questions, he would lead knowledge out of a person that is already within the person. Maslow described the self-actualizing person in a very similar way. The self-actualizing person is *not* as the person with *something extra added*, a Formula-X, but as the ordinary person with *nothing taken away*.

So even if your client *does not know something*— you can still coach them! Yes, you can send them off on a task to read, interview, and research to find information. You can also learn to use Socratic Questions to help them discover things that they don’t know. That’s the power of questions. Interested? Fascinated? I am.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #31
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THE 10-DAY ACMC

I have a vision— I envision a 10-day *Coaching Mastery Training* for the ACMC credentials. And before long we will be announcing the first 10-day ACMC. I don't know *when* we will do it or *where*, but we will. I began envisioning this as I talked with several of the Leadership Team about the difference in NSTT and ACMC. In NSTT we have 95 to 97 percent of participants reaching competency during the training. That contrasts with maybe, at best, only 3 to 5 percent at ACMC. Why? What's the difference?

I think I can identify several reasons. One of the key ones is that at NSTT people are doing a lot more practicing of the skills. There they are up and on their feet every single day making presentations. At first they are practicing various skills in the drills that we have been using since the beginning and which Colon took to a whole new level five years back. They are also up on their feet presenting all aspects of their final 30-minute presentation from Day 4 to 9, going over it again and again, and getting immediate feedback from multiple benchmarkers to shape their presentation skills.

Another key factor is that for the first nine nights, they get to see one of the Master Trainers or someone in that track, present and they then hear feedback and benchmarking at that higher level. They get to hear a group of us give feedback and talk about the structure of the presentation in addition to the live demonstration.

So suppose we extended the training and did more of these things at ACMC. Do you think that we could get the numbers up to 80 or 90 percent of participants reaching competency level? I do. That's my vision. Given the rigorous standards we have for the ACMC credentials and the complexity of being able to use so many of the Neuro-Semantic models, my sense is that the 8-day training is just not sufficient to fully create the new habits. After all, new habits take time to solidify. They require intense practice so to make the new behaviors automatic.

When the time comes that we're able to devote 10-days to ACMC and there's a sponsor willing to sell it— then the schedule on Days 8 to 10 will be as following.

- **Day 8:** We will replace the feedback sessions and the “test,” with Coaching Sessions, these will be 30 minutes long with 15 minutes feedback. Afternoon will deal with Licensing, a demonstration of Meta-Coaching, and Graduation for those leaving after 8-days. Evening session will be another set of Coaching Sessions.
- **Day 9:** We will begin with a special demonstration— one where the co-trainer and/or members of the Assist Team will be holding signs of the skills as they are demonstrated. We will then have Coaching Sessions in the morning ... review and Skill Drills in the afternoon, and another set of Coaching Sessions in the evening.
- **Day 10:** We begin with another special demonstration — the Coach describing the skill that he or she *will be doing* in the next moment—and then doing it. Another set of Coaching sessions in the morning, descriptions on how to practice skills in the afternoon, and the final Coaching sessions. Evening will be for the Graduation.

The 10-Day ACMC is coming, I don't know when or where, but we will do it in 2017 or 2018 to test

if we can get 80 to 90 percent of participants to competency level by adding 5 more feedback sessions, three or four more quality demonstrations, and with more focus on the coaching skills. Would you like to be a part of that one?

In the movie, *Groundhog Day*, Bill Murrey played a character who was self-centered, self-absorbed, arrogant, and dismissing of others. And at first, he dismissed others and their responses with a sarcastic humor that put them down. But the situation was always the same. The day kept repeating. Nothing changed. Only he could change. So he could dismiss the experience. The experience would occur again and again. When he couldn't take it any longer, he tried to kill himself. He tried in multiple ways to kill himself. Even that didn't work. He could not escape groundhog day. Eventually he began to adjust himself— his behavior, his thinking. And eventually his character began changing. Over time, he began using feedback to adjust his behavior to create new ways to relate to others and to develop himself as a decent human being.

So what if we do something similar with the Meta-Coach training? We could simply add a few extra days with lots and lots of practices, and encouraged people to keep working on the core skills, reliving them in session after session, over and over until they begin to learn what to do differently. We would be establishing a *Groundhog Day Coaching* experience as it were! And the design would be to enable a person to become much more competent in the Meta-Coaching conversations. What do you think?

From: L. Michael Hall
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THE PROBLEM OF MIND-READING AND ITS CURE

The primary linguistic distinction that the founders of NLP discovered from Virginia Satir was Mind-Reading. With her emphasis on communication as “the greatest single factor affecting a person’s health and relationship to others” (*Peoplemaking*, p. 59), her book reads like a full assault on the danger and disrespect of mind-reading. She repeatedly emphasized the unique thinking and feeling of each person, each with his and her own maps of the world, and that we do not know what the other person is thinking, feeling, intending, etc.

“You don’t really know what I am sensing, what I am feeling, what my past is, what my values are and exactly what my body is doing. You have only guesses and fantasies, and I have the same about you. Unless the guesses and fantasies are checked out, they become ‘the facts’ and as such can often lead to traps and ruptures.” (p. 33)

When we fail to honor and respect each person’s unique experience in the world and start assuming that “my experience in the world” is the standard for understanding others, then I begin imposing it on others. This results in mind-reading. Virginia said that we take a *resemblance* from someone—what they say, what they look like, a gesture, a body movement, how they say it—and then *use our history* to interpret it.

“When this kind of thing goes on, communication is taking place *with shadows of the past*, not real people.” (p. 37 italics added)

You are communicating with the shadows of your past! This is one of the ways that we engage in mind-reading. Unaware of our own thinking, feeling, and interpreting and *assuming that what we experience is what another person is thinking, feeling, and intending*—we impose our stuff on them. Now how disrespectful is that? And how blinding is that? In mind-reading, you discredit the other person, you dishonor that person’s uniqueness, and you create a blind-spot for yourself so that you cannot see that person truly and accurately. Talk about a sabotage to effective listening and relating!

Here’s another way that you might fall into the trap of mind-reading and here Virginia offers some pretty graphic and memorable words to describe it:

“It is equally possible that as you first looked, memories of old hurts were so strong that that was all you could see. I call this ‘riding the garbage train.’ As long as you look now, but see yesterday, the barriers will only get higher. If you encounter the ‘garbage train,’ say so, and dump it.” (p. 41)

Ah, riding the garbage train! *Looking now, seeing yesterday!* This is full-fledged mind-reading and as she noted— a barrier to listening, connecting, recognizing, and effective relating. Her aim was to enable people to really listen and really see another person. In Coaching this is critical. And in Meta-Coaching, we emphasize constantly that truly listening and listening deeply is the core skill.

“Listening and looking require one’s full attention. We pay a heavy price for not seeing and not hearing accurately as we end up by making assumptions and treating them as facts. ...

How easy it is to misunderstand someone by making assumptions about what he meant. This can have serious results ... This brings us to what I consider one of the most impossible hurdles in human relationships. That is the assumption that *you* always know what *I* mean. The premise appears to be that if we love each other, we also can and should read each others minds.” (p. 48, 50, 53)

For you and I as Meta-Coaches, the problem lies in failing to listen with full attention. To do that is demanding and requires a lot of effort as well as quieting the mind (the next Morpheus article). Our problems is that we are only half-listening while we are simultaneously paying attention to our own internal dialogue, our memories of our history, our judgments and our knowledge. In a word, we are too full of ourselves!

Richard, John, Frank and the Meta Groups in Santa Cruz took this from Virginia Satir and turned it into the challenging questions of the Meta-Model that enables one to become an effective questioner and gain precision and clarity in the communications:

How do you know this information? Did the person say this?

Where did you get this information about the other person’s thoughts, emotions, intentions, etc.?

Now if you do have a sense of what another person is experiencing, then frame your words as your guess. If your “intuition” is that the person is in a certain state or operating from a certain intention take ownership of your guess, present it, and give the person the right to correct you.

“I have a sense that you might be afraid to really say what you think. That’s just a guess.

What do you think?”

“My hallucination is that you’re upset, maybe even angry, but only you know what you’re feeling. So let me ask, what are you feeling?”

“I get the feeling that you are trying to evade the subject. But that is just a feeling and I could very well be wrong. Would you let me know what’s actually going on?”

The tell-tail sign of mind-reading is the sentence that starts with “You ...” and that then asserts what the person is thinking, feeling, and intending. And among the ways to temper things is to use tentative language: “It seems to me...” “I don’t know but maybe you are experiencing...”

From: L. Michael Hall
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***The Art of Listening* #1**

MIND-QUIETING 101

How can you *listen* to your client when your mind is full of noise? The question is rhetorical. The fact is—you cannot. If you have lots of noise, chatter, talk, and stuff going on in your mind *while* you are trying to listen—you won't be able to listen very well if at all. So, how quiet or noisy is your mind? If we could listen in to the inner dialogue within your mind, when you are coaching or thinking, what would we hear? Would we like listening in and hearing what's going on? Would it attract us or repulse us? Would it be engaging and loving or would it be insulting and obnoxious?

Some people have very noisy minds. Inside their heads are lots of words—commands, ideas, curses, advice, etc. Some primarily talk to themselves in their internal dialogue—if they listen in to themselves—they would hear themselves constantly talking to themselves in unpleasant ways—sometimes yelling at themselves, sometimes cursing, giving orders, shaming themselves, etc. They have what we call an “internal critic” voice. Do you? Do you talk to yourself? Are you kind and gentle to yourself? Others deceive themselves with their self-talk as they recite their best PR to themselves about how skilled they are, how they are way above-average, etc.

Others not only talk to themselves, they record the words and messages of other people who have spoken to them—parents, teachers, friends, enemies, etc. and then they run those messages in their heads as internal dialogues. They run them over and over and, of course, as they do, they feel worse and worse. They put the insulting or discouraging words of others on a repeating loop that never turns off. This is a sure way to create incredible internal misery—something not recommended if you want to have a pleasant life. And something especially to avoid if you want to be able to listen to others.

When someone creates this, sometimes when they discover that they have these conversations in their heads, they describe them as “voices.” And they say that they can't turn them off. “I have these voices in my head!” they say. Many of the clients you coach will say this. The weird thing is that they speak *as if* they have no part in this production. They speak *as if* they are victims of other people who put these voices in their head. All the while they do not even notice the volume, tone, location, nature in quality of the words. All they focus on is *the content* of the words and feel bad.

In a Coaching demonstration on the Well-Formed Outcome questions which I did recently with a lady who is becoming a Coach, she did not answer my questions. I began repeating the question over and over and still she did not seem to notice. Then I noticed a strange thing. She was answering questions but not the ones I was asking. When I noticed this, I began figuring out *what* questions she was answering. Then I called her attention to this. I did that several times and even that did not work—she still could not hear the questions I was asking. So as I started guessing at the question she was hearing in her mind and saying that question out loud. I did this to pace her. Amazingly, it got her attention. Then to connect question-and-answer, I began repeating *her answer to her question*. That worked better. It at least paced her experience and she felt heard!

Here was a *person who could not hear on the outside*. Why? Because there was so much talk and noise *on the inside*. It makes sense that if you are talking a lot on the inside, listening to “voices” that you are remembering or repeating, you won’t be able to listen very well on the outside. Now being a client in this situation is one thing, being a *Coach* is quite another. And she was a Coach in training! So no wonder she had a difficult time listening to her clients and scoring less than 1.0.

What’s the solution? One solution is to quiet your mind. And how do you do that? First *become aware* of what you are saying on the inside. What are you hearing? What are you saying to yourself? Then start to alter your representations of the sounds and the words. Alter what you are saying, how you are saying it, the code you are using (loud/quiet; close/far; harsh tone/ sexy tone, etc.). In the process of changing the code—you start to take control of your own constructions, and that begins to give you a sense of being able to regulate your experience and your emotions.

From there you can begin to record messages that will become the new “voices” in your head.

- What would you like to say to yourself?
- What messages could you give yourself that would make you feel safe, valuable, present, caring, etc.?
- Would you like to replace the old conversations in your head?

Once you develop awareness of the old voices and have constructed some new voices to replace them with—step back and examine your beliefs, understandings, identity, and decisions about all of this.

- What do you believe about your internal dialogue?
- What would you like to believe?
- What would be the most powerful belief that you can construct that will enable you to be present and have a quiet inner mind when listening and coaching?

Do you have difficulty really listening to your clients? This offers you a beginning place. More will be coming in the next *Morpheus* post.

From: L. Michael Hall
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***The Art of Listening* #2**

WHY PEOPLE CAN'T HEAR

Some people seem to be *incapable* of hearing. As a Meta-Coach, you talk, you ask questions and your client does not hear. Your client keeps saying, “What was that?” “Could you repeat that?” Or your client talks *as if* what you said had not been said. So what do you do as a Meta-Coach? In the previous article (Mind Quieting #101) I wrote about helping a person discover the noise in their mind and how to quiet that over-active mind. That’s one explanation for why a person cannot hear.

Here’s another reason for not being able to actually hear. This one goes to a person’s meta-programs, what we call in NLP the “representational systems,” and it goes to *how* the person uses representational coding. Here’s something that was written at the beginning of NLP by Richard Bandler and John Grinder:

“Typically kinesthetics complain that auditory and visual people are insensitive. Visuals complain that auditories don’t pay attention to them because they don’t make eye contact during the conversation. Auditory people complain that kinesthetics don’t listen, etc.” (*The Structure of Magic, Vol. II, p. 17*)

“Note that Jim uses a large number of auditory predicates (heard, said, tells, words, sounded, sound) yet he is unable to recall the words—apparently, he is responding to the tonality.” (p. 131)

This gives us an understanding of how a person could use his or her representational systems in such a way that *prevents hearing*. If you are processing almost entirely visually—and you are paying attention to facial expressions, movements, gestures, etc. and you are giving meaning to such—you may *not* be able to hear *what the person is saying*. The person may focus so little attention on the words that after the exchange, he or she has no idea *what* was said. They hear, but do not hear. Similarly, if you focus on a person’s *tonality*, you may not hear *the words*. You could even hear the opposite. If a strained tonality (“harsh”) *means* anger to you, and the person is stressing “I am not angry!” you may walk away convinced that the person is angry and said so! Of course, you are hearing yourself, not the person.

All of this describes *an impoverishment of one’s use of the representational systems*. The truth is that every single person *is* at the same time visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Yet each person will have his or her favorite system—either for inputting information, encoding information, and/or outputting information. This is NLP 101. “Our experience has been that we need all our potential will offer—kinesthetic, visual, and auditory.” (Vol. II, p. 19). The potential is there, but the person has not and is not *actualizing* that potential.

As a Meta-Coach, check out your client’s *representational system potentiality*. Your client has the potentiality to see, hear, and sense, but he or she may be extremely impoverished in any one or several of these systems. So, check it out.

- Does my client have VAK clarity?

- Ask, “What happens when you use the VAK code that your using?”
- Do you need to supplement it with more of the auditory-language system?
- Do you need to add auditory to your visual system?
- Do you need to use less (or more) of your kinesthetic system?”

Again, Richard and John wrote:

“The overall strategy ... is that specified explicitly by the Meta-Model— to challenge and expand the impoverished portions of the client’s model.” (II, p. 29)

In Meta-Coaching this is the *first meta-program*— the information coding that your client uses. You can detect it in their languaging (their representational predicates). You can detect it in watching their eye accessing cues (remember the eye-accessing cues in “Coaching Essentials” and NLP Practitioner?). So calibrate to how your client is processing information. Calibrate to the system in which your client is processing information. Notice if there are any of the blocks described here that’s preventing them from really “hearing.”

Now let me get personal. What about you? As a Meta-Coach, do you have full access to all of your representational potentiality? Have you fully developed each representation system so that you can see, hear, and sense? Do you so much over-favor one system or one sub-facet in that system so that you are unable to fully listen? If you are getting low scores on “Listening” and if you are getting feedback about many things “not heard,” consider this as a possible cause. Here’s a checklist for you to use to evaluate what may be going on:

- I over-focus on what I *see* and don’t remember the exact words.
- I over-focus on the *tonality* and don’t capture the exact words.
- I over-focus on the *words* and don’t notice tonality.
- I over-focus on *kinesthetics*, feel what my client is saying, and so don’t recall the words.
- I over-focus on *the meaning* of the words, and miss the exact statements.
- I over-focus on *getting an outcome*, solving a problem, fixing things, etc. that I miss the actual words being said.

There’s lots of ways in which you can be not be tapping into and expanding your own representational potentials and thereby *not hearing your client*. Yet as you know as a Meta-Coach, *listening is the most critical skill*. It determines the quality of all of your other skills. The quality of your support, exploration, state induction, framing, etc. depends on your listening. And you are not unique in this inability to hear— we all are. It is part and parcel of the human condition. It is how our mind-body meaning-making system works. To that end, I’ll write about that in the next *Morpheus* post.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #35
August 10, 2016
***The Art of Listening* #3**

HOW YOUR MEANING-MATRIX PREVENTS YOUR HEARING

Your matrix inevitably interferes with your listening. It is inevitable and it is inescapable. While that is not good news, what is good news is this—it does not just happen with you—it happens with everyone. We are all limited in our *hearing* by our matrix. I mentioned this in the previous *Morpheus* post and promised to write about it. So here we go.

Your *Matrix* determines *how you process information and create meaning*. Because of this, it operates simultaneously as your *filters*. That's why at the heart of your Matrix are your meta-programs, your belief patterns, your value patterns, your style of meaning-making, the quality of the meanings that you make, and so on. That is, *the patterns* you develop in your mind about what things mean, how they work, their significance, and your intention (the first four basic meaning-making structures), those *patterns* determine and, in fact, create your primary *filters*. From there, you *filter* the world so that it makes sense to your psycho-logics. That is, what you see fits your meaning-structures and how you make sense of things.

With these filters, you then select what to pay attention to and what counts as significant. These are the things that you let in. Conversely, you delete and ignore whatever doesn't count. None of us do this consciously. We don't have to. Our Matrix of filter automatically transforms what's outside of what we are prepared to filter so that what we see and hear fits our interpretative lens. Now let's ask the hearing question: *What can you hear? What you have filters and patterns to process!*

If you didn't underline that sentence, go ahead and do that. As you do, add the word "only" to it. You can *only hear* what you have filters and patterns to process, to select, to bring in, to interpret, and to use. Everything outside of that—you *cannot hear*. It passes right over your head. It does not even get through your filters! No wonder when you begin learning the coaching skills—there are many things that you do not hear, that you *cannot* hear.

This is also why, in *Coaching Mastery*, we point out dozens and dozens of things to listen for—things that you might otherwise have no internal meaning pattern and filter to notice and pay attention to. We recommend that you begin to give significance to semantic space, representational systems, implications (for you to infer the person's logic), levels of belief statements, states about states, distinctions questions, the client's questions to themselves, etc.

The art of active, intense listening is a learned skill that develops as you learn what to listen for and how to listen. To do that you need patterns to notice and filters so that you pick up on the signals inside all of the outside noise. If you have had the experience in a Coaching Experiment at ACMC where a benchmarker identifies "things not heard" and you go, "Yes, I remember hearing that! I

didn't know what to do with that." Then you are very close to experiencing an eureka moment where you suddenly *hear* what before you would never have been able to hear. It's a great moment. And the process of becoming fully competent as a Meta-Coach involves lots of those exciting eureka moments!

What then can you do about this? If it is inevitable and inescapable, what can you do to reduce this built-in bias and blindness? Is there anything you can do?

Yes, of course! Begin by creating for yourself a listening checklist. Then as you listen, check with this list to see if there may be information being offered that your filters are not designed to let in. This enables you to then begin to run a quality-control check on your filters. Now you are at a meta-level to your filters.

“Are these filters working well for me?”

“Are my filters preventing me from receiving some critical information?”

This meta-awareness about your hearing will sensitize you to possibilities that prior to this training you would never have suspected. Take one distinction at a time, learn about it, and then practice it until you can detect it.

Next, take a similar meta-position to your meaning-making processes and conclusions. If *the way you construct meaning* creates your perceptual filters, then you have control over your filters. That's the good news. Now, using the Matrix Model, you can work with your Meaning Matrix to make it more effective and more precise. You can check through the cognitive distortions and the cognitive biases to update any patterns that have not been updated from childhood.

You can take the Meta-Model of Language (see *Communication Magic*, 2001) and clean up your own languaging skills so that you are not blind-sided by mind-reading, presuppositions, causation statements, nominalizations, etc. There are ways for you to become an active and effective listener—one who keeps expanding your filters so that you don't miss what's key to your client.

Olympics, 2016 Rio de Janeiro

- Watching the Olympics this week—swimming, gymnastics, diving, volleyball, soccer, etc.—if there is ever *performance under pressure*—this is it! And most of the Olympiads only have one chance or at most two chances. The so-called “pressure” people put themselves under at *Coaching Mastery* is nothing compared to being seen by tens-of-millions from people in hundreds of countries and video-taped and every excellence or mistake seen immediately again on close-up instant-replay video. And a great many of them are kids! And you think you are under pressure when someone observes you coaching? Step up to become a Coaching Olympiad!

From: L. Michael Hall
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August 17, 2016
***The Art of Listening* #4**

HOW YOUR EGO PREVENTS HEARING

For high quality coaching, you need *high quality listening*. And to achieve high quality listening, you have to push beyond the “normal” kind of passive, distracted listening that plagues us. You have to push far beyond it and learn how to actively and accurately listen to someone in a deep and focused way. It’s this deep listening that’s the key to transformational coaching. Yet as noted in this series, these are numerous things that can prevent this development. Among them is your ego. In his 2009 book, *Mojo*, Marshall Goldsmith writes about this. He speaks about the problem of having “the need to be smart.” He describes the problem in these words:

“One of the most pernicious impulses among successful people is our overwhelming need to prove how smart we are. We become poor listeners—so invested in presenting self as smart that we believe we don’t need to hear everything that people tell us; we’re smart enough to tune out people and still succeed.” (2009, p. 66)

In a similar vein, Danny Tuckwood, Meta-Coach in South Africa, wrote after *Morpheus* #34, *Why People Can’t hear*.

“I’d suggest that there is another area to add to the checklist which operates at a higher level to that of the primary representational systems. ... The coach is overly focused on his or her own performance, asking the ‘right’ question and so spend time listening to one’s own internal dialogue and miss what the client is say both verbally and non-verbally.”

Here are two facets of how our ego can get in the way and prevent us from really (and accurately) hear out clients. The problem is that both of these are about *us*, not the client. Both indicate that we are ego-invested in using our coaching to prove something about ourselves.

- 1) We want to show how smart we are.
- 2) We want to demonstrate how good (skilled, competent, effective) we are.

Now because you have already experienced the De-Contamination Chamber pattern on Day 1 of *Coaching Mastery*, you already know that *in the context of listening to your client*—in that context while you are in service of your client—in that moment, your ego-investments are out-of-place, irrelevant, and in the way. That’s why we use the pattern to “get the ego out of the way” and find states and frames of mind that are cleaner and clearer.

This goes back to the first article, *Mind Quieting 101*, and about quieting *your own voice* and your own ego-concerns about showing how smart you are or worrying about how you are doing in your coaching performance. In this sense, *ego concerns and ego investments* can be very subtle in their influence. After all, you spend your whole life in your own personal development— gaining knowledge, skills, confidence, values, etc. So wanting to do well, wanting to be seen as competent—these are good things. Without them you’d lack the drive and motivation to keep developing.

The problem arises in the specific moment that you are coaching. In *that* moment, that's when you do not need your concerns about you. While all of your preparation has come to this moment, and while the coaching experience for your client does operate through your skills of facilitation, your knowledge of human nature and the integrated hierarchical needs (D-needs and B-needs), and while the coaching is *through* you— it is still *not about you*. It is all about your client. So, set that in your mind, "It's about my client." "It is not about me." Then re-direct your attention so that you are 100 percent focused and present to your client. I'm not saying that this is easy, it is not. But it is essential.

When thoughts of yourself arise, release them. (Remember the Release Pattern, also on Day 1?) Let them go. Say goodbye to them. Schedule a date with them *after* the coaching.

"I'm here in service of my client."

"I will trust my preparation for this moment and give my full presence to my client."

"More important than me being smart, having a great performance, being right, doing everything perfect, etc. is being present to and for my client."

At the beginning of this week, I wrote on Neurons about the most powerful kind of practice— *deliberate* practice. That's the kind of practice you'll need to develop active and accurate listening skill. Take a small aspect of the skill, one of the sub-skills of listening, and because these can be measured, you can now focus exclusively on it until you raise your numbers. It's the precision feedback which you can focus on that's the secret of deliberate practice.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 *Morpheus* #37
August 24, 2016
A New Distinction for You

GRAB THE SUBJECT AND GET YOUR OUTCOME

Question: Do you know the difference between the subject and the outcome of a session? Having just completed the PCMC Training here in Mexico City, I discovered that one thing preventing some Meta-Coaches from being effective with well-formed outcome questions was failing to make this distinction. If you have struggled with the same, then here is the distinguish between *the subject* of the session and *the outcome*.

The Subject of a Session

It all begins with question one where you invite your client to identify what he wants. “What do you want?” “What do you *really, really* want?” And as you know, your client may or may not know! Nevertheless your client will begin talking about something and whatever that is— that is *the opening subject of the session*. So say so. When you do, you are *classifying* (framing).

“So this is about figuring out what you are going to do about the conflict on your team.”

“So this is about your weight and finally doing something about it.”

“So this is about learning to take feedback more positively.”

If the client says that she does not want to feel so much stressed in being over-responsible in the home, then grab that subject. “So this is about over-responsibility.” You still do not know the outcome yet, but you do know the subject. Suppose your client tells a story first about ill-health and then say that they heard someone say it might be caused by one’s emotions. True, you do not know the outcome, but you do know the subject or perhaps a couple possible subjects.

“So this is about discovering the cause of your ill-health.”

“So this is about finding out if your illness is being caused by some emotion.”

What you are doing with the “*So this is about X*” is limiting the field. You are narrowing the area for defining the coaching conversation. And you are doing it tentatively. You are just exploring. As you do, it invites your client to confirm or disconfirm your guess and/or redirect you in the direction she wants to go. All you have to do is *grab it*. Step back in your mind as you are listening and ask yourself: “What is this about? What’s the subject.”

When you get a confirmation on a subject, lock it down. Use *testing questions* to do that. “So you want to change a limiting belief or beliefs which are creating the fear and panic that you have been experiencing?” Yes/No? “That’s what you want to focus on?” Yes/No? Locking it down *grounds* the conversation to this subject. If you are calibrating and there is any hesitation, ask some more *testing questions*. “So there is nothing else more important than finding and changing those limiting beliefs?” Yes— No?

Now you are ready to see if it is truly important. So ask question three. “It’s important to change them?” Yes. “Why? Why is it important to you to change the limiting belief or beliefs?” This question is designed to bring forth the client’s motives, motivations, and values. If you are not

hearing *values*, then interrupt and ask the question again. “Why is it important for you? What will give you?” You can even offer a menu list to help your client. “Peace of mind, tranquility, clarity, freedom, possibilities, etc.” Here’s a key: Values will be presented in these kinds of *nominalizations*. Another key: *Do not clarify these terms*. You don’t need to do clarification checks with them! Why not? Because the design of this question and these higher frames is to create the energy, the drive, and the motivation to engage in going after his objectives.

Now you have the subject. With questions one and three, you have your general area or subject for the coaching conversation. Question two, if appropriate and it is not always appropriate, will test to see if what the person wants is tangible or intangible. If tangible, she can see it or hear it. If intangible, like a belief, there will not be any sensory-based information about it. In that can skip question two.

The Outcome of the Session

You and your client will begin to get more and more specific about the outcome of the session as you ask the next well-formed outcome questions. The three context questions (when, where, and with whom) details the time, space, and person/s of the outcome. “When do you want to get that?”

It is questions 7 and 11, however, that really begin getting the session’s outcome. First a testing question: “Do you know what you have to do to get what you want?” (Yes/No). If *yes*, then ask the open-ended exploration question: “*What* do you have to *do* to get what you want?” If *no*, then say, “Great, I have a job! That’s what we will find out together.” Do a quick check with question eight: “This is in your power to do, whatever it is?” Then do a quick check-off of questions 9 through 15—typically do that by summarizing, “we don’t know the skill” (#9), we don’t know if you’ll need a plan (#12), etc. Without knowing *what* to do (question 7), skip #9, there’s no need to ask “Can you do it?” etc. Obviously, you now have an outcome—you are going to have a Clarity Conversation—to find out what to do. That is your outcome: clarity.

If in the checking off of questions 9–15 your client suddenly has a thought and says, “Oh, I know what to do, it just came to me.” Then you have a *yes* to question 7. So go back there. This often happens. Asking these questions facilitates a brainstorming mood and suddenly client’s have insights and ideas. This is great! These questions also begin refining the outcome. If the client *cannot do* and does not have the skill to do it (question 9), you have the outcome of *creating the resource* (Resource Conversation). If your client has several things to do (#11), she probably will need a plan or strategy (question 12), so now your outcome is to create a plan (Planning Conversation). If your client identifies interferences (question 14), then your outcome is a Problem Solving—Resource Conversation.

All of these questions (7–15) answer the *how question*. How do you get what you want and as you ask the questions, you find out *what outcome* the client wants: Clarity, Decision, Planning, Resourcing, Change. The checking questions (16–18) may refine things even more: if going for it violates ecology, then you may need to do a Decision Conversation or a Resource Conversation. If the client is not decisive and committed, again a Decision Conversation.

So first get the subject, then use the well-formed outcome questions to shape the subject into an outcome. And, ask the WFO questions in sequence. Do this and your intelligence gathering will enable you to co-create a contract for the coaching session.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #38
August 30, 2016

PEER ACCOUNTABILITY

When we began Neuro-Semantics, we built *peer accountability* into the very fabric of what we do. How did we do that? We set up a conflict resolution process and asked everybody to sign it. The first two people to sign the agreement was myself and Bob Bodenhamer. After that we asked every Trainer to sign it and when Meta-Coaching was developed, we asked every Meta-Coach to sign it.

We also emphasized feedback in everything we do and that's why we began creating benchmarks so that we would have specific behavioral signs for the standards. Unlike most other training school in the field of NLP, we established standards in many areas— knowledge, skill, ethics, and character.

This was, and continues to be, critically important because congruency in walking our talk is one of our resonant signatures. It is what distinguishes us. It is one of the reasons I always use feedback forms for my own performance. It is one of the reasons I am constantly asking for feedback from the assist teams we use and why we are constantly adjusting and changing things.

In recent years I have started calling this by a term that I learned from Patrick Lencioni in his book, *Five Dysfunctions of a Team* (2002)—*peer accountability*. He there strategically put peer accountability in his analysis of groups and teams. When I learned that, I integrated that into the Group and Team Coaching materials as well as in the book I wrote on that subject. Lencioni, argued that this is the foundation of an effective team. It propels a “group” (of people) to become a “team.”

In his diagram of a pyramid, he put *trust and vulnerability* first—the foundation. It is the lack of vulnerability (invulnerability) that creates the lack of trust and so people do not become a team. Next, when there is effective trust and vulnerability, the group becomes a team because it knows how to engage in *productive conflict*. It does not go for artificial harmony due to fear and/or avoidance of conflict. This then leads to commitment and overcomes the lack of commitment and ambiguity as to whether a person has made a commitment or not.

Then with trust, productive conflict, and commitment people are able to engage in what Lencioni calls *peer accountability*. He contrasts this with low standards and the avoidance of accountability. In peer accountability we hold each other to high standards. Here are the words from Lencioni:

“Teams that commit to decisions and standards of performance to 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 of the importance of results.”

Peer accountability refers to members of a group, team, or community in bringing up instances where there are low standards or standards have been dropped and holding each other accountable for doing what we have promised. And that's what we have encouraged all of us, you and me, to do with each other from the beginning. That's why the conflict resolution process starts by *going to the person* with whom you have doubts, questions, or problems. This means that you *do not* talk about the issue or problem with anyone else or make it public. You go directly to the person. Now if you do not, and others see it, they come to you and “bring up what could be potentially unpleasant” as an

expression of *peer accountability*. After all, you have agreed to the vision and mission of Neuro-Semantics— and that means to the standards and ethics.

If you cannot work things out by yourself, or if someone else is holding you accountable, and there's no mutual solution, then you ask another member of the community to moderate. We have set up the local national Institutes for this purpose— to keep the process local. We do not want to create a “police force” or appoint “bouncers” ... we want all members to assume this responsibility and develop this competence. After all, given the NLP Communication Model (the Meta-Model), we have in our hands a great model for governing how to talk with each other without judgments, mind-reading, accusations, distortions, vague ambiguities, etc. And that's part of the conflict resolution process— we *use* what we have learned in the trainings and especially in Meta-Coaching for governing our communicating.

In terms of the *peer accountability*, we have asked that every Institute, and every leadership team apply and practice this. To do so keeps things current and relevant. It helps us live up to the high standards that we have set. And yet this “standards” do not require that everybody agree with everybody else or with any single individual, not even myself. If there's anything that we value as one of our standards is respect for differences. Yet while we do not have to totally agree with each other, we do expect that people are *respectful* when they disagree. You do not have to like or even work with any other person, but you do need to be civil and respectful. And that means *not* speaking ill of them or slandering them.

Peer accountability, as a group dynamic, challenges us to keep up-ing our game and enables us to be real and authentic with each other.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #39
September 7, 2016

A REAL META-COACH META-MODELS

Question: How well do you know the Meta-Model? That is the model you learned in *Coaching Essentials* —and we put it there because it is absolutely *essential* if you want to learn coaching. It is perhaps the most fundamental coaching skill of all. At least I hope you learned it there. Ideally, when you learned about it, you practiced it night and day and drove it into your unconscious competence. Some Meta-Coaches do not. I recently had an engagement with some Trainers who supposedly train the Meta-Model, but who do not practice it in their own languaging. That’s really tragic.

When it comes to Meta-Coaches, I can detect if a person understands and is competent to Meta-Model within minutes when a coaching session begins. I can also detect someone who does not know it. Within minutes they show that they don’t know how to gather high quality information and so it does not take long for them to be confused about the subject of the session.

Now if you know how to Meta-Model, you know how to hear language, how to explore meaning, and how to engage in the first coaching conversation— *clarity*. If you don’t, or if you are weak in this— you are going to have trouble learning Meta-Coaching.

A Little History

The heart of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, the core of the NLP Communication Model, and the very first model of NLP, the model that is the foundation of modeling is— *the Meta-Model*. This model was put together as a *group project* over a two-year period. It started as Richard Bandler began copying the language patterns of Fritz Perls and then Virginia Satir. When he and Frank Pucelik began recognizing the incredible changes that were occurring in the Gestalt Class they were running, they got John Grinder to come and figure it out. “How are these linguistic patterns creating such transformational change?” Then, using Korzybski’s map/territory formulation and Chomsky’s Transformational Grammar they identified 12 linguistic distinctions. Actually Robert Dilts put them together (I wrote about this on Neurons Monday). Bandler and Grinder put their discoveries in the two-volumes of *The Structure of Magic* (1975, 1976), and Dilts organized the 12 distinctions in his 1975 paper on Socratic questions and the Meta-Model (*Applications of NLP*, 1975).

The following is what Robert Dilts wrote about the Meta-Model way back in 1975 and 1976. Read it from the perspective of coaching and you will see just how important it is for your ability to communicate effectively and professionally.

“Learning the Meta-Model is essentially learning *how to hear and identify patterns* in people’s language. ... For me, this is what the Meta-Model is all about: being able to increase your efficiency in anything by finding out that kind of specific information.” (113, 115)

“The Meta-Model was developed ... as a means of identifying and responding to problematic patterns in the speech of people... The function of the Meta-Model is to identify problematic generalizations, deletions, or distortions through the analysis of the syntax or form of the surface structure and provide an inquiry system so that more enriched representation of the

deep structure may be attained.” (153)

“Some people are very prone to nominalizations. Many people have what we call *blind spots* to meta-model patterns.” (122)

The Meta-Model — A Set of Questions

What is the Meta-Model? It is a set of linguistic distinctions with questions that you can ask, questions that “challenge” the speaker in order to get the person to respond with more specificity and precision.

For *Unspecified Nouns, Verbs, and Unspecified Referential Indexes*, ask “What specifically do you mean by ‘reject,’ ‘hate,’ etc.?” “What specifically are you referring to?” Do this and you are asking the clarity question and flushing out the speaker’s vagueness.

With *Universal Quantifiers* you call attention to universal words (all, every, never, always, only, everyone, everything). Here a person is exaggerating and over-generalizing. Ask, “Always?” “Nobody?” “What about Bob?”

With *Modal Operators* you focus on words indicating a mode of operating in life (should, shouldn’t, must, can, can’t, have to). Ask, “What stops you? What is the rule?” Doing this enables you to flush out the belief frames in the back of the speaker’s mind.

With *Lost Performatives* the person makes an evaluative statement using words like right, wrong, good bad, just, unfair, but does not own the statement. “It is unfair that you...” Ask: According to whom? “Bad by what criteria?” “Best compared to what?”

With *Complex Equivalences* two experiences become so closely tied together that a speaker is treating as equal. Ask, “How specifically do you know that?” “Are they always equal?” This is great for breaking up limiting beliefs and understandings.

With *Cause-Effects* the person implies a direct causation between two things. “Your words *make* me feel bad.” Ask about how the process works. “Do my words always make you feel bad?” “How specifically does my words *make* you feel bad?” “What do you have to assume to make that statement?”

With *Mind-Reading* a person claims to know what another person thinks, feels, intends, etc. without giving evidence of how they have come to that knowledge. If the other has not told them, then the person is guessing, projecting, or hallucinating. This typically occurs in language when you start a sentence with the word “you.” “You know nothing about business.” “You are in the habit of...” “You are ignoring ...” Ask, “How specifically do you know that?”

With *Presuppositions* the person is assuming something without saying so. Here you can use inferential listening to pull out from the statement what the person is logically assuming, implying, but not saying. Ask, “How do you specifically know that?” “What are you assuming?”

With the Meta-Model, your task as a coach is to help people *clear up* their meanings and communications. It enables them to become more knowledgeable about how language works and so

skilled as a communicator. When you do this you will be catching most cognitive distortions. It enables you to become more competent as a critical thinker. When you “challenge” the distortions, deletions, and generalization and you simply *ask about the person’s processing of information and drawing of conclusions*. When you do, you “send” the person back inside his or her library of references (experiences, memories, imaginations, beliefs, etc.) so the person checks with the experience and gets a chance to create a mental map that’s more accurate and/or useful.

Now as you do—*practice with yourself*. Re-read your emails and writings using the Meta-Model as your template. It will make you a better and clearer communicator. It will make you more professional. When I get emails from people in our community whether Trainers, Meta-Coaches, or others and there are significant violations of Meta-Model distinctions that creates distress, limitations, and conflict, I typically call this to their attention. The great majority appreciate this. A few do not.

When I catch it in myself, or when someone points out where I have violated one of these distinctions, I consider it a great contribution. It means that I have an opportunity to clean up my language, to become sensitized to a cognitive distortion or a Meta-Model distinction. It means I will be increasing my competence as a writer. I recommend that you do the same.

Want more? More about this will be posted in next week’s Morpheus article.

Get open of the books on the Meta-Model and practice, practice, and then deliberate practice. My book is *Communication Magic* (1997/ 2001). Frank Pucelik and Byron Lewis’ book, *The Magic of NLP Demystified* (1990/ 2012) which includes the nine distinctions that I added to the Meta-Model.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #40
September 14, 2016

META-MODELING AS A COACHING STYLE

The problem with *Coaching Essentials* is that we only devote one day to the Meta-Model of Language in your training. In *NLP Practitioner* training that usually expands to two or three days. Personally, if I were to train that course again, I would devote even more time to it. Why? Because as Richard Bandler once told me, “everything in NLP came from the Meta-Model.” Did you know that? I was almost at the end of my Master Practitioner training when I heard that and I was absolutely shocked. “How could that be?” I began asking myself.

That question sent me back to the Meta-Model and in studying it and learning it inside-out, I understood how that model serves not only as a communication model, but also the key template for how to model an experience, how to facilitate generative change, and much more. Now if you have not intensely studied the Meta-Model, set that as a personal goal and study it deeply and thoroughly. The question you might have at this point is how. “How can I learn the Meta-Model if it so *essential* in Coaching, and especially in Meta-Coaching?” Here’s how.

1) Take each of the linguistic distinctions and their questions and practice it intensely for three or four days.

Think baby steps. One distinction at a time. Then with everything you write, every email, every tweet, every article — meta-model yourself. Then with everything you hear people say or write that fits the linguistic distinction you are working on—turn the statement over and over in your mind and generate questions to make it precise and specific.

If you work with two distinctions each week, then it will take you six weeks to get through the original set of distinctions and ten for the additional distinctions. Ten weeks! Let’s call it three months. In three months you could train yourself for these distinctions so that you have some real expertise in critical thinking, detailing and meta-detailing, getting specific, engaging the Clarity Conversation, and slowing down a coaching conversation and making it a deeper conversation.

2) Once you know all of the linguistic distinctions inside-out, use the logical level template of the Meta-Model that I put in “Communication Magic.”

Don’t attempt this prior to your first three months of deliberate practice. Once you have that down, then you can begin to delight yourself with distinguishing *the levels of the linguistic distinctions*. And when you can do that, you can ask what we call at the PCMC level, Torpedo Questions. These questions go straight for the heart. They take the person very deep into their mental mapping and to where the leverage point for change and renewal will be. Now are you interested?

All Meta-Model distinctions are not equal, some have much more expansive influence than others. But until you get your hands on these linguistic distinctions— and get a felt sense of how they work, where they send a person, how people respond to your questions, you really won’t understand their

neuro-linguistic responses.

3) Practicing meta-model coaching with a buddy coach.

After the first three months of practice, then get with a buddy coach and engage in a coaching session, but not for the purpose of coaching as much as for practicing hearing and questioning Meta-Model violations. When a statement is not well-formed and has “violations”—generalizations, distortions, and deletions, then identify what distinction is present and search for the question that will challenge it.

When you do this, make sure you have lots of fun. Make it playful. One of the games that is in *Coaching Essentials* that I hope you played in the training is to play around and see how many Meta-Model violations you can put in a single sentence. After you create these monster statements that are loaded with violations, then generate a whole series of questions that challenge the statement. Afterwards you can do a post-play review and reflect on which questions were most powerful in terms of facilitating a transformation.

What Will You Get?

If you devote yourself to really learning the Meta-Model in an in-depth way, what will you get from this? First and foremost *you will be able to hear your client at a very, very deep level.* In a word, you will be able *the structure of a client’s experience.*

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #41
September 21, 2016

I LIKE TO BE CHALLENGED, DO YOU?

Having had the chance to be home here in Colorado for a few weeks this summer, I decided to go run one of the mountain trails that goes from the valley up through the canyons and up to the top of the surrounding mountains. I used to do that years ago when I actually lived here before I began traveling internationally. It has been along time and in during the intervening years, many new trails have been created.

When I made my first run up the canyons to the top in mountains I remembered why I moved here in the first place—the mountains, the expansive views, the majesty of panoramic views, the challenge of the outdoors, the painted desert, the sun, etc. On my first run, I took the primary trail, one that had been a wagon train trail back in 1880 when this part of the country was first settled. It took me 35 minutes to get to the top and some parts of the trail were so steep I could no longer run, but had to walk. That happened on two of the really steep inclines. Twenty-years ago when I last ran up that trail, I didn't stop. I felt challenged. Could I once again run to the top without stopping? I didn't know, twenty years had passed, but I liked the idea, so I took the challenge.

So I began running the mountain / canyon trails every other day. At first I spent time exploring all of the new trails and pushing my physical conditioning. After two weeks I returned to the main trail and got to the top in 31 minutes without stopping. Two weeks later after returning from Mexico I reduced that to 27 minutes. One of the new trails went around to several new canyons that I didn't even know were there. One day I ran it and came across a sign on a post, on one side it said, "Difficult" and on the other side was a sign "More difficult" with an arrow pointing to a very steep trail. I had been up that one so I took the "Difficult" trail, "Holey Bucket" trail and felt disappointed as I ran it. The awareness and feeling was that I let myself down.

Later I hit another junction and continued up "Holy Cross" and it was tough. I ran uphill for another 30 minutes and finally got to the top. There I saw a sign. It was about the trail that I just climbed.

"This trail is designed to be technically challenging.
Do not modify or seek alternative routes to avoid
the challenging features."

Suddenly, I felt great. "I didn't let myself down after all by choosing a less different path." It was hard and I was pretty exhausted (I had run just short of two hours). So there was a sense of delight, and of pride that I had done it. A sense of accomplishment. That's when a stray thought passed through my awareness, "*I like being challenged!*"

Now an interesting thing about running these canyon/mountain trails is that it forces a person to be totally present in the here-and-now. Unlike running on a beach or along a street where a person can daydream and spend time reflecting on the events of the day, that's hardly possible except for a moment or two on these trails. That's because while it is a trail, it is full of rocks. There are stones

sticking up, sometimes roots, sometimes cactuses, all very unpredictable. This require full attention. Take your eyes off of the trail for even a moment, and you can take a nasty spill. I generally stumble two to four times on every run and average falling one time. So yes, it is a bit dangerous, which is part of the challenge. It is an eye-foot coordination challenge that lasts for the length of the run.

Reflecting on the idea of enjoying a challenge and the motivation that arises when we are challenged speaks about the needs at the higher levels of Maslow's hierarchy. It's part of self-actualization psychology—there is within us humans something that *likes* a challenge. When Jack Welch introduced *stretch goals* in GE, it moved the whole organization to a new level of productivity.

What is a challenge? As I began wondering about challenges, I realized that I didn't know the source of that word. When I got home I looked it up.

Challenge: Middle English: *challengen*, to accuse. French: *halengier*, Latin, *calumuniari*, to accuse falsely. To demand as a right, to question the legality or legal qualifications, dare, to boldly defy. Then from there the word *challenge* has come to mean: a calling to account or into question, a questioning of the right or validity, a summons, an invitation to compete in a sport, to call forth and test (someone's qualities).

In the interpersonal realm sometimes we feel challenged by what someone says to us—perhaps they question what we're doing or our right to do it. Perhaps someone calls us into account and accuses us of not doing what we promised to do. Today we think about a challenge as an invitation to demonstrate our skills or qualities, or to call forth the powers and potentials within us. When you do that, you get out of your comfort zone and “go beyond” what's your norm, and your regular response. You “stretch” forward and you *push yourself* to step up to a higher level. That's the value of being challenged—*to expand your capacity*. It might be a mental capacity, an emotional one, a verbal one, behavioral, etc.

What is it within us that want a challenge? It is your self-actualization drive to be your best, to be all that you can be. When you allow yourself to be challenged or when you challenge yourself you are testing your limits, you are pushing the boundaries, and when you do that *you are expanding your capacity for something*. It could be your coaching skills, your listening, your use of the Meta-Model, your training skills, it could be anything.

How about you? Are you taking on new challenges? What new challenge have you taken on this year? I'm still running the canyon—mountain trails. From running four miles a day (which takes half an hour), I have turned it to running one hour to an hour-and-a-half. Once I ran for two hours I took on the next challenge, can I run for three hours up these mountain trails? Anyone like to join me?

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #42
September 28, 2016

ARE YOU AN INSPIRATIONAL COACH?

A couple years ago I began a little tradition for our Graduation Ceremony at ACMC by asking all of the Assist Team Leaders and those who do the benchmarking to present a 2-minute *Moment of Inspiration*. After the first two times, even though all really gave it their best, I realized that I needed to give the team some training to prepare them for that task. That led me to asking myself a series of critical questions about inspiration:

“What inspires people?” “What is the structure of inspiration?” “What is the best way to think about inspiration?” “What kills inspiration?”

I then used these questions to begin coaching myself about inspiration. That led me to start noticing the speeches that I found inspiring and those I did not. Then, once I got an elementary idea of the structure of inspiration, I began asking others about which speeches moved them and which did not. When I wrote the book on *Political Coaching* I kept this in mind and that caused me to notice some things in the speeches of Lincoln, Mandela, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Now I’m working on a new book, *Inside-Out Persuasion*, and the subject of inspiration has arisen again: How does inspiration work? What inspires? Why does that inspire?

Let’s talk about this in terms of coaching, and especially in terms of *what you do as a Meta-Coach*. Here are some really personal questions, and I’m guessing, some very challenging questions:

- Are you an inspirational coach? Do you inspire your clients?
- Do your clients walk out of your coaching sessions moved with a new spirit of hope and commitment to the goals that they set?
- Are they moved and touched in their spirit by the way you coach?
- Would you like to be able to inspire your clients so that they translate their dreams and hopes in the coaching room to how they live their lives?
- Would you like to be able to induce the state of inspiration in your clients as a regular feature of your style of coaching?

Inspiration literally speaks about putting *spirit into people* (in-spirit) and by contrast, the opposite would be doing something that would lead someone to feel dispirited. Inspiration suggests that you facilitate a process of putting hope, courage, commitment, and persistence in a person. *Spirit* here refers to a positive and robust attitude. Where there is *spirit*, there is energy ... and vitality ... and life! In the Letter of James, we read, “The body without the spirit is dead.”

If that’s what *inspiration* is, then *the process of inspiring is the process of inducing that state*. It is the process of stirring people up. When you inspirit you challenge people to reach forward and stretch and you may at the same time warn people to not sell themselves short or play small. You encourage them to dream a better and greater dream about your life. It is to put forth a vision that stirs your blood and moves you to want to act to create a better world.

Isn't this at the very heart of coaching? Given that coaching is about challenging people to be more, think more, feel more, want more, give more, etc., I think it does. This is one of the reasons we focus so much at the ACMC level about state induction skill. It's your responsibility, as a coach, to help your clients manage their states, get into the right states, get out of the wrong states, and learn the art of state management. To that end you absolutely have to have the expressive skill of inducing state.

Let's now push this back to you and your ability to be truly *an inspirational coach*. What state/s do you typically induce your clients into? What states do they experience in the session? What states are they in when they leave? To what extent do they experience moments of inspiration in your presence?

In the next post I will write about the structure of inspiration and *the how* of inspiration. But before I do, study this paragraph from Mandela's most memorable speech. He gave this in his 1994 Inaugural Speech to inspire the nation of South Africa. And even though the words originated from Marianne Williamson, he is remembered for using these words to introduce the way he would govern:

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate,
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.
We ask ourselves,
 Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?
Actually, Who are you *not* to be?
You are a child of God.
Your playing small doesn't serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking
 so that other people won't feel insecure around you.
You were born to manifest the glory of God that is within us.
It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine,
 we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear,
our presence automatically liberates others.”

Here are twelve lines that talk about fear, light and darkness, who we really are, how we show up in the world, and the glory of God within us. Yet their power lie in how they are put together—how they urge us with the spirit of stepping up to life and living more fully. Now for a coaching question: *Could you use some of these ideas to inspire your clients?* If you could, how would you do that as part of the coaching conversation? (Next post I'll give some of my answers to this.)

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #43
October 5, 2016

THE STRUCTURE OF INSPIRATION

What authentically and healthily inspires is what puts *spirit* into you so that you stretch forward, set more ambitious goals, aim higher, believe more in yourself and others, devote more effort and energy into a “big wild audacious hairy goal.”

In writing that, I need to issue a warning—It is possible to be inspired in an unhealthy and neurotic way. Think Hitler. Think about any cult leader, like Jim Jones. Think about the fanatic jihadists who are misusing Islam and those being “radicalized” to kill people in the name of God. Talk about sick! Similarly there are people who are “inspired” by money, fame, domination, control, etc. So yes, even something as good as inspiration can be misused and turned into an addiction or psychosis.

Conversely, inspiration is healthy and authentic when it brings out the best in people, when it is ecological and does not ruin health, finances, relationships, etc. It is healthy when it contributes to the whole and not just a few individuals.

Inspirational Content

In terms of its content, inspiration raises hope in a better future. It invites people to rally their internal resources to make that brighter future possible. It challenges people to put forth the effort, face their own internal dragons and/or encounter the external dragons that have to deal with. What is inspirationally meaningful touches and activates our values—that’s why we find it important and significant. It is! The statement or story resonates with our values and so it puts spirit into us. What is inspirational is also meaningful— it presents something so that we see it through the lens of meaning. Steve Jobs said:

“My best contribution is not settling for anything, but really good stuff, in all details. That’s my job— to make sure everything is great.” (p. Success Factor Modeling, p. 263).

Inspiration Methods

There are numerous paths to achieve these objectives. Here are the key means and methods for inspiring —yourself and others.

First and most obviously, *Vision*. You can inspire by setting forth a compelling vision. Visions inspire us to act intentionally today to achieve a goal that excites us. A vision inspires a direction in life and once fully accepted, puts you on a mission.

Second and just as importantly, *Story*. You can inspire by telling a moving story. A human story of sweat and blood, of facing overwhelming forces and succeeding, of a Rocky Balboa who doesn’t have a chance, but works through his fears and ultimately succeeds by sheer determination, etc. That kind of a story inevitably inspires and always has.

Third, *Challenge*. You can set out a challenge to step up and be all that you can be. A challenge can inspire if it is big enough and bold enough. John F. Kennedy did that when he set out the challenge to put a man on the moon and to return him safely to earth. A challenge can also inspire if it points the way for how to achieve it.

Fourth, *Creative Tension*. You can inspire by putting challenge together with a story and build up tension so that people feel the creative tension especially as it builds to a crescendo. Many sport coaches do this at half-time when they are significantly behind the defending camps. The coach says something like, “I am offering this team no easy path, no sure path to victory, but I’m offering you the challenge of a lifetime, one that you’ll look back on — that win or lose— you will know that you gave it your best and you are a champion because of that. So go out there and make us all proud!”

Fifth, *Memorable*. Construct a succinct point that’s clear and memorable. It’s hard to inspire with fluffy, convoluted words that are ambiguous. Do you have a point? What is that point? Can you state it more succinctly? Once you can, then find rich words that engage the mind and make the point memorable. One way to do this is to make the statement poetic— let it rhyme, use parallelism to express in, use contrasts, etc.

Kennedy used parallelism when he said, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.”

The statement, “It’s better to light a candle than to curse the darkness” uses the contrast between light and darkness, between lighting and cursing. Most memorable.

Sixth, *Surprises*. Make a statement that surprises, turns things upside-down. George Bernard Shaw wrote,

“Most people go to their graves with their music still in them.” The juxtaposition here is between going to one’s grave and the silence of a tomb with the music within a person’s heart that was never sung. Stark memorable images.

With these means and methods of inspiration in mind, let’s review the twelve-lines that Mandela used from Williamson:

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate,	Surprising statement; most of us feel inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.	Compelling and memorable words “powerful beyond measure”
It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.	Contrast: light/ darkness. Surprise: Light frightens! How? What frightening about light?
We ask ourselves,	
Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?	Compelling words! Me? Brilliant?
Actually, Who are you <i>not</i> to be?	New question ...
You are a child of God.	Memorable words that raises the bar.
Your playing small doesn’t serve the world.	“Playing small” playing is what a child does, conveys idea of not being grown up.
There’s nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you.	Play on light— enlightened. “Shrinking” again, like a child. Shrink so others won’t feel insecure! Around <i>You</i> . Memorable. Surprising.
You were born to manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us; it’s in everyone.	Not only child of God, but Glory of God. <i>Inside you... and everyone</i> . Raises bar.

And as we let our own light shine,
we unconsciously give other people permission
to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear,
our presence automatically liberates others.”

Light— shining —*your own light!*
The value of what you do for others when
you go first.
Metaphor: Liberty! From fear— fear of
our being “powerful beyond measure”
(line 1)

How about you? Are you ready to do some inspiring? Maybe you are *powerful beyond measure* in your ability to *unconsciously give others permission* to let their light shine and be liberated from fear! Maybe you are asking the wrong question, “Who am I to...?” What if the question that you need to be asking is, “Who am I not to ... do these wonderful things?”

Now about using inspiration in coaching, how could you do that more intentionally? You have some of the answers here. More will be coming in the next Morpheus post.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #44
October 12, 2016

COACHING INSPIRATION

Because the structure of inspiration is not something everybody intuitively knows, I began spending time a couple years ago at each ACMC with the Assist Team to prepare them for their two-minutes of a *Moment of Inspiration* which we do at the Graduation. If you'd like to experience that, come and join the team! But the question before us right now is, "How do I coach inspiration when I'm not giving a speech, but facilitating a conversation with my client?"

Part of the answer, using last week's Morpheus' post, is to use *the mechanisms of inspiration*. Use vision, story, challenge, creative tension, memorable language, and surprises. These naturally come up in the coaching conversation anyway, do they not? Do you not ask about what the person wants? And once you get the first level objective, do you not ask for the meta-wants and do so until the person articulates his vision for the kind of life he wants to live? As the person goes there, you can then use acknowledgments, validations, empathy statements to amplify that visionary sense of life. Do that in the coaching conversation and you will facilitate inspiration.

Similarly, when you ask about the client's best time with a particular resource. "Have you ever been knocked down and then bounce right back? Tell me about that? What enabled you to be so resilient?" In this way you can call forth a story from your client and enrich that narrative so it becomes increasingly more and more that person's story. Here you help your client develop the story so it becomes his or her narrative and a statement about one's character. And that builds inspiration at the historical and identity levels.

Here's something else you can do. You can introduce mini-inspirational thoughts *as frames* and then amplify them and apply them by *asking questions*. Think about that in terms of the Williamson/Mandela presentation that I put in last week's post. As a *frame*, you could take lots of different parts of that and inspirationally challenge your client.

For example, suppose your client is talking about fear. You might respond, "So you're afraid of making a mistake and fail at the adventure of launching your coaching business?" "Well, let me ask you what may be a shocking question, one that I take from the poem that Mandela used:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate,
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.

Given that... what is your deepest fear behind making a mistake? Could you be playing small and shrinking because you are really afraid of believing in yourself?"

Will that not change the tenor of the conversation? That will probably deepen it and get more quickly to the heart of things, don't you think? If the person then says, "Well, but who am I to believe that much about myself?" "I'm really no one." "I come from a poor family, a small country, a low social status, etc.!"

Again you could set a frame. “Did you know that Williamson must have known that you would say that!” (Surprise, be playful). “Yes, that’s right. She knew that you would play small and sell yourself short. And she wrote additional lines in the poem to awaken you to something you might not know about yourself. Ready to hear that?”

“We ask ourselves,
‘Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?
Actually, Who are you *not* to be?
You are a child of God.
Your playing small doesn’t serve the world.
There’s nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won’t feel insecure around you.’”

With all of the great and tremendous quotations from famous people that are so readily available, all you have to do is google a theme and quotations to get scores and scores of great ones. Then you can use them as frames. “What you just said reminded me of what Mr. X (some famous person) said about Y (the subject). Would you like to hear it?” “It could be relevant.”

“‘Courage is not the absence of fear, but in spite of fear.’ Now if that’s true, what’s your next step? Do you have the internal resources mentally and emotionally to generate sufficient courage for the fears that you have?”

Or you could use George Bernard Shaw quote, “Most people go to their graves with their music still in them.” Present it as a frame. “Let me set this frame. It’s a quotation— a famous one ... so what do you think? Are you selling yourself short so that you will go to your grave with your music still undeveloped, untapped, and unreleased?”

The most direct way to coach inspiration is using the “toward” side of the motivation axis. A less obvious way is to ask for resources. Every time you do that you are inspiring possibilities. “What resource do you need to have more hope? More resilience? More love? More vitality?”

Think about becoming *an inspirational coach*. Think about sending your clients out of your coaching room with a new spirit of hope and determination to make their dreams come true. Do that and you will build a wonderful reputation and your services will be more in demand. It’s possible. It is possible for you ... it is only a matter of learning and practice.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #45
October 19, 2016

KEEPING COMPETENCY

Because we use an Assist Team in conducting ACMC *Coaching Mastery*, one of the requests we have is that they have reached competency in the core coaching skills at the 2.5 level. And most have. Some may not have, and that's okay because it is not an absolute requirement for being on the Assist Team. It is what we desire for the team.

Yet when the members of the team come together for the Pre-ACMC Training which is an internship in group and team coaching as well as training in giving feedback and then benchmarking, only 5 percent of them are able to demonstrate that full competency on the first day of our practice. Strange! Yet some of them have demonstrated the 2.5 level two and three or even more times in the past. Yet on the first days of the training they now get 2.0 scores on listening and supporting and sometimes lower. So what gives? What explains this?

To add to the mystery, there is another fact. While it occurs seldom, there have been times when we have been able to have one or two of the Assist Team members do a coaching session at the end of the eight-days of ACMC. When that has occurred, the Assist Team member has been able to demonstrate the 2.5 competency level again. They didn't practice, they didn't get feedback on their skills, and yet they stepped up and reached the competency that they had previously reached. Apparently the Assist Team experience itself renews and refreshes coaching competency! (Want to join the team?)

All of this raises several questions:

- Why do most people, even experienced coaches, *not keep their competency*?
- What does it take to *keep* your competency level so it stays fresh and available to you?
- What can you do to prevent the deterioration of your coaching skills?

The fact is— *skills deteriorate if they are not used regularly and refreshed*. “Regularly” here means that you are coaching daily, or almost daily. And “refreshed” here refers to focusing on the skills themselves, thinking about them, getting feedback, and caring about keeping them tight and up to the standard. This answers the first question about *why*: People do not *keep* their competency because they do not use and practice them regularly.

David Murphy told me earlier this year about benchmarking various Meta-Coaches who were ready to sit for assessment. When several did not reach it, then they asked to sit again two weeks later. When the time came David asked, “How much have you been practicing? How many coaching sessions have you been doing? And what skills have you been working on?” One person was surprised at these questions. That led to a discussion. Eventually David asked, “Why would you think you are ready to sit for assessment again if you have not been practicing?” “Well, time has passed,” was the stunning answer.

Now we have a problem. Time alone is not sufficient! The mere passing of time will not make you

better! Practice makes you better—and it has to be *deliberate practice* to create a real difference. That is, focused practice where you take one skill at a time and do it over and over, drill it in and make it automatic.

What is the answer to the second and third questions? Simple:

1) *Make a commitment to yourself* that you are going to practice and keep refreshing your skills to keep them in top shape. You've invested your time, effort, money— now keep that investment.

2) *Set up a discipline* so that you have a set of procedures that you do to practice. Use the *Drills for Skills* to practice particular skills. That's why we have been developing these drills and publishing them.

3) *Establish your inner willingness to persist* no matter what. If you hit a plateau, if you get discouraged, if someone criticizes you merciless— access a robust “I will not quit.” As persistence is the key in so many areas of life, it is especially important in developing the coaching skills.

4) *Get feedback.* Attend the MCF chapters, get a buddy coach and develop a hunger for sensory-based feedback. You can even get your own feedback— video record your session and take the feedback sheet and go through the video looking at your skills.

5) *Support and get support* from other Coaches. We all need support especially if you are working on developing a skill to a level of expertise.

The fact is that *you can keep your competency level.* You can keep your skillful behaviors fresh and sharp. Yet to achieve that requires effort and a commitment on your part to yourself. Have you made that commitment? Are you willing to put in the effort? When you do, you will gain additional value. Your skills will drop into your unconscious competence (into muscle memory) so that it will become increasingly more grounded and available to you.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #46
October 26, 2016

SLOWING DOWN YOUR CONVERSATIONS

Most coaching sessions go too fast. They go far, far too fast! And why? Mostly because the coach does not manage the incoming information. Perhaps he does not sort it out to prioritize what's really important to the client. Perhaps she does not classify the incoming information to let both oneself and the client to know how to categorize things. Perhaps the coach is overwhelmed and doesn't know what to focus on. Perhaps the coach doesn't have permission within himself to slow the conversation. There are many possibilities that explain this. Yet that's really not the important thing.

Now you can tell that the coaching session is going far too fast by your experience as the coach when you feel overwhelmed by too much information and therefore don't know what to focus on. I have seen coaches get overwhelmed with just four minutes of the conversation. Already they have allowed the client to talk on and on without effectively interrupting and already they don't know what to focus on. Now there are two persons confused and overwhelmed— client and coach!

Slowing a conversation down so that you can manage it and help your client sort things out is an important skill. It is a mistake that most novices fall into. They don't know how to interrupt and if they do, they don't interrupt effectively. They don't know how to call for a meta-moment and invite the client to step aside and/or how to make some meta-comments about the rush of information.

Recently in reviewing the Meta-Model, I came across the following example of a conversation. And it shows how a therapist slowed down a conversation so that the members of a family could more deeply and personally confront an issue. This conversation comes from *The Structure of Magic (Volume II, pages 138-140)*. It is in a section on Family Therapy between a therapist and a ten-year old boy, George, who is reactive to the non-verbal messages that he sees in his dad.

Therapist: Well, George (a ten-year-old boy), I've heard from all of the family members except you— tell me, what do you want?

George: I want respect.

Therapist: (The father in the family) (Smiling broadly) Yes, that I believe.

George: (Explosively) SEE! That's just what I'm talking about—I don't get any respect from anyone in this family.

Therapist: Wait, George; you sound real angry to me. Can you tell me what just happened with you?

George: I ... I ... oh, never mind; you wouldn't understand anyway. [Slowing things down]

Therapist: Perhaps not, but try me—did the way you just responded have something to do with something your father did? [Therapist does not take offense, keeps focused on issue.]

George: Yeah, I ask for respect and HE (pointing at his father), just laughs right out loud, making fun of me.

Matt: That's not true, I didn't...

Therapist: Be quiet for a moment, Matt. (Turning to George): George, tell exactly what happened with you just then. [Slowing down dad's reaction. Gathering information from the boy first.]

George: I asked for respect and my father started making fun of me— just the opposite.

Therapist: George, tell me something—how, specifically, would you know that your father was respecting you? [Meta-Model question for specificity which slows things down.]

George: He wouldn't laugh at me—he would watch me when I say things and be serious about it.

Therapist: George, I want to tell you something I noticed and something that I can see right now. Look at your father's face. [Does not respond to George's judgment, instead focuses on sensory-based information occurring in the moment.]

George: Yeah, so what?

Therapist: Well, does he look serious to you—does he look like he's taking you seriously right now—like he, maybe, respects you for what you're saying and doing right now? [Testing to see how George interprets things in this moment, which again slows things down.]

George: Yea, you know, he does look like he is. [Getting behaviors of "respect".]

Therapist: Ask him, George.

George: What? ... ask him. ... Dad, do you respect me? Are you taking me seriously?

Matt: Yes, son ... (softly) ... I'm taking you seriously right now. I respect what you're doing.

George: (crying softly) I really believe that you do, dad.

Therapist: I have a hunch right now that Matt has more to say, George; will you take him seriously and listen to him?

George: Sure...

Matt: Yea ... I guess I do have something to say. A minute or so ago when you first said that you wanted respect, George, I smiled and said, 'Yes, that I believe' but I guess you only saw the smile and didn't hear what I said (crying quietly), and then, when you became so angry, I suddenly remembered how I never believed my father respected me, and I'm grateful (turning to the therapist) that you helped me straighten this out with George.

Therapist: That's right—a message that's not received the way you intended it is no message at all. Matt, is there some other way that you can show George that you care for him besides telling him that you respect him? [Set frame about messages, looking for more external behaviors for "respect."]

Matt: Huh ... some other way besides telling him ... I don't know...

Therapist: I have another hunch—that, maybe, there's a rule in this family, maybe a rule that you, Matt, learned in your father's family, that the men in the family don't touch one another to show their affection and love. Do you catch what I mean, Matt? [Suggesting possibility of a meta-frame, a "rule" against touching.]

Matt: ... Wow ... I guess ... I really connected on that one...

Therapist: Well, maybe it's time for you to try to connect in a new way with your son.

Matt: (moving slowly and awkwardly at first, then more smoothly, quickly crosses over to George and holds him close).

What can we learn from this? Here's a good example of moving the conversation from the conceptual and abstract level down to the sensory based level. Getting specific behaviors for "respect" significantly changed the conversation and gave the family some new resources for interacting with each other. Guiding the conversation so that the persons checked out what they were saying so that message sent and message received would be congruent.

From: Hesham Elmo Hassan
Neuro-Semantic Trainer, Egypt
2016 Morpheus #47
October 30, 2016

RESTORING HUMANS— MASLOW, LEADERSHIP, AND NEURO-SEMANTICS

Fifty years before Persey and Blanchard Popularized Situational Leadership Theory, and Hackman and Walton Popularized Functional Leadership Theory; Abraham Maslow had encountered such concepts during his Anthropological Studies, as he observed The Black Foot Indian Culture of Alberta, Canada. The Black Foot Indians were applying what are considered today to be "developed," "modern" approaches to Leadership and "Organizational" well-being. To them though, as Maslow found out, it wasn't an intellectualized theory as much as it was their Cultural Heritage and Human Legacy passed down from generation to the next. So what kind of culture, society, environment has made such concepts an actualized reality?

THE CRUCIBLE OF HUMAN ACTUALIZATION

In his article, Abraham Maslow and The All-American Self, Algis Valiunas describes:

"Nearly all of the Blackfoot, he (Maslow) discovered, displayed a level of emotional security that only the upper percentiles of the U.S. population reached, and Maslow attributed this in large measure to the Indians' emphasis on personal responsibility instilled from early childhood ... A demanding but loving upbringing enhanced the essential goodness and strength with which these children were born. Perhaps most important, their inborn virtues were not 'leached away.' That is to say, their culture did not erode their fundamental humanity; masses in ostensibly more advanced societies were not so fortunate. The combination of tenderness and hardiness that Maslow saw in the Blackfoot helped shape his ideas of the best sort of character. It was a universal ideal, then, that his fieldwork directed him toward, rather than a culturally specific one. Cultural relativism had to go. What all people shared in the best of their nature overrode even the differences between races, classes, or civilizations. Maslow's project involved getting at the vital core of Man, pure and simple."(1)

For the sake of emphasis, I'm re-quoting an excerpt one more time:

"Perhaps most important, their inborn virtues were not 'leached away.' That is to say, their culture did not erode their fundamental humanity; masses in ostensibly more advanced societies were not so fortunate."

IMPROVEMENT VS RESTORATION

So if what we call modern, civilized society has very successfully failed in providing the type of psychological environment that would adequately nourish and nurture the individual to reach his/her best; if the current "modern" beliefs, concepts, and understandings about human nature have brought us to a state where "the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation" (Henry David Thoreau), live in an un-zestful mechanical way, live either half-dead or in denial through habits by which they forget that something is seriously wrong with our social systems - would it be sane, given one life as far as

we know, to persist in such a way?

If a highly functional (highly synergistic) society is the like of a mansion, wouldn't it make more sense to restore the individual (building brick) upon which this mansion is built? And what if there is a way for the individual to "restore" what has been taken away by conditioning? What if there exists the tools of providing a psychological space within which the individual's most innate gifts may be brought forth into reality and actualized?

APPLIED SELF-ACTUALIZATION PSYCHOLOGY

Applied Self-Actualization Psychology— the presuppositions, models, and patterns of Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching, are not only designed to improve human performance as some may assume, but even more, to "restore" that which is "fundamentally human," that which lays latent and potential in the core of humans whether on both and individual and group level. They are purposed to unveil and unleash all the creative power of the human-being and human-doing in a systematic and measurable way, so that the human and group may actualize their most innate gifts and potentialities that have been veiled by conditioning to live a more zestful, passionate, and wondrous life, fully alive, fully human in a highly synergistic way which simultaneously empowers individuals to be an active part of a "highly synergistic" group dynamics.(2)

As Maslow has proposed based on his encounter with the Black Foot Indians:

"The Self-Actualizing Human is not a Human Being with anything added, but a Human Being with nothing taken away." (3)

What will you get back today?

References:

- 1: Web article: The All-American Self, Algis Valiunas.
- 2: Unleashing Vitality Manual, L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.
- 3: The term "highly synergistic" communities was first used by Ruth Benedict, Abraham Maslow's mentor during his anthropological studies of the Black Foot Indians. It's used to describe communities where individual and group achievement and well-being "synergize," are in harmony rather than conflict.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #48
November 3, 2016

THE FAST TRACK OF META-COACHING

When we began Meta-Coaching in 2002, those who were sponsoring said that many people wanted to take Meta-Coaching and learn the form of Coaching that we were presenting but they were not ready to take the whole NLP practitioner training. So the sponsors urged us to create a way to get people involved without requiring that they do the whole NLP Practitioner training (10 to 15 days). That's why we originally put together *Coaching Essentials*. To do that we asked ourselves, "What aspects of NLP are *essential* for Coaching?" From that question, we then put together a *fast track*— 3 days that would give people a quick introduction to the NLP Communication Model.

When I say "quick introduction," it really is that. Quick and a mere introduction. And as an introduction, it should *not* be considered to be fully adequate for a person to understand NLP. It is not able to do that. It is just the beginning of that journey. And every trainer of *Coaching Essentials* should emphasize that with every section that they train. "This is an introduction!" "There is much, much more to learn, study, and integrate."

This is especially true of the Representation Systems, the predicates indicating such, the eye accessing cues, the Strategy model, states, the Meta-Model of Language, the Meta-Programs, the Meta-States Model, etc. Just pick up *User's Manual of the Brain, Volume I* and you will see that there is so much more. With *Coaching Essentials* you are introduced to the five central models of NLP— the Meta-Model of Language, the Representational Model, Sub-Modalities (which are really meta-modalities), Strategies, and the Meta-States Model. There is no time to go into any of the models in depth, let alone talk about the inter-relationship between them.

As a hint, I have written at least one book about all of those models and sometimes several. Nor am I the only one to write a book about the models, many others also have.

Further, I would never, but never, encourage anyone to go immediately from *Coaching Essentials* to *Coaching Mastery*. I know that some people get into a rush and want to do everything quickly. Yet actually they need at least six-months minimally to practice and integrate what they have learned. In that way a person becomes intimately familiar with the materials.

But suppose a person gets in a rush and wants to do the trainings back to back? What happens when a person takes *Coaching Essentials* and/or *Coaching Genius* (APG) and within a month attend *Coaching Mastery*? Many unpleasant things:

- They will probably think that they can do things when they cannot. As a result they will become severely disappointed when they begin *Coaching Mastery*.
- They probably cannot Meta-Model yet and get specific details from a client in a conversation. This is going to limit their coaching ability and prevent them from using the higher quality skills of Meta-Coaching. They will struggle to ground the conversations and get specifics.
- They are probably overwhelmed with all of the models and patterns and confused about how they all fit together.

- They could mistakenly think they know NLP.

If you have used the *fast track* to get into Meta-Coaching— Great! Now continue your learning by getting the entire NLP Practitioner. Get several books on NLP to continue your studies. There is so much that you do not know. Get the two volumes of *User's Manual of the Brain* and begin studying through them. Get the book *Introducing NLP* by John Seymour and Joseph O'Connor. Get *Sourcebook of Magic, Volume I*.

The *fast track* into Meta-Coaching is just that—a quick way to get you into the NLP-based dimension of Coaching from the Neuro-Semantic perspective. From there, set your goal to study the Practitioner and Master Practitioner course— these are required for your next level of PCMC anyway. After all, quality Coaching, and especially Meta-Coaching, requires a quality foundation and that's what the full NLP Practitioner will help you achieve.

In the next few weeks, I plan to start a series of articles on *Neurons* about the basic concepts of NLP. If you do not get *Neurons*, it is free for you on www.neurosemantics.com.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #49
November 9, 2016

WHY THE LACK OF QUESTIONS?

You know that the most effective, the most successful, and the most powerful coaches coach best by questioning. *Questioning is the primary tool of a coach.* I always strive very hard on Day 2 of *Coaching Mastery* to drive that point home. Coaching is questioning. Questioning lies at the heart of coaching. Does that make sense? If you know that Coaching differs from Consulting which is giving advice and Mentoring which is guiding and Training which is teaching— then you know that the process facilitation of coaching and especially Meta-Coaching lies in questioning.

Consider for a bit the *state of questioning*. What is that state? When you are truly and authentically in a state of questioning, what kind of a state or meta-state are you in? Are you not in a state of curiosity? That state usually begins with some *interest*, and then as the interest grows, it becomes *curiosity*. And when you amplify that curiosity, it becomes *fascination*—a deeply engaged state of absolute fascination, as if you are on the verge of a mystery, an awesome and incredible mystery. Access *that* state and I assure you that you will be in a great state of questioning and meta-questioning!

Yet so many Coaches and even Meta-Coaches do not access that state. I was a bit disappointed last week in Brazil at the general lack of questioning in our group—a low level of questioning that continued to the very end. It reminded me of previous times in Hong Kong when we had a similar response. What's going on? What explains the low level and low quality of questioning?

The first time it happened in Hong Kong, I became incredibly curious and began asking around. Eventually the answer was repeated again and again, “I only ask a question when I know the answer.” “If you ask a question that means you don't know the answer, and that means you are ignorant or stupid and it's bad for your reputation to do that.” “*You only ask when you know the answer?!?*” I asked in response. That raised my next question, “Why would you ask a question if you already know the answer?” And the answer was— To demonstrate my knowledge!

Wow! Did the planet turn up-side-down last night when I was sleeping? Did aliens land and made everybody's brain do a 180-degrees shift so that they think the opposite of what they normally think?

I kept asking questions about this and eventually I discovered the real culprit: *People fear asking questions* because they confuse their identity with their questions. By putting their social-identity on the line, they now become fearful of asking what they don't know. Now they cannot ask what they really want to ask. Now they cannot ask such questions because they are afraid that they will be “dumb questions,” and expose them to the ridicule of their colleagues. They are continuing to value or dis-value their “self” based on their knowledge and to “not know” is to be inadequate, flawed, stupid, and therefore imperfect.

Wow! Talk about semantically loading the central tool for learning! Talk about how to kill the one and only “instinct” we humans have— the capacity to learn by asking questions.

What then is the solution? What can we do? Obviously there are several things:

1) *First, break the back of the most idiotic linkage — that you “are” what you “do.”* This is the fundamental NLP distinction that is the foundation for reframing: person is distinction from behavior. What you *do* is an expression of you, it is not *you*. It is what you do. And, you are more, far more than what you do, are you not? Or do you limit your sense of self to what you do? Do you judge yourself solely and only by your actions?

If this is a problem for you, go back to APG. Do the second pattern on Day 1 — *Meta-Stating Your Self*. Is a pattern for creating a solid sense of self by creating self-acceptance for all of your fallibilities, self-appreciation for your strengths and spirit, and unconditional self-esteem for you as a person—as a human being. Run that pattern again and again and again—until you feel in your very neurology that you are a somebody, that you count, that you are precious and loveable.

2) *Highly esteem the wonderful and awesome state of curiosity.* Recover the childlike attitude of being fascinated and curious about everything. With eyes wide open and full of wonder, curiously explore and question everything around you as if you were on the verge of a great discovery and you are only five questions away from it.

Sometimes people ask me how I have created so many models and write so many books. And the core answer goes to this very thing—a curious fascination with things and the ability to ask multitude of dumb questions. That’s how I found the Meta-States Model originally, it’s how I “stumbled” upon the resilience strategy, the Axes of Change, the Matrix Model, and on and on. Where others were “secure in their knowledge,” and “knew it all,” I did not. I was insecure in my knowledge and figured there were many more things that I did not know and did not understand. So I kept asking questions. I still do this.

3) *Embrace the not-knowing of the learning state.* Being without “instincts” and not innately knowing how to be human, we are a species designed to learn and to learn all of our lifetimes. And while learning is a great state, it is also a fascinating state in that when you are learning— you are *not knowing*. If and when I think I know something, I’m *not* learning. It access the state of learning—openly receiving new things, unknown things, and things I don’t understand. And often (usually) that puts me in a state of confusion ... and now I have to do the mental work of striving to figure something out. Do you love that state? I hope so. Is it pleasant? Often it is not. Will you embrace it? I hope so.

We often say that to learn best, access a know-nothing state. Release what you do know and from that place begin your explorations. Many cannot do this. They are too proud of their knowledge and refuse to know-nothing. Yet without emptying and becoming open—they cannot learn anything new. They can only learn what they already know—a sad and pathetic state.

Here’s to you becoming a Great Learner—a Great Coach—to your openness to ask the most wonderful dumb questions!

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #50
November 16, 2016

DEEP LISTENING

When it comes to Coaching, *listening is the critical variable*. Having just completed two ACMC trainings, one in Brazil and the other in the Dominican Republic, everybody involved became significantly aware that, again, *listening* is the central issue in the coaching sessions. After a few of the experimental sessions, most became aware that they were *not hearing so many things—central points of their clients*. Yet try as they may (and they did try), they still could not deepen their listening. Why not?

As noted in some earlier posts, there is *too much noise in their heads*. The coaches are doing too much self-talking, sometimes talking to themselves about their evaluations, sometimes judging themselves, sometimes talking about what the benchmarker was doing(!), etc. Sometimes the coaches are *trying too hard to get the outcome or to fix something or succeed*. For these, the patterns “Releasing Judgment” and “Decontamination Chamber” are recommended as patterns to quiet the inner voice and make the coaching about the client instead of oneself.

There’s also another reason. *The coach may not know how to listen deeply to the client’s words and sentences*. And when this is the case, it indicates that the person probably doesn’t know the NLP Meta-Model of Language. I wrote about this yesterday to the Trainers’ egroup saying that we have to do better on training the Meta-Model. I saw this in the past two *Coaching Mastery* trainings—those who were there to become Meta-Coaches really had far too shallow of an understanding of the Meta-Model. How do I know? Because when you know the Meta-Model and know how to use it, you can engage in *deep listening*. Deep listening involves—

Listening for specificity

The first distinctions of the Meta-Model deal with what’s been left out (deletions). Whether it is an unspecified noun, verb, modifier, or referential index—the way to ask questions is to take the noun, verb, etc. and ask about *what* or *how* it references something. “Who specifically are you speaking about?” “What criteria specifically?” “How did he criticize you specifically?” The key to listening for deletions is to hear the word and try to make a picture or a sound of it. If you cannot, then ask for specifics. “Delegating to who specifically? In what way specifically? At what time specifically?”

This requires that you *track the word or sentences representationally into the theater of your mind*. If you cannot, then you have questions to ask. Be a blank slate and let the client’s words hit it and if it doesn’t evoke a visual, auditory, or kinesthetic representation—ask more questions. Ask until you can representationally track it to your mind. All of this is in *Coaching Essentials* and in *Meta-NLP*.

Deletions: Simple Deletions; Comparative/ Superlative Deletions, Unspecified Relations, Unspecified Referential Indices, Unspecified Nouns and Verbs, Unspecified Processes (Adverbs Modifying Verbs), Unspecified Processes, Adjectives Modifying Nouns.

Listening for Over-Generalized maps

When you learning hear Universal Quantifier you hear the words and phrases that are exaggerated and extreme: “No one, everyone, always, never, etc.” Hearing this lets you know that the person is failing make finer distinctions in-between polar opposites. Deep listening for Modal Operators (necessity, possibility, impossibility, etc.) enables you to hear *the rules that a person has in his or her mental map about the world*. “I have to do this project.” “I must start exercising.”

Generalizations: Universal Quantifier, Model Operators, Either-Or Phrases, Over/Under Defined Terms.

Listening for Distortions

When you hear distortions, you hear even more deeply. Now you hear the mental maps that involve a cognitive distortion or a cognitive bias. Listening for *causation words* that indicate cause-effect structures enables you to hear how the person reasons about how things work. “This X causes this Y.” Yet these premises about causation are often wrong. If you do not recognize the cause-effect word or statement and if you then ask a question based on that false premise—than any answer the person gives will validate the false premise and they will be in worse shape!

By listening for *Mind-Reading statements*, you are then able to hear a person’s internal structures and this mostly reveals that person’s projections. What he says is actually projecting onto someone else what he feels. “That won’t work with my boss; he is so stubborn, he would never consider it.” “She is just a control freak, needs to always be telling others what to do.” The challenging question asks for the source of this information. “How do you know?” “Has the person told you this?”

Listen for *Complex Equivalence statements* and you get to hear what the person has equated—the structure of what counts for a certain value or meaning. Here the person has equated some external behavior (EB) with some internal state or experience (IS). The EB equals the IS. When you can hear this, you can listen deeply to the person’s structure of meaning. “When he crosses his arms, I know that he is defensive and rejecting what I’m saying.”

Distortions: Mind-Reading, Complex Equivalences, Nominalizations, Cause-Effect, Lost Performatives, Delusional Verbal Splits, Pseudo-Words, Personalizing, Static Words.

Listening for Structure

These structural linguistics enable you to deeply listen to the person’s internal world structure. Metaphors, for example, give you many ideas about what a person is formatting internally as she is *comparing* one less known and understood thing with something well known. With every metaphor or analogy there are “entailments”—things that come along with the metaphor that do not fit. That’s because no metaphor or comparison is complete. Everyone fails at some point. “Trying to get a sale is like fighting a battle for attention.” So also when you listen for presuppositions. These reveals the person’s assumptions about the world, or about people, or about some concept.

Structures: Metaphor, Presuppositions, Multi-Ordinality, Identification.

If you want to learn to *listen deeply*, learn the Meta-Model. Go back to your *Coaching Essentials* and/or *NLP Practitioner*. *Get Communication Magic* (2001) and study it cover to cover. Then practice the distinctions and questions so that you can effectively handle the linguistics of your clients.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #51
November 23, 2016

GETTING TO THE MEANINGS BEHIND THE WORDS

To be able to achieve “deep listening” (Morpheus #50), you have to learn how to deal with words as symbols and question them to get to the references and meanings they refer to. By themselves, words do not mean anything. Whether as a sound spoken into the air or as a set of scribbles written on paper, if you do not know the code—the words themselves will mean nothing to you. Just look at any set of words that are part of a language that’s foreign to you, or listen to a language that you do not know. The meaning is *not* in the words.

The meaning is in the person. It is the person who understands the code and can use the symbols as symbols to identify the facts (referent experiences) and then reason from those facts to some conclusion (a belief, decision, understanding, identity, etc.). Now if the meaning is in the person and not the word—do not blindly accept the key words that you hear from your client! Check them out. “How are you using the term X?” “What are you referring to when you use Y?” We call this a *clarity check* in Meta-Coaching and if you do not do this with the key words, and especially the semantically loaded terms, *you will not understand your client.* And without understanding, you will not be able to facilitate that person’s development.

Steve de Shazer spoke to this when he summarized what Horne Tooke, a linguist, wrote about the danger of words and how we have to unpack them.

“The significant thing Horne Tooke (1832) found out about language is that all the structural parts of language—the prepositions, conjunctions, prefixes, suffixes, and whatnot—once were full-fledged, meaningful words that got gradually whittled down to handle little symbols. Language, as Tooke discovered, goes through a continuous process of condensation and abbreviation; through the centuries, *people manage to cram more and more meaning into fewer and fewer words.* What once took a whole sentence or clause to express, can now be compressed into a single word; and language is full of clever devices that make for more and more speed. ... The principle: a single participle or complex word takes the place of a cumbersome word-combination.” (*Clues*, 1988, page 132)

It is the compactness of words that can create lots of problems for you as a Coach. The words that your client uses can carry a heavy load of ideas. That is, as we say in Neuro-Semantics, the words can be *semantically loaded*. And if they are, then as a professional communicator, your job starts by unpacking the person’s meanings. That’s why you ask exploration and testing questions. Doing so enables you to get on the same page with your client. If you don’t do that, your interactions as a Coach will be irrelevant! De Shazer again:

“Most of the long, complex words in modern prose are not labels for things in the world around us—like *radioactivity*—but condensed expressions of abstract ideas that can be expressed just as well in two or more shorter words.” (p. 135)

How about that!? Certain words are *not* labels for things in the real external world. They summarize abstract ideas. So when you encounter some of those words, you have a lot of unpacking to do.

“Self-Esteem” is another complex word. How is the person using that term? What “self” is he thinking about (his innate self, his social self, his career self, his performance self, etc.). What kind of esteeming is she referring to, and based on what criteria? How can you even talk intelligently if you don’t ask these questions?

De Shazer says that “One of the basic facts about language is that no word ever means exactly the name to two different people.” (p. 171). It all depends on the person’s individual background and experience with the term and since no two persons live exactly the same life—each term will inevitably mean something different. You have to ask.

“Reading is really a miracle,” says de Shazer. That’s because the meanings that you are attempting to send via words are unpredictable. You never know what meaning someone will conclude from the words.

“In writing, you can predict more or less accurately what your general style and your language structure will do to your readers, but you can never predict what a given word will do to a given reader. Words don’t mean anything by themselves or even in groups of two or three. Words get their meanings from the context, from the sentences they are in, or even the whole paragraph. After your eyes have seen the words, your mind assigns to these words a provisional meaning, ‘good only until further notice.’” (p. 182)

The truth is that you and I can *easily* mis-understand each other and mis-understand our clients. What do they really mean? What meanings are really driving their experience? Are the meanings that your client has invented about something accurate, useful, ecological, toxic, dysfunctional, or what? As a Meta-Coach, *you coach to the heart of things—the client’s meanings*. That’s why learning how to deeply listening is critical if you are to be world-class in your coaching. And to get to the real meanings behind the words, you have to slow the conversation down, check the words, reflect what you hear and help your client to more deeply understand his own meanings.

It’s not easy; if it were then anyone could *Coach*. It’s not easy, it is a challenging adventure. Are you up for it? Are you willing to develop your skills to lead that adventure? This is what makes your coaching worth its money. When you can get to the meanings behind the words and enable your client’s more effective meaning-making, you have enriched a person’s life at its source. How valuable is that?

Here’s my challenge: Refuse to tolerate having shallow, superficial conversations with your clients. Inspire them and invite them to go deeper. Invite them to explore their meanings and the quality of their meaning-making and to get real. And that’s the ultimate purpose of your coaching, is it not? Inviting your clients to unleash their authenticity!

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #52
November 30, 2016

HOW TO REASON AS A META-COACH

When a client sits in your coaching chair and you ask the opening question, “What do you want to achieve in this coaching that is the most important thing that will make a transformative difference?” your client will begin to give you “information.” But as you know, that *information* will very often be vague, confusing, abstract, and contaminated with all sorts of cognitive distortions and biases.

What then? What’s a Meta-Coach to do? Ah, that’s where your work begins—helping your client to communicate with clarity and precision. How do you do that? Use the Meta-Model distinctions and questions of course! When you do that, *you actually help your client to think more clearly*—usually more clearly than they have ever thought. That’s because the Meta-Model questions keeps inviting your client to *go back to the experience* and the referents to map it more accurately. This, in turn, enables him to speak more explicitly and begins the process of thinking and speaking with precision. It enables critical thinking.

If you do *not* do this, then when the client speaks in ambiguous, vague, confusing and misleading ways, it prevents both him and you to think rationally, accurately, and clearly. The *precision questions of the Meta-Model* enable both of you to get the facts of the case. Where is the person now? What’s happening? What does the person want? What will that look like or sound like? When is that? In what area is that? What does the person have to do to get what she wants?

First the facts. Get the empirical facts. Get the sensory-based facts, what we call the VAK in NLP. This will *ground* the subject so that you know what the client is talking about. It also helps the client to know what she is talking about! But all facts are not created equal. There are many different kinds. There are true facts and false facts. So ask the questions:

“Where did you get that fact?” Is that a solid fact or more of a guess? Is that a dubious fact based on some questionable research? Is that fact relevant or is it irrelevant to this subject?

Next come the conclusions. From the facts people draw conclusions. That’s what we do with facts—we reason from facts, we select certain facts and then make an argument based on them. We even put a spin on those facts. But what spin? A positive one? A negative one?

“I want to start a coaching business”—fact. “Coaching business” means sole practitioner doing life coaching—fact. Currently I have a day job, 9-to-5, in supervising people on an assembly line—fact. Today I make \$3,000 a month—fact. I need \$2,700 a month to pay the bills that I have—fact. I do not know how to get started, what to do first or second—fact.

As we combine facts, we draw conclusions. The above client may conclude: “I’m afraid of getting started.” He might conclude, “I don’t know how to get started.” “I need a plan to get started.” “I lack the courage to get started.” Same facts, many different conclusions. That’s why your first task is *intelligence gathering*—gather all of the facts so you can ground the client’s situation. Then ask for the person’s thinking.

Given these facts, what are you thinking? What have you concluded? Where are you today? What do you want to achieve in coaching? What do you believe?

You learned in Meta-States about reflexivity and that when you take a nominalization and apply it to itself, you have multi-ordinal terms (one of the new Meta-Model distinctions). Then the term will mean something different at each level. And guess what kind of a term “fact” is? That’s right. It is a multi-ordinal term. Check it out, “Can you have a fact about a fact?” That’s what I’ve been doing here, mentioned facts about facts: facts can be relevant or irrelevant, true or false, realistic or unrealistic.

All of these questions enable you to *hear your client’s way of thinking*. It enables you to start deeply hearing the person’s meaning-making style which that she uses to “reason” from fact to conclusion. Now you can summarize by bullet pointing *the subject*.

“So this is about getting clear?” “So this session will focus on creating a plan?” “So do you want to focus on risk management?”

Here you are guessing. You are asking questions from your guesses to see if you can follow your client and the kind of thinking that’s leading them to sit in your coaching chair and receive coaching from you. Think of the conversation that you’re having as *solving a puzzle*. The client has a puzzle to solve and like any puzzle, there are many, many pieces—maybe 20, maybe 100, maybe 1000. You ask the “What do you want?” question to see if you can get the big picture. Like a puzzle box, the pieces are all mixed up on the inside, but on the outside is the picture of what the puzzle will eventually look like. So as you guess what kind of conversation your client wants, you are guessing at the picture on the puzzle box.

Your client is giving you the pieces. Take them, clarify them, unpack them, get the facts and put them down on the Landscape: this piece is part of Present State, this one is in the Gap, this one is in the Desired State, and this one is in the Meta-Landscape over Present State. Keep asking and going through this clarification process until you have a lot of the pieces of the puzzle laid out. As you put the pieces together, you can ask yourself (and your client) questions to help complete the puzzle.

Is it complete? What’s missing? Where are there gaps of understanding? What is this a puzzle of? What is the big picture? What pieces may be distorted? Misleading? What questions do you still have about the various pieces of the puzzle?

As you do all of this, you will be hearing *thinking patterns*, that is, meta-programs, as well as cognitive distortions, cognitive biases, etc. Some will be thinking inductively (detail to general), others deductively (general to detail). Some will be thinking visually, others auditory, some kinesthetically. This is critical to the pattern detection skill.

Notice if your client has mis-diagnosed his situation. Many will, so expect that it may be happening. Your client will present what she thinks is the problem and the solution needed. But don’t be seduced by this. Challenge it. Check it out. Play “devil’s advocate.” All of this is about *how to reason as a Meta-Coach*—and obviously, it is equally about *how to help your client to reason* about his life. How your client reasons, how she puts facts together, how he goes from one idea to another— all of this are structural components that govern the content information. You need both. One is the interpretative frame, the other is the grounding content that keeps it real.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #53
December 7, 2016

MAKING COACHING RATIONAL YES? NO?

“Well, some people are rational and some aren’t. Just the way it is.” That’s what he told her. He said that in response to what she had just said:
“You’ve got to get her to be more rational, she is not being reasonable.”

They were talking about his sister who lived with them and this was supposed to be a problem-solving conversation. Obviously with all of the telling that was going on, the conversation was not a problem-solving one!

The conversation got me thinking so that I started questioning the assumptions within those statements. Both persons were assuming that “being rational” was a choice, that people could be rational or could choose to not be rational. Now, is that true? As the term *rational* was being tossed around as if it is a thing, I then realized that they were playing tennis with another one of those damned nominalizations.

“So what’s the process of ‘being rational’ if it is not a thing?”

“What do we mean by ‘rational’ anyway?”

“What do you mean when you use the term ‘rational?’”

Now a quick glance at the dictionary revealed that the word “rational” comes from “reason” and relates to “the ability to reason—to think, reckon, calculate.” Ah, perhaps that’s the source of the disagreement. Could there be different *kinds or ways of reasoning*? Could there be different *processes* by which we reason?

Actually, this is an old debate that goes back to ancient times. Aristotle engaged in this philosophical debate. Back then it was the polarity between reason or emotion. Is reason strong enough to control passion? Today we ask the question in other ways. Today you can regularly hear things like the following:

Can we take a rational approach to people?

Are we rational enough to work together to improve the quality of life in our country?

Are we rational enough to not blow ourselves up?

Mankind has many irrational and unreliable impulses that cannot be control by our will.

That’s why we need someone to control us.

Why is it that when rationality becomes diseased, it seeks control and becomes obsession compulsive?

To the question about *kinds of rationality*, yes of course, there are many kinds. This means that all that we call a “reason” and all that we call “reasoning” is not the same. There are many styles of reasoning—a person can reason in a theoretical way, a practical way, a personal and/or an impersonal way. One can engage in experimental reasoning, emotional reasoning, intuitive reasoning, and wishful reasoning. There is the reasoning that’s involved in magical thinking. Children reason

according to their cognitive development level. So do teenagers. So do all of us. There are all of the different kinds of reasoning in the cognitive distortions, kinds that are less legitimate and sometimes completely destructive. Then there are the cognitive biases which essentially describe a flaw in human reasoning that we are all liable to make. In terms of reasoning, for example, we have a bias for confirming what we already believe, we have a bias for remembering recent things, etc.

Thinking through all of this, I then realized that we can put *reasoning/being rational* on a continuum. We could then look at *the quality of one's reasoning* and view it along a range from being non-sense, fantasy, magical to childish and immature and all the way up to a highly structured, mathematical way of reasoning.

The bottom line is that the real question is not about whether a person is being rational or not, but what kind? Every form of reasoning/being rational occur within a framework. So the question is, What is the framework within which you are reasoning? What premises are you working from? What are you assuming as you are reasoning using those ideas? What interpretative frame is the person assuming?

If one is “reasoning from his emotions” then he is using *what he feels* as his framework, and so his reasoning is rational *within that frame of reference*. Accordingly, outside that framework other kinds of thinking would be irrational. It is therefore silly to argue about which kind of thinking is rational, that will get us nowhere. Instead we have to look at the structure, the framework a person is using.

And that's the point. As a Meta-Coach, you should be looking for, flushing out, and then exploring *the framework of reasoning* that your client is using in drawing the conclusions that she is making. Why? First to understand your client. Second, so that your client can become more mindful of the assumptive frames that he is using to make sense of his world.

Do that and your coaching conversation becomes deep. You are getting to the frames of reference and the frames of meaning that are informing and governing your client's experience. And with so many, many things—if you do not get there you cannot enable your client to make great choices, or even understand why things are happening to him. By flushing out *the framework of reasoning* that your client is using then change, and even transformation, can occur and sometimes very quickly.

Finally, to use the words of Alfred Korzybski, every person is “rational” according to his or her *psycho-logics*. The way you reason and are “logical” depends on how you have framed (or meta-stated) yourself with some idea. That's why you are like me in that you are *psycho-logical*. And so are all of your clients. It's not about being “rational” or “reasonable” or “logical,” it is the *kind and quality of reasoning* that a person is using.

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #54
December 14, 2016

GETTING INTO YOUR CLIENT'S WORLD

To coach effectively you have to get into your client's world. But I don't have to tell you that, you already know that. And yet how many coaches do not do that?! From what I can tell, lots of them. And why? Probably because they feel in a hurry. They feel that they have to rush and so they cut to the chase and skip over the matching, acknowledgments, listening, checking, clarity checks and rush in to fix things. Bad idea.

Getting into your client's world means you have to go there. And to go there, you have to listen, really listen, so that you can identify their world. If you expect your client to come to your world, talk your language, phrase things the way you like them phrased, present them in the order that you prefer—good luck! That probably won't happen. You are actually setting yourself up to be significantly less effective than you could be. After all, if you don't get into your client's world, you will not understand your client very well and will not create much rapport with them.

We call this pacing—going along with them at the client's pace. And you do that by matching. Of course to match, you have to stop mis-matching using your own criteria and beliefs and preferences as you begin to look for what fits for your client and your client's patterns. This is an art. It is, in fact, the central art of coaching.

In the early NLP literature, the authors talked about *meeting your client at their model of the world* rather than meeting your client at your model of the world. To meet them at their model, you have to listen to their words, calibrate to their responses, try on their expressions, and seek to understand them *on their terms*. This explains why in Meta-Coaching we emphasize asking clarity questions.

How are *you* using that term or that phrase?

When you think of that, what are you seeing and hearing that *for you* means 'insult?'

I noticed that you point to your right when you speak about your goal, is that where you put your future?

One of the reasons you and I as professional coaches *meet our client in his world and use her terminology* is because we are trained in communication to have that flexibility. You have gone through the training to be able to adapt to others. More than likely, the client does not have that understanding or the flexibility. We also know that "the person with the most flexibility in a system will have the most influence in that system."

I recently watched some benchmarking sessions that some of our Team Leaders were doing with many people who were working on reaching the competency level for ACMC. When a couple of the coaches seemed stuck and unable to listen with accuracy and do the basics of supporting with a client, I was asked to step in. Having watched, I have a pretty good suspicion that the coach was not listening or clarifying because the coach was operating from a strong self-reference and a strong mis-matching meta-program. So that's what I inquired about:

I wonder by chance if you tend to mismatch? “Yes.”
So you most easily notice differences and what’s not there? “Yes.”
And I wonder if you are also strong in self-referencing? “Yes.”

“Thank you for your self-awareness and for your honesty. I would guess that this is the reason that you are not picking up on a lot of what your client is saying.” Both of the coaches that I said this to agreed. And both wanted to know what to do.

“My recommendation is that you put yourself into second perceptual position and ask yourself, ‘What is my coach not catching?’ ‘What am I trying to say, but my coach is missing?’”

This would use their mismatching but now from the other-reference perspective! Then I suggested a second choice.

“Another recommendation would be to see if you can match ten points that your client is making to his or her satisfaction. Doing that will demonstrate your skill and your flexibility and that you can choose to match as well as mismatch.”

Your success in coaching, in relationships, in business, in just about everything, depends on how well you can see the world from the point of view of the other person. And that means *listening to understand them on their terms*, not yours. This differs from how most people listen. They actually don’t listen, they merely wait to talk! And if they do listen, they listen for how to win a discussion and get their point accepted.

In Meta-Coaching, one of the tools we encourage for listening is, strangely enough, interrupting! That’s because when you interrupt to listen, you stop the person from speaking more so that you can make sure you are accurately understanding him. So infrequently interrupt to track with the conversation, to clarify words as you seek to more fully understand the person. To do this effectively, do not do this to guide the other person to where you want them to go or think they should go, but to discover and find out where your client is taking you.

One author I recently read called this being a *blank slate*. He said, think of it as a verb, *blank slating*. That is, make yourself a blank slate, empty yourself so that what your client says, you can register completely. Shelle Rose Charvet uses another metaphor in her book, *My Customer is Bothering Me*. She says, “go to their bus stop.”

Regarding what your client wants and before you ask the *how* question, “How do you do X?” Ask a testing question, “Do you know how to X?” If they say, “Yes,” then ask it. If they say, “No,” then say, “Great! I have a job!”

As you do this, stay in the place of not-knowing. How long can you stay in that place?

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus Reflections #55
December 21, 2016

“I DON’T KNOW” DOESN’T STOP A META-COACH

How do you answer a client when he says, “I don’t know?” Does that stop you? Would you like to have a way to effectively respond? I wrote the following article for the Meta-Coach Reflections back on June 1, 2011. And we regularly send it out to the new Meta-Coaches. Last week we graduated 34 new Meta-Coaches in Sydney—so this is for them. And if you have lost it or forgotten, it is for you also!

What do you do when a client says, “I don’t know!” What do you do when you run up against the “I don’t know” roadblock? Do you quit? Do you shift to another subject? Do you ask the tormenting question that they cannot answer and which they just told you they cannot answer, “Why don’t you know?” I hope not! Asking that “why” when the person is in an unresourceful state is an unuseful question at best. It is also “irrelevant” and can induce a counter-productive state.

What can you, as a Meta-Coach, do when your client says “I don’t know?” Lots of things! That’s because “I don’t know!” does not and will not stop a skilled Meta-Coach. The fact is that there are many ways to respond to: “I don’t know!” Do you know them? If not, here are the 15 key ways to respond.

First, be sure to pace and match by saying something like, “That’s great! Not knowing means this will really be a valuable conversation we’re about to have!” Or, “That’s okay. So if the coaching can help you to know that, would that be of value to you? Would that enable you to move beyond this barrier of ‘I don’t know!?’ Great, then should we move right along and enable you to know?”

Now as with all NLP and Neuro-Semantic processes, always begin by matching and validating the person’s not-knowing. Once you do that, then you can begin to explore what kind of *not-knowing* it is. There are many kinds.

1. Lack of Information — Do you need some information?

Perhaps the person just does not have the information that he needs and that’s why he does not know what to answer. What information do you need in order to know? Do you know how to get that information?

2. Insufficient information — Do you have enough information?

Perhaps she has information, but does not sufficient information to be able to answer the question. What information do you already have? How do you know that it is insufficient? What criteria are you using?

3. Confusion— Do you have too much information?

Or the person could be confused, his knowledge is *fused together* (con-fused) and needs to make distinctions that he is not currently making. With all the information that you have, do you have distinctions that allow you to sort it out, to classify it, to see structures within it?

4. *Not-prioritized — Is the not-knowing due to the lack of prioritizing?*

Perhaps she does not know because she has not prioritized the things of importance, or the things to be done and so doesn't know what to choose. She needs to identify her values and sort them out in terms of importance. What are your values that you can use to prioritize that information?

5. *Fear of knowing — Are you afraid to know?*

What do you feel about knowing, about gaining that knowledge? If you did know, what would that mean to you? Is there any fear in you about finding out?

6. *Repression — Do you not allowed yourself to know?*

From the fear of knowing, comes a taboo about knowing, and eventually an unconscious repression of knowing or of some information. Do you have permission to know?

7. *Self-Distrust — Do you not trust yourself?*

The not-knowing could be that you have not given yourself permission to know, that you don't have permission to trust yourself with the information. Do you trust yourself with knowing, with finding out? How much do you trust yourself with the information?

8. *Unwillingness — Do you want to find out?*

The not-knowing could be a lack of desire to know or even an willingness to know, to explore, to find out. Do you want to know? Are you willing to find out? Are you ready to make a decision that you will find out?

9. *Over-identification — Are you confusing the map with the territory?*

The not-knowing could arise from an identification that a person has made between some information or knowledge and how he identifies himself or something else. Is your identity tied up in this information?

10. *Unsafe — Are you simply not willing to tell me?*

Perhaps the statement about not-knowing really means that the person does not feel it is safe to share the information with you. Perhaps she feels that it makes her too vulnerable and exposed and/or weak and so does not want to tell what she knows. Do you feel safe enough with me as your coach to share this?

11. *Ignorant about Cause — Do you not know what causes this experience?*

Sometimes we say that we do not know when we are really saying that we lack knowledge about causation, what causes us to think, feel, say, or do something. Sometimes we know, we just do not know about an experience's origin or source. Are you really saying that you don't know where this came from, its source?

12. *Distortion — Do you have a distortion in your mapping?*

Perhaps the not-knowing really means that he has a distorted map, one that is twisted in such a way that it prevents him from being clear about something. What do you need to do to start sorting out what you do know— a mind-map, a flow chart, a list?

13. Blind-spot — Do you have a blind spot that prevents you from knowing?

Perhaps there is a blind-spot in something that is your strength, somewhere where you have become over-focused, and you have a blind spot that's preventing you from knowing. Are you surprised or even shocked by your own responses and just don't know where they came from?

14. Inexperience — Do you lack experience in or with something?

Perhaps you do not know something due to inexperience. You don't know something because you have not and sufficient experience with some area or skill. Is this an area where you need more experience in practice?

15. Lack of Strategy — Do you not understand how it works?

Perhaps you do not have a strategy and that's why you don't know the strategy for doing something. It's new or different to you and so you don't know how it works. Do you have a strategy for how to accomplish X?

Overview of 15 responses to “I don't Know.”

- 1. Lack of Information — Do you need some information?*
- 2. Insufficient information — Do you have enough information?*
- 3. Confusion— Do you have too much information?*
- 4. Not-prioritized — Is the not-knowing due to the lack of prioritizing?*
- 5. Fear of knowing — Are you afraid to know?*
- 6. Repression — Do you not allowed yourself to know?*
- 7. Self-Distrust — Do you not trust yourself?*
- 8. Unwillingness — Do you want to find out?*
- 9. Over-identification — Are you confusing the map with the territory?*
- 10. Unsafe — Are you simply not willing to tell me?*
- 11. Ignorant about Cause — Do you not know what causes this experience?*
- 12. Distortion — Do you have a distortion in your mapping?*
- 13. Blind-spot — Do you have a blind spot that prevents you from knowing?*
- 14. Inexperience — Do you lack experience in or with something?*
- 15. Lack of Strategy — Do you not understand how it works?*

From: L. Michael Hall
2016 Morpheus #56
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MY LEADERSHIP IN NEURO-SEMANTICS

Reviewing the Past, Forecasting the Future

Years ago, thinking about the kind of leadership we need in Neuro-Semantics, I picked seven leadership traits and developed benchmarks for those seven qualities. That article (“Neuro-Semantic Leadership”) has been on the website since that time as well as in the NSTT manual. Why? Because leadership is such a critical factor. This is true of leadership in the home, at the office, in organizations, in communities, in government— everywhere! What were those qualities? Here they are:

Being Criteria:

- Authenticity: being and acting from one’s true self without masks and personas
- Integrity: being as good as one’s word, impeccably honest and fair-minded
- Congruent: applying the principles to self so that one walks the talk

Doing Criteria:

- Contributing: giving of oneself to others, serving from the NS principles
- Collaborating: operating as a team player, cooperating with others
- Pioneering: leading out into new areas
- Communicating: sharing and disclosing in ways that are clear, precise, succinct, engaging, and compelling

Later, during my studies in Self-Actualization Psychology (from 2003 until 2016 with the writing of *Get Real* on authenticity) lead me right into the heart of leadership— the highest and best kind of leadership, Self-Actualization Leadership. That led to the book *Unleashing Leadership* (2009) and the training manual by the same title. Along the way I realized that the best leaders collaborate, and so out of a three year collaboration with Shelle Rose Charvet and Ian McDermott came the most recent book, *The Collaborative Leader: The Ultimate Challenge in Leadership* (2016) published by Crown House Publications.

Working on *The Collaborative Leader* made me realize afresh how much Neuro-Semantics is the result of people with various leadership skills and capacities. No one person could have provided the full leadership needed. When Bob and I began, if we were anything, we were thought leaders and that was it. That’s the leadership we provided as we wrote nine (9) books together. Some 22 years ago we stumbled our way into registering the Neuro-Semantics trademark and website and launching what has become a movement in the field of NLP. I often tell the story of how we were constantly running to catch up with the people coming in so that we could “lead” them! At that time, neither of us were “visionary” leaders and much less “administrative” leaders.

Eventually Bob left to work on his Christian NLP (Renewing the Mind) program along with Mike Davis as well as his work with transforming stutterers into fluent speakers (and all that is continuing to this day) and Bob and I are constantly in touch. When I was in Australia and during my first training in Master Practitioner, I met three fantastic people— Graham Richardson, Michelle Duval,

and Cheryl Gilroy. Then after putting together NLP, Meta-States, and the Matrix Model, I asked all three to co-train the first Meta-Coach training with me (November 2002). I could say that Meta-Coach was *co-founded* by all four of us, but it was Michelle who caught a vision and wanted to really promote it.

Later in 2003, Michelle and I became partners and she joined me as I traveled to do Meta-Coach training in London, Johannesburg, and a few other places. It was her who caught the vision for the MCF and who founded that. While we were planning to get married (I proposed in 2005 at an ACMC training in London!), we broke off our relationship (2006) and she decided to move on to other things. While I invited her to keep co-training, she found it awkward to continue working together. That's understandable. People move in and out of all of our lives and rightly so. We are all on our personal journeys of discovery.

From the beginning in 1999 I trained NSTT by myself. Then in 2004 I called together a group of men and women to co-train with me. All gave it their best, but some were just not "team players" and did not know how to work cooperatively or to share the stage. At the same time I was working through how to create a leadership team of people who had caught the vision, were living the vision, and who had the respect of the community. I made many mistakes in those years, often choosing people who were high on public relations, but weak on living it. So people came and went. Some took sabbaticals because something arose in their personal life that they needed to take care of. Others were struggling financially and just could not devote the time away from making a living. All understandable reasons for coming and going.

Eventually with the insights of some of the co-trainers and the leadership team we invented the Master Trainer track, one that stands apart from every Master Trainer system in the field of NLP. Today that group is now *the co-training team at NSTT*. In 2007 we caught the vision of creating the Leadership Team, not as those individuals that stand out in training, but as *a representative body* from the Institutes. So we began focusing on creating self-managing groups of the Institutes (we're still working on this).

One of the things that we did from the very beginning was to create a License and a Conflict Resolution Process. In that way we had a process for holding each other accountable to the code of ethics and to the vision of Neuro-Semantics. Sadly, we had to use it with some trainers almost from the beginning. Two in Europe and one in the US got a website for Neuro-Semantics in their countries and then *refused to share it with the community*. Of course, that violated both the license and the code of ethics, so we engaged the process and eventually revoked their license. Another sold videotapes of Bob and I (which I never granted him that right) to another trainer, took his money, and then never delivered the video-tapes. Eventually we revoked his license. More recently another plagiarized 70 pages of the ACMC manual, so her license was revoked.

Standing up for standards was, and always is, a hard part of leadership. I don't like doing it. Yet I know that it must be done. And sometimes it triggers some people to get resentful, angry, bitter, and hateful. That's another hard part I don't enjoy. And sometimes that triggers others to move on, they feel uncomfortable about having high standards that are enforced. I can only say that I respectfully disagree and wish them the very best.

Now while Neuro-Semantics is not about me, it is through me. Anyone who knows me and has heard me, knows that I work hard to *not* make it about myself, but about what *we are doing together in the world*. Bob and I had the privilege of launching Neuro-Semantics some twenty-plus years ago (in 1996). In all of that time my intention was never to be a leader, it was to study NLP, model expertise, create new models, and share what I found. The strange thing is that as I did that, I have found myself in a leadership role. And with that, the spotlight often has fallen on me, which is fine because I have always believed that with leadership comes greater responsibility and higher standards. It singles a person out, puts one in the spotlight, and exposes every imperfection and flaw. And so it should. And I'm quite willing to be singled out and held to a higher standard. I expect that of any leader.

Of course, there's a price to pay for that, namely my flaws have been exposed publically repeatedly over the years. Have I made mistakes in choosing people? Yes, definitely! Have I been stubborn at times? Yes. Have I pushed for decisions that turned out to not be the best? Yes of course. Have I at other times reacted or even over-reacted to things? Yes again. Have some people found me hard to work with? You bet. And I have also striven to take feedback, make corrections, defer to the opinions of others, support decisions made by the team that I was not personally in favor of, apologized when wrong, and never ask someone to do what I was not willing to do and go first as an example. Perfect? No. Learning? Yes and I hope always growing and improving.

One thing that I have learned is to *not criticize anyone publically*. For years and years, no one has ever heard me criticize anyone. I might talk about someone's position about something, but I never question their motives or attribute some sinister motive to them (that would be mind-reading) or their character (that would be judgment). I separate *person from behavior*, and stay factual. I even do this when presenting the history of NLP and Richard Bandler's murder trial. Nor do I ever talk down about anyone in our community. I don't do that even when someone is criticizing me, judging me for poor leadership, and the like.

Our Conflict Resolution process says that if we have a problem or conflict with someone, go talk to that person alone and don't triangle with others. That's part of our licensing agreement. We attempted to do that with the two trainers who are now severely criticizing me. I had personal and private conversations with both of them and encouraged them to work through the process. I thought they would, but *both chose to not do that*. That's their right and prerogative, and it is their right to move on if they think that best.

The leadership team knows about most of what happened and we have been discussing how to handle the situation. While some want me to publish the factual details to set the record straight especially regarding some of the dis-information that has been spread. I felt that such would come across as defensive as well as give too much energy to it. Most think the best thing is to focus on the future and our collaborative approach in which we believe that we can do so much more together than alone or apart.