

# **MORPHEUS**

## **META-COACHING AS IT BEGINS**

### **VOLUME I**

**2009**

# MORPHEUS — 2009

I began writing the articles for the *Meta-Coach Reflections* in 2009. I wrote one *Reflection* per week throughout the year for the Meta-Coaches egroup. The purpose: Provide continual support for the ongoing training and development of Meta-Coaches. Because *Coaching Mastery* training is as intense and packed as it is, these Reflections are also designed to continue that coaching bootcamp experience. It is to offer refinements to the model by responding to the questions that Meta-Coaches have asked.

In early 2009, after the Meta-Coach Training in Mexico, Omar Salom and I had a conversation about re-designing the training. As that solidified my thinking, the Training was completely re-designed. You will find many Reflections in this volume about that change. Welcome to *Volume I of Morpheus*.

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**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #1**  
**January 28, 2009**

## **CONTINUING THE COACHING BOOTCAMP**

To be certified and licensed as a *Meta-Coach*, you experience what we have been calling the “Coaching Bootcamp”—the very intense 8-day experience of presentations, coaching sessions, benchmarks of coaching competencies, group experiences, and so on. We have designed the *Coaching Bootcamp* of the third module (Coaching Mastery) to be a hot-house experience (of intensity, anxiety, and transformation) and I think most people experience it as such.

The Coaching Bootcamp is a time when you are *literally immersed into a whole context and culture of coaching*. You are immersed into the models of Meta-Coaching —communication, self-actualization, transformative change, precision of benchmarking for measurement and embodiment, facilitation of a dozen processes for skill development, meaning detection and meaning-making, and following a person’s energy through their mind-body system. Everybody is talking the language of coaching— KPIs, desired outcomes, benchmarks, competency, coach identity, matrix, meaning, and so on. And it doesn’t just occur during the 12 hours of the training each day, but in the hours before and afterwards!

Recently I’ve been asked by several Meta-Coaches how they can continue the Bootcamp experience. When two of them, who plan to re-visit module III this year and enter into the immersion again to refine their skills and be benchmarked again, asked me about this, I started wondering how I could help with the continuous of the bootcamp on a more regular basis. Of course, being a part of a Practice Group at your local Meta-Coach Chapter helps.

Beyond that I have made a decision. I decided to begin a series of *Meta-Coach Reflections* similar to what I do on a weekly basis on Neurons, but focused on coaching and sent exclusively to this Meta-Coach Egroup. My goal will be to offer a 2-page Reflection every week on Wednesday. In doing this, my objective will be to support your ongoing growth and development as a coach, especially as a Meta-Coach and to offer Reflections from my own experiences, from your questions, and from my ongoing research in this area. My goal will be to keep awakening or re-awakening your passion for coaching, for being a Meta-Coach, for being a Self-Actualization Coach, and for feeling like you are in the Bootcamp again.

A lot of my recent research has been not only in self-actualization psychology, but also in business and leadership. Just last week I finished reading the book, *The World is Flat* by Thomas Friedman. This book is about the *flattening of the world* (or globalization) and how there have been flattening events and innovations that is creating a new kind of a world. In this new world, there is increasingly coming a flat playing field—at least in all of the countries that are able to receive and experience the flattening influences.

While I will write more about this in coming Reflections, one of Friedman's main points is the importance of collaboration. The Flat World is a world of collaboration and the cutting-edge innovations are products of collaborations. If there ever was a book that underscores the Neuro-Semantic principle that *we can do so much more together than alone or apart*, it is this book, "The World is Flat."

Those who are leading out in terms of creativity and innovation in today's world are those who are collaborating as never before. This is the force behind all of the out-sourcing, in-sourcing, off-shoring, and supple-chaining that's making our world flat. It is the force that's creating the equal playing field, that's making the world smaller, more into a village, which the current economic downturn certainly shows, and which is making *change* and the *speed of change* one of the key factors that's driving the field of coaching.

Friedman also shows through the many business stories that he tells that those who succeed in any given field and industry are those who have both the knowledge for collaboration and the will to collaborate. Reading that book has deepened my understanding of collaboration and of how important it is for an association like the ISNS. Being a "lone ranger" off by yourself doing your own thing is a luxury we no longer have if we want to be on the cutting-edge of where the world is going. Being able to collaborate from a sense of abundance and professionalism is what will enable us to brand "Meta-Coaching" in a way that will benefit everyone.

To your highest and best as a Meta-Coach

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #2**  
**February 4, 2009**

## **FROM GOOD COACHING TO GREAT COACHING**

Coaching looks simple from the outside—two people simply engaged in a conversation about goals and potentials. But as you well know, *good coaching actually is hard*. It's tough. It's challenging. It can also be confusing and frustrating. It is a conversation, yet it is so much more than just a conversation. It is a very special kind of conversation.

What stops regular people from “coaching” (and many Coaches) is that we humans fall too easily into poor habits of half-listening, distracted by other things on our minds, reactive to things another person can say that we might disagree with, all too quick to give advice and cut things short by telling them what they should do to make things better, and unable to distinguish evaluations from descriptions. Ordinary people who have not been training will fall into mind-reading, judging, interpreting (as if they are psychoanalysts!), and storytelling. That's one reason why people seek out a Coach; they can't get the life-changing and life-enhancing conversation at home or in the pub.

*Good coaching* arises from training in these most basic interactions— listening, supporting, questions, summarizing, listening for patterns, reflecting precise words back so the person can hear themselves, finding a direction and creating a focus with it, and so on. It arises from *relationship* with the person and, unless you are a Business Guru like Marcus Buckingham with an international reputation (as Joseph Scott mentioned in his post last week) and automatically carry that kind of authority and respect, you have to work at create rapport, getting connection, caring enough about the person to enter into his or her world. Only then can the real conversation occur.

*Good coaching involves a true dialogue*. It is a dialogue between two people that focuses the interview into a fierce conversation. I really like the word *dialogue* for it speaks about *meaning* (logos) that is moving *through* (dia) two people. The client's meanings flow back and forth from client to coach and coach to client as the client is working hard to express what he or she really means, what meanings are operating in the client's matrix and the coach works to not assume understanding but to use questions and meta-questions to facilitate a deeper and deeper clarification for the client.

When you are able to do this really well, this is where the conversation becomes fierce and a true dialogue. Then good coaching can become *great coaching*. In true dialogue the two persons are awash in a sea of meanings—meanings that keep refining and changing and transforming. Typically it becomes a peak experience moment (or hour) for the two as layers of meanings

unfold and as new exciting meanings are given birth. For many coaches, this is the passion that drives them—to touch the heart of meaning in the life of another person.

And through the relationship, the coach enables the person to get to the heart of things—to the driving meanings that are either in the way and creating problems or the self-organizing meanings that can unleash potentials hardly even dreamed about. No wonder this kind of coaching can be potentially both high impact and high risk. Coaching that is not merely good, but great is highly consequential coaching— it makes a difference. It changes things. It can even transform a person and his or her life.

Meta-Coaching identifies *the heart of things* as the heart of *meaning* because it is always and only *meaning* that we and our clients are performing. That's because we are neuro-semantic beings. The meanings we create in our mind is not just in our mind, it is in our body. We create it from the body upward. And the neurology of our body is designed to actualize meaning. So when we meet a client we always know that the client is currently actualizing meanings. But what meanings? What is he making real in his life? What meanings is she realizing in her life? And what meanings does the client want to experience?

This is where the coaching conversation always begins.

“What do you want? What shall we talk about today? What conversation would you like to have that would make the most transformative difference in your life?”

*We begin with a call to meaning elicitation.* Then we begin following, seeking to understand, reflecting back, summarizing, using a know-nothing state to be with the client. Awash in this whitewater of meanings rushing this way and that, *we are looking for a direction and a focus.* The question that we hold in mind and that provide direction at first is the desired outcome question: “What does the client want? What does this client really want? Is that all? What else? What does the client want in wanting that?” This raises the bar so that our conversation isn't boring, bland, superficial, and merely surface level.

Once we have a direction and a focused KPI, we launch into the next step of the adventure and begin exploring the client's current and desired Matrix of frames. Knowing that *the frame is the problem and not the person*, we shift the dialogue to an exploration of the meanings that will change things.

So to your Wonderfully Fierce Dialogues and getting-to-the-heart of things Conversations!

[If you have questions that you'd like me to address in these Meta-Coach Reflections, write to me at [meta@onlinecol.com](mailto:meta@onlinecol.com) or [usa@meta-coaching.org](mailto:usa@meta-coaching.org) ]

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #3**  
**February 11, 2009**

## **UNLEASHING THE QUESTIONER WITHIN YOU**

If you are a coach and especially a Meta-Coach, then *you lead by questions*. Great questions. Penetrating questions. Questions that get to the heart of things. Questions that create stunned silence that brings a client to a complete stop so that he or she leans backward and makes comments like, “I’ve never thought of that.” “I don’t know, give me a moment to process that.” Is that true of you? Are you a *great questioner*? Do you ask powerful, profound, and fierce questions?

This lies at the very heart of Meta-Coaching— the ability to ask great *down* questions and great *up* questions. The *down questions* are the Meta-Model of Language questions that index specifics and get details so that you help your client *ground* their experience in reality. These are the indexing questions of what, when, where, with whom, which, and how. These index time and space and enables your client to experience vivid mental movies in the mind so that there’s clarity and precision. And often, this is all your client needs— Clarity! Precision. So as you help them meta-detail the specifics and get the KPI for the outcomes that they want, you have given them an extremely powerful gift.

The *up questions* are the Meta-State of Reflexivity questions that takes a person up into the heights of their matrix to their governing beliefs, values, decisions, permissions, identities, intention, purpose, and all of the other 100 meta or logical levels that gives us our meta-questions. And you can ask meta-questions right out of the gate. Don’t wait until you get the KPI, *use them to get the KPI*. The meta-questions enable your clients to go for *meaningful* goals and outcomes, to set directions that make a difference, and that activates their passions. If your client is just talking to you, just have a nice chat, as if you are running an afternoon tea shop— then you are not effectively using the meta-questions. The gift you give your clients with *up questions* is an Awakening, a Vision, Passion, Energy, Vitality. And sometimes that’s all they want or need.

As a questioner, what are your best questions? What are the questions that awakens, challenges, probes, provokes, co-creates, actualizes, celebrates, and tests? Ah yes, *the Axes of Change questions!* What about *the Matrix questions* that enables you to get to the heart of things and enter deeper into a client’s matrix than they go with anyone else? And are there questions that sometimes comes to you— that you never ask? What stops you? What holds you back? What do you need to be unleashed from so that you become a *great questioner*?

*And what if what you’re really getting paid for is asking those kind of questions that nobody else*



*in their life asks?*

Of course, to be able to ask such questions, *you have to have relationship*. In fact, if you don't have the quality and depth of relationship, the question often will not work no matter how good it is. And that's why *Listening and Supporting* are the first two core coaching skills. By intensely, actively, and deeply listening *and* supporting the person at all levels—you gain a connection and rapport so that you can ask anything. Anything!

So, how supported does your client feel? Calibrate to the client's state and see if you can figure that out. Then ask. Yes, ask. Just ask the client.

“One of my goals as your coach is to make this such a special place that it is a sacred space so that you can say anything and we can get to the heart of things so that you can experience a totally transformative conversation right now. So how am I doing? How safe to you feel right now? What can I do so that this conversation becomes a powerful dialogue as we dive into the pool of the meanings that you have about this desired outcome?”

If you're talking too fast or too slow, if you're talking about things too superficial or going too deeply too quickly, if you mind-read or give interpretations, if you give advice or use a tone that doesn't work for the person, and so on, these are the things that the client can read and interpret as not supportive. Are you courageous enough to ask your clients?

Obviously this identifies another core coaching skill— *receiving feedback*. Yes, even receiving feedback from your clients. After all, they pay the bills. They fund your coaching practice. They are the ones to whom you deliver value.

Then there are *the Self-Actualization Quadrant Questions*. You know about those questions, right? The meaning axes questions and the performance axes questions? The synergy questions about mind-to-muscling great meanings and the sacrilizing questions about how to give rich and robust meaning to activities.

And of course, there are the *KPI questions*. How are you doing with getting program KPIs and KPIs for every session? If you know how to ask powerful KPI questions then your coaching itself becomes highly focused, directed, intentional, and purposeful. It leads the facilitation through those outcome questions. (I began the Meta Reflections on Neurons this year with the outcome questions and distinctions about that.)

Then there are the *Induction questions*—questions that induce states, elicit emotions by inviting clients to experience things and not just chat about them. These are mostly meta-questions, Milton Model questions, and Mind-Line questions.

*So many questions!* And as a Meta-Coach you have many models of questions. What are you doing this week to become an even great questioner? How surprised will you be to find yourself naturally thinking about *the question that will open up this client and unleash capacities that are just clamoring to be released and used for a mighty purpose?*

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #4**  
**February 18, 2009**

## **THE CORE SKILLS OF GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK**

Since the first of this year I have been engaged in a good bit of mentoring. I have watched three CDs of Meta-Coaches coaching clients and have written reports on the core coaching skills. Two of them were for Meta-Coaches finishing their provisional status on the competency levels. The other one was a Meta-Coach wanting me to see if her core skills were at the level of 3.5 and ready for PCMC.

In addition to that, I have had 6 or 7 mentoring conversations with other Meta-Coaches. They called to invite me to go over some coaching cases with them and think through their coaching strategy. Sometimes the mentoring was focused on getting some feedback and ideas about how to proceed and sometimes to check to see if they were on the right track. And sometimes the Meta-Coach asked if I would provide feedback on something very specific —how they followed the energy through the client’s matrix, how they were doing with their meta-questions, their state induction, and their ability to see and reflect back patterns.

Perhaps more than a dozen times while exploring with the Meta-Coach what he or she was thinking and what was their intuition about what to say or do next, they would offer some really insightful responses. I would acknowledge that,

“That sounds like a significant insight or reflection to me, did you say that to them?”

And about as often, the coach would say,

“No, I thought about it, but didn’t. I didn’t know how they would take it.” Or, “No, can I say that?”

And over and over I emphasized that if that’s how they experienced the client and the thoughts that raced through their mind—reflecting that back as their thoughts is also “giving feedback.” And every single time the coach would say, “That’s giving feedback?”

This was a lack in the *Coaching Mastery* during the first 4 years. It was only last year that I began emphasizing and demonstrating that *giving and receiving feedback occurs during the coaching session between coach and client*. This means that during the conversation, your client is always giving you feedback —if you have eyes and ears to perceive:

Correcting you when you go off in a direction that doesn’t fit.

Getting quiet or not responding when your response doesn’t fit.

Getting excited or animated when your response hits a semantic nerve.

Repeating a line or an emphasis over and over when you’re not picking up on it.

All of this is feedback. Every once in a while a client is will be explicit, “No that’s not what I said.” “No I don’t want to go in that direction.” But most of the time, maybe 90 or more percent of the time, the client will offer feedback implicitly and covertly. That’s why you have to have your eyes and ears open and “listening with a third ear” pick up on things that the person is not directly saying. This is where “listening for what’s not being said” comes in. This is where watching gestures, movements, breath, eye accessing cues, listening for words (values, semantically loaded phrases, meta-structures, etc.) also come in.

So to *receive* this feedback, you have to really be represent, really in the here-and-now moment and not in your head preparing your next questions or responses or with your head buried in your notes(!). And to *receive* this feedback, you also have to be open to being corrected ... by your client. You have to have you ego so much out of the way, that you don’t take their corrections personal. So how are you doing with all of this?

*Giving* feedback in this context is providing feedback to your client about what’s happening *in the moment of the dialogue*. Last year several times when I was in the role of benchmarking a coach in training, I yawned really big (and obvious) and kept doing so until the coach noticed. Then I commented,

“I’m so bored ... This is so boring! Is this the goal you really want to spend your time and money on?”

I let that sink in. Then I turned to the client.

“How about you? What are you feeling? Is this highly meaningful and significant to you? Is this emotionally worth two hundred dollars of your investment?”

Most of the time the client would shyishly say,

“No. I’m also bored. It feels like a waste of time.”

Once a client spoke up and almost shouted,

“Thank God you interrupted! I have been bored out of my brains for the past ten minutes!!”

Another said,

“Can I tell my coach that I’m bored?”

I answered with a question,

“Why would you not let your coach know that? Aren’t you paying for this? Is this what you are spending your good money for? Is this adding value and making a transformative difference?”

“No, but what if it might hurt his feelings?” he asked.

“And what if it does? Is that what the coaching relationship all about— avoiding hurting your coach’s feelings? Do you need to be coached on that? Would that be more interesting for you and life changing?”

*The receiving and giving of feedback is part and parcel of the communication exchange between*

*coach and client.* You don't have to wait for someone to benchmark you at a practice session or at Coaching Mastery. Every time you coach you are receiving feedback if you have eyes to see and ears to hear. Every client is providing *and* you can also ask for it. And in every session you have hundreds of opportunities to *give* feedback. In fact, many if not most of your clients are there as your clients to get that feedback — to have you serve as a mirror for how he or she is coming across.

- So how are you doing *mirroring back* the moment by moment here-and-now experiences that your clients are giving you?
- How clean is your mirror?
- Any need to return to the de-contamination chamber to get your ego out of the way?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #5**  
**February 25, 2009**

## **ENGAGING THE HEART**

If you're going to coach and especially if you want to be an excellent Meta-Coach, you have to *engage the heart*. This raises two questions:

- What does it mean to engage the heart?
- How do you engage the heart?

Engaging the heart is a shorthand way for describing making contact with a person's inmost values and meanings which touches their central identity and emotions. Doing this then touches them in a deep way or at their highest frames of mind and emotion. It is shorthand also for treating people as *people*, as human beings, and not just "clients," "patients," "customers," the "cases" that come through our companies. It is to bring a human and humane factor into the way we relate to them.

Why do this? The purpose for engaging the heart so that you make your coaching *personal* and you do that so that you can get personal with people. And you do that so that you can get to the heart of things and not just have a "mere chat" with people. Coaching that doesn't get inside, that doesn't get to the heart of meaning, that doesn't get personal ends up being shallow and superficial and so doesn't change much.

Coachability is also about engaging the heart. For many people, the coaching conversation will be the most intimate and vulnerable experience of their lives. Can they go that deep? Are they willing to "go inside" and really face their reality—their self-definitions, their sense of mission and purpose in life, their competencies and their incompetencies, their truths, and so on. If we don't engage the heart, we really don't get in. Even the most external performance coaching will need to do this because performance is ultimately driven by belief, by attitude, by self-definition, by purpose, by meaning, by vision, and the many meta-levels of the mind.

Engaging the heart lies at the very core of Self-Actualization Coaching because our design is to empower people to become real—to become authentic persons. And becoming authentic means open, vulnerable, fallible, and humble. We are never at our best when we are pretending and merely posturing. We may have to "fake it till we make it," yet during that part of the learning process we typically feel incongruent. When the new behavior habituates, then our conscientious practice reflects our authenticity and we feel congruent.

### ***What's the process for engaging the heart?***

1) *Begin by developing rapport.* The NLP model has shown that we create rapport by matching a client's verbal and non-verbal expressions. Do that and you begin to enter into his or her world.

And that conveys the sense of being like that person. Doing that requires a lot of attention and active listening, it requires that you enter into the person's perspective to understand how he or she is framing experiences.

2) *Ask for permission.* Once you have rapport and the sense of trust is developing, ask for permission to be real and authentic. You will want to set a frame for authenticity in your approach and probably repeat it a number of times until your clients know that this is part of your style—you go for the depth of reality and don't play the game of merely having a nice chat.

3) *Access and operate from a state of respect so you can be compassionate and caring.* Make sure that your frame is, "All people deserve unconditional positive regard— respect and dignity." You can give respect to everybody, even those you may not like, who's personalities you might find irritating and annoying. They are still human beings. So set the Neuro-Semantic frame your frame: when there are problems—the frame is the problem, not the person. When you do that, then you can be compassionate and caring—because while the problems are in the person—in his way of talking, emoting, behaving or in her history and experiences—the problem is not that person. And if you had the same frames—you'd probably have the same problems.

Here we come to the principle that people will not care about what you have to offer until they know that you care about them. And actually it is only a caring heart that can truly engage the heart. This speaks to the importance of you as a Meta-Coach being in the right state and getting your ego out of the way. Otherwise you will be irritated, annoyed, impatient and your client will defend against those states by not opening up or through defensiveness.

4) *Be authentic and self-forgetful.* Since coaching is not about you, but the client and facilitating the client reaching his or her highest desired outcomes, as you get your ego out of the way and becoming self-forgetful in your engagement "genius" state—then you can truly use yourself, your trained intuitions, and your authentic self. This helps you become a clean mirror for your client and can mirror back the patterns as sensory-based relevant and useful feedback. Then when you're bored by shallow talk, you'll feed that back. Then when you're irritated by avoidance patterns, you can feed that back— honestly, candidly, and authentically.

5) *Be fully present in each moment.* The coaching conversation at its best is a genius state of total engagement in which time, self, the world, etc. goes away and you get lost in the experience which later, when you look back, you'll recognize as a peak experience. Now being fully present to that moment requires that you give up multi-tasking and release the need to succeed. Then you can trust yourself to your training.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #6**  
**March 3, 2009**

## **SYSTEMATIC COACHING**

As you well know (or at least I hope you know very well), one of the distinguishing features of Meta-Coaching is that *it is systematic*. You can even sell yourself as a Meta-Coach and your coaching as fully systematic, and I hope you are. It makes a difference. It means that you are not just hoping and guessing that your coaching makes a difference— you know it does! And you know *how* it does. You know this because of the systematic approach you have to coaching. And that means you are not coaching “by the seat of your pants,” “intuitively,” or “just believing that a caring approach and good intentions is enough.”

If you want to re-familiarize yourself with how Meta-Coaching is systematic, grab your Training Manual and look at the *Introduction* in the back — **7+2 Keys to World-Class Coaching** (It is also on the Meta-Coach website). That will give you the structure of what we mean when we say that the Meta-Coaching approach is systematic.

It is systematic because it operates from a precise understanding of what the “coaching” methodology *is*. And it is systematic because we use and operate the seven models that governs and guides our thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting. When you know what *Coaching is* in contradiction to what Therapy is as well as Consulting, Training, and Hypnosis, then you know the boundaries of your profession. Do you know the boundaries of your profession? How well? Do you know how to explain it to people? To your clients?

Now one problem in the field of Coaching today, and it is a big problem, is that lots of coaches — maybe the majority of them are *Grab Bag Coaches*. They read a little of this, a little of that; they do a workshop on EQ, then some from Ken Wilber, then a bit of Meyers-Briggs, TA, and so on. Then depending on how they “feel,” they try to be “intuitive” coaches. What that approach mostly does is create a mess in both the coach’s mind and in the client’s life. It’s no way to be professional!

What you have in the Meta-Coach Training system is a fully systematic approach. This means many things. A systematic approach means that you have a consistent theory and model of human beings— that you use one consistent psychology, Self-Actualization Psychology. You don’t mix a bit of psychoanalysis with it, a bit of emotive therapy, or a bit of some superficial new age theory like “The Secret” about “intentionality.” It means you understand the basic functioning of human beings in how they create their reality and how to model it.

This is where NLP and Neuro-Semantics— as powerful expressions of Cognitive-Behavioral

Psychology— comes in. We operate from several premise that how we coach, question, and interact. The key premises include the following:

- *Every experience has a structure.* An experience may seem confusing and mystifying when first presented, but with persistence, you will discover how it is structured. It always makes sense. Maybe not from the outside, but always from the inside. That's why we pace, pace, pace— to understand how it makes sense on the inside.
- *Every experience is structured in the mind-body system with "thoughts" and "feelings."* That's why we pay close attention to words, images, sights, sounds, cinematic features of the person's internal movies, and how the person uses semantic space with his or her body to express the experience. That's why we listen so intensely, intently, precisely and calibrate to the person's state.
- *Every experience is a mind-body state.* Every client is always in a state, so we coach from our state to their state. That's why calibration is so important. What state is my client in? Is it useful, effective, productive, ecological? That's also why state-induction is so important. What state does the person need to be in to get the most out of the coaching?
- *Each person is the creator of his or her experience and state.* This puts the responsibility on the client and makes us, as the coach, the explorer with the client to find out, "How are you creating this experience? What are you seeing, hearing, saying, feeling, etc.?"
- *Every experience is a skill.* No matter what the client does, it is a skill and there's a structure to it. If the person never delegates and "can't" delegate, there's a structure to it. If the client can be obnoxious and over-controlling as a leader, there's a structure to it. If you, as the coach, have eyes to see structure and process, then everything is a skill. So you can explore and be curious.
- *The person is never the problem; the frame and framing is the problem.* This is what makes your attitude as a coach so important. You can speak truth to the client and expose reality without making the client as a person wrong, just the behavior or the framing. And because the client is response-able, the client can assume responsibility for the frames.
- *The emotion of the experience is derivative.* The client's emotion is important, but not primarily important, only secondarily. At best it provides information, but not an order or command about what to do. Sometimes we will listen to the emotion, sometimes act on it, sometimes ignore it, sometimes act against it, sometimes put it on hold to get back to it later. Emotions give us our somatic registering of our meanings. Your meanings show up as your feelings. Emotions are *the difference* between your model of the world (your beliefs, meanings, decisions, understandings) and your experience of the world. *How it goes*— fulfilling your meanings or violating them creates your positive and negative emotions respectfully. So as a coach, you use emotions, induce states, but your goal is



*not* to validate every emotion or get people to always “be true” to their emotions. Sometimes you will be challenging your clients to act against the emotions.

- *Inside experiences naturally are actualized to the outside.* The mind-body system is designed to turn what’s in the mind into muscle memory and neurological responses. So we coach first to the inner game so that clients can win at their outer games.
- *Behind every experience are layers of thoughts as frames.* People don’t merely have a representational mind— they have a self-reflexive consciousness and so “in the back of the mind,” they all have more thoughts, more emotions, more memories, decisions, and the other 100 meta-levels. That’s why we use meta-questions to explore the matrix of these frames.
- *Experiences can be ecological or non-ecological.* Just because a client feels something or thinks something or remembers something and so on, does not mean it is useful or productive. It can be toxic! It can make them and others sick. So we coach by “quality controlling” the stuff of experience.
- *Experiences can and do change.* Change is normal, natural, and healthy. We organically change when we learn and grow. Development to become more of what we can be is “change.” Change in itself is not hard or scary or painful. In spite of Anthony Grant’s book on Coaching and his first change, “Change is Painful.” That’s therapy thinking!
- *Experiential change can be facilitated in generative ways.* That’s what coaching is all about. Identifying desired changes and facilitating those transformations.
- *Resources for new experiences can be unleashed and enabled.* That’s what self-actualization is all about.
- *Progress of experiential change can be measured.* That’s what benchmarking is all about.

I could go on and on with this list of premises that guide and govern Meta-Coaching. The Neuro-Semantic approach is to use a fiercely focused conversation to get to the leverage points of change and transformation. So, how systematic are you? How clear are you about “human functioning” in mind-body and how well informed and skillful are you in using the systematic approach?

When you read other stuff—from Daniel Goleman, Ken Wilber, Tim Gallwey, and others who are seeking to influence the field of coaching — be aware of contaminating your systematic approach. Find out *how it relates to Meta-Coaching* and to the seven foundational models. Many of the premises of these others *do not fit* the NLP and Neuro-Semantic models.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #7**  
**March 12, 2009**

## **THE LEVELS OF CHANGE**

When it comes to *coaching change*—all change is not the same. When someone calls you up for coaching, when you enter into an organization to facilitate change in managers or employees, *what kind of change* will you work with and *at what level*?

- Do you know the different kinds of change?
- Do you know the levels of change?
- Do you know how to talk about these things?

To answer these questions, do you now need to get out your *Coaching Mastery* Training Manual and review the section on change? Or perhaps to read through the first book on Meta-Coaching, *Coaching Change*?

When it comes to selling yourself and the value that you add as a Meta-Coach, the ability to speak about change, its levels and kinds, is important. After all, *you are a change agent*, are you not? Yes, of course you are! That's the value that you are offering— to identity, enable, mobilize, and facilitate individuals and organizations to create new and different experiences— to change from the experiences and performance that they are now having.

### **The Levels of Change**

Regarding the dimensions of change, we have three levels giving us three kinds of coaching:

#### *1) Primarily level change:*

When you change things at the primary level, you focus on changing behavior, actions, habits, and performances. This change also involves primary level thoughts and emotions—the thinking and emoting that occurs while a person is engaged in something.

Changing this is what we refer to when we engage in *Performance Coaching*. Change this and you change what you do and how you do it; you change your state and your thoughts about it.

#### *2) First meta-level change.*

When you change the first meta-level you are focusing on changing thoughts and emotions involved in yours or another's belief frames, the beliefs that govern primary state and behaviors. Here you are changing beliefs—beliefs about values, perspectives, and meanings. Here you are changing beliefs about identity, self-definition, self-esteem (as a human person), self-confidence (as a human achiever or doer), self-efficacy (your confidence in your competencies to figure out things in the future). This means that you are involved in *Developmental Coaching*. Change this and you change the governing beliefs in the back of the mind.

### 3) *The highest meta-levels:*

Above the first meta-level are layers and layers of even higher frames of meanings—meanings about purpose, mission, and vision. This speaks about a person’s direction in life and basic orientation. Change this and you create a personal or organizational paradigm shift about what a person or company is about and where the person or firm is going. Do this and you engage in *Transformational Coaching*. When you change this, you engage in some radical and revolutionary change that will stir up everything.

## **The Kinds of Change**

The next distinction is that between *remedial change* and *generative change*. This enables you, as a Meta-Coach, to identify the professional boundaries between therapy and coaching. The first is *the kind of change* for people who are hurt, traumatized, living in the past, and have a need for ego-strength need. The second is *the kind of change* for people who are okay, up to average, living in the present, and ready to take on a good challenge want.

### 1) *Remedial Change.*

In this kind of change, we fix things—we fix things that are broken or wounded and that need restoring. We offer a *remedy* for something that has gone wrong or has been distorted. Typically anyone raised by someone who didn’t attend *Parenting 101* will need this kind of change. The frames, experiences, ways of coping, and ways of relating have been distorted in some way with the result that they have mental maps in their heads that don’t offer guidance to where they want to go. They are not broken, but their frame may be severely wrong. And if it is, then they become cognitive wrong in their thinking and emoting that creates their meanings.

In remedial change, the design is to get a person to be “okay,” average, and normal. The design is to enable the person to release the past, finish inside their mind-and-heart what has felt as unfinished, forgive, release, and come into the “now.” The design is to identify and develop the knowledge and skill for how to cope with the basic human needs for survival, safety, love and affection (social skills), and self-value. And the design of all of this is to develop the ego-strength that’s strong enough to take ownership of self, to become independent, and ready for inter-dependent relationships.

Remedial change is re-parenting someone—identifying, diagnosing, and bringing “healing” (therapy). This requires lots of patience, working with the mechanisms of transference and counter-transference, and creating the kind of nurturing relationship that allows a person to get over the things of the past. In this change people are looking for equilibrium, peace, the quieting of the war that’s been raging within, the conquering of the demons, and the slaying of the dragons.

### 2) *Generative Change.*

Once a person is up to average, okay, in the present, and with sufficient ego-strength, they are ready to take on life, to be challenged and stretched to become all they can become. They are ready for self-actualizing. Here people are change embracers—they are looking

for challenges, wanting to stir things up, create disequilibrium, to stand against the crowd, to find their uniqueness, and to find what they can contribute that will make a difference.

This is the change that keeps *generating* more and more skill and competence as one seeks to live for the highest *being-values* (justice, music, mathematics, contribution, meaningfulness, wholeness, etc.). The change agent for this change awakens, challenges, and provokes.

There you have it. While this is short and quick, it provides an overview of some key factors involved when you, as a Meta-Coach, are *coaching change*. To your best Coaching this week!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #8**  
**March 18, 2009**

## CO-CREATING AN ACTION PLAN

If you are a Meta-Coach, you never leave the scene of a coaching conversation without your client having an action plan in hand that will govern his or her actions in the coming days. While this is true for all Coaches, it is especially true for Meta-Coaches. Why? Simple— because you are engaged in neuro-semantic and self-actualization coaching and that means *translating great ideas into actions*. That means you are working to enable a person to take what he or she knows and make it part of neurology so that it becomes automatic and totally accessible in everyday life.

You learned this in the *Coaching Mastery Bootcamp*, did you not? There we outlined that a “full coaching session” always and inevitably involves an *action plan* and the co-creating of tasks with your client. So, you will also never let your client go without asking the *action plan questions*. Do you have a list of them? Are they at ready access on your lips? If not, then there’s a beginning list to learn and use:

- What will you do to make this real in your life?
- What will be your first step after you leave here?
- What will be the steps in the next two weeks that will actualize this?
- How will you implement this?
- Who do you need to hold you accountable for this?
- You have a list of things, so when will you write them out more fully?
- Will you send me an email with your complete action plan at the end of the week?
- And you are fully committed to this?
- Are you now unstoppable? Do you need any other resources for this coming week?

Actually you will be building up *the Action Plan* with the client all the way through the coaching session. After you know what the client wants in a specific way (the KPI), whenever you hear the client say something that sounds like an action to actualize the goal, then as a Coach — you jump in:

- Is that what you would like to do between this session and the next one?
- Would that be something to add to your Action Plan?
- If you did that, would that help to forward your progress?

As a coach, think of your coaching as facilitating *the launching of action* in the client’s life. “Will the client launch out? Will my client actually do what he or she wants and needs to do in order to experience the desired outcome?” The answer to these questions demands that the client has sufficient motivation, decision, understanding, accountability, and inspiration— and that’s what you facilitate with him or her.

There are numerous frames that you can set in your mind that will empower you as you support

your client to mind-to-muscle the meanings of your coaching conversation. Here are a few that you might consider incorporating into your mind:

Successful coaching leads to actions.

The real stuff of coaching occurs outside the session.

The coaching session is to activate the person to take effective action, not to have a nice chat.

As a Self-Actualization Coach, it is all about implementation.

A client who doesn't execute the plan will not succeed.

The Action Plan that you co-create with your client is where the *meanings* of your dialogue become *performances* in the real world. That's why the Action Plan plays a critical role for the actualization of the client's new meanings. The action plan is also what the client takes away from the session. Whether on the phone or in an office, whether 30 minutes or 3 hours, the Action Plan is what the client walks out with. As such it needs to be clear, focused, and actionable. It needs to be specific enough that the client can easily make a mental movie of what it will look and sound like. It needs to be precise enough so the client knows when to do it, with whom, and how.

So what are you taking away with you as a result from our session today?

What difference will it make for today, tomorrow, this week?

The action plan reveals that ultimately all coaching is *performance coaching*—it leads to new and better performances. Developmental coaching does; and so does transformational coaching. So as a Meta-Coach, do you have enough pragmatism within you to keep this focus? If your meta-programs put you up in meta-land (global, intuitive, in-time, options, reflective, etc.) then you might so-much love the dialogue, the philosophical exploration, you might forget to get your client to act— to act on the information, to put it in the body. Yet the end point of a coaching conversation is that the person makes plans to actually try out some new responses that will change results and relationships.

Think of the Action Plan as the bottle of champagne that you co-create and that you then use to *launch the client out into the world*. Or think of it as your client's booster rocket that will enable them to blast upward to new orbits of influence and effectiveness. With the Action Plan, the conversation now becomes reality as the client moves out on the new adventure.

To your ability to launch your client to higher levels of self-actualization!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #9**  
**March 25, 2009**

## **WHAT KIND OF A CONVERSATION IS THIS?**

One of the wonderful things about *the Team Leader role* is that of benchmarking coaching sessions. Last year I got to do that four times in four different countries, this year I get to do it six times. When a team leader does this, or when I get to do this, it means that we are taking a balcony view (or meta-level view) of the coach and client— their states, conversation, and processes. And as such, it provides a way *to see the structure of a coaching conversation*.

During the last several years, I have often stepped in and interrupted the coach and asked him or her, “*What kind of a conversation does the client want to have with you about this content?*” And before explaining this as thoroughly as we now do in Meta-Coaching, the coaches often would ask about what I meant by that question. So I would respond with something like:

“Is the client wanting to have an experience, think through things, make a decision, create a new identity, change a belief, or what?”

Then the coach-in-training would usually identify the kind of conversation and often have “aha!” moments. “Oh yes! Now I get it. Now I know what to do.” Not knowing what kind of conversation the client wants or needs means the coach is coaching blind.

So obviously, my design by this question was and continues to be *to facilitate the coach to think strategically about where he or she is in relationship to the client and what the client is asking of the coach*.

I generally ask this to help the coach identify the kind of KPI that the client is suggesting. Since I have done this again and again, I thought I’d begin to make a list of the possible kinds of conversations that a coach could have with a client. Here are some of the most common examples. These are the kind of *coaching conversations* that then occur in the heart of the coaching session and what the coach offers that adds tremendous value.

- 1) A thinking-things-out dialogue: just talking through things, talking it aloud, to enable to client to hear him or herself more fully and develop clarity.
- 2) A brainstorming of ideas and possibilities. Getting a list of choices for what to do.
- 3) Weighing the pros and cons of a decision. Getting all of the pros and cons of a decisions out on the table to clarify the mind.
- 4) Making a decision. Identify values and criteria to facilitate a really solid and resourceful decision.
- 5) Experiencing a state, an emotion, or a possibility.
- 6) Creating a new identity, self-definition, or sense of self.

- 7) Creating an Action Plan for next steps, for new game plan.
- 8) Removing interferences, and sabotages— leashes to self-actualizing.
- 9) Unlearning understandings and meanings that are no longer valid.
- 10) Identify and coach a skill or resource into the body, to coach the body to feel a great idea and make it part of one's way of being in the world.
- 11) Understanding and dealing with an emotion to transfer it into a resource.
- 12) Setting up a monitoring or accountability structure.
- 13) Taking action on a decision.
- 14) Building a new meta-state structure to elicit a gestalt state like courage, proactivity, etc.
- 15) Receiving feedback on a pattern that needs to be addressed.

Why is it important to know this? And what can you do, as a Coach, with this information? The importance is that once you know what a client wants, it enables you to set your orientation. For example, if a client isn't ready to make a decision, but wants to think through all of the ramifications of a decision, then you will best coach to that clarity by helping the client become aware of the pros and cons and then the beliefs about those values and dis-values. If your client is caught up in an emotion and doesn't know if that emotion, helps or hurts, then you'll be coaching first to the clarity of that emotion, the meaning frames behind it, and then perhaps state management regarding it.

Sometimes a client needs a sounding board more than anything else. Sometimes the client needs the facilitation of taking action on a decision. Sometimes a client may need to download stressful thoughts, even ventilate an emotion. Sometimes a client may need to experientially practice a role play in the safe environment of the coaching session in order to see where he or she is and get feedback from you. And often, the client doesn't quite know what is needed or wanted and so wants to brainstorm and get some ideas in order to consider all of the possible choices.

I hope all of this highlights the importance of asking the simple questions:

- What kind of a conversation would you like to have?
- What is the most important conversation we can have in this session?
- How can I help you in this session to take your next transformation step?
- What's the most transformative thing you could experience in this time we have together?

Does the client want to *think, feel, explore and discover, try out new responses, role play, make a decision*, or some combination of these? What hints is the client giving you? Don't have a clue, then do something radical, *ask*.



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #10**  
**April 1, 2009**

## **THE DANGER OF MIND-READING AS A COACH**

I have recently heard about several coaches giving responses to clients that bordered on mind-reading or giving interpretations. It's a temptation and a tremendous danger. The worst case of it that I ever saw was in Quebec City Canada at the ICF conference that Michelle and I first presented the Axes of Change. That was 2004. We were there with Denis Bridoux and in one workshop, 500 people were gathered in the main auditorium to hear a MCC — a Master Certified Coach by the ICF. I was excited to see and hear what a “master” could do. But I was severely disappointed. And I wasn't the only one.

I think the three of us were all sitting there shaking our heads “no” in disbelief of what we were seeing and hearing. The so-called “master” said he had an “intuition” regarding the older gentleman that he invited up on stage and proposed to do some coaching with him. The intuition was “I sense that you are in need of appreciation.” Maybe it was that the gentleman had one of those big bold moustaches that draped around his mouth creating the impression that he was frowning. Perhaps that was his intuition! But, who knows where the “intuition” came from.

Anyway this master coach from Latin America said that he just had this inner knowing that the client needed appreciation. When he said this, the man responded in a kind and thoughtful way, “No, that does not resonate with me.” Then, instead of acknowledging and supporting and perhaps inquiring further, the coach violated the basic principles of coaching.

“No I'm sure of it. Check inside and see.”

“Okay ... [quiet checking] No. I don't have the sense that I need to work on appreciation.” As the coach was deciding where to go, the man added, “Actually, I was at a workshop two months ago and have been writing 7 things I appreciate every night before going to bed. And so appreciation is something I'm getting pretty good at.”

“No, my gut says that you really need more appreciation in your life.”

Now the content that began the session was the man's indecision about leaving his company and selling that business and fully entering into Coaching as full time work. So the coaching conversation and outcome that he wanted was a decision-clarifying and decision-making one. That was the kind of conversation he wanted. But the so-called “master” was so invested (ego-invested) in his “intuition” and judgment, that he apparently would not let the appreciation issue go. Finally, getting nowhere with him, he simply dismissed him. He sent him back into the audience.

As the old gentleman left the stage and walked down the aisle back to his seat, he was definitely

not pleased. His face was tense and I would guess that he perhaps felt embarrassed in front of the auditorium and that his short experience had definitely not helped with what he asked for! I was wondering,

“What ever happened to *the client being the expert* of him or herself? What happened to coaching being not about the coach knowing what the client needs better than what the client? Isn't that the therapy approach and not the coaching approach?”

Anyway, that was *the worst case of mind-reading, imposing, judging, and forcing an interpretation* on a client that I've ever seen. And the word that came to my mind about that so-called coaching was, “Shameful!” “That's a horrible way to treat a client— a shameful way to treat another human being.”

About coaching, I am sometimes asked, “Can coaching do damage?” My answer is always the same and stated pretty definitely:

“Yes, if done improperly or poorly. Yes, you bet it can!”

And why not? We are working with human beings who operate from ideas, meanings, beliefs, emotions, experiences ... and if *framing* is powerful for empowering and enriching someone's life, *mis-framing* can just as equally mess things up and invite a client into a toxic and dis-empowering place. And the coach, being in the role of a meta-expert of processes for facilitating the unleashing of resources and possibilities and mobilizing resources for implementation, can just as equally set toxic frames, sick frames, distorted frames, and frames that can mess things up. The coach can do that if he or she isn't mindfully aware of the meta-processes and their effects in the human mind-body-emotion system.

Yet it is a big temptation. And the more skilled you get, the more experience you have, the longer you are in the field— the more likely you can subtly slide into mind-reading and giving interpretations. *But don't do it!* Never do it! Stay on the alert from telling, giving advice, knowing what the client needs. And even if you are right about the client's content—bite your tongue and don't say it! Coaching is not advice giving, lecturing, consulting, or being the expert of the client's experience.

Now true enough, there are people who sometimes come to “Coaching,” who actually want consulting. They want advice and they ask for advice. They come with the expectation that you will give them advice and tell them what they should do, what goal they should set, and so on. So what do you do as a coach when that happens? Or, as one Meta-Coach shared with me last week, what happens when you are demonstrating coaching—and are criticized by both the client and the audience because you did not give advice?! What then?

My recommendation to her was, at that point, *post-frame*. While you could have pre-framed by enabling the person or people what true coaching is, if you did not, then simply do so afterwards. Use that as a time for post-framing. To do that, say something like:

“Ahhhh, so you actually didn't want coaching; you wanted consulting! Okay, now I understand. Thanks for clarifying that.”

Or, “Okay, so you want advice. I’m sorry, but I don’t do that. There’s a whole profession ready and able to do that, the field of Consulting. I am not a consultant, I am a Coach. And this profession differs radically from Consulting. If you want a consultant, I can make a referral for you if you like. Coaching is about facilitating you to find your own answers, know your own mind, take ownership of your own personal powers, and unleash your highest and best.”

And of course, all of this explain why we also begin *Coaching Mastery* with a very clear definition of coaching and equally clearly distinguishing it from Consulting, Therapy and Training. So again, the importance of you as a coach to set the frames about what you are doing, what coaching truly is and how it differs from the other helping professions. Are you up to the challenge of making those distinctions and setting those frames!

Here’s to your frame-setting skills as a Meta-Coach! Now, let there be framing and world-class coaching!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #11**  
**April 8, 2009**

## **AN ABUNDANCE CULTURE**

One of the things that originally drew me to NLP was the idea of abundance. I first read about it in *Frogs into Princes*, the first NLP book I ever read. Then as I continued reading all of the early NLP literature I could get my hands on, I kept finding it again and again. And the idea of abundance excited me.

*The Abundance Premise:* We live in a world of abundance— abundance of ideas, of creativity, possibilities, respect, love, learning, growth, etc. The more you create these experiences, the more you can create more of these experiences. And the more you create of these experiences, the more that's available. Abundance is the more—the more pattern.

Today, with the last 4 years of research into *Self-Actualization Psychology*, I realize that the premise of abundance was one of the direct legacies of Abraham Maslow into NLP. But, of course, as we all know while Richard Bandler and John Grinder talked abundance, they did not live abundance. In fact, they lived scarcity to a pretty high degree given the lawsuits and the Magician Wars that have occurred. And from that scarcity came competition, ego-centered focus, one-upmanship, the need to win, the need to be right, the inability to acknowledge the contributions of others, the inability to groom leaders, kingdom-building around egos, and many other destructive forces in the field of NLP.

Scarcity then became a thought-virus in the field of NLP that has been a basic factor undermining cooperation, collaboration, support—factors necessary to create *community*. I didn't understand this at first. Terry McClintock helped me understand this in his book, *The Wild Days of NLP: 1972– 1975* when he wrote about the breakup of Bandler and Grinder, “The stage was not big enough for both of their egos.”

Well, okay, that's NLP. But what about us? We launched Neuro-Semantics to be different. I wanted it to be different— radically different. So to make that real, we put thousands of pages of articles and patterns on the website. And why? The purpose was to convey the message: “*There's plenty, we have plenty. There's a lot more from where this came. Please, help yourself.*” I then decide to provide the Training Manuals at \$5 for use; that was unheard of. Most NLP trainers would not share their manuals at any price. After Bob Bodenhamer completed his Trainers Training (twice) he asked Steve Andreas, he wanted \$150 for the manual but then said that he would also have to attend his Trainers Training to get that price. So much for supporting the field!

When Bob and I wrote the first NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner book (*User's Manual of*

*the Brain, Volumes I and II*), it was the first time in the history of NLP that the content of NLP had been made fully public. That was 1997, 20 years after the first NLP Practitioner course. Talk about scarcity! They would not share it; so when we did—we made the content available for \$50. Our feeling was—this stuff needs to be put out there and *there's plenty more where this came from! People need to have this; the world needs this technology and these models.*

I write all of this to say that I have tried and I am continuing to work at living the principle of abundance and to encourage others to do the same. I believe that we need to live by the principle of abundance, that this self-actualization principle fosters growth, collaboration, creativity, community and many other values.

So I think you can imagine how discouraging it is to me when I see many Neuro-Semantic trainers and coaches not living by this principle, but operating from scarcity and competition. They do not share with others, they do not work together with others, they do not operate as good team members, and they don't collaborate or cooperate, they compete over clients, they do not refer people to other trainers or coaches, they act like "lone rangers" and so they hoard whatever they have as their private "intellectual property," they do not share insights, books, patterns with this egroup or the other one, and so on.

I write this now because for the past 3 or 4 years I have been renewing my effort and focus in working with Neuro-Semantic Trainers and Coaches (Meta-Coaches) to build both Institutes of Neuro-Semantics worldwide and Meta-Coach Foundation Chapters. And while we have made a lot of progress and are getting more and more high quality people as part of the leadership team and as part of the leaders around the world doing things, I still have the feeling that all of these efforts are just limping along. We still have many among us infected with the scarcity thought-virus from NLP. We need more of a culture and practice of abundance.

Last week when I was in Malaysia I found it discouraging to discover that in spite of all the Meta-Coaches in KL and Singapore, we still do not have a single Meta-Coach Foundation *Chapter* in either city. Yes I know people are busy. Yes I know that people have businesses to run, and a living to make. Yet those who do live and operate by abundance also have the same challenges and, in fact, use collaboration to create partners and connections. I saw this in Tessie Lim in Kuala Lumpur—that's how she is able to sponsor events—through collaborative partnerships.

This is the power of abundance—the more you give, the more you receive. The more you support others, the more you are seen as a leader, the more you contribute and collaborate, the more your leadership goes to a higher level of being a professional in this field.

So how do we change this? Suppose that we together set a goal to eliminate the scarcity thought-virus and plant more of the seeds of abundance? *How then can you and I create an abundance culture, a self-actualization culture of abundance?* What will it take and are you willing to contribute to creating an abundance and collaborative culture?

- It will take time, effort, and energy. It doesn't just happen. It happens through intention,

focus, and commitment. Are you willing to sign up for this? Devote yourself to this?

- It takes the ability to step outside of yourself which requires that you get your own ego out of the way and be able to support and encourage others. It requires taking second position and third position. Are you willing to do that?
- It will require persistence and patience. It will not happen quickly or without facing ups and downs. It will require a persistent optimism that believes in abundance and collaboration.
- It will require detecting the scarcity frame and transforming it to the abundance frame.

To those of you who are committed to this and have been operating from Abundance— may it return to you a hundred-fold! And to the rest, consider making abundance as a life premise for how you operate in your personal and business relationships and how we can achieve so much more working together than alone or apart.

To your Abundance!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #12**  
**April 15, 2009**

## **THE SHOCK SKILLS**

I coached a CEO a couple of weeks ago in a private session. I don't do that very often, but I was working with a group of senior managers in a particular company when some "issues" emerged which the team agreed had to be addressed. As I asked a series of questions that confronted the issue, I dove headlong into the CEO's matrix with an ever-probing exploration using lots and lots of meta-questions to understand where he was coming from.

On the surface all of his answers were "proper and right." Then we got inside his matrix of frames—we got to the heart of things, to the meanings creating the issues for him. So on the surface he uttered all of the right words that fit a leader guiding a company where "people, family, and work-life balance" were the key values. But something was not right. It sounded too good, too much like a P.R. statement and not "real" enough. It sounded like a cover-up.

So I probed further. What allowed me to do that was the issue that kept surfacing—his fear of failure, his fear of not succeeding, his fear of the possibility of being on the wrong path. As I explored, I let him talk. Eventually he said,

"I don't know if I really have enough self-esteem to handle the challenges before us, the challenges that ..."

That's when I interrupted him. "I must have missing something Peter. What does your self-esteem have to do with handling the challenges that you and the others have described?"

"Why everything! If my self-esteem falters, then I'll not be able to keep a calm head, and will miss the key variables and will probably sabotage myself in some unconscious way."

"Do you hear what you just said?" I asked abruptly jumping in. A silence ensued as his eyes moved around looking to each side and then up and down as if searching to recall what he had just said.

"What? What are you talking about?"

"You said that 'if your self-esteem falters, you won't keep a calm head.'"

"Yes, and . . . what's your point?"

"You still don't hear it, do you? Are you really that lost in your own frames? Do I have to give you the red pill again and rip you out of that Matrix again?" Now my questions shocked him. Silence ensued again, this time for a longer period of time. Finally, he looked at me imploringly as he said:

"I guess I don't hear it. What am I supposed to be hearing?"

“‘If my self-esteem falters’ —so your self-esteem is *conditional is it?! So your value as a human being depends upon how you are doing, how the business is going, how calm or stressed you feel! Is that really true for you Peter?*”

“‘Yeah .... I think so...’ He said as his voice trailed off.

“‘Really? You put your value and worth as a human being is on the line and dependent on those external conditions? You allow your self-esteem to go up and down as a roller-coaster so you are always needing to prove yourself, to be a somebody!’”

As he was minimally nodding his head “yes,” and since he was to my left, I put my left hand behind his head as if holding it in place and as I moved closer to him, I then acted as if I was slapping his face back and forth by moving my right hand in a slapping motion in front of him. That got his attention! His eyes bulged open and as they did I said,

“‘I think it’s a time that you fire that toxic frame and bring onboard a whole new frame of *unconditional self-esteem* so that you never engage in the non-sense of putting your worth or dignity as a human being on the line again. What do you think? Would you want to make an executive decision right now to declare that your value is a given, unconditional, and stop playing the roller-coaster game any longer? Shall we go to the board room so you can fire the old frame?’”

His response was thoughtful as he turned inward:

“‘Is that what I’ve been doing? Is that the cause of my problems with stress and fear and why I’ve been leading as I have? Now I get it. Of course! It’s like I heard your words before but I really didn’t feel them. Now I do. Yes, okay, let’s fire that frame! I don’t need it any longer.’”

That fact is that sometimes, as a coach, you have to shock your client into awareness. Previously with this group, I had presented all of the typical ideas about self-esteem that we present in Neuro-Semantics. *Intellectually* Peter knew it. What was missing was that he did not know it in the deepest part of his Matrix. It had not transferred there. So by interrupting, confronting, play-acting that I was slapping him around (!), and using the language of firing —my aim was to shock him so that he could hear himself and catch the disturbing frame.

Now for some personal questions to you:

- How are your *shocking skills*?
- To what extent can you be a *shocking coach*?
- Not ready for it? Not up for it? Too impotent? Maybe you need another ten years of pussy-footing around before you do it! Maybe you need a real man show you how! Or a real woman!

Here’s to your ever-advancing skills as a Meta-Coach!



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #13**  
**April 22, 2009**

## **META-COACHING AND PROBLEMS**

What is the relationship between coaching and “problems?” We know that coaching differs from therapy in that therapy focuses on healing, fixing, and re-parenting. The problems that therapy addresses are those of trauma that causes a person to become stuck in the past with something that serves as “unfinished business.” Serious personality problems involving low ego-strength and/or the distorting of one’s mapping (framing) of personality undermines a person’s psychological health and leads to various forms of pathology. This is the domain of therapy.

Counseling, another domain of psychology, is a lighter form of therapy and focuses on enabling and equipping people to cope with similar problems about one’s self, one’s values, talents, skills, career, relationship, etc. Yet while the problems are a lighter version, they are still focused on the past, ego-strength, and support rather than challenge.

Coaching clients also bring problems to the coaching session for the coaching conversation. But what are the problems appropriate for coaching? Similar to the *kind of conversation* you can have with a client (Reflection #9), there are different *kinds of problems* that clients will want to bring and work through. As a coach, you might want to put this question in your mind so that as you listen to your client—you keep an openness to the kind of problem that the client is attempting to put before you:

- “*What kind of a problem is this?*”
- “*Am I you working on the right kind of problem?*”
- “*What problem is the real problem, the core problem, my client is trying to make me aware of?*”

The good news is that psychologically healthy people also have problems and they always will. If you are growing, stretching, learning, and taking risks, and breathing, you will have new problems arising from time to time. This is good. It means you’re alive! And once we use therapy and training to get beyond the self problems, then we’re ready for the more useful problems—problems that center around unleashing more and more of your potentials and making a positive difference in the world.

### **Kinds of Problems:**

1) *Motivation:* goals, outcomes, needs, gratifications.

Is the problem a problem of motivation, energy, focus, or goals?

2) *Coping:*

Is the problem that of how to cope with gratifying his or her needs?  
Is it learning how to cope with job, family, time, etc.?

3) *Decisions*: choices, will, indecision.

Is the problem about how to make a decision? Criteria for decision-making?

Is the problem about resources for handling risk? Taking a chance?

4) *Values*: Standards, criteria, etc.

Is the problem about determining what's important?

Is the problem about figuring out how to prioritize values?

5) *Language*: critical thinking skills, operationalizing terms, (meta-model, benchmarking)  
cognitive distortions, dichotomizing.

Is the problem about how to think or how to define things?

Is the problem how to measure something, especially an intangible?

Is the problem about a thinking pattern—a cognitive distortion?

6) *Confusion*: lack of clarity, precision, focus.

Is the problem about sorting out information and creating a clear movie in the mind?

7) *Inhibition*: by taboos, prohibitions, fears, worries, apprehensions, seriousness, uncreative.

Is the problem that there's a frame in the back of the mind that's prohibiting a required response?

Is the problem an interference by some belief frame?

Is the problem due to too much seriousness and too little humor and lightness?

8) *Meanings*: frames, semantically over-loaded things, semantic distortions.

Is the problem from having semantically over-loaded something with too much meaning?

Is the problem failure to recognize the meta-levels in the back of the mind?

Does the problem need exposed through ferocious meta-questioning?

9) *Actions*: Procrastination, impatience, reactivity, fears.

Is the problem one of taking action, taking *effective* action, getting oneself to act?

Is the problem one of under-performance?

10) *Focus*: attention deficit (ADD).

Is the problem too many attentions and not enough strength of intention?

Is the problem having too much of a meta-program of options and not enough ability to follow-through on a procedure?

11) *Release*: letting go, de-activating, suspending meaning.

Is the problem one of holding onto the past or old meanings?

Is the problem one of needing more acceptance and permissions?

Is the problem one of failing to suspend meanings that no longer enhance the quality of

life?

While this obviously is not a complete list of problems, it does suggest some of the problems you'll face as a coach. Part of your work and value as a coach is to enable your clients to distinguish *real* problems from *pseudo-problems*. These include symptoms, riddles, and paradoxes. If the problem you coach your client to solve is a *symptomatic* problem, your client will return to work on it again, and again, and again. After all, it's a symptom of a problem; not the problem. If the problem you coach your client to solve is a mere riddle— it also is not a real problem, but a linguistic frame inventing problem that doesn't really exist. And if the problem turns out to be a paradox, it isn't something to solve as it is to accept the confusion of levels with a frame.

To your Coaching Creativity in facilitating great problem-solving!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #14**  
**April 29, 2009**

## **DON'T SOLVE THE FIRST PROBLEM**

Here's a secret that will save you a lot of embarrassment and wasted energy. It will save you from getting egg all over your face: *Do not answer or try to solve the first problem that a client offers you.* You will be tempted. And your client might even present a truly desperate situation needing urgent solutions—now. But do not do it. Resist the temptation.

For years I frequently lived from one episode of jumping in to solve the first presented problem to the next one. I would suffer embarrassment after embarrassment when I discovered that for all of the energy I devoted to “solving” some problem, it turned out to be just a front or a cover for some other problem or a test of my competencies to see if they would share with me the real problem.

Eventually I discovered that clients often start with a sample of a problem or a cover for a problem and not the real problem. And why would they do such a thing? There are several possible reasons:

- 1) *To test you.* They need to test you to see what you're made of, your skills, how you will treat them, etc. Usually none of this is conscious; yet it is there nonetheless. The presenting problem is just that. It's presented to see if you will take the bait and jump on the first words that reminded you of some old solution or if you will explore and respect the individuality and uniqueness of this person's problem.
- 2) *To find the real problem.* Clients often do not know the core issue or problem, so they present whatever it is that they know about it as their first halting descriptions of a problem. This is, of course, why they need you as a coach in the first place, to help clarify their situation and engage in a problem-defining and clarifying conversation.
- 3) *To react to a strong symptom.* When symptoms of a problem become too much for them, the problem then overwhelms the client's resources. The client, in turn, then truly wants, and believes in the importance of, the relief of their symptoms.

First problems are interesting. More often than not they are primary state problems and so are obvious to us and are more compelling because they are “in our face.” Yet they are just as often symptoms of the problem or in some other way peripheral to the real problem. If you answer them, if you solve them with a brilliant insight that blinds the client with the light of your intelligence and creativity—the solution often proves inadequate. It doesn't last. And that's because it was not the real or core problem.

Instead, begin with an acknowledgment of the problem. Say words that adequately describe the problem as it is first present to the client. As you *verbally pace* them with such acknowledging words and then some empathetic words, you will get a sense as to a little more of the breadth and width of the problem.

Next, embrace the problem as you explore it with an attitude of seeking first to understand it. Start from a state of “know-nothing” and ask many, many questions about it. Invite the person to make the problem more and more explicit for you. Play dumb. Ask dumber questions. As the client engages in the process of making what he or she “knows” clear, the client becomes clear and so do you. Explore it first with the *down questions* of the Meta-Model (what, when, where, with whom, how, to what extent, etc.).

Next, explore it with the *up questions* of the Meta-States Model (what do you believe about that, what does it mean, what decision have you made, etc.). This will take both of you up, up, and away into the client’s Matrix of frames of meanings that create and hold the problem in place. Doing this means making it worse before it gets better, and holding a frame in place so the client can transcend it and then include it in a larger and more expansive frame is a central meta-stating skill.

As you then engage in a curious exploration, being absolutely fascinated by the problem, you facilitate the process whereby the client can lead both of you to the heart of the matter—to the meanings that govern and guide the person’s behaviors. In all of this, your coaching skills will improve and you’ll learn more and more of the art of coaching as you view first-problems with suspicion. Suspect that they are just covers and fronts for something else. Be respectful, patient, compassionate, committed as you ask the grounding questions and then the framing questions. Be a Sherlock Holms in your detective work, giving yourself enough time and exposure to the problem to see what it’s made out of.

As Neo discovered in the Matrix, “There is no spoon,” then you too will learn, “There is no problem.” What we call problems are human inventions—ways of saying that something seems to be in our way and that we need a creative solution through, around, over, or under it.

Here’s to the unleashing of your problem-solving mind and heart as a Meta-Coach!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #15**  
**May 6, 2009**

## **THE MYTH OF “BODY LANGUAGE”**

In Meta-Coaching we put a lot of emphasis on *opening your eyes and ears* and actually seeing and hearing the processes behind the person’s content as well as the accompanying movements, postures, gestures, etc. that the person is offering in the coaching conversation. It takes a lot of active listening to do this. A lot! A whole lot. It is so easy and seductive to get caught up in the person’s content and story and forget to watch *how* the person is expressing him or herself.

“Oh you mean watch their body language? Yeah, right. I can do that.”

Actually, that is *not* what I mean. Yes, I know that all of your life you have heard about “body language,” you probably have talked about “body language, and you may have even read or bought books for your library on “Body Language.” You may even believe in body language. You may believe that there is such a thing as the “language” of the body.

If so, then let me be the person who has the privilege to shock you with the perhaps disappointing news— *There is no such thing as ‘body language!’* Whatever you refer to when you use the phrase “body language,” whether to gestures, movements, breathing, posture, etc., that is not a “language,” it is merely *expressions of your body*.

These expressions that you can generate in and from your body do not comprise a *language*. There’s no “language” of your body! Unlike your mind that can look at squiggly lines on a page and “see” a language system (definitions, syntax, grammar, etc.), your body doesn’t have such a symbolic system that it can learn and use when it expresses itself. Gestures are just gestures—movements of your arms and hands and there is no grammar or syntax or symbolic signs of the gestures that make up a language system. That’s why every “body language” book is wrong!

In most “body language” books you will find statements as the following: “Crossing the arms” means a person is “closed.” Well, yes, sometimes with some people in some contexts that may be true. But *no*, crossing the arms does not inherently or innately mean that! Crossing the arms *is* crossing the arms. *Why* any given person crosses the arms—in what context, relationship, conversation, etc. depends on what the person *thinks, believes, understands, etc.*

He may cross his arms to show off his muscles. She may cross her arms because she’s cold. He may cross his arms to calm himself and hold himself back. She may cross her arms because she feels awkward about what to do with her arms as she’s standing there waiting for him to ask her for a date. He may cross his arms because that’s what he saw his dad do.

Instead of thinking about the expressions of your body, and the body of your coaching clients, as

“language,” think of it as non-verbal somatic expressions. If you do that, then you will be in a wonderful position to begin exploring with the client what any given expression *means* in that context to that person. Then you can ask many questions about the person’s state, intention, and meanings. Then you can begin to discover that person’s unique meanings and symbols and which that person uniquely expresses in his or her communications.

To do the opposite is *assuming* and that comes very, very close to mind-reading. The truth is that *you do not know what a person means by merely observing their movements, postures, breathing, gestures, etc.* You have to ask. In fact, asking is an act of respect. It is an act of honor. So ask. Find out their semantics. Discover how they express their semantics (meanings) through their body and bodily expressions.

So in your next coaching session, do watch for as many of the *expressions* that your client makes with his or her body. Watch the person’s breathing for location (high, middle, low) and correlate to the person’s state. Watch the person’s eye access cues for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Watch the person’s gestures with the hands — direction, intensity, range of motion, etc. Watch for repetition of the same movement, for the variations that the person has, and so on. Watch for posture. Listen for tone, tempo, volume, different voices, etc. Listen for what the person embeds in conversation.

And as you do— see if you can begin to understand the person’s unique *meanings* and *symbols* in such. Sometimes one or more aspects of these gestures and expressions may indicate a problem that the person has. If the person points to in front of him when he speaks about the past, that coding may be what the person needs to change to develop and unleash potentials. If the person points outside of herself when she talks about making up her mind or her values, that might indicate the authority meta-program of external reference and that might be the primary interference that she needs to be unleashed from.

So watch. Watch carefully. Listen intensely. Observe for patterns— but assume nothing. There is no “language” in the body, there are just *expressions of the person’s meanings* at that moment in that conversation.

To the unleashing of your eyes and ears to see and hear the invisible structures!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #16**  
**May 13, 2009**

## **THE MOST PROFOUND FORM OF COACHING**

Of all forms of coaching, self-coaching is both the most challenging and the most powerfully profound. With self-coaching, you take your own personal growth and development to a whole new level as you schedule and engage yourself for a coaching session. With self-coaching, you can develop higher levels of congruence and authenticity. You can accelerate your learning and integration of new skills and empowering beliefs. So, how does that work and how can a person learn to effectively self-coach?

In short, as mentioned during the *Coaching Mastery* training, self-coaching is actually the highest form of coaching and the most advance. Why? Because in self-coaching, you have to work with your own self-reflexivity and be able to manage it. And the challenge is how to *hold your experience or state in place* while you jump meta-levels and then feed-forward and then notice how that fits or doesn't and to do all of that without going for a wild spin where you lose your equilibrium and get lost in your own matrix of frames!

One way numerous Meta-Coaches solve this is that they write down on a sheet of paper both their questions and their answers. They may even draw the little person in a bubble of a state (as I do in my presentations), and then step back from that to ask, "What state does that put me in?" Then, "And what does that mean to me?" And they continue to do that using the paper to stabilize the answers and experiences so as to keep tracking themselves through the self-coaching session.

With the paper in front of you, you can answer your questions with a single word or line and put that above as a frame or as an expression of the frame (some other emotion or verbal or behavioral response). This would actually help you with your basic *tracking skills* as a coach and your skill of *looking for and detecting patterns*.

*Self-coaching* is fascinating in that as you play both roles simultaneously. You are both coach and client ; you both facilitate the process and then you step in to experience the question or response that you provide as the coach to yourself. And as you do this, unlike when you are being coached by a colleague, now the experience of your own truthfulness, authenticity, and honesty moves to a new level. It's harder to hide from yourself! It's harder to want to say something that would make you look better in the eyes of your coach. In self-coaching, your coach knows you pretty well!

And yet, you can lie and deceive yourself even in self-coaching. We all do. After all, we all



have blind spots and areas in which we are more “sensitive” and so can easily judge ourselves or blank out and so avoid the issue. All of that is still possible. Of course, if you do and you persist at the self-coaching, this becomes another issue you can address. You can coach yourself and access resources for a more solid sense of self, for more self-honesty, and for more openness to your “shadow” side.

Another technique that some coaches use is they use a tape-recorder to record the questions and answers. Then they can listen to it later, and make comments about their comments in the next session.

For myself, I have developed the ability to pose a question and then hold that question in my mind. As I do, sometimes I will keep repeating it and noting the answers I get. Sometimes I turn the question into an image or a frame and then dance around the image or frame eliciting numerous responses and possibilities. By holding the question in place and letting my mind dance around it, I think of it as *circling the question* and getting multiple perspectives about the question.

With self-coaching, you may experience a lot of noise and the rushing in of other thoughts. These may interrupt you. They may grab your attention so that you are suddenly off and running in a different direction. And while you can certainly use that if you detect it, to stay focused on the coaching theme that you want to explore, you might run the genius pattern on accessing a genius state of “being a focused client” ... or on the state you find most supportive for self-coaching.

Another choice could be to run the Intentionality pattern to create a highly focused intention for your self-coaching. Running the Intentionality pattern will enable you to create a really high and strong *reason why* for your self-coaching practice and that will help to create the laser-beam focus.

When I worked with Richard Bandler, he said self-reflexivity only puts a person “into a spin.” And because he would never let anyone work with him and why he had never *received* the NLP patterns himself. During those years he repeatedly said, “I can’t do NLP on myself.” Later he changed that statement, but not the experience! So his incongruence and failure to walk the talk is now world-known and I think very sad. Here’s one of the co-founders of NLP who has never experienced NLP!

Finally, the process of receiving coaching from a colleague is a great way to learn to integrate the self-coaching processes.

To your highest and best as you step up to the most profound form of coaching!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #17**  
**March 20, 2009**

## **AN EXCITING NEW DEVELOPMENT**

Imagine if you had the KPI process formatted set forth in the Matrix—as an Outcome Matrix. Would you like that? Would that help to visualize and keep it in your mind when you're coaching? And what if it was formatted from *content* to all of the frames that embrace that content? Would you like to see that?

Well, on my way home from Meta-Coaching in Mexico this week, Omar and I spent an hour in the airport playing with that idea and came up with a *KPI Matrix*. But that's not all. Then we fit the 10 distinctions of a well-formed outcome not only as a matrix, not only from content to process. And then to integrate that even further, we put all fo that on the Meaning—Performance Axes. How about that!?

And that now gives us — *The Matrix KPI — Synergizing Meaning and Performance*. While the following diagrams are overly simple and in-the-rough, I hope that they give you an idea of what I'm describing. First, the ten-distinctions of the well-formed outcome.

**System:** \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Ecology \_\_\_\_\_  
Is this good for all of you; in every aspect of your life?

**Meaning:** \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Compelling \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Evidence \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you really want this? How will you know?

**Power:** \_\_\_\_\_ 5 Self-Initiated \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Steps \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Resources \_\_\_\_\_  
Is this something *you* can do? Do you know the steps? How many? Need any resources?

**When?** \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Time \_\_\_\_\_ Time frame/ schedule

**Where?** \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Context \_\_\_\_\_ In what contexts? With whom?

**Others:**

**Content:**  
**State:**

1. Stated positively	2. Sensory
What do you want?	What will it look like and sound like?

If we now take these and line them up along the Funnel (the diagram we use in Meta-Coaching) — we have this order (from top to bottom):

**What?**

1. State in the positive:     What do you want?
2. Sensory-based:            What will it look like, sound like, what are the kinesthetic features of it?

**Where?**

3. Contextualized:            In what context do you want that outcome?

**When?**

4. Time:                        When do you want it? How long do you think it will take to get it?

**How?**

5. Self-initiated:            Can you launch out and make this happen? Is it within your power-zone?
6. Steps and stages:         How many steps will it take? Do you know the steps to get to your outcome? What steps do you not know yet?
7. Resources:                 Do you have the resources to reach your outcome and make it real?

**Why? What mean?**

8. Compelling:                Is it compelling? Do you *really* want it? How much? Why?
9. Evidence:                    How will you know when you reach your outcome? What will let you know?

**Valuable holistically?**

10. Ecology:                  Does the outcome fit and align with all of your relationships and aspects of you?

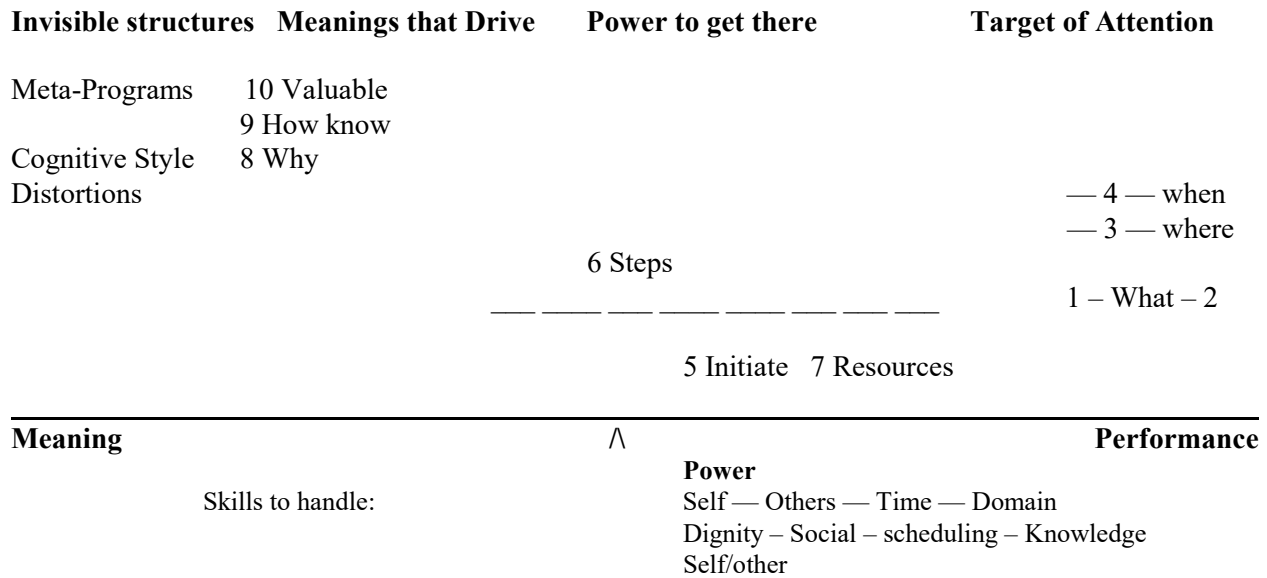
By the time you circle these questions repeatedly with a client and get to the bottom— you facilitate the client reaching a decision — a go/ no-go decision about the outcome. And you have not only a well-formed outcome, but a specific and precise KPI.

Now let's put that on the Meaning—Performance Axes, and as we sometimes do, let's open it up from the 90-degree angle to a 180-degree angle so that it comes a continuum —a line that stretches from present state to desired state. Doing that *Distinction / Questions 1-2* identifies the target out in the future, a target that the client will be performing when he or she arrives at that future. Then outframing that are *Distinctions/ Questions 3 and 4* identify the contexts for the outcome.

Then backing up to the now, we use *Distinction / Questions 5-7* to identify the required powers that the client will use to reach the goal. These define the pathway to the desired outcome and the skills and competencies the person will have to learn and apply to get there.

Then backing up even further, we have *Distinctions/ Questions 8-9* to take the client to the Meanings, Values, and Intentions that provide the energy, motivation, and drive to get to the outcome. And finally *Distinction / Question 10* enables the client to run a quality control to make sure the outcome is healthy, ecological, congruent, and well-formed.

Then, behind all of that are the processes that govern *how the person thinks and feels and decides* about him or herself and the desired future. These primarily involve meta-programs and cognitive styles. These are the hidden, invisible structure driving everything as the person constructs compelling futures that are rich in meaning and inspiration and then make them real in actions and performances in the outside world. So we have inner game to outer game — mind-to-muscle — semantics to neurology.



And that's *the Matrix KPI that synergizes meaning and performance*. And for those of you who will be re-visiting **Coaching Mastery** this year — you will be trained in this as well as some other very exciting changes to the whole Meta-Coach Training System. In fact, we are in the process of *completely* re-designing and re-structuring ... *and the first presentation of the new format will be in September in Sweden!*

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #18**  
**March 27, 2009**

## **COACHING AS THERAPY<sup>LIGHT</sup>**

On my way to Montreal this week I read *The Leader on the Couch: A Clinical Approach to Changing People and Organizations* by Manfred Kets de Vries. Some months ago I read another book on leadership by Kets, *The Leadership Mystique*. While I liked that one, I found this book problematic, and problematic in a way that affects what you are doing as a Meta-Coach.

For one thing, in *The Leader on the Couch*, Kets completely confuses a leadership coach with a psychotherapist. I mean *completely confuses* the two! Here are quotations directly from the pen of Manfred Kets de Vries:

“In fact, coaching is today’s most acceptable way of doing psychotherapy.” (p. 255)

“The most effective leadership coaches draw heavily on psychotherapeutic frameworks and skills ... looks very much like short-term psychotherapy. Many coaches go beyond mere confrontation (helping the client recognize that there’s a problem) to clarification to interpretation (mutually examining unconscious conflicts and wishes) to insight and working through...” (p. 259)

“Leadership coaching has a present and future orientation, despite its attention to transference.” (p. 260)

Kets’ whole approach is psycho-dynamic and that means the Psychoanalytic model. And because of that, his assumptions about human nature come from Sigmund Freud. And that means many things:

1) About *change* it means that he views change as “hard,” “unnatural,” and something that takes a lot of time and trouble— not exactly the kind of assumptions that supports coaching as a change methodology.

“If the human tendency is to resist change, how does the process of change ever get underway? Why does a person’s resistance start to weaken?”

*Answer:* “Disrupting the relative stability of personality to get the process of change into motion requires a strong inducement in the form of pain or distress—discomfort that outweighs the secondary gain that hanging on to the present situation offers.” (p. 218)

“Change is so difficult that, even with the best of intentions, people can rarely manager it single-handedly.” (p. 234)

Apart from his belief that it is in our human nature to resist change, Kets’ answer is entirely on the “push” part of the Motivation Axes. He believes there has to be a crisis and never mentions the possibility that there could be a positive awakening of a vision. Accordingly, for him

*coaching* is the form of therapy that helps people identify their transferences and overcome through insight their defenses and resistances.

“Other leadership coaches sabotage the coaching effort by ignoring the client’s resistance. Effective change can’t happen unless the coach *resists* the resistance. He or she has to acknowledge and address negative feelings immediately.” (p. 268)

2) About *coaching processes* his favorite tool in his leadership challenge program is “the hot seat.” It’s a group process that from his descriptions sounds like group therapy.

“After a great deal of trial and error, I conceived that I could create an intense learning community by combining some of the methods used in short-term dynamic psychotherapy with the interventions derived from group dynamics while adding concepts taken from organizational and leadership theory.” (p. 205)

So the first part of the book is all about personality types informed by dynamic psychotherapy which he argues the “leadership coach” has to identify and work with— the Narcissistic Leader (chapter 2), The Dramatic Disposition, the Controlling Disposition, the Detached Disposition, the Depressive, the Abrasive, the Paranoid, the Negativistic, the Hypomanic, the Impostor Syndrome, etc. He even repeatedly quotes the DSM-IV on these personality disorders and speaks about how a leadership coach can deal with them.

Interesting enough, Kets distinguishes coaching, as we do in Meta-Coaching, from counseling, consulting, and mentoring. He just does not distinguish it from therapy!

“To see what coaching is, first rule out what it *isn’t*. It isn’t mere technical guidance, though coaches have strong technical expertise. It isn’t career counseling, though coaches can often help a client find the right job. Nor is it consulting, though there are quite a few similarities (and at times the boundaries between coaching and consulting are vague). While consultants typically play the role of the specialist, having the answer to any questions, coaches prefer to *ask* questions. ... Likewise coaching isn’t mentoring. ... Finally, coaching isn’t training.” (pp. 257-258)

What this book presents, in my opinion, is a great example of the current confusion about *what coaching really is*. And this is the question that the field of Coaching has to answer in order for it to separate for itself an area that is unique to Coaching. The “coaching” that Kets describes in this book is actually therapy (and specifically dynamic psychotherapy) —therapy that’s been hijacked from that domain and relabeled with the coaching label. Such coaching is Therapy<sup>light</sup>.

Here’s to our success, as Meta-Coaches, to helping to define coaching in a way that distinguishes it from therapy and so creates a “space” that is unique to this field.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #19**  
**June 3, 2009**

## THE STRENGTHS OR WEAKNESSES QUESTION

As a coach, you have undoubtedly thought about this question many times:

“Should I play to my strengths, focus there and not worry about my weaknesses? Or should I focus on my weaknesses to strengthen them?”

When you get this question, how do you respond? If you have a strength-based approach, does that mean that by focusing on people’s resources means that you don’t direct them to strengthen their weakness? If you focus on your own or another’s weaknesses, how much do you do so? Do you think that a person can develop expertise or mastery in his or her weaknesses?

The strength—weakness conversation is not only a common one, but it is indeed an interesting one with numerous sides and issues. And your answer to this question will determine some of the projects and outcomes that you take on. It will determine the degree that you will operate as a change agent.

*Person 1:*

“Forget about your weaknesses; just play to your strengths and you’ll be fine.”

*Person 2:*

“No, no. Your weaknesses are your blind-spots. They will undermine you, sabotage you, and defeat you; you have to strengthen your weaknesses!”

*Person 3:*

“What are you guys talking about? It’s not about playing to strengths or strengthening weaknesses, it is about tempering and balancing your strengths so that they do not become your weaknesses! You are most weak at your strengths.”

So what say you? Without question, we all have both strengths and weaknesses. We have interests and skills in which we are naturally strong and we have temperamental or characteristic weaknesses—dispositions that we just have to live with. Yet what do these words mean in the context of coaching and what strategy should we take from the positions articulated above? Obviously (well, I hope *obviously*) “strengths” and “weaknesses” are nominalizations and not contextualized or defined so for clarity of understanding we first have to do that.

*Strength*— what you are strong in, that is, what you can do with energy, vitality, attention, intention, what comes easy to you, what you seem to have a natural disposition for, what we call a “natural gift” or talent. You are interested in it, you easily operate in that domain; success comes to you with hardly any effort.

*Weakness* — the converse, what you do not find easy or even desirable, what you struggle and are challenged with, what you are less “naturally” drawn to, attracted to, and easily understand mathematics or geography, or history, or medicine, and so on. Try as you may, success is hard work and comes, if only at all, with lots of effort.

In psychology we speak about talents as natural gifts, as *predispositions* that people seem to “be wired for.” In Howard Gardner’s work on Multi-Intelligences, he and his colleagues have designed questions to elicit those “intelligences” that any one of us seems to be more “natural” at and those that we do not.

In his book, *First Break all the Rules* (1999) Marcus Buckingham, who is today presenting himself as a Coach, argues for the first choice:

“How do great managers release each person’s potential? Focus on person’s strengths, manage around weaknesses, help each person become more of who he already is. . . . Focus on these strengths. Encourage them to take responsibility for who they really are.” (p. 143)

Yet the problem I have with Buckingham is his definition of “talent” and all of the things that he identifies as “talents.” First he defines “a love of precision,” which you and I would call a meta-state, as a talent:

“Talents are the four-lane highways in your mind, those that carve your recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior. . . . A love of precision is not a skill. Nor is it knowledge. It is a talent. If you don’t possess it, you will never excel as an accountant.” (84-85)

Then he calls other meta-states like “calm under fire” and even “attitudes” as talents:

“These are not competencies, these are talents, and they cannot be taught. A competency such as ‘calm under fire’ is a talent—and you cannot teach someone to be cool!” (89)

“A person’s prevailing attitudes are part of your mental filter. They are created by the interplay of a person’s unique pattern of highways and wastelands. Attitudes are talents.” (90)

Attitudes are talents? Really? The ideas I have in my head about things, the attitudes that I’ve developed from experiences over my lifetime are “talents?” Then to deepen the confusion, he lists the following as “talents:”

Cynical or trusting

Optimistic or malcontent — seeing the bright-sider versus the dark-sider

Experimental or conservative

Competitive or non-competitive

Self-starters

Achievers: burning desire to achieve

While Buckingham recognizes the importance of being specific, he doesn’t seem to know how to do that. Someone ought to teach him the Meta-Model and how to use it to benchmark words like “talent!”

“Be impatient with the clumsiness of generalizations; they obscure the truth. . . . describe in detail the unique talents of each of your people.”

When I completed re-reading *First, Break all the Rules* I came away with the impression that for



Buckingham everything is a talent. And he comes close to it. In fact, he identifies three kinds of talents—relating talents, striving talents, thinking talents.

*Striving talents*: explain the why of a person; why he gets out of bed every day, why motivated to push and push a little bit harder.

*Thinking talents* explain the how—how he thinks, how he weighs alternatives, how he comes to decisions.

*Relating talents* explain the who—whom he trusts, whom he builds relationships with, whom he confronts, and whom he ignores. (85)

Incredible, wouldn't you say? If our thinking patterns are "talents," then that makes our meta-programs "talents" and as such not merely the learned meanings and explanatory styles that we have developed. Buckingham defines a "talent" in this way:

"Talent: a recurring pattern of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied."

"Any recurring patterns of behavior that can be productively applied are talents. The key to excellent performance is finding the match between your talents and your role." (71)

"You have a filter, a characteristic way of responding to the world around you. ... Your filter tells you which stimuli to notice and which to ignore; which to love and which to hate. It creates your innate motivations— are you competitive, altruistic, or ego-driven? It defines how you think— are you disciplined or laissez-faire, practical or strategic? It forges your prevailing attitudes—are you optimistic or cynical, calm or anxious, empathetic or cold? It creates in you all of your distinct patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior. In effect, your filter is the source of your talents." (76)

Now in NLP that is how we define a *meta-program*. My problem with the things that Buckingham identifies as "talents" is that you and I view them as changeable and he does not. In fact, in Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching we regard thinking and perceptual patterns (meta-programs) as something we can *expand* and we have multiple ways to expand the meta-programs or even to change them if we so desire. I have seven patterns for doing this in the most recent edition of *Figuring Out People* (2005).

By way of contrast, Buckingham does not see these things as changeable. He interprets them as "identity" and a person's "essence:"

"A person's drive is not changeable. What drives him is decided by his mental filter, by the relative strength or weakness of the highways in his mind. His drives are his striving talents." (91)

[About some people] "... They are not competitive. ... it is simply who they *are*."

[About talents] "They are your very essence." (98)

Then, just when he makes this point, he shifts and writes the following:

"None of this implies that a person cannot change. Everyone can change. Everyone can learn. Everyone can get a little better. The language of skills, knowledge, and talents helps a manager identify where radical change is possible and where it is not." (92)

Okay, so we can "get a little better!" And it would entail "radical change." Undoubtedly getting the right fit between our talents—our inner gifts and predispositions with our role is important.

And just as important is clarity of definition of what we mean by “talent” as well as having the tools to create not only performance change, but developmental and even transformational change. Here’s to your competency as a Meta-Coach Change Agent!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #20**  
**June 10, 2009**

## COACHING WITH APG

Recently several Meta-Coaches have asked about various patterns for different clients and contexts and most of the time I referred back to the 14 patterns of APG. Reflecting on that I thought it might be a good idea to highlight the value of the 14 coaching patterns in the APG (Coaching Genius) course. So here goes.

The following comes from the back of *Ultimate Self-Actualization Workshop training manual*. I wrote it originally an appendix to highlight the **Self-Actualizing Process by using the Accessing Personal Genius (APG)** patterns.

What is the heart of the APG training? It is to learn how to use your self-reflexive consciousness to create your levels (psycho-logical levels) of meaning. And when you can do that (!), you can set up frames for your personal mastery or “genius” state, you can unleash new potentials, and you can create the foundation for creating all kinds of wonderful experiences. And that’s why APG is the flagship of Neuro-Semantics.

As providing 14 coaching patterns, APG facilitates the coaching of self-actualization in your clients in many ways. You can use it to facilitate the removing of interferences that a client might have to his or her growth. You can use it to unleash new potentials for excellence in your clients. The following identifies the 14 patterns and the 21 meta-stating processes.

### *Accessing Personal Genius*

### *Self-Actualization Factors*

#### **DAY 1: INTRODUCING META-STATES**

##### **1) Power Zone**

- 1) *Awareness and acknowledgment*
- 2) *Ownership (“mine”)*
- Responsibility For / To

Access a client’s *powers* for self-actualization. Enable the client to accept and own personal responsibility for taking charge of his or her life. Help them develop an internal reference for being the “author” of life, the creator of meaning and so response-able. This builds up the states of proactivity, taking initiative, and being responsive to life’s challenges.

##### **2) Self**

- 3) *Acceptance*                      Self-acceptance
- 4) *Appreciation*                    Self-appreciation

Enable your client to move beyond the lower needs for self-regard. Help them get their ego

5) *Awe*                      Self-esteem  
                                         Self-efficacy

out of the way.  
Facilitate self-forgetfulness so your client can step into the flow zone where “self” goes away. This builds up self-efficacy so your client can come to trust themselves in new ways.

### 3) Confirmation and dis-confirmation

6) *Confirmation — Yes*

Facilitate a powerful *Yes* frame for life, self, and others. This enables clients to bring value into their personal space and fill life with good things.

7) *Dis-Confirmation — No*

Establish personal boundaries and clarity about what’s acceptable and unacceptable.  
Enhance powers of choice and decision.

### 4) Pleasure

8) *Pleasure, joy, fun, playfulness*

Take charge of pleasuring to enable your client to elicit states of ecstasy, adventure, curiosity, wonder, awe, joy, happiness at will. Experience more of the *being*-values of self-actualization.

## DAY 2: CLEARING THE PATHWAY

### 1) Emotions

1) *Limitation of meaning: “Just”*

Acceptance; Acknowledgment

Acknowledge and perceive reality as it is thereby developing a clear perception of reality. Develop the emotional security that will promote emotional intelligence.

### 2) Concepts

2) *Suspension of meaning*

3) *Quality Control*

Discovery of how we construct meaning and our matrices of meaning

Explore the meanings your client has created. This facilitates giving more choice. Recognize the cultural and conventional meanings that make up their matrix of meanings. Facilitate the client’s meaning-making skills to create a new matrix of meaning to enhance life.

### 3) Dancing with Dragons

Name, acknowledge

4) *Permission*: embrace, acceptance

5) *Analyze: index specificity*

Starve: “No,” stubbornness.

Frame: meta-state with resources

Eliminate toxic states of mind and emotion that interfere with self-actualization. Stop turning thoughts/ emotions against oneself. Transform energies for productive engagement. Fully embrace one’s humanity and fallibility.

### 4) Mind\to-Muscle

6) *Implementation*: coach the body to feel  
Commission the body to feel great ideas

*Feed-forwarding information* so it becomes “energy” for action in the real

Integration of ideas into body, the embodiment of ideas and beliefs that your client knows intellectually and wants to embody. This enhances personal congruence and authenticity.

world.

### 5) Miracle

7) *Pretend: as if frame*  
Different kind of thinking

Stepping out of the old Matrix

Facilitate the creativity of your client's imagination for brainstorming new possibilities. Using possibility thinking for opening up new areas for self-actualization.

## DAY 3: CREATING A GENIUS STATE OF FLOW

### 1) Intentionality

1) *Intentionality: positive intention*  
Align attention to intention  
2) *Self-organizing attractor*

Choosing desired outcomes for self-actualization. Using one's highest intention to set a pathway of living the *Being*-values. This connection intention with attention giving a person a laser-beam focus and brings motivation back to things that are otherwise a chore and takes a lot of effort.

### 2) Genius Pattern

3) *Step in and out: impeccable state shifts*  
Focus, flow, peak experience  
4) *Commission Executive Mind*  
Return to senses, lose mind

Enable the flow or peak experience. Enrich your client's here-and-now awareness. Experience the loss of time, space, others, world. Develop more of your client's *Being*-cognition.

### 3) Excuse Blow-Out

5) *Discern: reason or excuse*  
Choice: Yes or No  
Value: keep what's valuable, appreciation

Facilitate your client to choose to live his or her values. Enhance their determination and persistence for becoming unstoppable in following passions and making them real.

### 4) Spinning Icons

6) *Trust unconscious mind for answer*  
Acknowledge drives and needs  
Positive Intention  
Agreement frame for congruence

Developing more congruency and authenticity. Eliminating unconscious internal conflicts.

### 5) Alignment

Full range of power and elegance  
7) *Potentiality of behavior, peak performance*  
Coaching a behavior with the resources of your higher mind.

Facilitate your client to have more congruency with his or her full mind-body resources. Alignment of one's highest intentions with behavioral attentions and moving toward peak performances in one's skills.

*In the next Meta-Coach Reflection, I'll describe some of the psychology behind APG so that you'll have that awareness to inform your choice of patterns and processes to use in your coaching.*

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #21**  
**June 17, 2009**

## **THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND APG**

When you coach using the patterns of APG you are using some of the distinctions that I found and developed from Developmental Psychology. This is the psychology that informs us about how we humans grow and develop over our lifespan. It is the psychology of our psycho-sexual development, our psycho-social development, our cognitive development, our faith development, our moral development, and so on. It is the psychology developed by Piaget, Eric Erickson, Fowler, and many others.

*Why is this important and how does it relate to APG?* It's important because one of the key *interferences* that prevent people from unleashing their highest potentials involves how human beings can get stuck at various stages of development. For example, people can so easily get stuck when they don't recognize or claim their innate powers for responding. Or they can get stuck when they don't value, accept, and appreciate themselves. Or they can get stuck when they don't know how to enjoy and endow things with joy and pleasure.

Stuck experiences as these indicate parenting errors. That's why I'm always quipping that "if your parents didn't go to 'Parent 101' or didn't pass Parenting 101" —then maybe you mis-learned things or learned stupid things. Maybe you learned that "power" is a bad thing. That saying "Mine" means that you are selfish and in danger of narcissism. That you are not allowed to say "no." That saying "yes" will only lead to disappointment.

As a Meta-Coach I'm sure that you are anticipating where I'm going with this—to the patterns of APG which then reveals that these patterns essentially puts a person through the developmental stages again. That is, if a person didn't complete any stage of development, the patterns can be used for coaching to facilitate completing those states. That's why I like explaining that *the patterns of APG recapitulates human development*.

Meta-Stating yourself or your client with *awareness* and *ownership* of your response powers establishes the foundation for taking charge of your life, running your own brain, and becoming a fully response-able person. Out of that you can build states of proactivity, taking the initiative, and smart risk taking—foundational states for being an entrepreneur and taking on the challenges of unleashing one's highest and best.

For the context of coaching, we know that coaching clients need to be operating from this frame to pursue their hopes and visions. Without the foundational state of "power" (empowerment), does your client need coaching or therapy? Does your client just need to recapitulate his or her development history and set great frames for personal empowerment or is there something else in

the way? This same applies to the meta-stating of *self*. Does your coaching client have a strong sense of self—one that he or she accepts, appreciates, and values? If not, then the first thing to do as a coach is to facilitate the development of a robust sense of self— of the ego-strength to face and take on the challenges of life.

For most people, doing this is just a matter of setting the frames and facilitating the meta-stating. For many coaching clients, it is just a matter of doing it and completing the developmental stage. Others may have to find a good therapist and work through the traumas, or whatever has interfered with their full and vibrant development as a person. For some coaching clients, who have spent a life-time trying to be “a somebody,” the meta-stating acceptance, appreciation, and awe (esteem) completely and absolutely transforms everything. It wasn’t that there was some trauma interfering. It was just that no one had ever facilitated this set of rich and liberating meta-states. Now how much is that worth? Suddenly, they realize that they don’t need to prove anything, but everything to express by living fully.

The Psychology of the APG patterns is that of creating a foundation for a person to be unleashed to their mastery and excellence. Identifying the prerequisites of “genius” —the APG patterns enable you to facilitate that foundation. Think of the patterns on Day 1 of APG as “primes.” The most essential states out of which more complex states arise. That’s why I always emphasize on Day 1 the child-like development pieces as captured in the words: “Mine!” “Yes!” “No!” and “Ahhhh!” (for pleasure). In Day 1 patterns you are playing the roles of Awakener and Challenger of positive change.

Using Day 2 meta-stating patterns focus on *clearing the path* and especially around 3 big human problems: emotions, concepts, and mis-applied reflexivity. In APG we use the morning and early afternoon for de-loading the *semantic load* on:

- *Emotions*: as if they were the most important thing in the world, they are *just* emotions and not commands from heaven.
- *Concepts*: as if an “idea” or “thought” or “understanding” was real; it is *just* a map about things.
- *Mis-applied Reflexivity*: negative thoughts and emotions *turned against* oneself as if they were inner demons or dragons, they are *just* thoughts-and-feelings (states) turned against oneself.

You can use these patterns for coaching whenever your client is stuck in strong emotional states, in experiences where they get their “buttons” pushed and they feel controlled, dis-empowered, and helpless, and/or when they are their own worst enemy—angering at themselves, fearing themselves, shaming themselves, guiltning their experiences, etc. These are things to be *unleashed from!*

The afternoon of Day 2 returns to patterns for being *Unleashed Toward!* Two patterns, first Mind-to-Muscle for taking Great Concepts (wonderful principles, truism facts) that the person already knows but cannot get him or herself to *do*. Now it is feed-forwarding time! Now your coaching facilitates them to take the great mental map *and feed that information forward into*

*their body and then out into the world in their two powers of speech and action.* This is where you coach them to “coach the body to *feel* the great idea.” And when you do that — you perform magic! You are meta-stating them to become an Implementor—someone who executes what they know. You turn them into an action-oriented person who applies what he or she knows and so closes the knowing-doing gap. Now the semantics in the mind become neurological patterns in the body. Now you are truly Neuro-Semantic Coach!

Day 2 ends with the Miracle Pattern— this meta-state pattern enables you to coach the meta-stating of possibility thinking. Here you facilitate people who have been so stuck now to give themselves a chance to try on an entirely different kind of thinking-feeling that will open up new vistas of possibilities. Here you become the Awakener of the transformations that they can now make real in their lives.

Day 3 of APG has two parts. First the meta-stating of focus, concentration, and the “genius” state of absolute engagement. So you meta-state intentionality to bring value and semantic loadedness to what the person “knows” is important, but does not *feel* it as important. Now you coach that linkage by taking them into their own meta-land of intentionality. Afterwards, you get them up — walking, talking, and feeling in their body the stance of intentionality. Here you are the Actualizer as you mind-to-muscle intentionality into their attentions to blow-out ADD!

You then set all of the frames for your client to step in and out of “the zone of flow” — their optimal state and to have that genius state at their command. This is the ultimate self-actualization state— the engagement state that incorporates their laser-beam focus of concentration. When I did that with writing, I blew-out the writer’s block state and unleashed myself to become a prolific writer. You can too.

The second part of Day 3 is clean-up for absolute alignment and congruence. There are 3 patterns for this: Excuse Blow-Out, Spinning Icons, and Meta-Alignment. Once again you return to “concepts” and “ideas” that the person may use to excuse themselves from excellence and by meta-stating the distinction between a real and legitimate reason and a silly excuse that will undermine self-actualization, you coach the person to feel in their body *the Choice* and become the Actualizer who enables them to make the Choice. What will they do? Which will they say Yes to? Which will they say No to?

Then for all of their many “parts” that may pull them into different directions, you can use their vestibular sensory system to create a dis-equilibrium. Spin them around and around until their larger mind outside of awareness (the “unconscious” mind) comes up with a resolution. And you can use the Meta-Alignment pattern to pull the higher levels of their reflexive mind to self-organize one behavior with the laser-beam power of focus.

So there you are—the 14 patterns of *Coaching Genius* alias APG (or Self-Leadership) gives you a psychology and foundation for coaching that makes you a Self-Actualization Coach. Now you can coach performance, development, and transformation. So who would like to re-visit an APG course? Did you get all of that the last time you attended APG? To you fully accessing personal genius!



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #22**  
**June 24, 2009**

## **APG COACHING PACKAGES**

Did you know that you can use your *Coaching Genius* training (APG) as a Coaching Package? You can and here's how.

The most obvious Coaching Package that you can create from the 14-patterns of APG is to *Coach Genius States or Personal Mastery*. Invite your client to identify the “genius” state of being “in the zone” and experiencing “flow” at will, one that will make a big difference in his or her life. Then ask a series of questions as part of your “need analysis” conversation with your client:

- Where, when, and with whom do you want to be in the zone?
- What will be the results and benefits of that?
- To what degree can you do that now?
- How valuable would it be to have the genius state at your command?
- What will you miss if you don't develop this skill and unleash this possibility?
- How much has the lack of this skill already cost you?

Another coaching package with the APG patterns is that of *Focus— laser-beam focus and concentration*. This frame looks at the 14 patterns in terms of developing *the ability to get one's attentions do service to one's intentions*. So begin with asking questions about your client's need for focused attention and where the experience of “attention deficient” undermines his or her success.

- What do you need to focus on with a laser-beam concentration?
- In what area do you seem to experience ADD?
- What difference would the power of a focused attention make for you?

Another idea is to package some of the patterns as *Coaching for Un-interruptability*. I did that once with a company in Colorado. I worked with a local newspaper company and all of the people “on the floor.” That meant everybody who worked in the main room where there were scores of small cubicle desks and where the noise level and the interruption level was very intense. In an employee satisfaction survey, everybody complained about the noise and the constant interruptions and credit it as the their cause for stress and dissatisfaction with their job.

Against that need, I packaged the solution as a group training / coaching for *Un-Interruptability*. I then facilitated experiences through the patterns of Power Zone; Responsibility to/for; Setting Frames (Meta-Stating), Pleasure Frames, Permission Frames, Matrix Remapping, Principle Embodiment, Intentionality, Un-Interruptability (Genius pattern), etc. Un-Interrupt-ability offers the competency of not losing focus when an interrupt occurs, but staying focused in spite of it or

being able to quickly take care of the issue of the interruption, and then return to one's focused task.

Another coaching package to develop could go under the theme of *Self-Leadership*. This is how Colin Cox, Lena Gray, and Andrew Bryant have packaged their APG trainings. And this picks up on the fact that “apply to self” is built into the Meta-States Model because the model is all about handling our self-reflexive consciousness. Using the 14 patterns of APG as a *Self-Leadership Coaching Package* answers the need for leading oneself— and following one's own directions in “getting you to *do* what you already know to do.”

Do you know things now that would make a big difference in your life if only you could get yourself to *do* those things?

How big is the knowing-doing gap for you?

What rich and exciting semantic ideas would you like to embody so that they in-form and govern how you move through life?

Then there is the *Unleashing Personal Potentials* coaching program that you could develop with the 14 APG patterns. I mentioned this in a previous Meta-Coach Reflection. You can find the details for this in the back of the *Ultimate Self-Actualization Workshop* Training Manual. With this package, your needs analysis conversation would explore the potentials that the person wants to identify and unleash and then show how the *Unleashing Potentials / Self-Actualization coaching program* would facilitate that.

Then there is the new packaging that you could do around *Personal Power Coaching*. Two or three of Neuro-Semantic Trainers (Telana in South Africa and Jan in New Zealand) have already trained the APP: Accessing Personal Power workshop as a one-day training and used the APP training manual. This primarily uses the patterns from day 1 of APG.

As you can see, there are numerous ways to package and re-package the APG patterns as a Meta-Coach for various *Coaching Programs*. It's really up to your niche, market, and creativity. So as you can take the *Coaching to the Matrix* materials and customize it to a great range of subjects, you can do the same with the APG patterns.

And as you do—let us know what you are doing and how it is working. Once you create a program; you can then create some passive income by offering it to other Meta-Coaches. Then instead of others having to re-invent the computer, they can use your program and pay you \$5 USD royalties every time they use it. That's what *the principle of abundance* and *the principle of collaboration* can do.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #23**  
**July 2, 2009**

## **KPIs and META-QUESTIONS**

I received the first two questions a few days ago from one of our Meta-Coaches and Team Leaders in Mexico, Maru Martinez about the role of meta-questions in getting a KPI. Because these are great questions, I've written a Coaching Conversation to answer them.

- Can you use the core coaching skill of asking meta-questions to get a KPI with your client?
- Can you use the core coaching skill of inducing state to get a KPI?
- If these core coaching skills can set a session's outcome, how do we use them to create an effective KPI?
- And what is a KPI anyway? Do these really exist?

Yes, there is such a thing as a *key performance indicator* of goals and outcomes! There truly are *indicators* that you and your client can rely upon to point to and use as measurements for successfully reaching desired outcomes from a coaching session or a coaching program. Such *indicators* will be *tangible signs* that indicate the achievement of the goal. This is important because most of the things we deal with in coaching are *intangible*.

These intangibles can be skills, emotions, or personality traits:

*Skills:* leadership, delegating, entrepreneur-ing, marketing, selling, creating rapport, using humor respectfully, managing your schedule, etc.

*Emotions:* self-esteem, confidence in a skill, resilience, optimism, playfulness, curiosity, love, forgiveness, etc.

*Personality traits:* charisma, responsible, accountable, proactive, thoughtful (mindful), loyalty, trustworthy, etc.

As a Meta-Coach you have already experienced *tangible indicators of intangible things* and you did everyday of the coaching bootcamp when you were benchmarked on the core coaching skills. The "feedback form" that you learned as the meta-person when you watched a coaching session and then used when you began giving feedback and the form that the team leaders used to benchmark your skills is full of *behavioral indicators of those intangible skills*.

For example, how do you know that someone is "listening?" The sub-skills of listening direct our attention to:

Able to repeat your specific words.

Able to track what you said through the session from beginning to the end.

Use encouragers like head nods, hmmm, ahs, etc. as client speaks.

Uses eyes to "listen" by looking at client, keeping eyes on client, commenting on gestures and movements, and other bodily expressions.

Now suppose you are coaching someone who wants to “listen better.” Perhaps the client says, “I become a more active listener.” Is that a KPI? If not, then how do you facilitate the conversation so that you can transform that into a useable KPI for your coaching session? **For practice — STOP here and answer these questions in your mind before you continue reading.**

Here is the diagram that I sent in Meta-Coach Reflection #17. It sorts out, from the bottom upward, the 10 qualities or features of a well-formed outcome. Using this format, I will begin with #1, then go to #3 and so on in the Coaching Conversation that I have invented here. The numbered states is what *the Coach says*, the indented line afterwards is *the Client’s* response.

**System:** \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Ecology \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is this good for all of you; in every aspect of your life?

**Meaning:** \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Compelling \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Evidence \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do you really want this? How will you know?

**Power:** \_\_\_\_\_ 5 Self-Initiated \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Steps \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Resources \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is this something *you* can do? Do you know the steps? How many? Need any resources?

**When?** \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Time \_\_\_\_\_ Time frame/ schedule

**Where?** \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Context \_\_\_\_\_ In what contexts? With whom?  
**Others:**

**Content:**  
**State:**

1. Stated positively	2. Sensory
What do you want?	What will it look like and sound like?

**A Coaching Conversation**

1) “So you want to become a more active listener? That’s what you want, right? (Yes.) Where? With whom?”

With my business clients and also my colleagues at work.

2) Okay, anyone else? Friends, family, children, anyone else? [#3]

No, I think I do okay there, it is at work that I seem to be so busy, and interrupted so much that I don’t listen very well, and it keeps coming back to bite me in the butt.

3) So it is at work that you want this. Okay. And is it with *all* of your clients and *all* of your colleagues, or are there specific persons that you find this challenging? [#3]

No, it’s with all of them. Some are harder, but it is with how I listen at work.

4) So there's some things about the work context that makes being an active listener challenging for you in a way that it is not challenging at home, with friends, and children? (Yes.) So does that mean that *you* [#5] know how to listen in an active way [#6] and that you have the resources to do that? [#7]

Yes, I can do it. Just at work with all the interruptions and all of the time and deadline pressures, it's just so hard. And the feedback I've gotten from my manager is now putting more pressure on me.

5) Great! So we don't need to work on *the capacity* of 'active learning.' You already have that capacity! It is just in the pressure context of work. [#3 context] (Right.) And so you already know what 'being an active listener will look like, sound like, and be like behaviorally? [#2] (Yes.) So describe that for me...

Well, I'll pay more attention to the person I'm talking to, you know, look at him and be patient ...

6) 'Be patient ...?' How do you do that? [#2 -> #6]

Well, hmmm. I don't know. I guess breathing slower. Not tapping my pencil...

7) Okay, good. What else?

Ahhhh, I guess maybe by repeating his words.

8) His exact words or paraphrasing?

I guess both.

9) So paraphrasing his words and putting them into *your words* would indicate that you are 'being an active listener' for you?

Well, when you put it that way, then no. I guess using *his words*.

10) Okay, so what you want is to be able to look at the person, breathe slower, not tap your pencil, and use his exact words. How much do you want that? Is that important to you? [Shift to #8 Compelling— and asking meta-questions.]

Yes, sure.

11) Really? You don't sound like you *really really want* this. Do you? (Yes I do.) How much? How much on a scale from 0 to 10? [State induction with #8]

Hmmmm. I suppose a 7.

12) Okay. Is that enough? Do you need more of a desire for this in order to do this? (Yeah I do.) Okay, great — how much?

I need it to be a 9 or 10 in order to actually do this at work in that context.

13) Okay, a 9 or 10. So if this is important for you, what do you get from this? Why is this important? [More meta-questions to amplify #8.] ... (pause) ... So you say it is important to be an active listener, *why*?

Well, to *hear* what my clients really want.

14) And that's important to you? (Sure.) Why? Why is that important? What do you get from that? [More meta-questions for #8 Compelling.]

They know that I'm with them, they know I'm treating them as an important person. And then I'll be more successful in my role.

15) Is that important? (Sure.) Why?

So that I achieve my best.

16) Is that important? (*Sure it is!*) Really? (Yes!) Great. So where are you now? [State induction of a compelling state.]

That's a 9!

17) And that's enough? (Yes.) Good. So when do you want this? When do you want to become an "active listener" at work by looking at your clients, breathing slowly, not tapping your pencil, and repeating his exact words so that you increase your success at work and achieve your best? [#4]

Well, now. (Laughter). Ah, I don't know.

18) What would be the most important thing that we could work on in this session so that by the end of this session you will have really invested your time, money, and effort well? What do you want by the end of this session? [Direct KPI question.]

Well, I'd become a better, more active listener if I could deal with the stress at work, the interruptions, the pressure.

19) And do *you* [#5] know *how* to do that? [#6]

No, that's what I don't know.

20) So is that what we should address in this session? (Nods head yes.) Should we come up with a number of ways that you can handle the stressful context so that you can apply your active listening capacity?

Yes, that would be great!

21) How great? [Meta-question for state induction for #8.]

That would be a 10! That's what I need!

22) So how many ways would you want to discover by the end of this session?

How about 3?

23) Yes, how about 3? Would you like that? Would that be valuable to you for enhancing your listening skills at work? [#10]

Yes, definitely.

24) So by the end of this session you will have identified 3 ways to deal with the stressful context that is currently interfering with your ability to be an active listener? (Yes.) And how will you know that you have 3 ways? (Pause) Would you list them off verbally, would you have them written out on a sheet, will you have mind-mapped them, how will you know? [Menu list of possibilities.]

I'll jot them down on a sheet of paper.

25) So by the end of this session if you have 3 ways to deal with the stressful context at work written down ... then we can check off that this session has been valuable to you? (Right.) And that's realistic? (Yes! Of course.) So we're ready to work on that?

Yes!

### **Debriefing**

An effective coaching session begins with a *Needs Analysis Conversation*—you find out what your client needs—and wants. This creates the driving *energy* of the session—the client *wants* something—wants to be, have, experience something other than the present state. But what? What is the desired state that your client wants? Whatever the desired state—what will your client have to *do* to get to that desired state? What is stopping or interfering with your client *doing* that now? What is the problem? What will *solve* that problem? How much of that solution can you develop with the client during the session? And what will be the indicators that you have developed some, or all, of that solution by the end of the session? That will be the KPI.

By asking questions about the well-formed outcome distinctions and reiterating these questions again and again (that's what makes the conversation a dance), you co-create with your client the KPI for the session. The frames I used in the above “coaching conversation” are the following.

- First find the needs—the problem that needs a solution (1-5).  
What's the problem? What's the real problem versus the presenting problem?
- Focus on the most important need or want of your client.  
What's the most transformative change that you'd like to get from this session?
- Refuse to get side-tracked by words, phrases, interesting metaphors (2).  
Is this relevant to what you really want?
- Do not start coaching until you have a “signed contract” (that you verbally co-create).  
Ask yourself:  
Am I jumping in and trying to solve a presenting problem without checking it out and detailing the specifics?
- Keep checking the client's reality (3).  
Do you want that? Do you know how? How much do you already have this? Is that a problem for you?
- Be a sculpturer by keep chipping away at everything *not* to do (5).  
What specifically do you know that?
- Detail the specifics of a process (5–10).

What are the specifics of that?

- Use meta-questions to get and/or create energy in the client (11-16, 21).  
Do you believe *you* can do that? Is that outcome important to you? What is the value that you get from that value?
- Ask the KPI question directly as many times as you need to (18) and summarize to get your contract for the coaching conversation (24-25).
- Empower the client to set the agenda for the conversation (20) and keep awakening him or her to what they really, really want.

In the following, I have put the questions so they form a *funnel* (the diagram we use in Meta-Coaching):

**What?**

1. State in the positive: What do you want?
2. Sensory-based: What will it look like, sound like, what are the kinesthetic features of it?

**Where?**

3. Contextualized: In what context do you want that outcome?

**When?**

4. Time: When do you want it? How long do you think it will take to get it?

**How?**

5. Self-initiated: Can you launch out and make this happen? Is it within your power-zone?
6. Steps and stages: How many steps will it take? Do you know the steps to get to your outcome? What steps do you not know yet?
7. Resources: Do you have the resources to reach your outcome and make it real?

**Why? What mean?**

8. Compelling: Is it compelling? Do you *really* want it? How much? Why?
9. Evidence: How will you know when you reach your outcome? What will let you know?

**Valuable holistically?**

10. Ecology: Does the outcome fit and align with all of your relationships and aspects of you?



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #24**  
**July 8, 2009**

## **IF YOU HAD BEEN MICHAEL JACKSON'S COACH!**

When I first heard the announcement that Michael Jackson had died, I felt that it was sad and tragic death. It was also shocking; I didn't expect it at all. And yet, in the end, it was just a death, the death of a celebrity. And in many ways a death like so many deaths of Hollywood people and entertainers full of high drama. It reminded me of Elvis' death in 1977. I was there. Well, not in Graceland, but it just so happened that I was in Memphis that August when news of his death came, and having seen him on TV when he got really fat in his Los Vegas specials, and hearing all about the drug use, it didn't surprise me.

I don't know how the news media where you live handled his death, but here in the United States from the Thursday that Jackson died, the news here was completely dominated by Michael Jackson. And at first I was interested in what happened and some of the reviews of his life. Although even on that day I thought it strange that Farrah Facett was given almost no coverage even though she also died that same day. At first I figured it was a slow news day and after two weeks about all the news of the riots and protests in Iran, well, perhaps people were tiring of that.

But then the next day it was again all about Michael Jackson. "Maybe he's more famous than I realized. Of course, the interest could be from his child molestation trials and his weird choice about having children sleep in his bed with him, and all the wild spending sprees." And then a third day, and the fourth day and so it went for a week, then a week-and-a-half and every single night, hour after hour on CNN, BCC, NBC, and most of the other stations—almost all of the news was about Michael Jackson.

I began wondering, "What gives with all of this?" He was a musician—a singer and dancer. An entertainer. And I like many of his songs, although I had always thought there was something schizophrenic about his soft demeanor in the interviews as he would speak with his tiny little voice and the contrast with his DVDs and their wild names—Thriller, Bad, Dangerous—and his rough and jerky dancing and sometimes his "bad boy" mannerisms. Seemed dark and strange to me, very different from his original Jackson Five days.

I guess what suddenly got my attention was one of his fans who emotionally exploded on CNN saying that "There are 20,000 fans in the UK ready to come to LA for his funeral." 20,000!?" "Twenty-thousand?" I wondered. All around the world in this year of recession I hear about NLP trainings being cancelled, and here are 20,000 people who want to fly to another country to attend a funeral of all things! Then a day or so later, I heard that 1,500,000 people had signed on the website to get tickets to the funeral.

Now we're talking about *a funeral*, right? And we're not talking about a president or a prime minister, we're not talking about a hero who saved a dozen people in a fire or war or crashed plane, we're talking about a singer and dancer. We're talking about a drug addict, out-of-control, spend-a-holic, pretty neurotic person who really didn't do anything out of the ordinary except create his style of entertainment. Now as I write that, I know it sounds harsh, and yet when I think about what Michael Jackson has done for others, for the human condition, I'm hard put to write anything. For someone who had more than a billion dollars in resources, what contributions did he make for others?

Sure he had a talent for singing and dancing, but his life was pretty much out-of-control (kind of like Elvis and lots of other Hollywood types). It now seems that he was pretty neurotic thinking that he was ugly and needed one face surgery after another. It seems that he would go on spending sprees spending millions on himself and Neverland. Psychologically and personally, he was no role model. Who would trust him with their children? And after dangling his own little boy off a balcony in Germany, there were questions about the safety of his own children.

Now suppose you got a chance to coach Michael Jackson. Suppose he showed up for a coaching session with *you*. Suppose the king of pop sat in your coaching room. How would you have gone about the process? How would you have started a needs analysis conversation with him? Or awaken him to his potentials and possibilities? Or to the things interfering with his potentials?

On the surface you might think of him as a high functioning person—he kept his job as a singer and dancer for four decades, he had married (twice I think), had children, made lots of money. Yet as a coach you have to see beyond and below the surface. Would you have? Would you have discovered some of the little problems: inability to sleep without pills, dislike of his face and multiple surgeries and skin bleaching, fear of disapproval, addiction to being loved by his fans, and so on? Would you have found out about some of the larger things like the accusations of being a child molester?

How would you have engaged him to flush out something transformational to work on? How would you have awakened him to possibilities or challenged him to dangers to reckon with?

On the surface he seemed to have everything— success, fame, money, adoring fans, influence. But did he? Yet he lived his inner life addicted to prescription drugs, fearful, insecure, depressed, and psychologically crippled in several ways. Seeing the clips of him as a young man, I thought he was good looking and charismatic and yet something within him created a dislike, maybe even a self-hatred of his looks. Was it that he wanted physical perfection? Yet with every surgery, he looked more weird, and worse. He seemed to never make peace with his dad and somehow developed a Peter Pan syndrome of refusing to grow up and wanting to play with children. In one interview, when this came up, he said, “I am Peter Pan.”

What could a Meta-Coach have offered Michael Jackson? Would you have started with the acceptance pattern? The unconditional self-esteem pattern? Maybe you would have facilitated

the releasing of the past or the forgiveness pattern? What would you have done? Just a thought for your reflection.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #25**  
**July 15, 2009**

## **POST-COACHING QUESTIONNAIRE**

If *feedback* is one of the great secrets of success, then how much feedback are you getting on a regular basis? In an earlier Reflection, I spoke about the value of simply asking your clients during and at the end of a session for some feedback.

How are things going?

Are we getting to the heart of things?

Do you feel that I'm effectively facilitating the coaching process in a way that will lead to the transformation you want or the unleashing that you desire?

And if the giving and receiving of feedback are core coaching skills—skills absolutely necessary for a professional coach and for continually taking your skills to ever-increasing levels of expertise, then feedback on your skills really should not end with the Coaching Bootcamp of Module III. So where to get more feedback? Obviously, the practice groups of the Meta-Coach Chapter meetings is an excellent place. And here's another idea and one that I think would give you, as a professional coach, a way to continue developing and shaping your skills. The idea? Create and use a Post-Coaching Questionnaire.

There many ways to use a Post-Coaching Questionnaire. Most obviously, you could send it out a week or two after the coaching program as a way of gathering overall feedback. Or you send it out at various times during the coaching, half way through a program, once a month, or you could even have one for each session. You could also customize the questionnaire so that it focuses the feedback on a specific skill or criteria.

Here is an example of some of the core questions that you can use.

### ***Post-Coaching Questionnaire***

In the field of Meta-Coaching we see high quality feedback as a central process for shaping behavior and developing expertise. High quality feedback is precise and specific, empirical and sensory-based, relevant to outcome, and timely. And as we use this self-actualizing tool in the coaching process, we also seek it during and after coaching sessions in order to improve our expertise in coaching. That's the reason for this Questionnaire. As a gift back to your coach, would you complete the following questions regarding your coaching experience?

### **Your Experience of Coaching**

What was your primary reason for coaching?

What goal (goals) did you set to achieve with your coach?

Did you achieve your goals?

Did your goals change during the coaching?  
What new or refined skills do you come away with?  
What potentials did the coaching unleash in you?  
What was the primary benefit or value that you received from the coaching?

### **Coaching Processes**

What process (or processes) worked the best for you?  
What process (or processes) did not work for you?  
What made the most difference to you and to your outcomes?  
What there anything that interfered with the process?

### **The Coaching Relationship**

How would you evaluate the relationship you and your coach developed?  
 Felt Supported  
 Felt a sense of Safety  
 Felt Respected  
 Felt Challenged

### **Your Coach**

What are the 3 best skills and/or states that you noticed in your coach?  
What skills or states would enable your coach to develop his or her skills to the next level of expertise?

Imagine sending that out or handing that to your clients on a regular basis. Would that be an act of courage for you? What would be the best state for you to be in to give and receive a feedback form like that? What would you have to believe about feedback that would empower you to do this? What decision do you need to make?

To your highest and best

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #26**  
**July 22, 2009**

## **DO YOU HAVE THE LOOK?**

I picked three. I could have picked just one or perhaps 10, but I picked three—three coaches. The firm I was working with in Canada wanted to hire me to be available once a month to them, but I said no. I would not have wanted to do that even if I could. So they asked if I would recommend some local coaches for them who would continue the process I had begun by coaching their senior managers as well as any and all of their people who wanted coaching. That created a problem for me! We do not have a single Meta-Coach in Toronto, Canada.

Later in April, I was back in Toronto for the Canadian Association of NLP and presented a two day training on *Transformational Coaching*. And in that training I introduced and demonstrated the use of four of the models that we use in Meta-Coaching: Meta-States, Axes of Change, Matrix, and the Self-Actualization Quadrants. Then when the 60 or so that were there were involved in the exercises and practices, I watched people and thereby began “interviewing” them on the sly. Sneaky, right?

I would listen in to determine their skill level, I would watch for their ability to create “relationship” with the person they were working with (listening and supporting). I would listen for their ability to ask great questions—transformational questions, explorational questions, meta-questions, precision questions, and coaching-moment questions. I would listen and watch for how they handled emotions, induced states, and facilitated their client to fully *experience* whatever it is that they were working on. And I watched for how they would receive feedback from their client, adjust their response, and how they would give feedback.

Later I would engage in “small talk” with participants to find out who lived in the area, if they had a coaching business, their background in NLP, their openness to the Meta-Coach models of Neuro-Semantics, and their look.

Their look? Yes, their *look as a coach*. Do they look like a coach? Do they carry themselves as a self-actualization coach? Do they speak and interact like a mind-to-muscle, Neuro-Semantic coach? Do they speak with a voice that can induce state and hold a getting-to-the-heart of things fierce conversation? Their look.

Later I decided on three, got all their information, and gave them a heads-up about the organization. Recently I returned to the firm in Toronto and found out that they had brought in one coach and liked him. As I interviewed some of the managers and people in various departments I made recommendations on what they could work on to unleash potentials with that coach and then spent time with that coach sharing my recommendations.

“How did you like the coach?” I asked those who met him and twice I was told that he “looked” like a coach. Smiling wryly I asked, “And what, praytell, does a *coach* look like?” Talk about a conversational stopper! That question did it, completely brought the conversation to a halt and induced stuttering!

One of the updates in the Meta-Coach Training this year is the way we are facilitating the daily *introductions*. If we start from the frame that *you* are your best *business card*, then what if you thought about your introduction as your *Living Business Card*? Hmmm. *You*—living, breathing, standing, talking, smiling, looking, engaging, conversing, questioning, being— *you* as a business card! Now imagine that. Do you have the look? The sound? The voice? The walk? The eyes?

Coaching you to *be* the business *value* that you offer —leveraging frames for transformational change, awakening and unleashing people to their highest potentials, empowering and equipping them to access and develop their innate gifts and talents and turning them into skills and expertise for reaching peak performance — what if *you* fully and completely *become* that value? Then instead of handing a business card with contact details, the way you shake hands, gaze into their eyes, speak to their needs and wants, stand and “look” becomes your *contact information* that they will find irresistible.

So, do you have the look? The look is more than just your dress and how you hold yourself, although it does involve that. You’ve got to look professional if you want to be professional. The look is more than just the P.R. that you send before you arrive, the look is more than just first impressions.

*The look is everything about how you operate from the self-actualizing stance as you look at the person and see the sacred within him or her and stand in awe of the incredible privilege that would arise if you got to be the Morpheus for that person as he or she becomes “the one” in his or her own Matrix!*

Are you ready for the look? Are you ready to be coached to become your own best business card? You know the process. So get to one of the Meta-Coach practice groups; join your local MCF chapter, or create one, and begin to coach each other for *the look!*

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #27**  
**July 29, 2009**

## GETTING TO THE HEART OF THINGS

You probably have noticed that I am constantly talking about “getting to the heart of things.” I didn’t realize just how much I talk about that or even use that phrase, not for a long time. Then I began getting feedback about my use of that phrase. “How come you are always talking about getting to the heart of things?” And as is typical with feedback, I was stunned at first. It was a reflection that I had not seen of myself. I really had not noticed how often I use that phrase or how frequently I keep coming back to *the heart of things*.

In Geneva this year I did a full day on the seven models of Meta-Coaching. At one of the breaks, an Executive Coach asked *how* I was able to so regularly and consistently focus in a way that would get to the most relevant points so quickly. I then asked, “Is that your perspective of what happens when you see the demonstrations?” And to my surprise, they said yes.

That was not my perspective. For me, it always feels like a dance, sometimes like a whirlwind of spinning round and round, sometimes like the chasing of a rabbit and constantly reaching forward to get a hold of that rabbit. In my inner experience I have the sense that cowboys must have when they are attempting to rope in a wild animal. It’s as if I have a rope in my hand which I’m twirling above my head as if I’m riding a horse and going to rope a calf ... and I’m riding and riding and riding — and twirling the rope and twirling the rope and waiting for the moment when I can throw it and get it around the calf’s head. That’s what it feels like to me.

I said this to the Executive Coach as we talked. He said he liked the image and that it fit except that what I was experiencing was slow motion of the event and for him, it was as if in fast motion. Well, I appreciated the sucking up and made a polite “merci” and went on to the next rodeo. But the image was now in my mind! So in the next demonstration, guess what was playing in the theater of my mind? “Yep, partner, you’ve got it.”

Over the next months I probably demonstrated coaching sessions a couple of dozen times before various groups, many of which were recorded. And in almost all of those instances, I started to pay attention. I allowed a little part of my meta-mind to set back and peek in to observe the “getting to the heart of things” process. After that self-modeling, I then talked with numerous Meta-Coaches and Trainers at those events to get their perspective about what they had noticed. From that I have found a few things that might explain how I go about *getting to the heart of things*.

*1) I constantly check out the main structures.*

I do that by asking such questions as: “Is that the problem?” “Is that what you want to work on?”



“Is that the real issue?” “Is that the solution?” “Is that the resource you want to develop or apply to the situation?”

In asking these questions, I am circling the person and his or her reality (or experience). I’m asking in order to delimit the conversation and the area that we want to focus on. I’m seeking to find out if I’m at the place where we need to be. To use another metaphor, I’m like a chiropractor pressing on an arm, shoulder, or back to find the leverage point for change— where the joints are, the structures in play, and where there may be a misalignment.

Now my style of asking these questions is confrontational. I’m asking Yes/No questions to determine Go/No Go steps. “Is it this?” “Is it that?” It’s like playing the childhood game *Twenty Questions*, the game we played as kids to discover the object or experience that someone else was thinking about.

Structurally I’m looking for three primary things: Outcome, Problem, Solution. (This by the way is the content of the *Creativity and Innovation* workshop.) And I’m asking because I believe the client can and will show me the way if I ask the right questions and persist in asking them. To use yet another metaphor, I think of it as a decision tree. The client wants and needs to make some decisions, but doesn’t know what. So I ask decision questions and keep at it until we get deep enough into the decision tree so that we have something actionable and specific enough to work on. And I am also always ready to pop out of the decision tree to start all over if when we get down to things, it is not the area where the energy is—it is not the heart of the matter.

### *2) I keep checking the person’s state.*

While asking these formatting and framing questions about Outcome, Problem, and Solution I am also checking from time to time on what the questions and awareness are doing inside the client. “So what do you think?” “How do you feel about that?” “How strong is that feeling?” “Is that really what you want to work on that?” “How much do you feel that is the precise resource that we need to work on right now?”

The person’s state help me to understand if we are getting to the heart of things. If we are getting there, things are getting more and more significant—meaningful. And that might show up in emotions, it might show up in neurological engagement, it might show up in a sense of vision, or of insight.

### *3) I constantly reflect back the person’s journey.*

We record this as “*summarizing*” in the list of the behavioral equivalents of listening and supporting. “So you just told me a story, how does that fit into your goal?” “Okay, so you told me about Brenda and then a belief you have about her motives. And all of that means what?” Often times, I use one-word questions: “So?” “And...?” “Like...?” “So where are you now?” “So where from here?”

We call this *tracking* in Meta-Coach training—tracking a client through a session. I assume that the client is going on a trip, an inner journey, and that there are lots and lots of thoughts,

emotions, memories, imaginations, beliefs, etc. rushing through the client's experience. So summarizing by tracking the journey—the conversational journey—and feeding that back to the client enables the person to keep track with him or herself.

4) *I constantly offer frames and reframes along the way.*

For example, I might ask:

“So you told me about Billy-Bob's thoughts and feelings — and it seems you feel responsible for what he's thinking and feeling, so are those *responses* your responses? Are you able to generate those thoughts and feelings inside of Billy-Bob?”

If the person says *yes* (which some have!), then I use humor to see if I can tease out the responsibility to/for distinction. “Really? That's great! You can *cause* Billy-Bob to actually have those thoughts and feelings! That's incredible! Would you teach me how to do that? There's people I want to make think and feel certain things!” And I'm saying that with a smile to cue them that I'm pulling their leg.

But most often the client will say *no*. So I follow-up with that awareness. “How close are you to drawing the line between responsibility to and for? Is this a new distinction for you or have you known this? Would you like to work on making this sanity line between what you are responsible *for* and *to* whom you are responsible more clear and definite?”

In Meta-Coaching we say that we primarily *facilitate* rather than teach, train, or consult. Sometimes we do have to take off the Coach's hat and put on the Teacher's hat. Yet most of the time we can *draw out* (edu-cate) the client by asking questions that imply the distinction. This is framing and reframing. This is asking wonderful meta-questions.

Now we know from the study of peak performance that *mastery lies in critical distinctions*. That's what distinguishes an expert or master from a novice. Critical distinctions. So part of what a Meta-Coach will do is communicate these distinctions. You can do that in your Introduction session, in the papers that you give your clients for reading, and in the questions you ask. You can create questions for such critical distinctions as:

- Self-esteem and self-confidence
- Need and want
- Obsession and compulsion
- Financial stability and financial freedom
- Responsibility for and Responsibility to
- etc.

There's more but that's enough for now. Now, may you mount that steed of yours, get out your rope, begin twirling it around and around and fully ready to rope “the thing that we can talk about today that will make the most transformation!” as you get to the heart of things with your clients!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #28**  
**August 5, 2009**

## **META-COACHING AND MIND-LINES**

Over the past couple years, several questions have arisen about Meta-Coaching and Mind-Lines. Among them are these:

- 1) How come Mind-Lines are not taught in Meta-Coaching?
- 2) When and how does a Meta-Coach use mind-lines in coaching?
- 3) If a coach uses mind-lines, isn't that imposing and directing the client?

*Mind-Lines* is the term I came up with for the linguistic patterns in NLP originated by Robert Dilts as he heard and modeled Richard Bandler's language patterns in actual demonstrations. Robert originally did that in 1980 and then his 13 "sleight of mouth" patterns was around in NLP as some handout sheets and that continued until 1999 when he finally wrote the book, *Sleight of Mouth Patterns*.

But several years before that, in 1996, Bob Bodenhamer and I began working to update the sleight of mouth patterns with the Meta-States model. The result was the book *Mind-Lines: Lines for Changing Minds* in 1997. Both Bob and I wanted to get away from the magic metaphor of "sleight of mouth" (sleight of hand) because we wanted to avoid the connotations of manipulation and to focus on the structure of meaning.

My contribution in that book was to describe "the structure of meaning" as a "magic box" and then to identify *the seven directions* that you can send a mind in terms of framing and reframing. I framed that as "seven directions that you can dance around the magic box of meaning and meaning-making." Then what Bob and I did was to identify 26 language patterns that fleshed-out those seven directions.

What are the seven directions by which you can frame and reframe?

- 1) Deframe: tear the "formula" of meaning apart.
- 2) Reframe each side of the formula: X (EB) —> = Y (IS) (external behavior; internal state).
- 3) Counter frame: apply the frame or an aspect of the frame to itself.
- 4) Pre-frame: frame the source of the formula.
- 5) Post-frame: frame the consequences.
- 6) Analogously frame: frame with a metaphor or story.
- 7) Upframe or outframe: meta-state the frame with yet another higher frame.

*Question 1: Why don't we teach Mind-Lines in Meta-Coaching?* Probably because that would add another three days to an already very intense training, but also because it is already a part of the NLP Master Practitioner track. And it is something that a person can learn by reading the book and practicing mind-lines ten-thousand times.

*Question 2: When and how does a Meta-Coach use mind-lines in coaching?* It naturally and inevitably occurs constantly in conversation anyway. In every conversation, we are exchanging and exploring each others meanings (or frames). When a line is particularly effective, appropriate, compelling, and therefore persuasive, we say it is a mind-line because it can (and often does) change a mind. So Meta-Coaches are already using lots of mind-lines in setting the frames for the coaching, for the session, in asking meta-questions, in giving feedback, etc.

A Meta-Coach asks, “When you say self-esteem, are you talking about your innate esteem and value as a human being or are you speaking about your esteem by others in a social context or about the value you offer as a business person?” Is that a mind-line? It certainly invites a person to make distinctions about kinds and dimensions of “esteem.” And as it does, it can change a mind. So with, “Is his emotions a *response* that you have the *ability* to make? So if you are not *response-able* to do that, how can you be responsible for that?” That’s another mind-line. For that matter all of the NLP Presuppositions are mind-lines.

We commented in *Mind-Lines* that a great way to deliver a great line is to formulate it as a question. “Is there any real failure if you resiliently keep bouncing back, learning, and persisting until you succeed?” A mind-line is more powerful as a question than a statement because questions hook and invite and evoke whereas statements push and evoke defensive. So, “Do you feel pushed and forced to acknowledge what I say when I state it? Do you feel the same when I ask it as a question?”

And, if you really want to make your mind-line elegantly powerful, you can then turn it into meta-questions. Doing that enables you to create really transformative mind-lines.

“How surprised would you be if you found yourself just resiliently bouncing back from things, learning new distinctions, and then persisting until you succeed? Where would the construct of ‘failure’ then be? And what would you believe about your ability to succeed then? What would open up for you then? Would you like that? Are you ready for that now? So what decision about this do you feel emerging from within?”

*3) If a coach uses mind-lines, isn’t that imposing and directing the client?*

Yes it is! And, to a great extent, that’s what your client is paying you for, isn’t it? Isn’t it to get the outcomes and results that they want and feel are important? Of course, we direct and lead *to the client’s outcomes*, not our own or what we think the client should want. Mind-lines helps to facilitate the processes of unleashing potentials, identifying and solving problems, and innovating the required changes.

Mind-lines lie at the heart of Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching. When you open a session or explain Meta-Coaching by saying, “The person is never the problem, the frame is always the problem.” you express a powerful line for a mind that can prepare a person for the adventure of a lifetime. Here’s to your mind-line coaching!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #29**  
**August 12, 2009**

## **THE FIVE STAGES OF META-COACHING**

Would you like to know the five stages of coaching? I am sure there are numerous ways to create “stages” of coaching. I recently identified these stages as a way to distinguish the levels and qualities of coaching that a client goes through over the period of a coaching program. They depend on the developmental level of the client. And where did these stages come from? I got my inspiration for this from Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey and their Situational Leadership model (1968). It was there that I got the idea of using the two axes of *direction* and *support*.

*Direction* speaks of the amount of direction that you provide a client as you facilitate the coaching processes. At first you will provide more direction and guidance as you help a client to truly become a “coaching client” —co-creating the direction, the outcomes, enabling the accessing of resources, actualizing possibilities, etc. *Support* speaks about the personal care, empathy, and presence you bring to the client.

When I revisited the Situational Leadership model recently, and observed how Blanchard and Hersey used the term “coaching” for the second stage, I discovered that it does not fit the way we use *coaching* in Meta-Coaching, or any other Coaching model for that matter. They use “coaching” to essentially mean “teaching.”

Yet we all know that when a client shows up at a Coach’s room he or she will be at various levels of development. Clients do not all need the same amount of direction or support. Therefore they will need different kinds of coaching depending on their developmental level. Given that, we could postulate *five stages of coaching*.

*The Blanchard / Hersey Model* originally postulated four leadership roles which they labeled: Directing, Coaching, Supporting, and Delegating. Their vertical axis was *Supportive behavior* of the leader and their horizontal axis was *Directive behavior*. Leaders, they said, support and they direct. At times they are much more directive (telling, informing, teaching, etc.) and at other times supportive (caring, nurturing, relating, etc.).

Depending on the situation of the person being led, the leader will give more or less direction and more or less support. This generates the four leadership styles of *directing* when a person needs lots of support and direction, *coaching* when the person is distressed and struggling with problems, *supporting* when the person only needs conversations for checking in and making sure the person is on the right course, and *delegating* when the person knows what to do and knows how to do it.

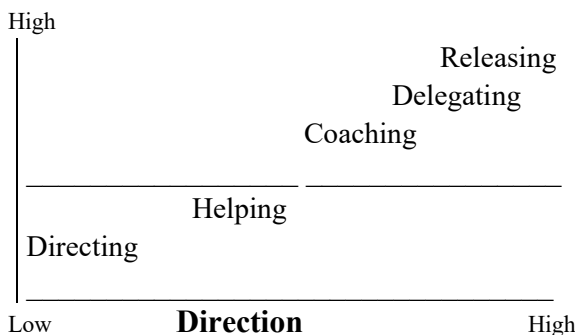
I like several things about this model. I like that it is based *situationally* upon the state of the person being led. I like that it modulates two seeming opposites, support and direction. I like that it assumes that the leader will have to be flexible to keep shifting gears to meet the needs of the person being led. And this corresponds to coaching clients and gives us five coaching stages of clients:

- 1) *Directing* the client who is an enthusiastic beginner but who does not know the skill and cannot do it.
- 2) *Helping* the client who is a struggling learner in the new development of a new performance.
- 3) *Coaching* the client who needs dialogue, who is capable but still a cautious performer.
- 4) *Delegating* to the client who is a self-reliant achiever and yet who still greatly benefits from a quality getting-to-the-heart-of things conversation.
- 5) *Releasing* and commissioning the client who is a fully competent colleague and who would greatly appreciate a formal releasing to his self-actualization vision.

Below is a rough diagram of the five stages. What I did with the Situational Leadership model was to reverse the direction of the axis, they had it from low to high. I put the axes them from high to low on Guidance and Direction. Then I corresponded these axes of the Coach to the Client's axes of Meaning and Performance in our Self-Actualization Quadrants. This means that a Coach begins with high guidance/ direction and support for the client. And why? Because that's what the client needs at the beginning. He or she suffers from low meaning and low performance and so needs direction. As that direction is developed and as the client launches out, he or she will be a struggling learner and need helping along the way— help to understand, help to deal with problems, help to face discouragement.

Eventually, however, the client has enough self-guidance and self-direction (on the Performance axis) and enough self-support and self-inspiration (on the Meaning axis) that the client now needs supportive coaching for collaboration. Later the client will need the delegation and releasing. Like the Meaning—Performance chart, begin in the lower lefthand corner and the five stages move up and to the right.

### Support



Low Meaning and Performance — requires the Coach to give high Support and Direction.

That's where every client will begin. Medium level Meaning/Performance and the client will be on his or her way but needing help with problems that arise from time to time. As the client moves above half way on Meaning/Performance, the coach uses more and more of a collaborative dialogue until there's increasing delegating to the client's own self-direction and self-support. The last stage is the releasing stage. That's where the client is no longer a client, but a colleague and perhaps partner.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #30**  
**August 19, 2009**

## **TORPEDO COACHING**

A few years ago I began wondering about “getting to the heart of things” questions. Now if you understand the Meta-Model of language, you know that the questions of that linguistic model are the key powerful questions of NLP that cut through the noise of our stories and enables us to remap our experiences more accurately and usefully. Meta-Model questions, when used with skill, can completely transform an experience. (See *Communication Magic* for a whole book on the original NLP Meta-Model and the extended Neuro-Semantic Meta-Model.)

- Are there any questions that are especially powerful or useful for quickly cutting through the chatter and clutter and creating a breakthrough shift?
- What would a leverage producing question in the coaching context be like?

During the Meta-Coach training in this (2009), we had a lot of participants who were still not getting the knack for how to create and ask meta-questions. The Assist Team along with my co-trainers, Omar and David, suggested that we do something on Day 7 of the Coaching Bootcamp that would address this lack. So in May of this year, I picked 10 meta-questions and set forth a self-actualization challenge in order to pick someone and do a demonstration of asking meta-questions.

In the Self-Actualization Challenge that I used, I asked everyone to write down one to three things they were working on to unleash in themselves.

“If you’re to be a self-actualization coach, then you’ll want to be constantly self-actualizing the next level of excellence in yourself. So what are you working on today? What would take your skills, passion, identity, relationships to the next level? What’s interfering with that unleashing? What problem is a roadblock to you?”

After getting some examples of what people were writing, I picked a man who was a senior manager and inquired what he really wanted to unleash and what current interference he needed to address. That was the content of the session. Once I had the subject identify and grounded (with the *down* questions), I then began asking some meta-questions as the *up* questions to enable him to move up, up, and away.

I also did something else. Because some of the participants were masters of the gift of gab and could probably set new Olympic records for talking around an issue and never penetrating the heart of the matter, I decided that I would use some special meta-questions. Afterwards, Omar and David debriefed to the meta-questions and the specific format I had used. Then as we observed people, they both commented about the specific format I had used and said that it was “Torpedo Coaching.” It was fast, furious, focused, direct, confrontative, and leverage producing.

Last week in China I did 5 demonstrations of Meta-Coaching during a one day Introduction.



Meta-Coach, Mandy Chai, set up this Introduction Day with the sponsor in Guangzhou as a way of introducing Meta-Coaching to China. At the end of the day, I wanted to do one more demonstration and so inquired about anyone who had a “performance problem.” Hand went up all over (characteristic of the Chinese culture). I choose a young woman and then used the *up* and *down questions* to dance back and forth between the *Meaning* and *Performance Axes* about the performance problem. My intention was to demonstrate the Neuro-Semantic use of the M/P axes which form the Self-Actualization Quadrants and the both-and approach to mind-body, meaning-performance, effectiveness-efficiency, etc.

When I notice the time getting away and realized I had to wrap things up quickly, I shifted to the format that I used in Mexico as a way to cut through the clutter, get to the heart of things, and wrap things up quickly. Again, the effect was dramatic. I later discussed it with Mandy Chai and Wilkie Choi who both had noticed it.

What was that format? The format arose from the second Self-Actualization Workshop, *Creativity and Innovation*. That workshop focuses on *four conversations*—a well-formed outcome, problem, solution, and innovation. It is the combined integration of these four questions as *processes* that puts together everything we know about these four facets of inventing, creating, and innovating powerful solutions for problems whether in one’s personal life or in business.

What I’ve learned to do with this format is first to punctuate the processes as they happen. “Ah, is that the problem you want to work on?” “Ah, is that the solution?” “Is that a piece of the solution?” “Is that your objective?” From this punctuating of grabbing and snatching, it is an easy step to flip a person around from one dimension to another.

“So that’s the problem. Now if that problem was a question, what is the most empowering question you could ask yourself right now? The answer to which would begin to facilitate the unleashing you’re looking for?”

The young woman in China, as is often the case, at first did not fully understand the question and so I had to repeat it. Then she didn’t fully answer the question. So as a Coach, that’s when we enable and facilitate the answering process. So when someone gives me an answer that doesn’t create forward movement for him or her, I’ll reflect and ask, “As you hear yourself pose *that* question, is *that* the question you really want to answer? An empowering question? A question that will *unleash* new potentials in you?” When they ponder and reflect and answer, “No,” I then ask, “So what is that question?”

So what is *Torpedo Coaching* and how does it work? Torpedo Coaching is a way to use some powerfully formed questions (meta-questions) to cut through the clutter of consciousness and get to the heart of things in a few minutes. Torpedo coaching is a high-impact confrontation that generates a breakthrough by working with structured meta-questions. I now have 6 torpedo coaching questions in my repertoire for use and will find more by the end of this year in the next Meta-Coach Trainings. This will be one of the things presented and made explicit in the PCMC training in 2010. (The first PCMC will be for the Meta-Coach Trainers in San Francisco, Jan.)

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #31**  
**August 26, 2009**

## **A WORKER OF AND WITH INVISIBILITY**

What is Meta-Coaching and what does a Meta-Coach do? I recently said to a group in China that Meta-Coaching means *working with the invisible structures of a client's inner world*. Unlike Consultants, Mentors, Therapists, and Trainers who offer “expert knowledge” that will enrich the content information and understanding of a client's world, a Coach and especially a Meta-Coach has *no expert knowledge* of the client's content to offer. What should the client do? Who should the client marry? What business should the client get into? What legal advice does the client need right now? Or medical advice? Or financial advice? A coach has nothing to say about all of that.

Coaches, and especially Meta-Coaches, are not *content experts*. Our expertise lies elsewhere. A highly trained coach is an *expert of process*. He or she is an *expert* in seeing and working with the invisible structures that govern the client's experiences at a higher (or meta) level. So, as a Meta-Coach, you are a *worker of and with invisibility!*

You engage clients in a conversation that will get to the heart of things because the conversation occurs on two levels— content and process. About the content conversation, you don't have that much to say or do. The client is the expert of that. It is about the hidden conversation, the higher conversation, the conversation in the back of the mind, in the recesses of the client's matrix of frames and meanings that you have something to say.

As a worker of invisibility, you have expert skills in recognizing and detecting frames. You can hear multiple layers of meta-frames and then see the results the client is getting from those frames as you detect the emotions, behaviors, and responses that the frame produce. And you know these are the symptoms of the frames. You also know that the person is never the problem; the frame is the problem.

And you have the expert skill of revealing and highlighting the frame to the client— enabling the client to recognize his or her own frames. This is a revealing or confronting skill that the client pays you for. They are inside the frame and more often than not cannot see it. That's why they need you as a detector and revealer.

Another expert skill is that of detecting patterns. Via your understanding and use of the Meta-Model, you are able to detect linguistic patterns. Via your understanding and use of the Meta-States model, you are able to detect mind-line patterns, hypnotic patterns, and paradoxical patterns. In Hong Kong I sat with a young man who was having problems with the Unleashing Possibilities pattern. His mother was with him and asked if I would assist. I inquired about what

he wanted to unleash, he was still struggling identifying what he wanted to unleash and was focused on the problems. He didn't believe he was a good learner, he didn't think he could learn as fast or efficiently as he thought others did, he didn't feel passionate about anything. After hearing a bit of the story, I made a comment that was essentially a pattern detection reflection.

“Are you aware that you have told me — repeatedly — in five or six ways— all of the things that you think you can't do, don't want, or will interfere? Are you aware of that?”

His next words were interesting.

“Because I've had to struggle so hard through university and because I don't feel what you're saying.”

“Okay, I said, so what does that mean in relation to my question?”

“Because I'm just not getting it.”

That's when I realized that here was a new version of “yes, but.” He had actually said “yes, but” once or twice, but it was not enough to be a pattern. It was his way of answering a question with “because” . . . that finally alerted me to this hidden way of yes-butting! The “because” was explaining why he could not follow or act on the suggestion in my question. The “because” and then the story, explanation, excuse was a hidden “yes, but.”

So I brought that to his attention. “Every time I ask a question or reflect back to you what your saying, you deny it with an explanation or a story or a ‘yes, but,’ do you realize that?”

“Because I don't feel....”

“Ah, there you go again!”

“Yes, but that's because....”

“Ah!! Again!! See?”

It took awhile, but the reflection of the pattern of his *invisible structures* slowly came more and more into his conscious awareness. That's when I said, “Here's my challenge to you— tell me what you want or don't want and what you fear will interfering without saying ‘yes, but’ or ‘because.’ Okay?”

For myself, I love working with invisibility! I love identifying the invisible structures at the meta-levels that's governing a person's experience and mirroring them back. It puts the person at choice point. It empowers the person. It takes a person to a new level of awareness where human freedom begins. It's the power of Meta-Coaching. And now you know why we coach to meta-programs, meta-states, meta-levels, multiple layers of meaning frames, linguistic structures, and so on.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #32**  
**Sept. 2, 2009**

## **COACHING COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS**

In the Meta-Coaching System, you learned about Cognitive Distortions and received a list of 13 cognitive distortions. These came originally from Aaron Beck and Albert Ellis, two key leaders in the field of Cognitive Psychology. When I found NLP in 1986 I began integrating these cognitive distortions with the Meta-Model distinctions and later I even wrote a paper that I presented to the International Interdisciplinary Conference of General Semantics at Hoffa University on the relationship between these two sets of distinctions using the formulations of General Semantics.

As an aside, I stopped in New York city to see Dr. Albert Ellis. I went to his Rational Emotive Center so I could get a chance to talk with him. He must have been about 80 or so then and was just as feisty and foul-mouthed as always. As a someone who read Korzbyski and used General Semantic formulations, I thought he might like to know that I was working on integrating his work with the Meta-Model of NLP. In his gruff voice, he said,

“Oh, that has been disproved!”

“Really?” I responded. “By who and when?”

“Milton Erickson is a f.... fraud; and that’s that; I don’t want to hear any more about this?”

“Well, just one question, if the Meta-Model is a set of linguistic distinctions similar to the cognitive distortions and some of the General Semantic distinctions, how could that be disproved?” But that was it, the “discussion” was over!

What all of this refers to are *the ways we mentally mess up our understanding of things*. And these can be detected using the NLP Meta-Model as well as the Cognitive Distortions list. In Meta-Coaching, we encourage that you make copies of the list of Cognitive Distortion, give them to your clients, and then use them as a *checklist for a well-formed or ill-formed map* as you engage in your coaching conversation. Or, you can do the same with the Meta-Model distinctions, make a list, give to your clients, and then use them as a checklist.

What is the value of this? You can call the meta-attention of your client to his or her *way of thinking*. You can invite your clients to “go meta” to notice *the kinds of thinking they are doing in the back of the mind* — and where and how they are using distorted ways of processing and meaning-making to create their inner game.

“Was that an universal quantifer?”

“Did you just over-generalize?”

“I think I heard a ‘should’ — are you ‘should-ing’ again on yourself?”

“I think you just engaged in two mind-reading statements back to back, what do you think? Were you aware of that?”

“Ah! Isn’t that an either-or frame that just excluded every possibility in-between and create a false sense of choice?”

In all of the recent coaching demonstrations that I’ve done, I keep finding myself detecting cognitive distortions, calling attention to them, and many times then move into *coaching the cognitive distortion*. And like meta-programs, because these make up the invisible structures governing the person’s thinking, perceiving, feeling, and construct of reality— the cognitive distortions provides a way for you as a Meta-Coach to work at the meta-level and to often identify the leverage point for tremendous change.

- How are you doing with detecting, identifying, and addressing cognitive distortions in your coaching?
- How skilled are you in using the cognitive distortion list as a checklist with your clients thereby enabling them to engage in self-coaching between sessions?
- How much competency have you developed to date for effectively coaching to the cognitive distortions?

To assist in this, I have completely rewritten the cognitive distortion list that you received in your *Coaching Mastery Training Manual* and have sent it along with this post. Feel free to make copies of this for your clients, to include it in your “Coaching Workbook” for your clients, and/or to use it in presentations that you make.

If you have questions about any of these, the books by Ellis and Beck are great sources. You can also write your questions to me on this post. Oftentimes the questions that you have — or the uses you put to such tools — offer good insights for the other 600 plus Meta-Coaches on this group.

To your Coaching Mastery

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Meta-Coach Reflections #33**  
**Sept. 9, 2009**

## **META-COACH BRANDING**

I've been thinking about branding. Again. That's because Cheryl Lucas, Martin Urban, and myself have been working with Tessie Lim on branding. This is her expertise. Tessie, a Meta-Coach in Malaysia, has created an extensive document that she presented to the Meta-Coach Trainers and soon—very soon—we will be sharing it with you. So thinking about it, I've been reflecting—again.

At its core, *branding is a communication process*. When something is “branded,” someone has communicated to a lot of people (a market) that such and such product or service holds such and such value. Then, whether it is Coke or Pepsi, whether it is Toshiba or Dell, whether it is Toyota or Ford, whether it is the Matrix movie or Harry Potter, whether it is Elvis Presley or Michael Jackson, when someone has branded something— *the brand is the frame by which we view that object, person, product, or experience*.

When we successfully brand something, we win a place inside of people's minds (and hearts) for our product or service. We gain entrance to their inner world so that our brand gives them a way of thinking about, seeing and perceiving, and therefore feeling and responding. As such, branding is a communication process that influences people to interpret things as we hope that they will interpret things. And they do so because *the meanings* that we have created and communicated are now branded in their perceptions.

So with regard to branding *Meta-Coaching* and the Meta-Coach System, there are now a great many of us who are daily communicating the *Meta-Coach brand*. If every Meta-Coach did so, there would be 860 people doing it in 35 countries around the world. This means that *you* are helping (or hindering) the branding of Meta-Coaching System every time you do an excellent job in coaching a client— every time you facilitate the unleashing of a potential skill or competency, every time you speak to someone about Meta-Coaching as your coaching methodology.

Every time you use “Meta-Coach” on your business card, brochures, websites, emails, business letterhead, etc. you are helping with the world-wide branding. And every time you participate in a local MCF chapter meeting or contribute to the practice group, or send a new person to a Meta-Coach Training, you are adding to the branding effort.

And it is this branding effort that will make your work, your business, and your marketing more effective. In the branding process we are setting the frames for how we want our Neuro-Semantic / Self-Actualization coaching to be viewed, understood, felt, experienced, and responded to. It speaks about many things critical for commercial success:

- What business we are in

- Who are our customers
- The value that we add to their lives
- The benefits that we bring to the coaching experience
- Our identity in the minds of people and the larger coaching community.

Branding yourself, branding your local coaching business, is a tough job. What makes it easier and gives you more credibility, legitimacy, and influence is when your *brand* is an international brand, and when you are recognized as part of something much bigger than yourself. And that's the value of the *Meta-Coach System brand*.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #34**  
**Sept. 16, 2009**

## **WHY KEEP YOUR META-COACH LICENSE CURRENT?**

It was a strange question. At least I thought it as strange. “*Why* should I keep up my license as a Meta-Coach? Why renew it each year?” I say it struck me as strange because when I consider all of the personal investment to reach certification level that is required to be licensed as a professional coach, as a Meta-Coach, for me it would think it strange to *not* renew it. Why give up something that I invested time, money, and effort into attaining?

From time to time I get a notice from the State of Colorado for my license as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), and even though I closed my practice in 1996, I still pay the \$250 for the license renewal. I do that, in part, precisely because of the investment I have in it—the many years and the tens-of-thousands of dollars to reach it. Also, if I let it go, it would take a lot to reinstate it.

Similarly, the Meta-Coach License—as a professional license, it says that you are an officially recognized Meta-Coach by the MCF. And you know that it took a big personal investment to reach that status. So when you signed the License Contract and became a part of the worldwide community of Meta-Coaches, you entered an exclusive community. So the idea of paying a small annual fee of \$50 Australia dollars (about \$35 USD and 25 Euros) to keep up your license strikes me as silly. So if you ask, “Why keep that current? Why keep it up? What is the value in that?” here are some of my answers.

### ***1) To maintain your Professional Standing in the MCF.***

Just as the ICF governs the Coaches who want that certification, so the MCF governs Meta-Coaches under the Neuro-Semantic banner. So I think the most important reason is to maintain your Professional Standing in the MCF and to not let your license expire. That allows you to maintain presence in a professional community. And that helps your own credibility.

### ***2) To be recognized by the MCF as a Meta-Coach.***

The fact is that when you do not keep your license up, it expires. And that requires two things, the annual fee and continual education. We have not set all of the continual education requirements yet but the MCF leadership team will be doing that at the first of the next year. So if you do not keep the license up, it *expires* and that means you are no longer a “Meta-Coach as recognized by the MCF.”

### ***3) To contribute to the community of Meta-Coaches.***

The way any brand works is that it works by the people who care about it and use it. The



more they invest in the branding of Meta-Coaching, in the community, in helping each other, in participating in the MCF chapter meetings, the stronger the brand becomes, the more it becomes known to others, and the more impact it will have. There are thousands of “Lone Ranger” coaches around the world—unrelated to any Certifying Body or Body that holds them accountable as a professional. That forces each one of them to try to create credibility not only for themselves, but also for the field of Coaching itself.

**4) To help the MCF Chapters.**

We now have some 20 or so chapters around the world. I would love to see 100 chapters by the end of this year. 200 next year. 1000 in five years. Imagine the impact that would have around the world! Wouldn't that be great?

The fact is that any Meta-Coach can start a chapter—and that's because the primary purpose is the same as your personal business—to promote the brand of Meta-Coaching. Then beyond that there are additional purposes like supporting Meta-Coaches with their skills, knowledge, and understanding. The Chapters do this primarily by holding *practice groups*. And the chapters are primarily funded by the annual fee (half of the fee stays with the local chapter). And we do all of that because of the Neuro-Semantic principle—we can do so much more together than alone or apart. In numbers there is strength.

**5) To keep actively involved with the Meta-Coach community.**

Investing your time and money as well as your mind, effort, interest, and commitment is a way to stay actively engaged. It enables you to stay informed as to new developments, to practice your skills on a regular basis, and to share your discoveries with other meta-Coaches around the world.

*Community* is the greatest weakness in NLP, it was the greatest weakness in the first human potential movement, and it is also weak in the field of Coaching. Those who live at the lower end of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs operate from deficiency and think only about themselves. To think about contributing to a community requires that a person is living at a higher need level—the need for self-actualization.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #35**  
**Sept. 24, 2009**  
*Report on an Event*

## **META-COACHING RELOADED**

“So, how did it go?” As you know, with the launch here in September of Meta-Coaching in Sweden, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sydney Australia, we have completely redesigned the *Meta-Coaching System*. And over the past few weeks, I’ve received emails from many of you asking “How did it go?” “What happened?” Well, the first experience of Meta-Coaching Reloaded occurred in the last week in Sweden, so now I can tell you.

From my perspective, the results overall were extremely positive so I am very pleased with it and think that this reloading of the Meta-Coach System has succeeded even beyond what I had hoped for. At the heart of the new structure is the *Facilitation Model*. This change brought a new level of focus to the training— each day we introduced and worked on a specific area to facilitation — the Coaching Relationship, the Skill of Exploration, the focus of Performance, working with Systems and systemically as a coach, Coaching Change, Coaching Self-Actualization, developing Coaching Business acumen, and being Professional as a coach.

The next biggest change that this generated was the increased emphasis and time on *the experiential nature of coaching*— each participant coaches each day, is client each day, and is meta-person each day. That means there are 7 coaching sessions which gives a lot more time for practice of coaching from all three positions— Coach, Client, and Meta-Person. And if turning out highly skilled Coaches who are fully qualified to coach and who are competent to deliver on the promises of coaching is our objective in the training, then the new format significantly contributes to achieving that outcome.

Now benchmarking that many times really provides a new level of challenge for the team leaders. That means they benchmark 21 coaching sessions! Think about that! And on Day 6 they benchmarked 6 times— that’s right, 6 times in a single day! And I can tell you, that is a lot and very demanding.

Yet what I saw in our team this time was the growth and development of skills in seeing the facilitation skills and benchmarking them at a rate I have never seen before. And by Day 6 every participant has fully reached competency on the first four skills and the “problem” that we then had was that of keeping the scores down to “3.” We have never had that problem before! So if you want to take your coaching skills for specificity, precision, and your benchmarking skills to a new level— think about joining the Meta-Coach Faculty by becoming one of the Assist Team Leaders.

Germaine assisted me in the presentations and for those of you who saw here last year doing that, I think she has made a big jump — 15 to 20% improved over last year. She also was able along with me to sit in the sessions benchmarking the benchmarking skills of the benchmarkers(!) And enabling them to catch the critical pieces for taking their skills to the next level. And with several of our team leaders operating mostly from the global meta-program— I was impressed with how much they learned to find and work with details by the end of the training.

I want to recognize and celebrate our team of 10 (which included the 3 sponsors) who were the team leaders and benchmarkers:

- 1) Helene Nordgren — Sweden
- 2) Niklas Daver — Sweden
- 3) Sara Lee — Sweden
- 4) Mario Mason — Paris, France
- 5) Nicola Riva — Italy
- 6) Lucia Giovannini — Italy
- 7) David Kynan — Canada
- 8) Mats Lundberg — Sweden
- 9) Leonie Zonjee — Holland
- 10) Femke Stutt – Holland

I want to recognize the tremendous development that Germaine Rediger, as a Meta-Coach Trainer in the making, has made. She is in the 3-year intern process of being mentored to become a full-fledge MC Trainer and is now part of the leadership team along with 8 others. For our Expert Coach, we had Lennart Carlsson who has been in the field of Coaching 10 years and NLP 12 or 15 and who brings so much to the coaching experience. And Lennart was with us for 7 days of the training which speaks about his openness to new learnings. His interview was one of the highlights of the training. Sad to say, Lene Fjellheim from Norway, Neuro-Semantic Trainer and Meta-Coach was scheduled but she came down with double pneumonia and could not make it.

With this training we now have 29 new Meta-Coaches in Europe — which probably means we have about 40 altogether including another 30 or 40 in England. Sara, Helen, and Niklas have founded a Meta-Coach Foundation Chapter in Stockholm and within a couple weeks the first practice group will be launched. In our coaching for the first time we had a young medical doctor who is going into psychiatry and we had a famous football (soccer) star as one of our participants. So all in all, a very successful training in that there are now 29 new Meta-Coaches on Planet Earth and we are closing in on the first 1,000 mark.

And with the Team Leaders — Nicola, Niklas, Mario began a great conversation the other day about how to take *collaboration among us — among Meta-Coaches in Europe and other places* to the next level. And already we have a good many at this training who will be coming to the *Unleashing Leadership* training in Italy in December (13-15). For those who do — NS trainers and Meta-Coaches are invited to an exclusive gathering at Nicola and Lucia's home the day after the training for a half-day “extra.” Meta-High Fives to the launch in Europe!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #36**  
**Sept. 30, 2009**

## **THE SECRET OF COLLABORATION**

While we have taken Meta-Coaching several times to London, we have never before taken it to Europe proper. And now, after many years, of thinking about when and where — Paris, Geneva, Brussels, etc., we have now successfully completed the launch— *Stockholm Sweden!* And that was due to the shared vision of three people who finally made it happen—

**Helene Nordgren — Niklas Daver — Sara Lee**

That's the way it usually is. That is, for success in business and in about everything else, it takes a collaborative partnership of several people to pull off an important vision. I didn't create the vision of Neuro-Semantics alone, I did that first with Bob Bodenhamer and some others as we shared our idea at the time of Bandler's 90-million of dollar lawsuit. We had a vision of taking NLP to a higher level and fully integrating the Meta-States Model into it. Nor did we do that alone, over the ensuing years many others helped to refine it.

So with Meta-Coaching— the first three expert coaches— Michelle Duval, Graham Richardson, and Cheryl Gilroy helped create the vision, and that was just the beginning. Since then many, many people have added features and distinctions into the vision to texture it and make it much richer than I could have alone. And in terms of the New Human Potential Movement that we launched in 2007 —that was not my idea apart from the contributions of many trainers and coaches who shared with me a love of the concept of unleashing potentials and self-actualization psychology.

One of the biggest challenges for our business endeavors in Neuro-Semantics, which embraces Meta-Coaching, is going it alone. If you've read my article about *How to Kill a Movement* about the first Human Potential Movement, you know about the individualism that plagued that moment. Its strength became its downfall. As people develop and become more of who they are and can be, they move through the developmental stage of individualism— they individuate, differentiate, and learn to stand on their own two feet. That's good. Yet it does not stop there; that is only the foundation for the next stage.

As social beings, we are designed and wired for connecting and bonding with others, for the inter-dependency of collaboration. But the philosophy of individualism that undermine that. So here is a paradoxical challenge— we need enough independence so that we can be ourselves, know ourselves, and develop our full selves *and at the same time* connect with others in the next level of development—inter-dependency. The independent person who becomes stuck at that level is *not* a fully developed human being. The person who is not a good team-player,

collaborator, and connector lacks some critical skills and experiences for being fully alive, fully human.

This fault from the first HPM has been inherited by NLP through “three rugged individualists” (Fritz Perls, Virginia Satir, and Milton Erickson) that “two mad-men modeled” (to quote Robert Dilts) about Richard Bandler and John Grinder. When I first heard Robert say that I thought, “So no wonder NLP people — and especially trainers— don’t seem to know how to cooperate, get along, and stop all of the ego-enhancing kingdom-building!”

So I love what Sara, Niklas, and Helene have done and think that they have provided an excellent model of collaboration. And may I be so bold as to recommend— Let there be more! I could also speak about some of the Coaching Companies that some Meta-Coaches have created which pulls together several Meta-Coaches so that working together they can do more than if each worked separately and apart.

Our success is inter-dependent. As an International *Association* of individuals who share a common vision and set of values, our success in branding Meta-Coaching as a Coaching Methodology *depends* on all of us. It depends on the quality of your coaching skills; it depends on the connections and influences you create; it depends on your success and recognition; it depends on the accumulated influence and impact that we all have.

Many of the Meta-Coaches in South Africa have been setting the pace for this. A couple years ago, due to the large number of Meta-Coaches on the service provider list at Standard Bank, when a coach would call the Bank and asked about getting onto that list, the person answering the phone asked, “Are you a Meta-Coach?” Isn’t that great? And that’s precisely what we need everywhere—in every country.

In January, I will be meeting with the full Leadership Team of Neuro-Semantics — the 8 Meta-Coach Trainers and the 2 Neuro-Semantic Trainers in San Francisco for a 5 day Leadership Summit. All of us will be meeting as *the Leadership Team* for the first time ever for the purpose of putting our heads together as we begin to think strategically about how to lead this movement and international association.

In December, Nicola Riva and Lucia Giovannini are hosting “Unleashing Leadership” training and as part of that, and as a way to encourage collaboration, they have envisioned a special exclusive meeting on the day after—only for Meta-Coaches and Neuro-Semantic Trainers. Well, only for 22 of them (that’s all that their home holds!). Again, it is a way to encourage us to know each other, connect, and build the kind of relationships that allow us to trust and enjoy each other.

Collaboration is occurring among us— here’s to ever richer, more robust, and more enjoyable meta-collaborations!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #37**  
**October 7, 2009**

## **THE POWER OF THE POWER ZONE**

*If you are a Meta-Coach, you are at the same time an Empowerment Coach.* But, of course, you know that. That's not news. In terms of generative change, you empower people for motivation, enhancing decisions, creation of new matrixes, and integration of their changes. In terms of self-actualization, you empower people to own their meaning-making powers and then empower them to execute their highest meanings into their neurology and performances. In terms of communication excellence, you can empower people for precise, clarity, artful vagueness (trance), and self-reflexivity. You can empower people to get to the heart of things and create transformational breakthroughs.

As a Meta-Coach, you do a lot of things that empower people. And yet most fundamentally, you enable people to discover their power. You enable people to be unleashed from powerlessness, helplessness, and victimhood. You coach people to own, embrace, and positively use their innate powers.

Recently Sue Anderson, a Meta-Coach in Australia, let me know that she has been working with a local school and school children on the issue of bullying. When she wrote, she described what she has been doing and how she uses the Power Zone with the children on that subject. Then she asked that I write about *The Power of the Power Zone*. And that was all the encouragement I needed to write this. The following insightful paragraph is part of what Sue wrote:

“I find myself beginning with the power zone when I am coaching kids who are being bullied. ... when I read the common definitions of ‘bullying’ it usually includes, ‘... by someone who has power over someone else.’ Alarm bells go off for me. Are we teaching our kids that bullies have power over their targets? Are we indirectly teaching them that other people can have power over you?”

Now as you know, we describe our “personal powers” in Neuro-Semantics in terms of our four most basic *responses*— two private and two public, our ability to make a *mental, emotional, verbal, and behavioral* responses. These are so fundamental, so essential, and so critical that they are part and parcel of what it means to be human. It is our glory, as human beings, to *not* automatically and “intuitively” to “know” what to think, feel, say, or do. We are instinct-less! There is a gap within our minds, emotions, verbalizations, and actions — a gap that we get to fill by choosing what to think, feel, say, and do. It is here that we have “ultimate power”— the ultimate response-power to determine our response.

If “power” is simply “the ability to do,” “the ability to take effective action in a given area,” then the foundation and source of this power lies in these foundational capacities. So what is the *power* of power? Unlike power itself which is automatic and a given—the power of that power lies in awareness, choice, willingness to act, willingness to be responsible, permission to have power and express power, and enhancing beliefs about such.

That explains why there are among us human beings some people who act and think and so feel “helpless,” “powerless,” and “victims” of other people and events. They are not powerless or helpless or victims, but they have made mental maps (unknowingly using their powers!) and so have made themselves powerless. They have *learned* helplessness. That’s the bad news. The good news is that they can also unlearn, re-learn, and learn to acknowledge, own, embrace, and use their innate powers. They can learn to become response-able human beings.

Now to step up to that level of transformation, many people have to semantically unload many negative feelings, thoughts, beliefs, experiences, and ideas they have linked to “power.” More than once a person has quoted Lord Acton’s famous saying, “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Yet what is forgotten or not known is that *powerlessness* also corrupts and absolute powerlessness corrupts absolutely as well.

After all, it is poverty and powerlessness that creates the corruption of riots, crime, violence, and so on. We human beings are not made to live in poverty or powerlessness. It does not fit our nature; we react and rebel. In fact, we are made for “taking effective actions” to make things happen. Watch any child when he or she first learns to tie a shoe bow, or ride a bike, or draw a face! They get excited and thrilled! Their joyous feelings show up in jumping and yelling and sharing their ecstasy. We are made to find, develop, and creatively express our powers—our gifts, talents, and abilities.

This is also *the power* of power. Power itself is neutral—a capacity, an ability, a function. *How we use our powers*—that’s the moral and ethical question as well as the ecology question about its effect in our lives and those of others. As I have been studying leaders and leadership for the past couple years, *power* is a key concept and phenomena. And it is one that can be healthy as well as unhealthy. And there’s a paradox. Those who want power, who continually think about it, who hunger for it—they are the ones least capable of handling it. And those who don’t care that much for it, who don’t think about it that much—they are the ones who can handle it more effectively.

Power for its own sake or power to “prove” something about you tends to degrade it and make it toxic. Power as a tool and instrument to achieve a higher goal that blesses many others tends to be a cleaning agent that makes the use of power effective, humane, and a moral contribution.

Yet for bullies, as with people who tend to rely on “power” as a way of intimidating, insulting, hurting, etc., what they need—paradoxically—is true power. They need to discover, detect, own, and embrace their inner innate powers of mind, emotion, speech, and behavior. That will make them less reactive to the responses of others. Then they can feel centered and okay within

themselves when others say or do things to their disliking. When they react to the words, gestures, and actions of others— they are not in control of themselves. Those triggers are controlling them. And that's why they think they have to control others. And the more they attempt to do that, the more out-of-control they become.

I seem to be quoting Viktor Frankl's statement every week these days, "They cannot make me hate them." He said that his concentration captures could take away all of the external freedoms, but that they were powerless to *make him* hate them. They didn't have that power. He had that power. And he would exercise his power in the face of their cruelest inhumanity. Talk about power! That's the power of power. And may you have lots and lots of it— increasing with every passing day.

Someone recently took the four powers and put it on the Meaning/Performance axes of the Self-Actualization quadrants (I'm writing this enroute to the training in New Zealand) and don't have the email and so can't quote my source. Of course — *thinking* is on the Meaning Axis; *speaking* and *behaving* are on the Performance Axis and *feeling* plays a double-role as it can be a way that we create associative meaning when we meta-state and/or a response to the outside world when we emote.

It was Colin Cox who came up with the mind-line: "No one can drive me crazy unless I give the keys away." The control is in your hands, your mind, your person— unless you give it away. So any belief that posits the control, the power, in the hands of others, of events, is a deceiving belief that will undermine your power. Sue Anderson describes that in these words:

"I find it amazing that most of society appears to think that others can have control over how they feel —it's everywhere, on TV, in songs, "he made me feel so good; she made me so angry; you make me feel intimidated; he made me so angry I had to hit him in the face; when you say that you make me feel worthless, etc."

Power— what a concept, what a resource, what a tool.



**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #38**  
**October 14, 2009**  
*Report on an Event*

## WHEN KIKIS META-COACH

As you probably already know, this past week was the *Coaching Bootcamp of Coaching Mastery* in Auckland New Zealand and the fourth one in as many years. While it was technically “an international training” because at least 3 of us were from “somewhere else” on the planet (myself, Robert Were from Australia, and Wilkie Choi from Hong Kong), everybody else were from New Zealand. Not only that, but everybody with the exception of team leader and Neuro-Semantic trainer, Alan Fayter (from Christchurch) was Maori. And that created a very new and different experience— since we could say that Meta-Coaching was as much immersed in Maori culture and Maori culture was immersed in Neuro-Semantic culture.

Although, even as I write that, I think about the years that Colin Cox (Master Neuro-Semantic Trainer) and Lena Gray have been introducing Neuro-Semantics to Auckland and New Zealand ... certifying 200 to 300 people a year in APG (they call it “self-leadership,” which is Module II of Meta-Coaching, alias APG). They have been immersing people into the vision and mission of Neuro-Semantics. Anyway, it was a great experience and exceptionally transformational.

And when I say *exceptionally transformational*, that is not hype or over-statement. We saw many people making tremendous developmental changes mastering anger by meta-stating with awareness, acceptance, choice, respect, and so on— mastering fear, hesitation, poor health habits, etc. I was privileged to see one young lady develop a strategy and the frames for more robust states to handle some “crazymaking” by a mother-in-law that had been driving her to the bring of despair.

And it was *exceptionally transformational* outside of the sessions as well as within. That’s because a large portion of our group stayed at a Backpacker’s Hotel in the city, just a few blocks from the venue. And that was great, first of all, for the residential effect of the training— the collaboration, partnership, collegial relationships. Not to speak of the coaching that went on to 1 and 2 and 3 am most nights!

It was also great for the other inhabitants at the hotel! There were a lot of backpackers who got a lot of free coaching as our coaches-in-training were looking for people to practice on. And I’m sure the backpackers and later, some homeless people, heard a lot of strange language— “That’s your frame, bro! Have you had enough of that or do you need 5 more years before you step up to your potential?” And from what I hear, some of the backpackers even began to get use to the language. One Meta-Coach came back and reported that when he introduced himself (using his Introduction of course!), the person said, “Hey, I’ve met other Meta-somethings around here.”

Actually we had a number of our group who were quite bold and outrageous— practicing their Introductions — “Hi, my name is ... and I’m a Meta-Coach, I specialize in ... and my style is...” And they were doing this in all of the three elevators that went up and down the 13 floors of the Mercure Hotel. Talk about literally perfecting your “elevator speech.”!

As I mentioned, while we sought to bring a cultural immersion of Neuro-Semantics to the participants of Meta-Coaching, we also experienced a cultural immersion in Maori culture given that only four of us were not Maori. So I saw for the first time an Axes of Change Haka. And how can I describe that? Each of our teams took on one of the axes on The Axes of Change and created a mind-to-muscle “song,” “rap,” “dance” with it. It was as mind-to-muscle as any pattern I could have invented and quite powerful in effect — even for an observer.

Another aspect of the Maori culture is the Taonga. I heard about it several times in coaching sessions when a coach would ask, “How do you want to remember this state or experience? How do you want to anchor it so you can keep this new robust frame of mind or feeling?” And they would talk about wearing something around their neck as a Taonga — a “treasure.” Colin and Lena tell me that they even introduce Neuro-Semantics as a Taonga (treasure) and as a term that carries special significance for those who wear a black or green stone which they receive as a gift around the neck. And that, by the way, is a way that the Maori people naturally anchor a state and use it for re-accessing it with ease. The training ended on Day 8 with a Neuro-Semantic Haka that was offered me which was especially moving and powerful, leaving me speechless.

And the new format for the *Coaching Mastery Program*? I congratulate *Lena Gray* on the exceptional job of co-training she did having to adjust to the new format and keep up with me and doing all of that *and* co-sponsoring the whole event. Meta-High Fives for taking on all of that! Meta High Fives also to *Antoinette Ehmke* from Pretoria South Africa who joined Colin and Lena on our panel of Expert Coaches on Day 7 to contribute to the business acumen of creating a commercially viable coaching practice. And also to *Joseph Scott* of Australia who showed up on Day 4, sat in and helped with the benchmarking of competency skills and then shared some of his experiences and insights having worked with leaders and companies as a Meta-Coach for some four or five years now. (Both Lena and Joe are part of the leadership team of the MCF — both in their internship for being signed off as a Meta-Coach Trainer.) Every single person reached benchmark competency on the seven core skills; several are provisional due to needing to catch up on Modules I and II. We even had 2 people without any NLP (Module I) and Meta-States (Module II) who succeeded in an exceptional way. And for the first time ever we also had two teenagers graduate from *Coaching Mastery*! That’s right, two young people 18 years old. Now imagine their futures knowing this stuff! Imagine what your present future would have been like if you had been introduced and trained in those coaching/ leadership skills at 18! And then there were the visions that we heard on Graduation night— What wonderful visions of the legacy that will be left by Meta-Coaches in New Zealand! As I now fly to Pretoria South Africa for the next *Coaching Mastery*, I am impressed with the quality of the new graduates in New Zealand and the foundational work that Colin and Lena are doing there—along with numerous other Neuro-Semantic Trainers and Coaches. Here’s to the Vision of Self-Actualizing people, companies, and countries!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #39**  
**October 21, 2009**

## **“YOU’RE ALMOST A META-COACH BUT NOT QUITE”**

Those were the words that recently I spoke to a Meta-Coach in a pretty intense conversation. And it wasn’t the first time. I think I have said those words to several Meta-Coaches over the years. And what leads me to saying such words? What were we talking about that would call forth uttering such a thing? Okay, here’s the story.

It almost always begins when someone asks me to do some coach supervision with regard to a client. And almost always the exploration begins with an emotion that the client is experiencing. The client either *wants* an emotion that he or she does not have or the client wants to stop having an emotion that is far too frequent. So far, so good.

But now the problem for the coach begins. Perhaps the client says, “I want to have more confidence in my work, my relationships, my public speaking, etc.” Or perhaps the client says, “I’m tired of feeling fearful, angry, jealous, regret, etc.” The problem begins at that point if the coach jumps in and begins coaching. I saw and heard one coach begin using the Swish pattern, another focused on changing the qualities of the representations of the feeling, another used Spinning Icons, another did state accessing, amplifying, and then went for applying and anchoring.

So what’s the problem? Simple— *all of this indicates a mis-guided understand or lack of understanding of how we handle “emotions” in Meta-States and in Meta-Coaching.* Are you aware of the distinction I’m referring to? Do you know why this is a mis-guided approach? Can you explain how and why it does not represent the premises and guidelines for handling “emotions” in Meta-Coaching? I hope so, but if not, here are some reminders to integrate this aspect of Meta-Coaching.

*Emotions* (as a combination of kinesthetic sensations and evaluative understandings and beliefs) *are secondary.* They come from our *meanings.* They arise from the *difference* between our mental maps about things and our experiences in the world as we use our skills to navigate a particular territory. They measure the difference between our map and the territory we are experiencing. That’s why they are always right! (Not always positive or useful, but always right.)

**Emotions are always right to the map and the experience out of which they come.** And that makes them informational and useful and secondary.

On the positive side, this means that you can always embrace, welcome, honor, and

explore your emotions for whatever “information” that they might provide. Do you need to adjust your mapping of things, your skills and competence in handling things, or a bit of both?

On the negative side, this also means that they can be wrong, distortion, delusional, and even toxic. If they come from a toxic map, expect the emotion to be toxic. If you believe that you are worthless, won't amount to anything, will always fail, are hopeless, helpless—you can imagine the emotions that you'll create in your body. And while the emotion is right to the map out of which it comes, it is also sick and toxic!

So how do you coach to address that emotion? Forget the sub-modality stuff of changing the representations—you need to go deeper and higher—you need to get to *the frame* from which it comes. If you don't change the frame, then changing the voice tone, volume, image position, etc. will only be symptomatic and your work will not last. You have to get to the belief frame that creates that nonsense in the first place.

*Neuro-Semantically, emotions are just emotions.* They are neither right nor wrong, just somatic energies in your body by which *you feel the meanings you have created*. Change the meaning—change the emotion. That will bring lasting change. Fool around with where the emotion starts in your body and how it spins around and where it goes (some of the current non-sense that Richard Bandler is propagating) and you achieve no lasting change. It might be interesting and mystical and new-age-ish, but it will not succeed in the long-term. To do that you have to find and change the frame. The frame is the problem, not the energy in the body.

*Emotions are symptoms.* So dealing with them directly is dealing with symptoms and working on symptomatic responses and not getting to the source. If you want to get to the source, you have to go higher and deeper—to the frame. So if someone says, “I want confidence.” “I want joy.” “I want compassion.” “I want to feel calm and relaxed.” Immediately ask, “And what do you have to do, what is required, so that you can feel X?” Do that and you move from coaching in a symptomatic way to coaching the invisible structures of the person's experience—to coaching in a structural way.

You have to ask *the action question*. You have to find *the behavior* that's required—the behavior, which if performed, will meet the meaning-frame and generate the emotion. Otherwise you can access an emotional state, connect it to the person's current incompetency and help them *feel* the emotion—even those it will be a delusion and a lie. So say,

“Great, that sounds like a wonderful emotion to experience, *what* will you have to actually do in the real world that will fit some criteria or standard or value or understanding that you have about that?”

Now you are meta-coaching! Now you are using the Cognitive-Behavioral psychology that NLP and Neuro-Semantics is founded upon. If you do not, then you are not quite a full-fledged Meta-Coach. Meta-Coaching does not help to perpetuate delusions and lies in people's lives. It does the opposite. It facilitates people mapping better and more useful frames and meanings and then implementing them into a mind-to-muscle process so that they *are* more competent. Meta-

Coaching is neuro-semantic in that it brings rich meanings to behaviors, expansive behaviors to meanings and it eliminates both meanings and behaviors that are not effective. If you have forgotten that, re-read the front page of [www.neurosemantics.com](http://www.neurosemantics.com).

A full-fledged Meta-Coach goes after the meaning-frames first and foremost which then facilitates a much richer emotional life. This makes for true emotional intelligence— an intelligent way of handling, monitoring, and managing our emotions so that we have the kind of emotional freedom and mastery that accords with unleashing our highest and best potentials.

To your full emotional freedom and mastery!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #40**  
**October 28, 2009**

## **STANDARDS AND CLONES IN META-COACHING**

A few years ago I began to understand the need for standardizing the models and patterns of Neuro-Semantics. The need is so that when people from Asia talk to people in Europe or those in Africa speak to those in Australia, or those in Latin America speak to those in Hong Kong — that when they speak about *The Axes of Change*, *Mind-to-Muscle*, *Meta-Stating Emotion*, *the Self-Actualization Quadrants* or dozens of other models and 200 patterns, they will be speaking a common-enough language so that they know what each other are speaking about.

Then, so when someone speaks about *meta-stating as a process*, they know “Ah, yes, the 5 A’s.” They know, “Yes, access, amplify, apply, appropriate, and analyze.” Now they may know some additional A’s — as Colin and Lena have added some more or they may know some additions steps, but minimally everybody will know the central process that we’re speaking of. That’s standardization.

*The fact is that standardization is critical for branding.* By creating a standard and holding to that standard, we create a set of human technologies (models, patterns, guidelines) that enable us to perform our magic and excellence. Standardization also enables us to measure competency. It allows us to test if a person has the required understanding to work the models and the required skills to implement them in training, consulting, and coaching.

With standardization, we are then able to create a coherent community, a world-wide association of people with whom we work and collaborate —an association of people that we can readily recommend and hold up as good examples of the models. Testing for such standardization then occurs by asking such things as:

- What is the elicitation question for X pattern?
- What are the 10 components of the well-formed outcome process?
- How does the 4 axes relate to generative change?

Does this turn everybody into clones? Of course not. If there’s one thing we emphasize over and over and over in Neuro-Semantics and Meta-Coaching, it is each person’s unique style. “What are your three best states and what *style* comes out of those states for you?” Style is *how you do* or run the patterns. Standardization is *the what* which you run. In fact, we bring different expert Coaches into Meta-Coaching to encourage people seeing different styles. So of course we do not encourage anyone to be a clone of anyone else. That goes against everything in the Neuro-Semantic vision. When we select a person as an expert coach who is also a Meta-Coach, we expect that person to use the 7 core skills of coaching when they demonstrate their style of coaching.

We also expect that when they use the 7 models of the Meta-Coaching System, they know and use them as they are originally presented. By standardizing in this way, then any and every one of the CDs and DVDs of various Meta-Coaches *coaching* will have at its heart— the same methodology. And the CDs and DVDs of trainers *training*— you can see the same methodology at work. It is when Style and Standards come together that we are able to have differences within the unity.

Too much standardization and we have bureaucracy and a smothering control. Too much uniqueness of style and we have chaos and an undisciplined association. It is the synergy of having rigorous standards that we treat as a discipline to learn and replicate along with each person's unique style that we inject real life and vitality into our models and patterns. And it is this that makes up our “methodology” in Meta-Coaching as well as in Neuro-Semantics.

That *methodology* is the result of the numerous models and patterns— the theoretical background that holds it in place (cognitive-behavior psychology, developmental, self-actualization psychology) —in addition to holding the right for people to express the discipline and apply it as they find it useful in the contexts in which they work.

Since the beginning we have had 4 or 5 people with University Degrees in Coaching come through Meta-Coaching. Those from Sydney U. made the comment that throughout their studies they had never sat down with a client, conducted a coaching session. So when they began doing precisely that in Meta-Coaching, it was surprising, scary, exciting, and wonderful. Wonderful especially that there was immediate and in-the-moment supervision in the coaching sessions. Others commented that they had just discovered that the internship in coaching at the university was actually training in counseling / consulting, and not in coaching at all!

Those are different methodologies. They are certainly different from the methodology of the Meta-Coach system. And the fact is that at this point in time no other system on the planet comes anywhere near having the systematic structure that we have in Meta-Coaching. That's one of our strengths and gives us an advantage in terms of moving the field of Coaching to becoming a profession. So, as you go out as examples and representatives of Meta-Coach, don't forget this. It does it you an advantage and a true value to offer.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #41**  
**Nov. 4, 2009**  
*An ACMC Event*

## **META-BABIES AND META-COACHING**

The 27<sup>th</sup> training of *Coaching Mastery* has just completed in Pretoria South Africa and during the days of that training — a first. During Meta-Coaching—a *meta-baby* was born! Cooper Antonio was born to two Meta-Coaches— Judite and Jerome Lucas and to brother Kai Lucas. I think that makes him the first meta-baby in the world. Cooper was born on October 27 and of course Cheryl Lucas and Carie Jooste —my co-trainers— had to pop out of the training for a quick trip to the hospital.

Another fabulous thing happened within the South African training of Meta-Coaching— we had six Meta-Coaches return to revisit the program. That’s a record and all six found it extremely rewarding especially given the new format. *Coaching Mastery* has now been trained with the new format three times on three continents and it has proven even far more transformative than what I originally forecasted— which is good. I always like to under-promise and over-deliver. The consistent word from the sponsors and every one of the team leaders is that the new format takes Meta-Coaching to a whole new level of transformation and integration.

I’m always being asked “What’s new this year?” and in addition to the full articulation of the Facilitation model— there is the specification of 7 different coaching conversations that a coach can have once a well-formed outcome (and KPI) is established. In fact, the conversation emerges from the KPI. And a new format for the well-formed outcome is the 4 distinctions (what, context, how, and criteria) or the Big What, the Small What and the what-of-the-what. Then there is the much more explicit vision of self-actualizing individuals, families, companies, and countries in the Meta-Coaching branding. For the Facilitation model, there is not only the focus on the non-content / process facilitation but also on how the facilitating skills fit the Meaning— Performance axes from which emerges the heart of the Meta-Coach as a compassionate challenger.

A big thanks to Tim Goodenough. He raised the question about the Matrix-embedded-Pyramid of needs— asking about a set of questions for a Meta-Coach to use to determine the “level” of drive that a person is living at. So he and I began putting that list together and we’ll be sending it out to the Coaches egroup in a week or two.

In our South Africa training, we only had 2 other countries represented other than South Africa — Kenya and Norway. Yet we did have people from several ethnic groups or cultures and so once again, “culture” became a central theme in the experience. In Pretoria we had Afrikaans, British, Dutch, Indian, etc.



I asked Cheryl Lucus about the diverse make-up of the participants and she noted that among the 25 delegates listed below (we still have not heard from 2 of them) there were 5 of the 12 official languages spoken in South Africa (maybe more with the two persons outstanding).

<b>Country</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Number of Delegates</b>
Denmark	Danish	1 Delegate
Norway	Norwegian	1 Delegate
South Africa	Afrikaans	7 Delegates
South Africa	English	10 Delegates
South Africa	Zetswana	2 Delegate
South Africa	Zulu	2 Delegate
South Africa	Tsonga	1 Delegate
Zimbabwe	Shona	1 Delegate

We had a tremendous Team of Leaders who made the week of Transformation occur.

Those returning as Team Leaders: Mike Cooper, Taryn Sydow, Time Goodenough, Cindy Bell, and Lee Griessel.

Those stepping up for Group and Team Coaching for the first time were: Dina Marais, Manuela Savage, Danny Tuckwood, and Martie Lewis.

And the training was a trio of myself with Cheryl Lucas and Carie Jooste.

Regarding the focus of the participants, about half were or were planning to create their own Coaching business and almost half were within organizations and using coaching as an internal coach or as their management or leadership methodology. We had two CEOs and numerous people in various levels of management.

**In just 10 weeks — in January 2010 the Neuro-Semantic / Meta-Coach Leadership Team is meeting in San Francisco.** The design is to decide on numerous things, the content of the PCMC that will be conducted this next year, the content of Neuro-Semantic Practitioner and Master Practitioner, and to begin forging the direction of Neuro-Semantics in the next 5 to 10 years. At that time, I will also be doing the “sign-off” for several of the leadership team as Meta-Coach Trainers. It was a delight this past week to work with Cheryl and Carey in co-training and in seeing their development as trainers and coaches.

Here’s to the Transformative power that you have in Meta-Coaching!

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #42**  
**Nov. 11, 2009**

## **THE EIGHTH MODEL OF META-COACHING**

### **The Hidden 8<sup>th</sup> Model**

We speak of *The Meta-Coaching System* as comprised of seven models — seven models based on what *coaching* by definition is. And you know those seven models and can easily quote them by memory— right?

- |                                     |   |                                                    |
|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <i>Communication</i>             | — | The NLP Communication Model                        |
| 2) <i>Indepth communication</i>     | — | Meta-States Model of Self-Reflexive Consciousness. |
| 3) <i>Systemic and holistic</i>     | — | The Matrix Model                                   |
| 4) <i>Generative Change</i>         | — | The Axes of Change Model                           |
| 5) <i>Measurable Implementation</i> | — | The Benchmarking Model                             |
| 6) <i>Unleashing potentials</i>     | — | Self-Actualization Quadrants & Psychology          |
| 7) <i>Process Facilitation</i>      | — | The Facilitation Model                             |

And yet there is another model, the hidden 8<sup>th</sup> model of Meta-Coaching. Do you know what it is? *It is the Meta-Programs model.* And as has often been said,

Inherent to Meta-Coaching is coaching to meta-programs. A Meta-Coach detects and addresses the meta-program perceptual filters that govern how a client attends to information, sorts for things, and filters the experiences of life.

If the Meta-Program Model is intrinsic to Meta-Coaching, then where do we place it in terms of the seven models and the seven distinctions of *coaching* as we define it in Meta-Coaching? When I was recently asked this question, I had to stop and really spend some time thinking about it. My first response was “Well, we could certainly place meta-programs in any one of the first three distinctions.” But that didn’t satisfy the questioner. “And which one do you think it best satisfies?” she continued! Auggghh! The power of a penetrating question!

The truth was, in that moment, I didn’t know. So then preframing that I was going to talk out-loud and think out-loud, among many other things, I made the following comments as I was trying to clarify my own thinking and trying to come to some kind of an answer to the question.

#### *1) Meta-Programs arose originally as part of the NLP Communication model.*

Leslie Bandler Cameron is credited as being the first person to recognize that a meta-program filter could make any one of the early completely NLP patterns null and void. Even the powerful “Movie-Rewind” pattern for curing phobias, eliminating traumas, and taking the emotional charge out of any old memory can be rendered ineffective by certain meta-programs. It was this very dynamic that first caught my interest and led me to write *Figuring Out People* (FOP) with Bob Bodenhamer. We knew that meta-programs were

powerful and powerful enough to support or diminish the transformative processes of NLP.

After Leslie's original work, Wyatt Woodsmall brought over the four distinctions from Carl Jung (and Myers-Briggs) and added them to the first list of meta-programs. Yet the field of NLP (even to this day) hardly knows what to do with meta-programs (MP). And that's why half of the NLP Trainers in the world today *do not even teach them* (for example, John Grinder doesn't recognize meta-programs as part of NLP!). And those who do either present them as a checklist of distinctions or as a form of typology (which totally misunderstands meta-programs).

## 2) *Meta-Programs are solidified Meta-States.*

After Bob and I put the first edition of FOP (1997) together and began offering trainings in meta-programs, questions kept arising, "Where do meta-programs come from?" That eventually led to the discovery that *meta-programs are primarily meta-states* that through the actualizing nature of the mind-body system, that is, through the mind-to-muscle process, get into neurology. When your meta-states get into your "eyes" they become your perceptual lens. How does this happen? First we meta-state ourselves with "detailing" or "generalizing" or "matching" or "mismatching" or "options" or "procedures" and then eventually we come to *believe, value, and identify* ourselves in these ways. And then we see the world, and ourselves, and others, through those meta-programs. (There's now an entire chapter on this in *Figuring Out People*, 2005).

This led to the realization that there were 4 meta-domains in NLP as we discovered that "sub-modalities" are not *sub-* but *meta* (*Sub-Modalities Going Meta*, 1997).

- 1) Meta-Model of Language — 1975
- 2) Meta-Programs — 1978
- 3) Meta-States — 1994
- 4) Meta-Modalities— the cinematic features of representational movies—1978 /1997.

## 3) *Meta-Programs works systemically.*

When I entered the field of NLP, there were 14 meta-programs (MP) and they were offered without any structure or order, just as a list of distinctions. As I searched through the field of NLP to see how others had structured MP I found several different approaches (these are mentioned in a Chapter on structure MP in FOP). From that I recommend to Bob that we go with the format of cognitive, emotional, conative (choosing) and semantic and he liked that approach. This allowed us to present meta-programs as filters that influence our whole system of mind-body-emotion and even our higher semantic frames. Later, in *The Matrix Model* (2003) we identified the key meta-programs within each of the sub-matrices.

So what do you think? Where do we put meta-programs? Here's my thinking about this. While meta-programs began to be identified within the original NLP model about 1978 as perceptual "filters" (some call them "neuro-sorts"), the NLP communication model did not really know

where to put them, how to think about them, or how to explain where they came from or how to change or expand them. They were simply collected as a list that somehow influenced communication. So we really cannot put them there and especially since half of the field of NLP still does not recognize them! After training in Mexico for a couple years, it was Omar Salom (one of our Meta-Coach Trainers) who made me aware that most practitioner and master practitioner courses in Mexico do not teach meta-programs (!).

And while it's true that meta-programs operate systemically, and that you have to think systemically in order to effectively work with meta-programs, that's true about everything in human personality.

So where would I put meta-programs? The clear choice for me is in *the self-reflexive distinction (or Meta-States)*. After all, meta-programs are solidified or integrated meta-states. And to change or expand a meta-program, you have to use various meta-stating processes like permission and belief. And as Meta-States as a model provide the primary explanation and tools for detecting and flushing out *the hidden, invisible structure behind experience*, it also provides the structural formulation behind meta-programs.

***Ah yes, a correction — And then there were 4 Meta-Babies!***

I wrote last week that we had *our first meta-baby* last week in South Africa, but I was wrong. Sue Anderson corrected me. She informed me a couple of days ago that Cooper Antonio was not the first *meta-baby*, but the second one! Sue Anderson (a Meta-Coach) married to Chris Cartledge (another Meta-Coach) were the first to give birth to a meta-baby. Jazmyn Annie Cartledge was born in March of this year (2009). And then I remembered that Andrew and Zurina Bryant (both Meta-Coaches in Singapore) had both of their children after they were Meta-Coaches, so now there are 4.

Of course, then there are the Meta-Children around the world. I had not thought of that until Sue also wrote the following:

My 10 year old daughter Cleo, who lives with Chris and I has been brought up as a Meta Kid for the past three years. Chris and I were having a heated discussion the other week and she said "Come on you guys, I thought you were Meta Coaches!!!!!!!!!"

Now talk about being held accountable! So for all of you Meta-Coaches with Meta-Children, especially if both you and your partner are Meta-Coaches, soon there will be a whole new population of people on this planet.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #43**  
**Nov. 18, 2009 \*\***

## **INSIDER’S GUIDE TO COACHING WITH META-PROGRAMS**

If meta-programs is a facet of the Meta-States Model and an intricate part of Meta-Coaching and if it is a facet of Meta-Coaching which sets it apart from other coaching schools, as I suggested in the last Meta-Coach Reflection, then what’s involved in *coaching to meta-programs*? Then, as a Meta-coach, what are the key skills that you need so that you can effectively coach to a client’s meta-programs? What are the required core skills for effectively working with meta-programs as a coach? Here are the most essential core skills:

### **Skill #1: Detecting the presence of meta-programs in client communications.**

Most people can pick up on and recognize if a person is a “cup-half-full” person or a “cup-half-empty” person. Certainly you can. And yes, true enough, you won’t necessarily be able to detect such in the first three minutes of a conversation or even after 30 minutes. But after an hour or perhaps a session or two, and you will probably be able to recognize the person’s key patterns for thinking, reasoning, perceiving, and sorting.

In the short-term, a person’s content, story, or immediate situation may govern and even cover up a person’s optimism or pessimism. But over a longer-term period of time, you will be able to see and detect the person’s style of thinking, perceiving, emoting, and responding. It will become seen for being regular and systematic. Then you will be able to recognize it irrespective of some immediate context or situation. The person’s pattern of response will be regular enough that you can depend on it. You can bet on it. You know that the person will be thinking, talking, emoting, and responding in a particular fashion.

How will you be able to do that? You’ll do it by picking up on some regular linguistic cues: “That won’t work.” “That’s a great idea! Let’s do it!” “I doubt it.” “Wonderful! I’ll vote for that!” You may also pick up on certain tones and gestures that give cue of the meta-program.

This is the first skill required for effectively coaching to a client’s meta-program. It begins with detection. And, of course, to detect you have to know the meta-program distinctions in the first place, their signs and cues, and what they indicate about the person’s processing style. And given that there are at least 60 meta-programs, as you begin with two or three and learn those well, then you can add a couple more, until you eventually have a good comprehension and competency with them.

### **Skill #2: Profiling with meta-programs.**

The next skill is that of recognizing a meta-program in a person and the effect it will have on successfully reaching a chosen goal. This requires that you are able to profile a person's meta-programs as well as profile a given goal or job in terms of the required meta-programs. Along this line, there are some meta-programs that directly relate to reaching goals—the goal style meta-program (mp), the motivation direction mp, the adaptation mp, the detailing mp, etc.

Others relate less directly and are more dependent on the particular goal. In this, you can profile a goal. What are the meta-programs of those who most effectively and efficiently reach this particular goal? What are the meta-program defaults of my client? What meta-programs will my client need to use to reach this goal? How much flexibility does my client have regarding this meta-program? The outcome of becoming an effective visionary leader will require very different meta-programs than becoming a highly skilled manager of front-line service people.

**Skill #3: Identifying leverage meta-programs.**

What meta-program could you shift, change, alter, or expand, that if you did would have a cascading effect on the person's responses and/or goal achievement? What meta-program would give you leverage on a change? The skill here is that of enabling a client to expand his or her frames—the frames that hold the meta-program in place. This meta-stating skill involves moving up through a person's matrix of frames and identifying the specific frame (belief, decision, value, understanding, identity, meaning) that holds the meta-program in place and that gives it too much semantic meaning.

**Skill #4: Testing feedback about the meta-program alteration.**

After you make the change, or after you experiment with trying on an alteration to the meta-program, then test the effect it has. What results? How successful is it in the change? How well does it sustain the results? What other adjustments to make?

Getting feedback and testing that feedback about the results of coaching to a meta-program is critical to make sure that your coaching is ecological for the person. Often our assumptions about what we think will be ecological do not make a good systems fit with the person's health, time, relationships, etc. So do follow-up and check it out.

**Skill #5: Trouble-shooting frame objections.**

Frames can and do object. When they do, you experience them as “internal conflict,” as incongruence,” and as “strange feelings.” When such objections arise, welcome them, accept them, and then respectfully explore them to seek to fully understand them. By no means demonize them. That only drives them underground and strengthens them.

So there you have it— an Insider's Guide for Coaching to a person's meta-programs. You now know five essential skills that are required so that you can effectively do this. Now go practice! Here's to your increasing skill in *coaching to a client's meta-programs!*

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #44**  
**Nov. 25, 2009**

## **GROUNDING A GLOBAL**

### **From La-La Land Back to the Earth**

A *big question* for NLP people (since 60 percent of them are “global” in the USA in terms of the information size meta-program and probably that or more in other countries) is how to unleash their potentials for *detailing* their great, exciting, up-in-the-air visions and dreams. That, in fact, may be *the question* that will enable NLP people to actually *actualize* what they can envision and create in their mind so that it becomes *real* in their everyday lives. Could that be the million-dollar question? Over the years, I have heard these questions scores and scores of times. And a few weeks ago at our *Coaching Mastery* in both New Zealand and South Africa—the big challenge of the day was “*How do you get the globals to come back to earth?*”

*The Global Meta-Program Question:*

- What do you do with a global person? Is there any hope for him or her?
- Can a global person, who claims that details are totally foreign, learn to perceive details?
- Is it an identity or an excuse when someone says, “But I’m a global, so what do you expect? That’s too much detail for me. I’ll just get someone else to do that for me; why do I need to do that?”
- Shall we put that person on a crash-diet of Details or just call the guys in the white coats?
- How can you help a person who lives in meta-land, who glories in beautiful dreams of a magnificent future driven by la-la land of optimism to get a KPI, benchmark a skill, and communicate with sensory specificity?

I hear this stuff all the time. Well, *all* the time is probably too general and too global(!). I hear it almost every day at the *Coaching Mastery* training, the Wealth Creation training, and some other trainings that involve detailing out specific processes to create a higher level of success. And it’s never the people who can do details who ask these questions or make these defenses; it’s the people who live in Never-never Land, in the highest suburbs of Meta-Land, who do “blue-sky” stuff all day long, and those who have not seen the ground in years.

Can it be done? Is there any real hope for “blue skiers?” Can they ever come down to the green earth and plop their skybound shoes on terra firma? Is there any actual hope that dreams of Quadrant III actualize their hidden performer (Quadrant II) and synergize into a self-actualizing person (Quadrant IV).

*Yes*, as a recovering Global-Only person myself, I can tell you optimistically that there is hope! “Who you?” Yes, me. My default meta-program is on the global side. It was through learning NLP that I learned how to detail things and to do so to such an extent, I constantly have people tell me to my face or write it on feedback forms that I am “the most detail person they have ever

met!” So how does this incredible transformation occur? What magic do we have to turn a raving Global into a calm and cool Detailer?

### **Detailer Magic**

*1) Recognize the value of detailing and especially of meta-detailing.*

It all begins with the recognize and the valuing of detailing as a legitimate and important skill. If you don't recognize that, you will never be able to expand your meta-program filter. And why or how are details important? Here's some ideas that support that realization:

Mastery is in the details. What distinguishes the master from the expert and novice is his or her ability to make finer distinctions whether these are in music, art, literature, patterns, etc. Every detective also knows, The magic is in the details.

I learned this and invented the phrase of “meta-detailing” after reading Robert Dilts' works on *The Strategies of Genius*. There I learned about Walt Disney and many other geniuses and how they demonstrated the skill of meta-detailing. Later we put this in the book *Sub-Modalities Going Meta* (2007).

Details and detailing is also the very “magic” in the Meta-Model of Language, the first NLP model. It was that model that gave us the way to speak with precision and to ground experiences into specific referents which then allowed for new re-mapping thereby giving people a new lease on life.

*2) Make a decision to expand your global meta-program.*

Once you realize the value of details— relevant and right details to any performance of excellence, then make a decision that you will expand your meta-program and that you will detail specifics for greater precision. Will you do that? When will you make that decision? Do you have permission within yourself, with the frames in the back of your mind, to make that decision? Go ahead, raise your right hand and say the words. Good. So how is that?

*3) Map out the detailing program.*

Okay, with the understanding and decision in place, you are now ready to create a positive and attractive image of detailing and meta-detailing. Do you have an inner movie of what this would look and sound like? Who can you interview as a model of positive example? Do you have any old images or metaphors about details that you need to release or change or expel? Ideas about “getting lost in irrelevant details” and “wasting time with details” commonly repel people from valuing details.

*4) Set frames to support your expanded detailing.*

What frames of mind, frames of meaning, do you need to set in your mind that will support you to expand your meta-program to detailing of things? What do you need to understand, value, believe, and/or identify so that it provides you a solid framework for moving to that end of the continuum? What are the richest meanings you can give to this experience that will empower you and develop your capacity for it?



*5) Develop an action plan for your practice.*

Now you are ready for acting on all of this and practicing the detailing. In fact, to deliberately practice detailing. So what's your action plan? What will you experiment with? How will you review your experience so that you can get quality feedback and gain a sense of success in this?

Now to put in a plug for the experience of being on the Assist Team, almost everybody on the team comes in with some fear and trepidation about the details involved in benchmarking the specific operational behaviors for the core skills of coaching. And at the same time, most of them find their skills in detailing growing exponentially in those 8 days of the coaching bootcamp. So if you are a Meta-coach and really brave, apply to be on the Assist Team and that will really challenge and expand your global meta-program.

You could also create an action plan to write out in detail (10 pages or so) your ten-year wealth creation plan. That was one of the first things I did. You could create your own benchmarking project and work on detailing out a skill or value that's important for you.

Okay, so there you have it— a process for radically altering the perceptual lens of the most extreme la-la-land over-generalized global person.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #45**  
**Dec. 2, 2009**

## — THE THOUSAND MARK — A TIPPING POINT?

I don't know if 1000 is the tipping point. While it could be, it probably is not. Yet whatever it is —it is a major accomplishment for the Meta-Coaching System. And in the 7 years from Nov. 2002 to Nov. 2009, we are just at the verge of the 1000 number — *1000 Meta-Coaches in 35 countries around the world.*

This past weekend we completed the 28<sup>th</sup> Meta-Coach Training and as I write this, I just realized that *Graham Richardson* was at the first training in 2002 as one of our 3 expert coaches (along Michelle Duval and Cheryl Gilroy and all three fully participated in the program as participants as well), and Graham Richardson returned this past week again as one of our 2 expert coaches for this 28<sup>th</sup> presentation of Meta-Coaching (along with *Shane Stewart* of Sydney). There are now another 25 Meta-Coaches on the planet and that puts us about 987 if my numbers are correct and so the China training in January will take us over the top as we push past the first 1,000.

It was a real pleasure and privilege to work along side of *Laureli Blythe* and *Heidi Heron* of Australasia NLP Training Center in downtown Sydney. I say “a pleasure and privilege” because they represent such high quality NLP and an approach to NLP that arises from inclusiveness as Laureli says, abundance and collaboration. And that is just all too rare these days in NLP Trainers. So what great models they both are of the communication and relationship models of NLP!

Now for some meta-high fives. A meta-high five to *Tom Kelsall* —our one and only Meta-Coach to revisit this time. Tom was part of the 2004 class in Sydney. And a meta-high five to two new Meta-Coaches who have raised their hands to lead out in creating MCF chapters in Sydney and Melbourne — something we have desperately needed. *Chris Day* will be leading out in Melbourne and *Chris Young* in Sydney — so if you are in either of these cities or nearby, you will shortly have MCF chapter practice groups that you can become a part of. This will give you a place to constantly refresh your skills— learn about some of the new models in Meta-Coaching and help to more professionally brand Meta-Coaching in your area.

We mostly had Aussies at the training, but also 3 from Japan — so a big meta-high five to Dr. Junichiro Takano for the MCF chapter that he has been leading in Tokyo and the 3 new Meta-Coaches in Japan! We had 2 from Singapore, 1 from Indonesia, 1 from Dubai, and 1 from New Zealand. Team leaders came from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.

We had 5 or 6 of the Meta-Coaches who are in organizations in various roles and who will be working *on the inside* to change the culture and the people so that they are able to become more

fully themselves even at work. Half of the group are already *in practice* as Coaches and now expanding their skills, identity, and credibility with the Meta-Coaching System; and about a third are planning to go into full-time practice as a Coach. We had one CEO who is planning to step *up* to become a Corporate Coach!

And as with the past 3 Coaching Mastery trainings— the *new format* has proven to be much more effective in enabling coaches to learn the integrity and power of Meta-Coaching. So a meta- high five to *Omar Salom* in Mexico who helped me design the new format that focuses on the *facilitation core of coaching* and that develops Meta-Coaching by beginning with the heart of coaching— a compassionate caring about people, about enabling people to unleash their highest and best.

I still marvel at the power of the intensity of the Meta-Coach Bootcamp— long hours, the pressure of being observed and benchmarked while coaching, the highly personal nature of the coaching sessions, the requirement to work effectively with others in teams, and so on. It creates a very unique environment for accelerating adult learning that closes the knowing-doing gap, and that sets the stage for the next level transformations. The intensity of the pressures creates an atmosphere that functions as a crucible— a crucible space that the team leaders hold for the unleashing of potentials. And this year in Sydney we had a very committed team— *Annie Letournie* (Canada), *Diane Smith* (New Zealand), *David Camp* (Australia), *Kate Rafter* (Australia), *Martin Urban* (Australia and current MCF President), and *Dr. Yvonne Sum* (Australia).

Yes it is intense and it is also a lot of fun. Many commented that it is very entertaining, and as usual, several write comments like, “I haven’t laughed that long or hard in a long time.” Of course, we create that because adults, like children, learn best when there is fun and when the learnings are also entertaining. And as an intense person, I’ve been learning for years how to introduce more and more humor into the process.

Comments written by the new Meta-Coaches about *the Coaching Mastery Training*—

“This training has changed my life forever. Today is the first day of the rest of my life. Thank you.” Nicola Townsend

“When it stopped being about me ... I became me!” Chris Day

“The Meta-Coach System is an amazing experience. I can simply to gain accreditation for my company, and I got so much more than that. The training has helped me overcome blocks to actualising my full potential, and I am now ready to step into my own power and go for it! The skills of advanced questioning techniques have already taken my coaching ability to the next level. Michael presents with humour and playfulness and a passionate love of this work and that makes the experience invaluable.” Carolyn Dickson

“The Meta-Coach system was transformational for me. ... this training raised by competency, confidence, and capabilities in coaching beyond my expectations. Michael’s abilities captured my attention throughout the training, 9 am till 9 pm which I found amazing.” Liz Walton

“Thank you for an awesome training! The Meta-Coaching skills and models are so valuable for you as a human being, to be and live at your best ... and you get to help others shine as well! ... thanks for the amazing skills for our own personal transformation and for becoming great coaches and leaders!” Kylie Sexton

“It’s very transforming personally and as a coach. I truly got my identity as a coach.” Wahyudi

“Truly life changing and amazing.” Lucy Patarcic

“Meta-Coaching is a great programme of skills, knowledge, mindset, and more importantly, the purpose and intent of being a Meta-Coach! Learning from the founder and expert coaches have been the most fabulous gift. ... thank you for being a massive part of my life of self-actualization.” Lawrence Tan

“Meta-Coach training has given me the structure and process to be an effective coach– not just the theory. The training was delineated in a fun, creative, and practical way ensuring knowing and doing.” Tom Kelsall

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #45**  
**Dec. 2, 2009**

## **WHEN YOU COACH**

### **Post-KPI Coaching**

As you well know—what makes coaching unique is that the client is the expert of the client. So we coach to the client's outcome, not ours! Responding to a client *in terms of our outcomes for the client* is what consultants do, what therapists do, what trainers, teachers, and hypnotherapists do. But that's not what a Coach does. A coach gathers information from the client about what the client wants that opens up new possibilities and potentials and then supports the client by mobilizing internal and external resources to enable the client to reach his or her goals. Skip this step and the coach will be imposing his stuff on the client.

After all, *what would you coach to* if you have not fully elicited the client's outcome? What? So for a Coach—your expertise is not in what the client needs, it is in effectively eliciting the client's highest and best outcomes. Your expertise is not in *the content* of the client's outcome, it is in *the process* of enabling the client to discover that outcome. That's why you are a *meta-coach*.

This explains our emphasis in Meta-Coaching on the Well-Formed Outcome of NLP and the formatting of a clearly defined KPI. And I think we can proudly sell Meta-Coaching as the world's foremost system for co-creating with clients the most clear, precise, and specific outcomes. Even NLP Coaching systems do not use the Well-Formed Outcome (WFO) the way we do and in the past few months, several new distinctions and formats have developed about the WFO.

After Michelle and I first formulated the KPI statement from the WFO, it took each of us 20 minutes to get a KPI. With the new formats, I've now reduced that time to about 5 minutes. I have recently scared some of the MC Trainers by demonstrating it again and again in 4 minutes! Ah, the 4-minute KPI! And I raised the fear-factor by challenging them, "See if you can follow my two demos with a 4-minute KPI!" (Of course, I don't tell them about my advantage of getting so much more practice with this and teaching it again and again, dozens of times during the Team Leaders trainings.)

#### **Post-KPI Coaching**

Last week in Sydney one of the participants who finally got a KPI in a session, asked this:

"What do you do *after* you get the KPI? Where does Meta-Coaching go then? What then determines where the coaching session goes after the KPI? ... (And then with a wink, he asked), Is there life after the KPI?"

Great questions! Too bad the answer is so simple. “It depends on the KPI!” That is, the KPI itself determines the coaching conversation. It is the KPI that determines what the client wants and needs to do next to make real (actualize) the client’s outcomes. Yet there’s more. Today in Meta-Coaching we have made the coaching conversations after-the-KPI more explicit. There are a number of coaching conversations that you can then have. Basically, there are 5— all of which demonstrates the 6<sup>th</sup>. These six describe what happens *when you coach* from after you say “Hello.”

- 1) Clarity
- 2) Motivation
- 3) Decision
- 4) Planning
- 5) Experience
- 6) Change / Transformation

1) *You coach for clarity.* The first question of coaching is, “What do you want?” “How can I assist you in actualizing your next step of development?” This is important precisely because most people don’t know what they want. Not really. We may have guesses, we may think we know, but it is in the process of clarifying through the WFO that we become increasingly clear. So as a coach, you ask, Where do you want this? When? What’s your time-line? With whom? Who will be involved? What will it look like and sound like?

2) *You coach for motivation.* Once a person has some level of clarity, the process is not finished. Then you ask, “Do you really want that? How much do you want that? Is it compelling? Is this a passion for you? And is it ecological: realistic, fitting to your values, fitting for your time, effort, energy, health, business, relationships, etc.?” Motivation is all about doing things that fit our highest motives— values and meanings. If it doesn’t, the motivation will not persist.

[These first two coaching conversations occur during your use of the WFO and the first axis of the Axes of Change. The next ones occur during the next three axes on the Axes of Change as well as the use of the Matrix Model and the Self-Actualization Quadrants.]

3) *You coach for decision.* With clarity of outcome that fits your meaningful passion (thereby giving you sufficient energy), you are ready to make a commitment to that outcome. Are you? Will you do it? *You* can do it, but *will* you? What will it cost you do make that decision? What are the benefits and values? Coaching for a well-thought-out decision enables a client to make a great decision, one that he or she will not regret. And what belief frames, understanding frames, identity frames, etc. support or inhibit making a committed decision?

4) *You coach for planning.* “So do you have a plan? How much of a strategy have you worked out so far? What is your blueprint for achieving this goal? What kind of a plan do you have?” This is the creation part of coaching as you facilitate the brainstorming and development of a solution for taking action in the world. Here you might facilitate a business plan, a strategy for learning something, or a new matrix of frames for mobilizing the client’s focus. Here you coach the inner game.

5) *You coach for experience.* All coaching ultimately ends up in action— in an action plan that translate great ideas into muscle memory and movement. We coach to close the knowing-doing gap. We coach the Meaning Axis and then the Performance Axis to get the synergy of self-actualization. We coach so that the client gets the results that he or she wants.

6) *You coach for transformation.* All of these first five coaching conversations involve “change.” You change your mind from confusion to clarity, your emotions from neutrality or fear to passion, your indecision to a committed decision, your lack of a workable procedure to a well-developed strategy, and your insights and understandings into the neurology of muscle-memory. As a Coach, you are always coaching change— change in a psychologically healthy person. You are changing beliefs, decisions, identity, direction, meta-program filters, meta-state frames, etc. “What has to change, what needs to change, what do you want to change so that you can achieve your highest values and visions?”

From: L. Michael Hall  
Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #46  
Dec. 9, 2009

## THE FACILITATIVE COACH

### The Ying and Yang of Facilitation

When you coach, you *facilitate*. Well, let me restate that, *when you Meta-Coach, you Facilitate*. I had to make that adjustment, as you well know, because there are many coach training programs that don't know that the heart of Coaching in contradistinction to consulting, counseling, therapy, training, etc. is facilitation. But in Meta-Coaching we know the difference and we use it as part of our branding.

That's why *The Facilitation Model of Meta-Coaching is so important*. Late to be developed, the Facilitation Model was actually the last of the 7 models of Meta-Coaching although it is the most fundamental and the model that explains the 7 core coaching skills as well as the additional two dozen advanced coaching skills.

- So what is the Facilitation Model?
- How does it fit into Meta-Coaching?
- How can we communicate it effectively?

Since as a coach you do *not* give advice, heal traumas, fix the disordering of personality, train in new skills, teach, lecture, or hypnotize— your core competency is *facilitating*. But that's not all. There are lots of facilitators who do not coach. There are people who facilitate numerous processes and, in fact, take any process and it is possible to facilitate it. Yet as a Coach, that's not what you do. Your focus is that on the person of the client and the client's personal development as a psychologically healthy person, on the person finding and releasing his highest values and visions and best performances, on actualizing the person's best potentials.

And because of this, the facilitation of a Meta-Coach relates to the *unleashing processes*. This explains why we define the core competency of coaching as *non-content, process unleashing facilitation*. And that's a special kind of facilitation— as a Meta-Coach your job is to facilitate the very processes by which a psychologically healthy person self-actualizes. So, how do you do that? And what are the processes for the unleashing of potential? And, by the way, what is self-actualization?

*Self-actualization* is the highest human need. While this drive is within each of us from the beginning, and while it begins to emerge even during childhood, it almost always requires the mature development and adequate gratification of our "lower" needs. When a person learns how to effectively cope with his or her basic needs, that person is then free to live in a very different dimension— in the *being* dimension rather than the *deficiency* dimension. Then a person is freed from instrumental motivation to being motivation, from a getting focus to a giving focus.



Self-actualization is a person discovering and developing his or her “real” self, hearing his inner voice, releasing her best potentials, and creating one’s “best version of oneself.” Self-actualization being fully alive, fully human without your powers and potentials dampened or inhibited.

If that’s what self-actualization is, then what are the unleashing processes? I identified some 25 processes in *Unleashed!* (2007) and classified them into three areas— in the Construct where we create rich and empowering meanings, in the Crucible where we transform old meanings and performances giving them new expressions, and in the Zone where we synergize meaning and performance.

So how do you facilitate this? Through the *deep* communication processes to a person’s *inner frames* that defines and determines his or her interpretative content and style and through the *embodying* processes whereby our mind-body-emotion system translates our interpretations into neurological responses (the mind-to-muscle dynamics).

*So what is the Facilitation Model of Meta-Coaching?* It is a model based on the two key factors that empowers a Coach to truly coach the unleashing of potentials: respectful caring about persons as human beings as sacred beings with incredible potentials persons and persistently challenging them that refuses to allow them to sell themselves short. If a coach is able to both care and cajole, to love and to liberate, to be compassionate and to be ruthless in challenging— then the coach can truly facilitate both meaning and performance. So imagine two axes: Relationship and Challenge.

*On the relationship axis*, a facilitative coach wins the trust and confidence of the client by listening and supporting in a way that captures the heart of the client. The coach does this by being totally *present* to the client so that he or she listens as no one has ever listened to the client. The coach listens deeply so that he not only listens, but *hears*— hears the client’s heart. The coach also believes in the sacredness of people— “sacred” in contrast to “instrumental” meaning that the client is of not of some instrumental value to the coach, but a value in and of herself. The coach is not “using” the client. The coach respects and honors the person apart from what one can get from that client.

No wonder then, *if you can’t actively, intensely and deeply listen, you can’t coach!* You have to be able to listen with your ears, your eyes, your skin. You have to listen to the surface statements and to the presuppositions behind the words. You have to be able to hear the invisible structure hidden in the person’s meta-program, cognitive style, and meta-state frames.

*On the challenge axis*, a facilitative coach pushes, exposes, stretches, questions, confronts, cajoles, even teases and provokes. A great coach will believe in the client to such an extent that she will not let the client sell himself short, but will tease and cajole, will challenge and stretch, will question and meta-question to such an extent that the client will feel the conversation as *fierce*, as “hot,” intense, personal, as if having been in a crucible. The coach will ask for actions, for an action plan, for the performance of tasks between sessions, and for accountability.

What do we get when we put relationship and challenge together? We get a compassionate challenger, someone who is ruthlessly compassionate. And this loving person who pushes you far beyond what you think are your limits or possibilities does so in such a respectful way that you find the challenges seductive. And how? On the meaning axis *the ruthless compassionate coach* listens, supports, receives feedback from the client and induces states of care and trustworthiness while on the performance axis *the ruthless compassion coach* shows up in terms of questioning, meta-questioning, giving feedback, and inducing states of action, passion, proactivity, and responsibility.

The synergy comes from operating fully on both axes. Too much meaningfulness of relationship and the coach is too soft, too nurturing, too forgiving, even co-dependent. Too much performance on the challenge side, and the coach is too hard, too rough, too demanding, too mean. Challenging needs compassion and compassion needs challenging. Then, as a coach, you actualize your highest and best as a process facilitator— operating with compassion enough for the person so you can fully challenge them.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #47**  
**Dec. 15, 2009**

## MCF AND MCF CHAPTERS

*“To promote Meta-Coaches and the Meta-Coaching System around the world”*—that’s the simple, singular, and focused purpose of the MCF. We established the MCF as a non-profit organization that’s designed to provide on-going support for Meta-Coaches and to help establishing ever-increasing credibility of the coach methodology of Meta-Coaching. Now *how* will the MCF achieve this? It does so in numerous ways—among them here are the most important:

1) *International Credibility*. The MCF provides a list of the Meta-Coaches who have kept their license current and so provides an international credibility forum for those coaches. As those coaches present themselves to companies, organizations, top leaders, etc., they can refer to the two international websites and show their connection. This establishes that they are not lone rangers, but validated by an international association.

2) *Exclusive Egroup*. The MCF provides the exclusive coach egroup for Meta-Coaches. We now have nearly 700 on the English speaking egroup, and there’s an egroup of 130 on the Spanish speaking egroup that Omar Salom has established. And Florent Fuser is setting up the French speaking egroup. This makes available expert Meta-Coaches and a whole community of coaches worldwide for buddy coaching, ideas, projects, etc.

3) *MCF Chapters*. The MCF is leading out in organizing the MCF chapters worldwide. This provides *local support* by primarily establishing *practice groups in Meta-Coaching*. The first and primary purpose of the Chapters is to meet once or twice a month and provide a place for Meta-Coaches to gather. There they can practice any of the patterns, review and deepen understanding of any of the models of Meta-Coaching, benchmark coaching skills, network, and so on.

Not long ago I received an email from Emilia in Mexico City. That week there had been a MCF chapter meeting and there were 33 present. In addition to Meta-Coaches, there were several coaches from other coaching schools who were there to observe and learn about MC and there were several business people, owners, and senior managers to see MC at work. That’s precisely what the Chapter Meetings are for. And as such, provide an excellent ground-roots way of branding Meta-Coaching in any city or community.

The chapter meetings are *not* a forum for learning about *other* coach training programs. There’s all kinds of meetings that you can attend for that. They are precisely to promote Meta-Coaching in your community and to present the distinctive differences of Meta-Coaching.

In our Special Forum in Italy after the *Unleashing Leadership* workshop, the question was raised about how to precisely articulate the difference, the value, the benefits of Meta-Coaching when you are speaking with leaders in organizations. The four chief differences that highlight the value of Meta-Coaching were these:

*A systematic approach.* Meta-Coaches have a structure that flows from a theoretical foundation and can articulate what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how they go about the coaching processes. Unlike some others, it is not guess-work, running on “intuition,” or by the seat of the pants.

*Precision that can be benchmarked and measured.* Meta-Coaches can demonstrate a way to measure change and progress so as to validate the investment. It is not merely a “feel good” approach, but one that can be measured and monitored.

*A generative change approach.* Meta-Coaches can and do clearly distinguish coaching from therapy. Focused on *generative change*, MC do not do *remedial change* that fixes people, that heals wounds and traumas, but works with people who are already basically healthy and who want to move to the next level of development. Unlike some approaches, it is not “therapy” disguised as “coaching.”

*A sustainable change process.* Quick changes that result from “rah-rah!” rallies and focused attention can quickly evaporate back at the workplace and result in employee motivation that goes up and down on a roller-coaster. For sustainable change, the underlying cause must be addressed, otherwise a person is only dealing with symptoms.

4) *Ongoing support in materials.* If you have been on this egroup for long, you know that I’m always sending out new materials as are others. And we will be increasing this in the new year. Also, we plan to be producing new promotional materials that you can use in your local practices. We are working on some new logos and brochures.

5) *Research.* One of the original purposes for the MCF was to provide money for research. There are numerous Meta-Coaches currently working on graduate degrees at various levels and several who are studying various aspects of the MC models and processes. We also have several people with degrees who have volunteered to provide support for such. Soon Charles DesJardins will be sending out a link to his contribution to Meta-Coaching in his Self-Actualization website and his dissertation on Meta-Coaching’s influence on the self-actualization of business people.

For all of these reasons and many more, we need you to be an active part of the MCF. So get involved in your local MCF Chapter; if there’s not a chapter where you are— start one! You can. Any licensed Meta-Coach can! You can start a study and practice group— all you need is one other person. There’s no better way to learn the Meta-Coaching System than teaching it. So start a MCF chapter and use it to teach the models and practice the processes. Keep your membership current (otherwise your license is null and void).

The more all of us actively support the MCF, the more we add to the branding of “Meta-Coaching” as an unique coaching philosophy and methodology, and the more that increases the value of your Certification. Here’s to all of our success —as we create an ever-stronger influence in the world for the unleashing of the potentials of people.

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #48**  
**Dec. 23, 2009**

## **THE STRUGGLE TO CHANGE**

### **Flushing Out FBI Desires and Frames**

One key difference between therapy and coaching lies in the process of change. People who live in the past, are not okay in themselves, traumatized by a previous experience, and suffer from low ego-strength tend to be *change-resisters*. Yes, they need it and yet they strongly fear it. Why? Because the kind of change they need requires a fundamental change, an existential change, a change in the way they relate to reality. Yet without a solid sense of self and the ego-strength to face reality directly, they tend to fight the very transformations that would bring relief, freedom, and empowerment. So the therapist has to deal with “resistance” and use the therapeutic relationship itself to do so.

Not so with coaching. The population most appropriate for coaching are *change-embracers*. Because they live in the now (not the past), are up to Okay, and have the ego-strength to embrace reality—so change is attractive to them. They even think about and plan for change. Change for them isn’t fearful, but exciting, even part and parcel of the nature of life.

So given that, you would think that coaching clients would never struggle to change. Yet sometimes they do. Sometimes you and I do.

*So why is it or how is it that some psychologically healthy people can continue to struggle with change, struggle to change, and may end up in a condition where they do not change?*

How is that possible that a psychologically healthy person vow to change without coming through in implementing the change?

In such cases, first eliminate the following possibilities for the lack of change. Is it a case where the person is consciously opposed to the change? Is it a case of inertia? Maybe the person has gotten into a habit that is so comfortable and habitual and inertia is the problem. If not, does the person lack understanding—does he understand what to change, when to make the change, and how to do it? If that’s not it, then check for motivation and decision (the first two axes of the Axes of Change Model).

Let’s say that you have eliminated these and there is still stalling, struggle, and sabotaging. Let’s say that when you ask *why* the person is still engaging in behaviors that still seem irrational or ineffective and the person says, “I don’t know.” Then what? At that point, my guess is that the cause goes to *internal frame conflicts*. That is, there is a frame in the-back-of-the-mind (“unconscious”) that is in the person’s way from making the desired change. It is not the case that the person is living in the past, not-okay, traumatized, or lacking ego-strength. It is not a therapy case. It is the case that there are higher level unconscious frames blocking the person

from being an effective change-embracer.

This is where the Meta-States Model (along with the Matrix Model) provides you, as a Meta-Coach, a theoretic base for understanding and working with the complexity of a person's behaviors. The person is not the problem; the frame is the problem. There is a frame in there somewhere, typically way in the back of the mind that's generating the unproductive behavior and the block to transformation. As such, it operates as an internal sabotage to change.

Without an understanding of the competing frames, attempts to change the behavior will be virtually futile. You will be working entirely symptomatically—even if you are working on the inner game. The conflicting frame will be hidden behind the level you're working at. It will typically involve silent assumptions that the person has not even thought about calling into question.

I recently worked with a person of color who had been promoted to manage an all-white team in an organization. The problematic behavior that he wanted to work on was his caustic humor. Seemingly at the very moments when things were sailing along for him and the team, he would crack a jock, but the humor would be caustic, sarcastic, and hurtful. "Why do I do that?" he asked me truly puzzled about the behavior that was obviously irrational and counter-productive.

Of course, the pattern of *asking the why question in the context of a negative experience* is sure to only make things worse. And it did. Not knowing why he had been given to creating conclusions that only made him feel inadequate. That's when I asked him to do something most counter-intuitive.

"Let me invite you to call up an instance of the caustic humor. And you recall it, what emotion does that evoke in you? He felt uncomfortable going there. 'When was it?' I asked? He said two week ago. 'Who was there?' he identified the team members. 'What did you say that was caustic?' And as he answered the questions, he began to go into state. 'What are you feeling right now? Step back and notice.' I suggested. He described the feeling. 'What outcome or outcomes are you preventing by this state?'"

As he did, he suddenly said, "This is going to sound really weird, but I'm trying to avoid 'being one of the guys; one of the white guys.'" "Great!" I said. "If that's your first positive intention, then by doing that, what does that do for you that's positive?" It took a moment for him to process that one. But when he did, he said, "I feel embarrassed saying this, especially to you, but I maintain my loyalty to my racial group." "Okay, and what silent belief or assumption do you hold about that in the back of your mind?" Again, more silence as he processed. "That if I was too friendly and accepting, I'd become 'one of them,' and I'd suffer some repercussions for doing that. I'll be alienated from my group."

"Ah, is that troubling frame?" He said it was. That frame was effectively preventing him from stopping the irrational behavior of using caustic humor to keep his distance and prevent his team members from getting too close.

## **Pattern for Getting the Change that you Want but aren't yet Experiencing**

### 1) *Identify the desired change.*

What change do you want to create in your life?

What behavior would you like to change to make your life more effective or an activity more satisfying?

What complaint do you have about yourself?

### 2) *Identify your FBI desire.*

What positive intentions are implied by your complaint? (Iterate this question two or three times)

### 3) *Identify the conflict or the complaint.*

What are you doing, or not doing, that's keeping your FBI desire from being realized more fully?

If your complaint implies some outcomes that you really want, what do you really want?

What actions are you taking that's interfering, or what actions are you failing to use, that's creating the block?

How are you acting that plays into the problem?

### 4) *Evoke the frame via imagination the action.* [Consider the consequences of forgoing the behavior.]

As you imagine doing the opposite of the undermining behavior, what do you feel?

What do you detect in yourself? Any discomfort, worry, or vague fear?

What consequences would result if you did not do the undermining behaviors? (Create a statement that describes your involvement.)

### 5) *Identify the outcome that's undesirable.*

As you imagine engaging in the undermining behavior, what undesired outcome are you stopping or avoiding?

What worrisome outcome do you seek to prevent by this behavior?

### 6) *Specify the FBI frame behind the problematic behavior.*

[Invert that frame and ask about further consequences.]

If this conflict has a positive intention and serves to protect you, what are you protecting yourself from? What is the positive intention driving the problematic behaviors?

What is the hidden assumption behind your actions?

### 7) *Quality control the FBI frame.*

Now that you recognize the frame that's driving this, what do you realize?

What are the silent assumptions (beliefs, decisions, understandings) of this frame?

Does this really serve you? Do you want to keep it?

Are you now ready to change this FBI frame?

### 8) *Alter the frame and confirm the change.*

Are you ready to say *no* to the frame?

What frame will you replace it with and validate with a *yes*?

**From: L. Michael Hall**  
**Morpheus — Meta-Coach Reflections #49**  
**Dec. 29, 2009**

## **THE EVOLUTION OF COACHING**

### **Coaching, circ. 1984**

As part of my study of leadership and business, I recently read a classic— Tom Peters' 1985 book, *A Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference*. This book followed his best selling book on great companies, *Search for Excellence* (1982). By the time I read over 300 pages, I knew that I was going to use a number of quotes on “coaching.” Then I turned the page to Chapter 18. It has a one line title, *Coaching*.

Now if that doesn't surprise you as it did me, then let me remind you that Thomas Leonard did not create the field of “Coaching” until 1991. So this chapter was published 6 years earlier! And while there's a few things I'll mention in a minute that doesn't fit for Meta-Coaching, mostly it is right on target. Chapter 18 is addressed to executive leaders and managerial leaders in an organization about *how to be a leader coach*. Now is that relevant? To see for yourself, here are a few key quotations from the book:

“Coaching is face-to-face leadership that pulls together people with diverse backgrounds, talents, experiences and interests, encourages them to step up to responsibility and continued achievement, and treats them as full-scale partners and contributions. Coaching is not about memorizing techniques or devising the perfect game plan. It is about really paying attention to people— really believing them, really caring about them, really involving them.

“To coach is largely to facilitate, which literally means ‘to make easy’ —not less demanding, less interesting or less intense, but less discouraging, less bound up with excessive controls and complications. A coach/facilitator works tirelessly to free the team from needless restrictions on performance, even when they are self-imposed. In these next few pages we will talk about some of the most vital aspects of coaching: visibility, listening, limit-setting, value-shaping, skill-stretching.” (325-326)

Under the title of “Coaching by Wandering Around,” Tom Peters writes about leaders and managers who use coaching as their methodology for leading:

“Coaching is the process of enabling others to act, of building on their strengths. It's counting on people to use their own special skill and competence, and then giving them enough room and enough time to do it. Coaching at its heart involves caring enough about people to take the time to build a personal relationship with them.” (328)

“Coaching is tough-minded. It's nurturing and bring out the best; it's demanding that the



team play as a team.” (329)

“Every coach, at every level, is above all a value-shaper. The value-shaper not only brings company philosophy to life by paying extraordinary attention to communicating and symbolizing it.” (330)

“The best coaches spend as much time developing the team’s ability to believe in what each member can contribute as they do working with individual players. It sets the tone for the way people should aim to work together and trust evolves in the process.” (334)

Now for what Tom Peters wrote that does not fit for coaching today as we know it via Meta-Coaching. This indicates the way coaching has evolved from 1984 to today:

“Five Coaching Roles: In short, sometimes coaching is not coaching, but counseling, or sponsoring, or confronting, or educating.” (337)

“It turns out that successful coaches instinctively vary their approaches to meet the needs of this person at this time, or that group at that time. They perform five distinctly different roles: they educate, sponsor, coach, counsel, and confront.” (338)

The theme of this chapter on Coaching is that the leader is a coach and the leader who coaches appeals to the best in each person, has an open door, is a problem-solver and cheerleader, thinks of ways to make people more productive, manages by wandering around, is a good listener, etc. (354-357).

“Effective coaching means creating winners, keeping the faith in the thick of turmoil, building momentum, finding tiny glimmers of light (to reinforce) in the midst of darkness...” (357)

“Effective leadership is full-time people development. ... In coaching, the name of the game is execution.” (359)

“Coaching includes praise— expressing approval or admiration, applauding, commending and lauding small (and large) victories.” (361)

“Coaching is ongoing leadership. ... Coaches stretch you to your limit, a limit often beyond what you thought possible.” (362)

“The best coaches set in motion a continuing learning process —one that helps people develop a tolerance for their own struggles and accelerates the unfolding of skill and contributions that would not have been possible without the ‘magic’ attention of a dedicated coach.” (377)

“Leading is a hands-on art. Coaching is the essence of leading— developing those with whom we work. Coaching is MBWA (management by wandering around.” (384)

As I reflect on these writings some 26 years ago, no wonder *coaching* has become such a powerful modality in the business world. And we stand on the shoulders of such giants as Tom Peters.

