

MORPHEUS

FACETS OF META-COACHING

VOLUME III

2011

MORPHEUS ---- 2011

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From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #1
January 6, 2011

SELLING AND *BEING* **THE META-COACH BRAND**

You are a Licensed Meta-Coach with APMC or PCMC credentials and that means you are *a representative* of the Meta-Coaching System and the Meta-Coach Community. And as such *you* are the best *branding* we have. What you *do*, how you *conduct yourself*, the *difference* that you make in the lives of individuals and organizations, your *spirit and attitude*, and your own personal *way of being in the world*— this is the best branding that Meta-Coaching has.

Yes, we have a very logical, systematic, and well-documented context of what we do based on three psychologies — Cognitive, Developmental, and Self-Actualization (or Humanistic). And yes we have an International Organization (Meta-Coaching System, Meta-Coaching Foundation) that governs the training, assessment, development, and feedback of Meta-Coaches around the world in 38 countries. And yes, we have things that no other Coach Training organization has— we have a Board of Accountability (the Meta-Coach Leadership Team) and we have specific behavioral benchmarks for the coaching competencies. We also will soon have the whole curriculum of Meta-Coaching written out so that it will all be documented in 12 to 14 books.

And yet, above and beyond all of that what truly *brands* us is the *quality of the people* who are doing the Meta-Coaching. It is the quality of what the Meta-Coaches are actually *doing* and *being* that is sets Meta-Coaching apart as a cutting-edge system. That’s why the way to really sell yourself as a Meta-Coach and Meta-Coaching as the preferred system lies not in all of the external things that I’ve mentioned, important as they are, is to be able to *be* the Meta-Coaching system the moment you meet someone or open your mouth.

“Being the Meta-Coaching System?” What is that? How does that work? How can you *be* the Meta-Coaching System?

Glad you asked! *Being* the Meta-Coaching System means integrating what you know about the models and processes of Meta-Coaching to such a degree that it is now part of your muscle memory. It means *embodying*

- The communication model of NLP — getting rapport, checking the feedback and feed-forward processes, knowing that you communicate verbally and non-verbally, working with your own semantic space and that of others, continually check out what the other means and seeing if your “meaning” is getting across.
- The self-reflexivity of Meta-States — listening deeply for the thoughts-and-emotions “in the back of the mind” of your clients, and following your client’s reflexivity as he goes round and round, spiraling up and down, and asking great meta-questions about the frames of meaning that govern the interpretation of your client.

- The Matrix Model of systemic thinking and working — following the flow of your client’s energy through her system as she moves to the seven distinctions (meaning, intention, self, other, power, time, and world) and grounds them in her state, recognizing which matrices flash on and off and which are not activated.
- The Axes of Change model — noticing the motivational energy for change that the client brings to the conversation, facilitating the probing and provoking for a clear-cut decisive decision to make a change, co-creating the new inner game and actualizing it in the outer game, and then integrating it by matching and then mismatching.
- The Benchmarking model — by asking for behavioral equivalents that enable your client to mark and measure where he is currently, where he wants to go, the milestones for measurement along the way, and the use of ongoing feedback for shaping performance to new and higher levels.
- The Self-Actualization Quadrants model — observing and facilitating greater meaning-construction by your client so that it truly represents the highest values and visions for a meaningfulness that mobilizes the client’s resources and focusing on the embodying of those meanings into high quality actions for creating the very best performance.
- The Facilitation Model — by providing a quality of support that creates a Crucible space for the client, enabling her to feel totally safe and cared for as a client and simultaneously challenged to push through the mediocre levels to step up to possibilities never even previously imaged.

Ah, now that’s *embodiment!* Coaching question for you: Have you embodied the seven systematic models of Meta-Coaching so that it is fully integrated in your everyday talk and actions? Is it so automatic and embodied that it is now the way you think and governs even how you dream at night?

Of course, my coaching questions are rhetorical and challenging because this is the challenge before all of us— to not only *do* Meta-Coaching, but to let Meta-Coaching change and transform us so that it forms and shapes our insides— our inner game of coaching and being a professional coach. Are you game for that? Do that and your own integrity and congruency will make you a powerful coach indeed! And it will do more. It will make you a powerful person, a powerful human being.

Do you have a New Year’s Goal yet? If not, how about this one? How about setting your goal for this year to not only *perform* the skills and competencies of these models so that you can communicate and coach (facilitate) the unleashing of potentials in people, but that you *become* this kind of communicating and coaching. Do that and you will have no problem selling yourself as a Meta-Coach or Meta-Coaching as your methodology, because then you will *be* the very brand that you present.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #2
January 12, 2011

COMPARING THE ICF AND MCF **— How do they Compare? —** **— How do they Differ? —**

L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.

As the field of Coaching continues to evolve, so are the organizations which are providing Coach Training and those which are providing Coach Credentialing and Assessment. Historically the ICF (International Coach Federation) has been the oldest organization involved in the later— credentialing coaches and so it is the most well-known organization. In 2003, Michelle Duval took the lead in initiating the MCF (Meta-Coach Foundation) for the credentialing and assessment for Meta-Coach Certification and Accreditation. And there are many other organizations doing the same.

- So what is the difference between the ICF and the MCF?
- Are the standards, values, and definitions of Coaching different?
- Are the assessment and coaching skills different?
- Which certification and credentials is best?

Inasmuch as these, and many other similar questions, are frequently now being raised, this article is design to begin to answer them.

Distinguishing the Two Organizations

There are several similarities as well as differences between these two organizations:

ICF	MCF
Anyone can be a member	Membership exclusive to Licensed Meta-Coaches
A Credentialing Organization	A Credentialing Organization
Not a Coach Training Organization	A Coach Training & Certification Organization
Sponsors Chapter Meetings	Sponsors Chapter Meetings
List of Coach Competencies	List of Coach Competencies
Competencies <i>not</i> benchmarked	Competencies benchmarked by behavioral measurements

The ICF

Regarding the ICF, anybody can become a general member, it is just a matter of signing up and paying a fee. No special qualifications are necessary to become a general member. Qualifications only come into play if you wish to gain Professional Credentials. For the Professional Credentials there are three levels:

- ACC — Associate Certified Coach
- PCC — Professional Certified Coach
- MCC — Master Certified Coach

Because the ICF itself *is not a training organization*, you cannot be trained by the ICF. The ICF accredits people from all different training institutions and they have rules governing the pathways to reach these credentials.

Pathway 1 is with an accredited coach training program. If you take your training in a Coach Training course approved by the ICF, you would then apply for your credential and demonstrate you have taken training. Pathway 2 is the portfolio certification. If you have taken your training by an organization that is not ICF approved, then you similarly apply for your credential and demonstrate you have taken Coach Specific Training of a minimum of 125 hours for PCC and another 75 hours for MCC.

One final distinction. The ICF is an credentialing organization, but not an accreditation body. That is, it provides credentials and credentialing of the ACC, PCC, and MCC ICF credentials. But it is not itself an accreditation body unlike what we have established in the Meta-Coach Foundation. In the MCF, all Meta-Coach training through modules 1 to 3 for the ACCM credentials is accredited through the ISNS (International Society of Neuro-Semantics).

The MCF

Given that the Portfolio Certification is the way a Meta-Coach gains certification through the ICF, you would apply for the credential by demonstrating that the training you took was “Coach Specific” and that it met the ICF Core Competencies. Meta-Coaching meets and far exceeds this criteria. The basic Meta-Coach training involves 180 hours of Coach Specific training and involves 7 core competencies by which you are benchmarked, 8 Axes of Change competencies, and then another 12 competencies for framing, pattern detection, etc.

Numerous Meta-Coaching Graduates have gone through the Portfolio Credentialing path of the ICF and have obtained ICF credentials in addition to their Meta-Coaching credentials. And to facilitate this, in 2005, Michelle Duval created all of the paperwork that a Meta-Coach needs to submit for the ICF.

What goes far beyond the ICF is that in the Meta-Coaching System, the competencies are benchmarked to specific behavioral actions and so provides behavioral measurement of the coaching competencies. In Meta-Coaching, we have rigorous credentialing that far exceeds the standards of the ICF.

Now about the Meta-Coach Foundation Credentialing, Michelle Duval in 2004 wrote the following:

“Our rigorous credentialing exceeds all the standards the ICF has set inasmuch as we require Cognitive Behavioral education in NLP and NS. This is not a requirement of the ICF. And to the question, “Why have we not got MC accredited with the ICF?” We have deliberated about this, and made the strategic decision not to in alignment to our commitment in order to build the professionalism of Coaching worldwide. We are doing this without harming our graduates because they can easily achieve an ICF Credentials if they desire it, simply by taking the Portfolio Credentialing path.

“Because we believe the ICF standards are too low and because we wish to set a higher bar for the field in becoming a profession, we are establishing the MCF and our credentialing standards. We believe Coaches needs training in the behavioral sciences of NLP and NS. By choosing not to become and ICF Accredited Coach Training we are demonstrating our difference. Given that our Grads can still achieve ICF Accreditation and we have a set a higher standard, we don’t feel there is any benefit in doing so.”

Collaborations

Why have we in Meta-Coaching not become an ICF approved organization? In 2002 when Meta-Coaching began, there was significant difference between the Meta-Coaching System the ICF. They believed that dealing with “beliefs” was “therapy,” and we did not. They had six very general competencies, we had seven core competencies and 20 advanced competencies— and all were benchmarked. So we deliberated and made the strategic decision to build the professionalism of Coaching as we were developing it.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #3
January 18, 2011

WHY JOIN THE ASSIST TEAM AT META-COACHING

While there are many reasons for joining the Assist Team as a team leader and a benchmarker at *Coaching Mastery*, the greatest reason is that you will get to re-experience the rich layeredness of Module III from a meta-position. And as such, you have the possibility of learning not only much more of the content, but even better—the invisible structures that govern Meta-Coaching.

The first time through *Coaching Mastery* is a total information overload, and that's by design. You are exposed to five additional models that govern coaching (Matrix, Facilitation, Benchmarking, Axes of Change, Self-Actualization Quadrants) and encouraged to immediately begin using those models in your coaching practices. You are also exposed to numerous new patterns, to look for Meta-Programs and cognitive distortions in clients, to release judgment, to de-contaminate, to check for ego-strength, and on and on. So much. So when you return on the Team, already being acquainted with the models, you can now begin to sort out this information and probe the models in more depth.

But more than that, when you benchmark you get to step back from the coaching sessions to observe the structure—the processes at work. And as the days progress, you get to compare one set of processes (Axes of Change transformation processes) to another set (Matrix Model, for example). And this begins to bring things together so that you begin to develop a sense of the conversation's structure. I know that I have learned so much from observing the coaching sessions.

What I enjoy and always find “funny” is how often Team Leaders tell me, “I know that you did not present *that* when I first took Meta-Coaching! I never heard that! You never said that before! When did you come up with that?” I say *funny* because it's like seeing a fast-moving movie for the second time, or third time, or even seventh time! We see things that we didn't see the first time or second time.

Another *funny* thing that inevitably happens is that when a Team Leader returns for the second time, they say things like, “Now I get it! Now I understand the Matrix!” Then on their third time they say, “Now I *really* get it! Now I *really, really* understand the Matrix! I only thought I got it last time!”

What's happening is the power of repetition from the and Korzybski again and again. In October and November of 2010 I re-read Korzybski for the eighth time. And I read things I never saw

before! And prior to reading some things, I would have sworn that I would not read or see such things in Korzybski, “It just not there! I know!” But it was. (By the way, I plan to write about some of the new things I’ve learned in Korzybski’s *Science and Sanity* on the Neurons Reflections soon.) So what explains that? I’ve changed. I’ve been learning. I have new questions in my mind. For example, this time in my re-read, I was looking for what Korzybski said about benchmarking. I also looked to see the formulations of the NLP presuppositions.

So when you return to *Coaching Mastery*, whether as a Team Leader or as a re-visit coach, because you’ve changed, because you’ve been learning more, because you have had experiences in coaching, communication, learning, etc., you will find new things— new applications. And that’s one reason to re-visit every four years. And when you do, you will more than likely find the experience as a *new and different training*. At least that is what so many Meta-Coaches have said about their re-visit.

If you come to the third module of Meta-Coaching as a Team Leader, you will have the unique experience of being a Group Coach and Leader. It will give you some experience in group and team coaching as well as stepping up into a leadership role. And because of these two roles, you will be challenged to learn when and how to put on the Coach’s hat and when to put that off and put on the Leader’s hat. And for many Team Leaders, this has been a very rich and stretching experience. So they develop the flexibility to be able to move in and out of these two roles.

Of course, the benchmarking role is the role that most Team Leaders find the most challenging, the most stretching, and also the one thing that can push their coaching to a whole new level. And yet because *mastery is in the details*, the training day for Team Leaders and the day by day experience of zooming in to the actual behavioral responses of the benchmarks for the seven core coaching skills work to *expand* the benchmarker’s meta-program thereby creating more flexibility and to unleash potentials that have been leashed.

There are many opportunities to revisit *Coaching Mastery* this year and I hope you consider doing that for your own ongoing learning and development. The intense learning lab that occurs at Meta-Coaching is truly an unprecedented opportunity.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #4
January 26, 2011

COACHING FOR BEING NON-DEFENSIVE

We have all been defensive and most of us have felt defensiveness this week. It's a pretty common experience. We have accessed the state of feeling threatened, attacked, or insulted so we put up our defenses and closed shop. The person who triggered the sense of threat is then not allowed entrance; they are stopped at the front door, blocked by a locked door and a "Do Not Enter" sign. We all re-experience this state from time to time—especially when we are not feeling well, or just not at our best, or when we sense that change is being imposed upon us, or when we feel no one is listening. In fact, for most of us—a wide range of things can trigger defensiveness in us. And sometimes it is useful. Sometimes. But not always. In fact, most of the time it is not useful.

Most of us have also learned that to avoid triggering the experience of defensiveness in someone else, we use "I" language rather than "You" language. Obviously, saying, "*You are* being selfish to go out with your friends tonight. *You* didn't even ask me what I wanted to do!" is a pretty sure way to *push buttons* and elicit a defensive state. "You" statements are great for triggering defensive responses: "*You* just don't care about me." In fact, any "you" statement that claims knowledge about another person's emotions, intentions, or character—statements that presuppose you have a Certificate in Mind-Reading or Clairvoyance—are sure to push buttons.

So we use "I" statements. "I don't like it when you go out with your friends without asking me about what I want." Yet even a clear "I" statements like that may still push buttons, especially if this person emphasizes the "you" in the sentence. And even if you go out of your way to not make the other person responsible for your emotions, you may still elicit defensiveness.

"I notice that *I* begin to feel lonely when you plan to go out with your friends. It's like I do this whole number on myself to make myself miserable and *I'm* really curious how this happens."

Even with a clearly differentiated "I" statement like that many people will "feel guilty" or "bad" or even "accused." Recently I came across a piece by I Robert Kegan speaking about defensiveness in his book *In Over Our Heads*:

"It turns out that having the other person feel non-defensive or unindicted is not totally within our control. ... Although it may sound strange to say so, the receiving end is as active a role in communication as the sending end. After all, *listening is an interpretative event*. How we hear what we hear will be enabled and constrained by our system of knowing." (p. 124 *italics added*)

He then says that "defensiveness can only follow the act of taking responsibility." That is, *our*

way of knowing and interpreting is such that we are viewing another person's communications as *forcing*— pushing or pulling on us— in some way. We are assuming responsibility *for* what they want or don't want rather than having a conversation about what the other wants or doesn't want.

“Our experience, when we are being defensive, is that we are being pushed or pulled upon in some way, that we are being acted upon. ... but *the attacks and judgments from those we do not take seriously do not make us defensive*. ... The crucial element in defensiveness is the feeling of being moved to a place to which we do not want to go ... for us to feel defensive, there [has] to be a ‘force’ or ‘power’ that we reckon can move us.” (p. 125 *italics added*)

Now how about that? When it comes to feeling and acting defensively, one requirement upon you is that *you have to take the person seriously*. If you don't take someone seriously, you won't feel defensive. Would you feel defensive if a 4-year old criticized your work? If a mental patient in a psychiatric ward criticized your coaching skills? Your state of defensiveness will not arise if you do not take the person and what he or she says seriously.

To feel defensive, you have to take the person seriously. You have to take their words seriously and their actions seriously. That is, you have to semantically load their words and actions with lots and lots of meanings— meanings that somehow violate you, threaten you, or attack you. Your state of defensiveness is a job you induce in yourself.

To feel defensive, *you* have to believe that *you* are being *forced* to go somewhere or do something that you don't want to go or do, or believe that you are forced to not do something you want to do. In other words, you have to believe that you are put into a position that you have no *choice*, that you have *no control* and that you are, in fact, out-of-control. And all of this presupposes that you think that this power to impose upon you is coming from the outside. That's a lot of supporting beliefs to create that state!

Yet the truth is that when you are defensive, unless you are being physically attacked, you are creating the state of defensiveness through how you are constructing your world, how you are making meaning of things.

“Even if the person tries to push on us (‘You are a slob!’), *we can react non-defensively by converting the communication into the information about the other's experience* it undeniably is, for which the other is responsible (‘She does not like my behavior, she is angry with me...’). We can then choose to alter our behavior or not in accordance with our *own* purposes, standards, and convictions, for which choice we are now responsible.” (p. 125 *italics added*)

So whether you construct your experience *as if* someone is faulting you for something or attacking you— your construction in that way is *what you are doing*. Do that, create that meaning, and no wonder you will feel defensive and react in a defensive way to defend yourself! To be non-defensive, even in the fact of attack-like triggers inviting you to be defensive, you have to 1) know that how you construct the situation is within your power, 2) be able to frame and reframe it so that it enhances your best resourceful states, and 3) use your highest meanings

to access your best states.

Welcome to *Meta-Coaching* — one of the world’s leading Coach Training programs. It is leading because Meta-Coaching focuses on coaching to a client’s processes that influence the identifying and unleashing of potentials. Meta-Coaching does this in a systematic way based on what “coaching” is and how it differs from other helping professions. If you are committed to your own excellence and willing to be stretched to actualizing your highest and best— you are at the right website!

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #5
February 2, 2011

USING THE CRUCIBLE AS A META-COACH

With the recent publication of *The Crucible and the Fires of Change* (2010), several people have written with questions. Douglas Cartwright in London sent the first ones. He asked:

Questions: “How do you use the Crucible in a coaching practice? I’m unsure of how to fit it into my coaching practice? Do you recommend helping clients build a crucible at the start of a coaching series? If not, when is an appropriate time to build one with a client? Do you ever use it completely instead of The Axes of Change?”

Answer #1: The Crucible model is actually much more than just a process that you do with a client, more than that, it is a model *for you as a coach— a model for how you can be a crucible for your client without ever saying a word about it.* Yes the Crucible is a model and there’s a specific set of steps for creating it and yes, you could make that explicit with a client. Yet I would encourage you to think about it as how to *be* a Crucible for and to your client.

What does that mean? It means that the *states* you begin your coaching from and the *states* that you communicate must be the variables of the Crucible—unconditional positive regard, witnessing what is, and acceptance of whatever the client presents. Operate from those states so that by your very presence you induce these states and you create a safe context for your client’s generative change. That’s the *compassionate part* of how you facilitate the coaching.

Next comes the *challenging part.* The Crucible means that you also access and operate from the states of *truth-telling, response-ability, and appreciation.* If those states are your core coaching states, if they are the states that you have so integrated that they make up your genius coaching state, then you will be inducing them in your clients every time you open your mouth. And that enables you to invite them into the furnace of the crucible where they will feel the heat of their own experience so that transformative change will occur. Put those together and you (and your client) experience the facilitation ideal of *compassionate challenging* as a coach.

Answer #2: Now if your client wants to be able to experience the *heart* of a coach or leader *and* the ability to *challenge current reality and get to the heart of things,* then before you begin the coaching or at some point, take off the Coach’s hat and put on your Consultant’s hat, and see if your client would want to learn how to access the Crucible as a pattern so that they can unleash that level of coaching excellence or leadership or management. Or, if your client shows up at your door with *The Crucible* book in hand and says, “Would you coach me so that I can fully experience this [pointing to the book] and have it at ready access in my neurology?” Then, yes,

coach them through a series of sessions so that they can develop a *Crucible presence* in their work with people.

Answer #3: To the question as to *when* to build one with a client—any time that a client cues you with request like—“Could you help me with?” And then mentions any of the variables of the Crucible—

- Unconditional positive regard (self-esteem),
- Witnessing in a non-judgment way (getting rid of a judgmental attitude),
- Just accepting and acknowledging reality for what it is,
- Being able to say what *is* (tell the truth) courageous and boldly without fear of what is PC (i.e., “politically correct”),
- Being able to see and recognize value and feel it (appreciation) and sacrilize even the simple things of our lives,
- Being able to own one’s own powers and responses and take effective action to make corrections or begin a new pathway of responses (responsibility),
- Falling in love with life or a particular activity so that you live passionately, with joy and even ecstasy (peak experience).

If your client is looking for, wanting to be unleashed from or wanting to develop and unleash any of these resources— and you establish that as the person’s well-formed outcome (and get a KPI), then you can immediately beginning coaching to that objective. At that point, pull out the book, *The Crucible* and use the questions in the patterns.

Answer #4: In terms of using the Crucible rather than the Axes of Change (AC)—remember the distinctions between the two. The AC focuses on how a psychologically healthy person moves through the four mechanisms of change. The Crucible is primarily for *unlearning* an old meaning (belief, understanding, identity, etc.) that is now in the way of a person’s unleashing. And *unlearning* is an interesting phenomenon—what you typically need to unlearn is so familiar that its even hard to recognize as a problem. You live in its frame and don’t see the frame itself. That’s why all of the iterations at the center at the point of truth speaking.

On the other hand, sometimes what’s challenging about *unlearning* is that we learned it in a context of pain, trouble, strong emotion, etc. and it is strongly emotional within us, in our neurology, and has to go through de-construction before we can engage in a new re-construction. That’s why the Crucible requires so much safety.

Other questions? Send them to me! (meta@acsol.net)

Thanks to Douglas for these questions.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #6
February 9, 2011

A FACT OF LIFE: EVERYBODY FALLS

During some of the days in which I was home this past winter in Colorado (during some of December and some of January), I went cross-country skiing. As the new year dawned in January, I drove to the top of the mountain that overshadows the Grand Valley, the Grand Mesa. It rises 6,000 feet above the valley floor so the top is over 11,000 feet in elevation. By the way, it is the world's largest flat-top (mesa) mountain— with 1,300 lakes on top and hundreds of miles of Nordic tracks and cross-country paths. And when the sky is a brilliant blue and the sun is shining (which is most of the time), it's a great place to ski.

In January I drove to the top with a goal in mind—to ski as fast and hard as I could for two or three hours without falling. But as you can anticipate, having a *goals which involves a negation* (seeking to obtain a *not*), it is not a well-formed goal and in the context of skiing on 6 feet of snow in the wilderness, it is especially not a realistic goal or ecological goal. But off I took anyway! And I was doing pretty good until I got to the top of a really high hill. Now the fun was to begin! It was a long hill and pretty steep, and unlike downhill skies— those long skinny cross-country skies are not the easiest ones to control when you go downhill really fast. But off I took anticipating the thrill of the speed going down. And it was a thrill!

And speed I got! A lot of it. And after half-way down the coldness of the air hitting my face made me shutter. And the speed increased. And then ... I fell. But the good news is that I know how to fall. Having fallen the wrong way a sufficient amount of times, namely, falling down by reaching out in front of me with my arms outstretched ... trying to stop the fall; definitely *not* the way to fall. So years ago I had learned how to fall effectively, how to fall like a little child just sitting down on my rear end and going for a slide. That's what I did. And although it was disappointing to my goal, it was still a lot of fun.

Then, getting up on my skies and continuing to the bottom, I observed a speed-skier coming up the trail at a very fast rate. In fact, he was practicing *racing* on a set of skies which is a mixture between cross-country and downhill, and he had watched my grand sliding on my ass down the hill. When we met, we both stopped and he gave me a thumbs up, "Great fall! Well done!"

I didn't expect that and so I commented, "Well, it would have been better if I had not fallen. That's was my aim." Then he said, "Everybody falls! I do every day, and just as you did— the secret is falling well." And off he took.

Now prior to going out that day I was working on the Benchmarking book and while driving up I was considering *how to benchmark my skiing that day*. I figured I could measure it in terms of speed (how fast I could get around a loop), by time, by smoothness of the slides, by how long I

could go without needing to catch a breath, by the number of falls, by the number of almost falls that I recovered from before falling, etc.

So when this 20-some speed skater said what he did, the idea of *falling well* planted a new idea in my mind. If the secret is not trying to avoid falls so much as learning from them and developing an effective falling-and-getting back up strategy, then I would shift my attention to noticing which of my movements facilitate a fall, or an almost-fall, and which movements were smoother and more graceful so that they never set me up for a fall.

After that a wonderful then began to happen. The next time I fell, I fell in slow motion . . . Well, not literally. I'm sure that a camera would have recorded it as just another fall. But in my consciousness . . . I was moving in slow motion watching it and enjoy it as I watch ... as I just sat down on the snow and slid on my bum!

The Art of Joyful Falling... that's another title I could have used for this article. How to fall in a way that you find fun, joyful, and learn-ful in an informative way so that it shapes how you handle something. Then instead of wasting the mental, emotional, behavioral, and interpersonal energy of fighting it and hating it and resisting it and resisting-knowing-it-about-yourself, etc., then you just fall with grace and dignity.

“Fall with grace and dignity? Are you kidding?” No. Think about the high trapeze artists and what they do. They practice and practice; they refine their discipline and art, and a lot of that is learning how to fall into the safety nets and bounce up and down a bit and then grabbing the bar so that they flip out of the net and land on the floor with a bow. Then, later when it does happen that they miss and take a fall, they make the fall part of the show—and fall with grace and dignity so that hardly anyone notices, and if they do, they enjoy the next part, the fall!

Everybody falls. You do, you have, and you will. Mark that down, digest it, and integrate it with the meta-state resources of acceptance, curiosity, appreciation, playfulness, and whatever else you need so that when you fall—you do so with grace and dignity. It's just part of the game of life. And you have your safety nets—you have people to pick you up, love on you, ask you great meta-questions about it, and then celebrate with you. Never play the victim again. That game is done and over with. *Now fall like a professional!*

Here's to some great falls and even greater learnings!

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #7
February 16 2011

A SECRET, MAGICAL, POWERFUL QUESTION TO ASK AS AN ELEGANT META-COACH

“So what have I learned from the latest *Coaching Mastery training*?” I always ask myself that question after every training and even though this was the 35th one and I’ve been involved in 32 of them, I’m still learning new things. Among my favorite activities is working with the Assist Team on the one or two days prior to the training— that’s because we not only benchmark coaching sessions, but we step back from the coaching and do structural analysis of what went on in terms of the invisible patterns (meta-programs, meta-levels of framing, etc.).

And because this means the coaching sessions are with those already certified and licensed in Meta-Coaching and some who have been at it for years—these analysis are often very refined and at a high level. This level of *pattern detection* also is providing the team leaders and benchmarkers some experience with one of the four additional skills that we benchmark at the PCMC level—*pattern detection*.

So what did I learn from the recent *Coaching Mastery* in Norway? I learned the importance of setting the frames that encourage and enable Meta-Coaches in their meta-detailing. Namely, to repeatedly set frames that will give those who feel stuck at the Global level to begin to value the importance of detailing specifics. The learning this time came mostly from the Team Leaders and came from some of the simplest comments and reflections that I made while working with those doing the coaching.

The comments I made were not grand insights, they were statements of the obvious— sometimes statements that the Coach really *believed* that they had made, but which they had made *in the mind* instead of externalizing them! So when I reflected that a comment about asking 3 or 7 or 15 more *clarification questions*, they regularly said, “I thought of that!” “I thought I asked that! Didn’t I ask that?” And the simplest question of all, the one I ask constantly, seemed to be one of those “Aha!” moments for many of the Team Leaders:

“Can you do that?”

I think I counted more than a dozen times that I suggested to the new coaches in training or to the Team Leaders:

“Instead of jumping ahead and asking the *how* question, ‘How do you delegate?’ ‘How do you handle that challenge?’ Ask the *ability* question, ‘Can you do that?’”

Frequently after asking *the how question* and getting a response like, “I just don’t know how to do that?” The Coach would go looking for and trying to facilitate some resource or reference

experience. “If you imagine that you could, how would you do that?” “Who do you know that can do that and what do they do that you could replicate in your own life?” “How would you like to be able to do that?” And all too often, the Coach would then get more stuckness. “Well, I don’t know.” And three times I heard the coach then torment the client with the NLP question, “If you did know what would you say?” And one repeated that five times!

So what’s a Meta-Coach to do? *Ask the ability question!* Test the person with regard to his or her *capability* and *response-ability*? “Can you do that?” If the person says yes, then celebrate and develop it.

“That’s great! So you don’t need to learn how to do it? So tell me, what do you know about *how* to do it?”

And if the person says no, then again celebrate that and tie it down as your KPI.

“Great! So is that what you would like us to work on in this coaching session as our conversation? We’re going to first develop the clarity of identifying *how to do this*? Is that right? Would that be a compelling conversation that you’d like to have?”

Now you have your *what* for the Well-Formed Outcome (WFO) questions and you can then quickly ask the rest of the WFO questions in sequence: Why is this important? Then the context questions of when and where is *the coaching session*. So your *how questions* for the WFO then focuses on *how do you want to get clear on the process of doing that*? And that opens up the person’s strategy for clarity, for learning, and for understanding. What will be the person’s preferred style for developing a clear understanding of the how? What is the person’s favorite learning strategy? Is it appropriate for learning whatever it is that the person needs to learn?

Finally your KPI for that session then will focus on the person’s convincer for *how do you know that you know*?

Will you have a mind-map in hand that you’ve made that provides clarity?

Will you have a flow-chart? A decision tree?

Will you have a list of items or steps written out on a piece of paper?

Will you be able to talk out the steps to someone and count them off on your fingers?

Would you like a very magical question? A juicy, powerful question that will create more clarification, test the client’s reality, challenge for precision, and lock down a KPI? Yes? Then ask, “Can you do it?”

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #8
February 23, 2011

COACHING WHEN THE ISSUE HITS HOME

Question: *What do you do when you are too close to a client's problem? I keep having a problem in coaching, the problem of understanding a problem if I am too close to it, if I am attached to it, if I care too much. Then I have expectations for each session and I put myself under pressure to get specific results. I also find it hard to recognize this when I'm in the situation, only later and then I only recognize the symptoms. So what is a coach to do?*

What to do? First, run the De-Contamination Chamber pattern that we do on Day 1 of the *Coaching Mastery* training. If you *care too much*, then to that extent your ego is in the way. *You* have to succeed. For *you*, the client has to get his or her solution and “fix” and you have shifted roles from Coach to Therapist.

Once you have liberated yourself from *the need* to make things right for the client (!) —after all, who do you think you are, God?—then run the Responsibility To/For Pattern and get yourself totally clear about what you are responsible for and how that differs from being responsible to your clients.

This is, by the way, a key occupational hazard of all those who are in the “helping professions.” We care. And we often care *too much*. Our heart goes out, we really want to bring solutions, resources, and even “fixes” to our clients, and sometimes—well often, we cross the line and begin to feel responsible *for* our client. We get hooked into wanting to step in and be a mother or father to our client and help our children out! When that happens, actually, *before* that happens, let there be warning bells that go off so that you can catch and stop yourself.

The third thing I recommend for this is that you take the *Principles for Coaching* that's in the Training manual and Mind-to-Muscle each of them ... and especially these that come straight from the manual:

Clients are responsible for the results they get.

The client does the work.

The client finds his or her own answers.

The client has all of the necessary resources.

Coaching is a facilitative art.

Coaching aims for the client's independence.

Have you fully mind-to-muscle these principles so that they are your *way of being when you coach* and your automatic way of thinking and feeling? If not, then using the Mind-to-Muscle

pattern (also in your manual) and get these principles into your neurology. When you're coaching, you are a Coach, not a substitute Mommy or Daddy for your client!

Another thing: *learn to shift your caring so that you meta-care*. Instead of caring about the specific content and details of the client's story, move to a higher level. Care that your client learns how to become self-reliant, self-trusting, self-competent, self-confident, etc. If you are caring so much about particular details of your client's life and journey and struggles, you have been hypnotized by the client's story and you need to be de-hypnotized!

Finally and very importantly, if you find that a client's story activates *stuff* within you, call up your buddy-coach or your personal or executive coach and schedule a session to deal with this. Your ability to coach effectively does indeed require that you have taken care of and handled your primary "issues" in life. And the good news is that if something gets triggered in you, you know that *you are not the problem, but that some frame is the problem* and the question is just about finding that frame and dealing with it. So do that!

This is normal! We all can be, and often are, triggered by something in someone that we're working with and because it is not completely finished in, we can hardly listen cleanly or clearly to them. This is a call for your own coaching. This is an invitation to take care of whatever that is. It is a call for the next-level development and growth in you. So call up your coach or schedule time for some self-coaching for yourself.

The Meta-Coach who sent this question added one more thing that I did not quote at the beginning. He wrote, "*Have you heard of this sort of thing before with NLP practitioners?*" My answer: All the time!!

It's called, "being human." It's called, "caring." So just notice it and use it effectively. It doesn't mean you need therapy, it doesn't mean you are not cut out to be a Coach, it doesn't mean that you aren't ready to coach, it just means that here is another piece of your humanity that is calling for you to address and transform. And that's what we do—we are Change Agents. You, as a Meta-Coach, you are a Transformation Agent. So do your own Dance on the Axes of Change or enter into the sacred space of your Crucible and *let there be transformation!*

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #9
March 2, 2011

WELCOMING THE DARK SIDE OF YOUR META-PROGRAMS

We completed a coaching session the day prior to the beginning of *Coaching Mastery* and I was asking different team leaders to come to the front, sit next to the coach, and give him or her feedback. It was practice for the sessions that would be coming. One person would give feedback on supporting, another on listening, and so on.

Then one of our female Benchmarkers stepped forward gave it on Supporting, and as I listened and looked at the benchmarks for “Giving Feedback” so that I could give her feedback on how she gave feedback. All this, of course, was the training day for the Team Leaders for the Coach Training. In giving feedback, this particular person gave feedback using every skill at level 3 (which was great!) but then diluted her “giving feedback skill” by making two mind-reads (level 2), and then a judgment (level 1). Not so good.

It was her judgment that surprised me and that I want to address here. What was her judgment about the coach? It was that the coach gave *too many acknowledgments and repeated too many of the client's own words*. Really!? As I then gave her feedback about her feedback, I first noted the judgment she made, quoted precisely what she said and then asked, “Does that make sense? How does that fit for you?” And her response?

“Well he did use too many of client's words. It was insulting and downgrading.”

In my mind I was thinking, “Do you hear the judgments you are making? Didn't you hear anything I just said?” But what came out of my mouth was, “Okay, that's an interesting comment.” Then I paused and asked, “And what is the criteria that you are using to make that evaluation about too many words and that you find them insulting and downgrading?”

“[A pause and open mouth ... as if shocked by the question] ... Criteria? It's just too much; it was a put-down to the client.”

“Yes, you said that it was insulting and downgrading, and now a put-down, but I'm still unclear about how you are determining this. How are you coming to this conclusion?”

“Because the client was upset with it.”

“Okay, and how do you know that? I certainly did not hear the client say that.”

[Silence.] “No, but ... well, I just do.”

“And as you take a moment now to listen to what you are saying, do you hear your judgments based on your values and on no information from the client?” Silence. “So let's ask the client.” And turning to him, I asked him how he felt when the coach used his own words. He said,

“Great. I felt heard.” So turning back to her, I said, “Using the client’s words and reflecting them back, and using them to acknowledge that you heard your client is the basic coaching skill that *we want the coaches to learn.*” To that she then asked a question:

“Don’t you think it is insulting or a put-down or speaking down to them?”

“No.” I said. Then after a pause, “but I am interested how you think it is insulting or a put-down or a speaking down to them. Can you tell me?”

At that point several of the Team Leaders, and all of them at the same time, asked her, “Do you feel insulted, put-down or spoken down to because Michael has been using your words and repeating them back to you over and over?” She denied that I had. They continued, “Yes, he has.” And she began shaking her head in the “no” direction, “No he didn’t!” And so it went on without resolution although I was smiling at this thinking it would make for a great skit!

What was driving it all was her meta-program of mis-matching and, of course, when someone pointed that out to her, she denied it! She never paused for even a nana-second to consider it, she immediately and vehemently denied it. (Ah yes, another meta-program— highly active to the point of reactive.) Later privately I point that out to her. And she made the same response.

So slowing down, slowing way down, I said, “What did you just do?” It was obvious, putting any of her responses into words elicited a strong and immediate reaction. So I asked and waited. Then I asked again. “What would you call the response you just gave?” She didn’t know. And I believe her. I don’t think she had even the slightest awareness of her meta-programs ... she was truly *seeing and perceiving* the world through her lens and didn’t for a second thought that her lens played any role in what she was seeing!

All of this leads me to re-stating a fact about meta-programs:

*Meta-programs not only tell us what to sort for, pay attention to, care about, and notice automatically— they also tell us what to **not** notice, to delete.*

A strong driver meta-program creates your best skills and directs your consciousness and perceptions *and it simultaneous identifies your meta-program dark side.* That is, the perspective and attention-sort on the other end of the driver meta-program is often a “dark side” perspective to you. It’s not good, it is bad, it is unacceptable, it is taboo, it is prohibited. To translate this into Meta-State terms: the meta-program that you use, understand, value, love, and identify with is framed by those meta-levels of states. And the other side is out-framed or meta-stated with prohibition, dis-value, not-me, not-liked, not-understood, etc. No wonder it is a *dark side* experience and one avoided.

For her driving meta-program of mis-matching, *it had her.* She did not “have” it. She was not aware that she was even using it. And so *matching—especially verbally matching a client by saying the same words was unacceptable to her.* For her, she found it *insulting and a put-down.* So, having tabooed it in herself, she didn’t like it and didn’t value it in others.

Now as a coach, and especially a Meta-Coach, *your own meta-programs governs what you can and cannot see.* And that is, of course, why we include the Extending Meta-Programs pattern and experience in Model III (Coaching Mastery) because as we say, “We coach to a person’s meta-programs.”

May you thoroughly enjoy the bright side and the dark side of your meta-programs!

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #10
March 9, 2011

HOW TO TRAIN AND COACH MASTERFUL INCOMPETENCE

If you want a quick and down-and-dirty way to train and coach people for greater levels of incompetence, here are some very effective and powerful ways to do that. It's not that I would want you to do that, in fact, I would hope you would do the opposite! Yet as a modeler, I've been noticing how ineffective trainers and coaches are so skilled in creating so many incompetent practitioners or to have clients who stay with them for a long, long time and never develop the competence that they seek.

1) When you hear an emotion, or think you hear an emotion, focus exclusively on the emotion—focus on its intensity, its source, its expression. And if it is a negative emotion, assume that it is terrible, bad, a tragedy, and that you need to immediately move the person away from it.

As a coach, keep asking, “And how did that make you feel?” Focus on feelings. “And how does that make you feel?” Forget that feelings are symptoms of the mind-body system, that they are expressions of the person's meanings and understandings, forget that what the person feels may be wrong, fallacious, toxic, or distorted. Instead, assume that emotions are primary and the most important thing about a person. Assume that people must always “feel good” and avoid “feeling bad” in any way.

If when someone isn't feeling great, and you keep asking about how they feel, and they give you a negative emotion, your questions will induce them into state. Then, if you ask how they feel about feeling that (a meta-state question), you can get them into layered negative feelings.

“I feel disappointed; and I feel angry at my disappointment, and I feel ashamed of that, and I feel worthless about that, and I feel...”

You will only deepen the problem and gather no useful information. This will increase incompetence as it invites them to draw even more false and unuseful conclusions. If you want to speed up the training of incompetence ask this dysfunctional question, “How does that make you feel?” By this question you will *by implication* set the frame that the person is a victim of events and that events cause feelings and that they have no control or choice in the matter. This will induce a sense of impotence along with the incompetence!

Here's another way. If someone wants confidence, get excited, validate them, and ask them “And how will confidence feel?” And then ask them if they really want that? And then ask about all the consequences that will come from this? And then induce them into the state of confidence

by finding places in their life where they already are confident, anchor them as they go into that state, invite them to amplify that state, then future pace it. Do this and you will create a tremendous case of confident incompetence —confident foolishness!

How does that work? By only dealing with the emotion and not the skill, talent, or activity from which, or in which, they want to be confident. They will *feel* confident, but it will only be a feeling and not based on a true competence that they have developed. You have, in fact, made things worse because you have not helped them *accept* the uncomfortable feelings that comes when we are first learning a new skill— when we recognize our incompetence and feel strange, weird, out of our comfort zone, etc.

2) Save people from challenge, discomfort, confrontation, being stretched beyond their comfort zone.

Teach and train and coach people to expect to be always high, excited, having a peak experience, joyful, in love, on top of the world, and boldly enthusiastic about everything. To create a good dose of incompetence, raise the expectation level to the point of anticipating effortless, painless, and immediate gratification. Tell them “You can have it all ... right now ... easily ... with no effort ... you can be a genius in moments...” Tell them “Everything in NLP is as fast as the ‘Phobia Cure’ Movie- Rewind pattern.”

If they try this and it doesn’t work, tell them success stories of people who happened upon tremendous success, making millions with no effort, etc. Tell them to believe more and harder. Tell them to use the law of attraction! Induce them to feel responsible for everything in life, in the world, in the universe ... and don’t let them consider that there’s any other variable or factor, or that the intentions of other people have any affect. Get them to expect that they and they alone are able make the universe work to fulfill their every desire!

3) Ask lots of either/or questions that tear reality apart and that force people into the false dichotomous choices.

Ask, “Or you being rational or are you listening to your heart?” “Are you trying to use logic to figure this out or are you willing to trust your unconscious mind?” “Use a K not an A(d) to get a strong response from your client.” (Statement I found recently in a NLP Journal!).

Either/Or questions force clients into a false decision and orientation and encourages them to rip up a holistic system that cannot be torn apart except in language. Such questions represent a false dichotomy and generate a linguistic-emotional problem when there was none previously! To create incompetency ask these kinds of questions, “Do you want to feel comfortable or uncomfortable?”

Competence—Incompetence: which do you train and coach people for? It’s possible to train people to be incompetent just as well as competent. And your questions have the power to set a direction for each.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #11
March 16, 2011

META-STATING THE BULLYING STRATEGY

Rosina Mladenovic [rosina.mladenovic@sydney.edu.au] sent me an email yesterday to inform me that this is Anti-Bullying week in Australia. Given some of the recent news here in the USA, I think we must have had the same thing last week. In Australia also, Sue Anderson [sue@good2gr8.com.au] has made Coaching kids and parents and teachers about “bullying” and how to master it, her niche and focus in coaching. And I’m sure that there others among our Meta-Coaches around the world who also deal with this subject.

How do we handle bullying using Neuro-Semantic NLP? What can we offer the kids who are bullied, those who are bullying, their parents and teachers from the tools and patterns that we have? Here I will mention some obvious beginning places for where to start using the Neuro-Semantics and NLP models.

1) Bullying, as an experience, has a structure that makes perfect sense “from the inside.”

Both bullying and being-bullied has a structure. Both sides of this particularly painful experience, involves a set of actions which come from a set of mental frames (thoughts-and-emotions). What then are the strategies that make up bullying? Both sides of the interaction requires *a state of insecurity*. This is most obvious in the person who is bullied. The one who gets bullied will tend to have the meta-program of moving away-from stress (passivity rather than aggression), an internal sense of weakness rather than power, the cognitive distortion of personalizing conflict, discomfort, and threat.

The same is also true of the bully, but is far less obvious in the one doing the bullying. Yet a child who is well-grounded in him or herself and secure will have no need, no drive to dominate or bully another. It takes a child who is insecure in him or herself to need to exercise power *over* or *against* another. Pushing someone else around is interpreted and experiences as showing power and building oneself up.

This is similar to the structure of arrogance. Who needs to arrogate him or herself by bragging, talking incessantly about oneself, always turning the conversation to one’s successes, parading whatever symbols of success for others to admire, even pushing the ethical limits to doing things to validate oneself (cheating, buying certificates, etc.), and so on? The insecure person! The person who feels inadequate. That’s why we say, It takes a lot of self-esteem to be humble or modest!

So with the child who pushes other children around, who seeks out someone who will not stand up for oneself. The bully bullies in order to feel powerful and that’s because there is a sense of weakness and inadequacy inside.

Now for older children who may have practiced bullying or being-bullied for years, they may have also begun to build various beliefs and belief-systems around such experiences so that they have a matrix of frames that now validate their habits. Yet again, the problem is not the child, it's the child's *frames*. It is his or her belief frames, understanding frames, decision frames, identity frames, etc.

2) As with any strategy, once you know how the person codes things so that it produces the behaviors, interrupting and changing the strategy, changes the experience.

In the case of the bullying interaction, both children need a sense of power and a sense of unconditional self-value. So one solution that changes the old strategy is that of enabling each to access their inherent "powers" as human beings. Here "the Power Zone" pattern is an ideal pattern for providing both sides of this dysfunctional interaction with a resourceful state that eliminates the need to bully and that eliminates the state where one "takes" the bullying. Let each child access his or her own Power Bubble and practice the new self-lines about their power to think, to choose their feelings, how they will emote, their power to speak up, to speak with their own authority, to set boundaries, their power to take action, their power to distinguish a trigger from their response.

Here also the "Self-Esteeming, Accepting, and Appreciation" pattern is a jewel. By sorting out one's unconditional right to assert one's own personal value and worth apart from needing to earn or prove anything, enables one to not fall into the trap of *conditional* self-value. By *unconditionally* declaring one's value ... a child, like us adults, can create a strong sense of self and thereby respect and honor oneself without conditions. This stops the personalizing, "The words are not about me; they are words." "The push does not mean I am inadequate, it is a push and that's all."

Sorting that out one's inherent worth, and feeling it fully, enables one to distinguish it from the things one does that gives self-confidence. A child can now be taught to feel confident about a skill that he or she has developed. And that builds trust in oneself to achieve something. Now, from the position of being unconditionally value in oneself, the child can recognize specific confidences.

3) If the person is never the problem, but the frame is the problem, then exploring and changing the meanings is the key to transformation.

For older children and teenagers who are old enough to articulate their beliefs, you would use a simplified form of asking down questions (Meta-Model questions) and up questions (Meta-Questions) to understand the beliefs they have created and are operating by. Often, the very process of talking it out and making the ideas external is sufficient for changing them. With very young children, however, you'll need some different tools. Perhaps the Social Panorama; perhaps the Miracle Question pattern, perhaps the Swish pattern.

All of this is an obvious beginning. What else might you recommend for empowering and unleashing both children so that the old dysfunctional "bullying" interaction becomes redundant?

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #12
The Coaching Skill of Framing
March 16, 2011

THE ART OF FRAMING

If you are a coach, you *set frames*. You set frames as you begin the coaching conversation—time frames and style frames. You also set frames as you hold the conversation with your client because as your client describes events and designates them as meaning this or that, you can accept the frame of meaning given, or you can frame it in a different way—a way that will make it easier to create a solution. You can reframe it.

And when it comes to framing and reframing meaning—the tool most excellent for you to use in Meta-Coaching and Neuro-Semantics is *The Mind-Lines Model*. Do you know that model? The model takes the structure of “meaning” – namely, how we relate something out there in the real world (an External Behavior, EB) and connect it or equate it to something in the inner world (IS: the internal state or significance). This gives us a formula for *meaning*.

Meaning is the relationship between EB and IS. It is the association of EB with an IS or the equation and identification.

And when you know that, you can now frame and reframe in 7 directions: you can deframe it, content reframe it, counter-frame, pre-frame, post-frame, outframe, or frame analogously. Seven directions for sending a person’s brain and within those seven are 26 specific linguistic reframes. Well, there’s more than 26 but that’s what is in the book and training on *Mind-Lines*.

As a Coach, you work with meaning. That’s because if there’s a problem or issue or goal—the problem, issue, or goal is always about the frames that create it. The person is never the problem; the frame is. The context of the person’s life, the people they have to deal with, the events going on — none of that is “the problem.” Problems are creatures of the mind and only exist in the mind. You have to define something as a “problem” in order for something to exist as a problem. Otherwise, it is just an event or word or action.

When you move to the PCMC level, *framing* is one of the coaching skills you have to demonstrate at the 2.5 level. Now to prepare for that, you can learn the Mind-Lines Model. This is typically a 3-day section of the Master Practitioner course. And while I no longer train Prac. or Master Prac., I have agreed to do a 3-day training on *The Mind-Lines Model* in April. So if you are interested — here are the details:

Mind-Lines Workshop in Hong Kong

Date: 18-20 April, 2011 Location: Hong Kong

Contact Persons: Mandy Chai mandy@apti.com.hk

Alex Chan alex@apti.com.hk

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #13
March 23, 2011

WHO'S READY FOR PCMC LEVEL?

Are you ready? Are your skills developed sufficiently that you are ready for the “full competency” status, the PCMC level? I would love to see ten or more new PCMC level Meta-Coaches this year and that many and more in the years that follow. And if reaching PCMC is one of your goals, here's a pathway to PCMC this year.

PCMC— Professional Certified Meta-Coach credentials is the next level after APMC level and a *big step up* in terms of qualifications, competency, and quality of coaching. It generally takes a minimum of two years to reach that level, partly because you need to document and chronicle a minimum of 400 hours of professional coaching (coaching that you are paid for) as well as writing out 5 to 7 pages on a Case Study, as well as the paperwork for your own ten-hours of self-coaching. And that's just the beginning.

To reach APMC level you can squeeze by (and I think the majority do!) in terms of the competencies by reaching a 2.5 on the benchmarks at least two times during the 7 or 8 Coaching Sessions at *Coaching Mastery*. Of course, getting a 2.5 two times on Listening or Supporting or Questioning, or Meta-Questioning or State Induction ... but not on all of them at the same time in the same coaching session— well that is *squeezing by!* You are showing the skills, but you are not showing them *with the consistency* that is really required for being a high quality coach.

When you come to *Coaching Mastery* as a Team Leader and Benchmarking, my request is that you can *consistently and regularly* coach at a 2.5 level. We would love to have all of the team at that level! And that is why we ask that you have a coaching practice and are regularly coaching. But, that has not been the case. On the training day for the team there have been very few of the team leaders who got a 2.5 on all of the skills. And yet, by the time someone has returned two or more times, typically they can *consistently coach at the 2.5 level for all of the skills*. (That's actually a great reason to revisit and plan to come as a Team Leader.) During 2010 I found several who were doing more and more of the level 3 behaviors and so were getting 2.7 and 2.8, etc. The next level is to get be hitting Level 3 from time to time on the various skills. And when you can do that, you are ready to sit for the PCMC assessment and training.

Why do benchmarking scores alternate up and down? There are a lot of reasons, primarily because there are a lot of variables:

- The state that you are in when you coach.
- The state that your client is in.
- How well you handle performance anxiety.
- What your client gives you to work on.

- If your client is a “client from hell” or if he just hands it to you!
- Your benchmarker— his or her skills in benchmarking, experience.

For PCMC credentials, you have to reach a “3” on all seven skills plus 2.5 on framing, pattern detection, tasking, and locking down a KPI statement— ah, yes, you have to ask the Well-Formed Outcome Questions so thoroughly that you co-create with your client an outcome for that session and identify evidence for how your client will know that he or she has succeeded.

If you think you are ready for the PCMC level, my recommendation is that you begin *now* to get your paper work prepared. Begin keeping track of your paid sessions, use the format that is in your *Coaching Mastery* training manual. Go to your local MCF chapter meeting and ask to be coached on the 11 skills in anticipation of PCMC level. Get all the feedback that you can.

Now in your preparation, plan for a 30 or 45 minute session with a client. Make sure that you have someone to coach *who truly wants to make a change*— bring your own client if you need to! Then in terms of the benchmarks— seek to do each of the items of *the level “3”* five to ten times. That is, 5 to 10 acknowledgments, 5 to 10 summaries, 5 to 10 confirmations of person, etc. It is not enough that you give an acknowledgment or two, or that you verbally and non-verbally match, or that you set some frames as you began. *You need to be living the level 3 behaviors in your coaching behaviors.*

And if you are ready— then plan to come *as a participant* to one of the *Coaching Mastery* trainings being offered around the world. That will give you 7 to 8 Coaching sessions and you’ll be able to quickly recognize if you are getting close to being ready or not. When you do, I will provide benchmarking for you at least 3 times as well as devote additional time to enable you to reach or at least get as close as you can to the PCMC competency level.

This year — if you are ready, you can prepare for PCMC

- Sydney, Australia
- Hong Kong
- Bali, Indonesia
- Colorado, USA

If you are ready, let me know because I will devote special time with you at the Coaching Boot Camp— giving on your customized feedback to help you reach PCMC level. Also, about the fee, it is a one-time fee which means that if you do not reach the Level 3 competency the first time through, you can return as many times as is necessary until you do reach that level.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #14
March 30, 2011

DO YOU KNOW YOUR BLIND SPOT? (AND OTHER STUPID QUESTIONS)

Okay I admit, I wrote the above question, not because I had to, but because I love asking questions that evoke strong responses whether of shock and surprise or engagement or confrontation. How did you respond? When you read it, did you go, “Of course I don’t know my blind spots! They wouldn’t be a *blind spot* if I knew them! Yes that is a stupid question! Ask me another one, I dare you!” Or, did you go, “No, I don’t think I do come to think of it; I wonder what my blind spots are?” Or maybe, “Yes, I know my blind spots and I’m working on them!”

As a Meta-Coach one of your tasks with clients is to help them discover, identify, expose, mirror, and enable clients to confront their blind spots. That’s a key purpose of the Confrontation Conversation. Clients will almost never come right out and say, “See, I have these blind spots and I need you to help me expose them so I can deal with them and not get side-blinded and sabotage my own best intentions.” In fact, as a Coach when you do happen upon what, for the client, is a blind spot and mention it, they will most often deny it. And why not? They are *blind* to it. They don’t know it’s there. They may not even have a clue as to what you’re talking about.

Yet we all have blind spots. Everybody is *blind* to certain facets of themselves. No one is so totally self-aware that they have no facets of their own way of being in the world that’s unknown to them. In fact, as you discovered when you learned about Self-Actualization Psychology in *Coaching Mastery* and the Meaning–Performance Axes, one of the greatest places where your blind spots are hidden is in your strengths, and especially in your meta-program strengths that gives you your advantages and core competencies. That’s because every meta-program not only tells you what to notice, to see, to focus on, to detect, but also what to delete, what to not-see— what to be blind to.

Why is all of this important in Coaching? Because wherever there is non-achievement over time, wherever you find yourself stuck again and again, wherever you have a pattern of not being able to complete a goal or aspiration, wherever for all of your efforts, you just do not mind-to-muscle some great principle or idea and transfer it into muscle memory and practical skill—you are *probably struggling against something within yourself that’s a blind spot to you.*

And what are you *blind* to? Probably some of your highest frames that are governing your most outside-of-conscious assumptions. At the lowest levels of blind spots, those that your clients will typically have is when a person is blind to how he or she comes across, how others experience him or her, what others are saying and responding. I know Executive Coaches who get paid big bucks just to observe and give feedback at this level. Here the magic of *feedback* saves the day

and gives the person a mirror so that the person can *see* oneself. Of course, to *see* oneself, you they have to be open to feedback, willing to consider it, and have the frame that what you cannot see in yourself is often very much in the open and seen by others.

What You Know About Me

What I Know About Me	<i>Deep Blindness</i>	<i>Self-Blindness</i>
	<i>My Secrets</i>	<i>Public Self</i>

At the next level would be the belief frames that a person may have, that you and I may have, and that we simply not be aware of. This is why you and I, and anyone who coaches, should have a coach. Do you? Have you gotten a buddy-coach from your *Coaching Mastery classmates*? If you have, do it! Do it today.

There’s something about being asked questions about beliefs, “And what do you believe about that? And if that’s true, what would that mean to you?” Asking it of yourself, while if you develop that discipline, can become a powerful self-coaching tool, is still not the same as to be put on the hot-seat with a great meta-question by another human being. Asked in the right way, at the right time, when you are in an open and curious state can suddenly strip away all of the common masks and posturings that we use and we can find ourselves naked in our frames.

But what about those *blind spot frames that are really outside-consciousness* and at the level of your life premises? What about those conflicting frames that only nudge at the edge of your consciousness even more most salient moments? How do you get to those?

Well, you already know how! That’s why your mirror, ask meta-questions, and create a crucible environment so you can take the person into the deepest/ highest truths of their lives. That’s why you use the Crucible pattern; it’s why you Explore a Matrix.

There is also now a new Meta-Stating pattern that you can use with another to facilitate a confrontation with their blind spots— those that keep them cycling around the same issues or patterns for years, even decades. I recently used the pattern, quite unintentionally, when I did a public demonstration of Meta-Coaching in Taiwan. I have written up the conversation and described the process. This week I will be putting it on the VIP Section of the Meta-Coach website (www.meta-coaching.org). So if you are a licensed Meta-Coach (that is, one with a current license, namely one for 2011), then you can use your ID and Password, login on the site and get to that document.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #15
April 6, 2011

THE ART OF WAITING FOR IT

Patience and Meta-Coaching

When it comes to coaching which is a process that incredibly accelerates adult learning and development, the paradox is that you have to go slow enough so that you can really go fast. Several people have noticed that about the way I get a KPI and have mentioned that to me. They have said things like:

“You seem to be going to slow and methodologically inquiring about various details, and then all of a sudden, seemingly out of nowhere, you lock down the KPI; I don’t understand how that works.”

“I was surprised when you got the KPI, it was like the client just gave it to you, but I can’t figure out how you got her to just give it to you like that.”

“I’ve been modeling how you get the KPI so consistently and so quickly, and what’s really interesting to me is how often you intentionally slow things down, you sometimes even tell the client to slow down.”

And true enough, I had not noticed that before, but I do now find myself saying such things:

“Whooh! You’re going so fast, I can hardly keep up with all the information you’re giving me. Wow. Let me slow you down a bit and see if I’m keeping up with you. Would that be okay?”

Then someone asked me about my own frames in this. And while I had never before made them explicit, they are frames that come from my basic assumptions in Meta-Coaching, assumptions also that come from the foundational field of NLP.

First, I believe that if I stay with a client, and create the relationship and Crucible space, the client will tell me the real problem and the solution to the problem.

Next, I believe the client has all the resources and can and will give me the KPI and the solution if I do my part in facilitating the client’s inner knowledge.

I believe that by waiting for it, being patient, fully entering into the client’s world of frames (Matrix), all of this will come.

I believe that together we (client and myself) have all the time we need to get a solid outcome and solution, there is not need to rush it.

I believe that if I do rush it, that will shut things down in the client’s Matrix.

I believe that we humans are constantly tempted to live on the surface and to not go deep, and that to go deep within to the highest frames and assumptive beliefs, we have to stay present with our client.

I believe that coaching is about facilitating a deep authenticity with a client and that I have to lead the way in being authentic myself.

So I wait for it. But this is not a passive waiting, *it is an active waiting*, a waiting in anticipation, a proactive waiting. As I'm waiting for it, I'm clarifying (using lots of clarification questions, also known as "dumb questions"), I'm using my know-nothing state of ignorance, and I'm releasing judgment and assumptions. I'm waiting for the coachable moment, for the moment of insight, for that special pregnant moment of "Aha!" I'm waiting for —

- The client to express a strong desire for something.
- The client to identify a belief frame that creates the interference.
- The client to recognize and say that he or she is stuck at X.
- The client to recognize a potential clamoring within.

And as the client does, then I use testing questions. I'm holding back, still waiting for it, not ready to jump on that horse and gallop off. I'm ready to toss it all away; so first I test it.

- Is *that* what you really want? Really?
- Is *that* the most important thing you and I can talk about today?
- Is *that* the problem?
- Is *that* the solution?
- Is *that* the insight that will transform everything?

And I don't ask these testing questions just once, I iterate them again and again. I asked them repeatedly so that the iteration of the questions cuts through surface states and facilitates a more authentic response. I want the client to begin to really hear him or herself. So I wait for it. In fact, once several Meta-Coaches started asking me about all of this, I found myself using a little line in my head as I'm waiting, "Just wait for it . . . not yet . . . wait . . . wait for it, it's coming."

So to go much quicker in your facilitation skills as a Meta-Coach, go slower! Wait for it ... and wait for it by being fully present, exploring, clarifying, using your know-nothing state, acknowledging, confirming the person, inviting more and more depth.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #16
April 16, 2011

M-P BENCHMARKING

Meaning-Performance Benchmarking of the Core Coaching Skills

Since 2003 we have been benchmarking in Meta-Coaching using a form that keeps evolving, the current form is #22! That form sets out the 7 benchmarks and has numbers from 0 to 3.5 to indicate the movement from *incompetency to competency and on to expertise*. The form is a short version— a cheat sheet— of the full benchmarks for the core competencies which are in the *Coaching Mastery* training manual.

Because *the skill of giving feedback* is a critically important core competency as a Meta-Coach, you begin learning the form on Day 2 and using it on Day 3 of the Coaching Boot Camp and by Day 7 you have given feedback on each of the skills. And as you well know, it is challenging! No question about that. And over the years, several people have attempted to simplify that form. And many of their suggestions have been excellence and, accordingly, have incorporated into the form that we now use.

For those who return to *Coaching Mastery* to be a part of the Team Leaders and to do benchmarking, most of the Training Day is taken up practicing the benchmarking skills. And that means *learning the form* so well that as a benchmarker, you can readily make marks and write on the form so that at the end of the session you can give high quality feedback. So we do 3 to 4 coaching sessions on that day, and sometimes more on the following days (before or after the regular training) so that the benchmarkers can become more skilled in recognizing expressions of the skills and the not-skills and give the kind of feedback that effectively shapes someone's skills for greater effectiveness.

As of January this year (2011) I created a new form that I want to introduce to you here. This form is designed to help to understand the relationship between the coaching skills and the client's relationship. Because I have formulated it on the Meaning—Performance Axes, the form shows a synergy of the 7 core skills in one picture enabling you as a Meta-Coach and as a Benchmarker to see how *the Coach's behavior in the core competencies affects and facilitates the Client's experience*.

I had the opportunity to talk this through with Mandy Chai and Wilkie Choi on a flight from Hong Kong to Teipei in Feb. And then with Omar Salom in Mexico in March. They provided additional insights about the form below. Then Mustafa El- Masry, a Neuro-Semantic Trainer in Egypt, created the diagram. So, many thanks for their insights and suggestions.

Diagram Explanation

As you can see the scaling from 0 to 3.5 on the **Coach's Behaviors**, as the coach moves from the gray areas (the dark side!) into the white and then on into the color sections, the skills become increasingly more advanced, developed, and competent. On the scale from 0 to 3.5 on the **Client's Experience** you can see that *the effect* on the client moves from being judged, defensive, etc. to feeling understood (2.5) to feeling honored, empowered, and awakened at level 3 and to experiencing transformation and peak experiences at the highest level. That is, when the Coach is in the right state and performing with full competency, the likelihood increases that he or she will be inducing the client into the most ideal states for being coached and for experiencing transformation. It works synergistically and holistically.

Now as a Meta-Coach when you are in a meta-position or when you are benchmarking or even when you are reviewing your coaching session, you can guess at the state/s that you are inducing your client in (the list on the far left side). You can even ask your client, "What state and states have you experienced during the session?" "What things did I do or not do that evoked that state in you?"

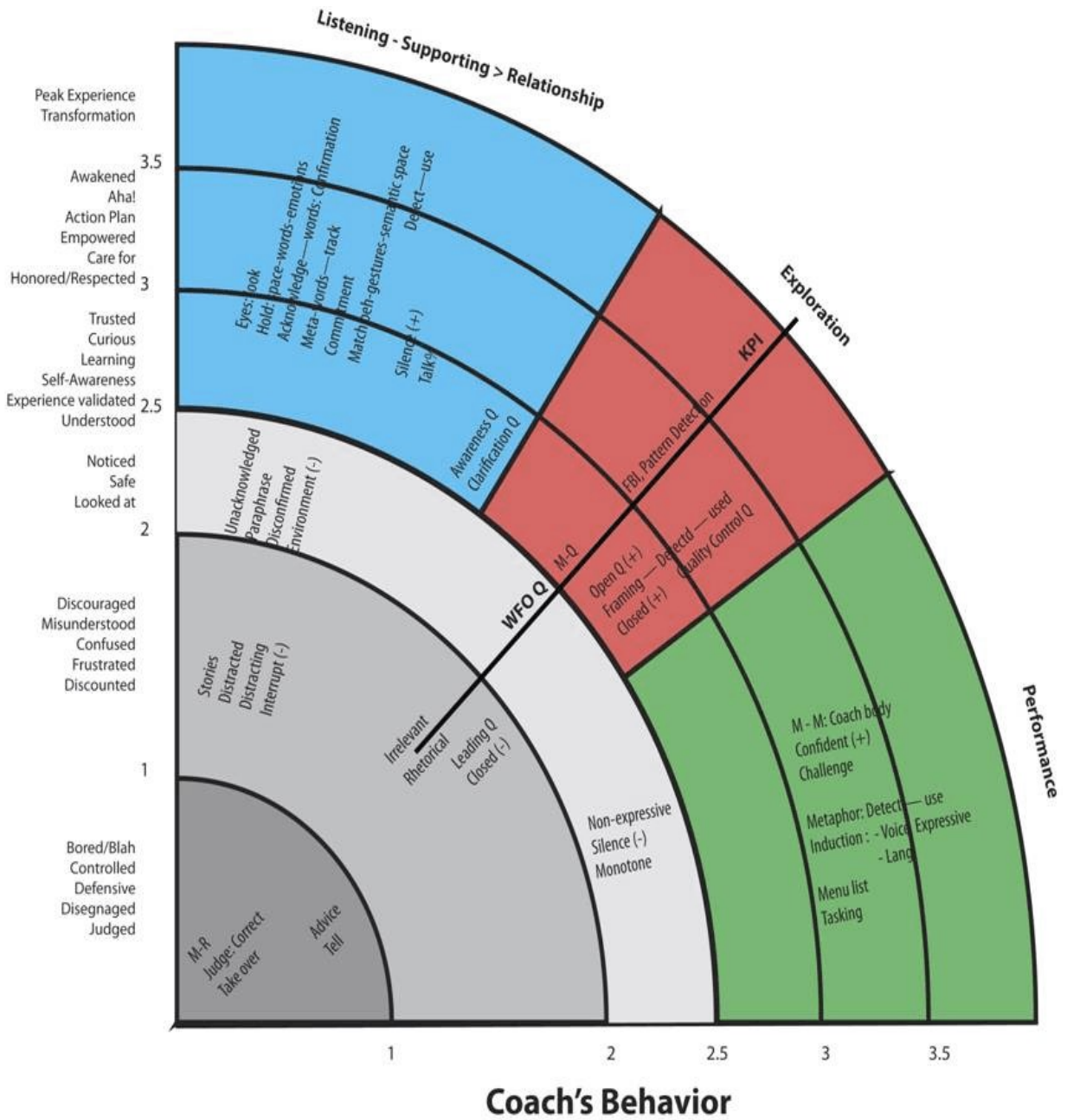
You can also see that in *the Blue area* — here are the things you do that facilitate *the Coaching Relationship* ...the things you do that induces the client into the states of feeling cared for, learning, challenged, awakened, etc. *The Green area* indicate the things you are doing in coaching that facilitate *Performance from the Coaching*. *Blue* and the person feels your compassion and sufficient safety to open up and become real. *Green* and the person is activated by your challenge and ruthlessness to take action and do something about the coaching experience. Together you are able to reach the ideal of challenging care or ruthless compassion.

That leaves *the Red area* that is about *the Coaching Exploration*. The center line here are the Well-Formed Outcome Questions (WFO) which involved Meta-Questions (—Q) and which enables your skill of asking FBI questions and detecting patterns in the client's frame-world (Matrix). On the left side the questions (awareness, clarification) enable relationship; on the right side the questions enable action, mind-to-muscle actualization, and performance.

Now in *the Gray areas* we have incompetence and even the dark side of coaching where a coach can be hurtful and counter-productive with a client. Here coaches are manipulative in ways that serve their needs rather than that of the client. Here there is judgment and the Coach's ego gets in the way. Here the coach does stuff that does not help, that irritates, annoys, and that gives Coaching a bad name. Everything within the 2.5 semi-circle (the curve that is a quarter of a circle) is in the gray area. This is the area that you have to escape in order to become truly effective as a coach.

To your Coaching Effectiveness!

Client's Experience



From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #17
April 21, 2011

MIND-LINING AND COACHING

To be effective as a Coach, and especially a Meta-Coach, you have to develop the skill of mind-lining. And what is that? It is a *line* (a statement or a question) that changes a *mind* (e.g., a mind-line). It is a frame of meaning that provides a new understanding about something. It is a frame that replaces and exchanges an old frame that is creating an interference, disturbance, or sabotage for someone. So when you reframe, you are providing a new line, a new mind-line.

Now as a Meta-Coach, you naturally do this whenever you ask the down or the up questions. Ask the *down questions* of the Meta-Model, and you enable a client to get specific and precise in that client's description (and in the Mind-Lines model) you are deframing. You are deconstructing the constructs that a client has built.

And when you ask *up questions*, you are using the Meta-States Model to ask questions that takes a person up into his or her Matrix of frames. And this outframes (in the language of the Mind-Lines Model). It brings higher meanings and states and applying that to the primary frames. The result is that they *qualify* the first states with the feel of the second seconds.

What all of this means is that as a Meta-Coach, you are already using lines to change your client's perspectives. You are already sending their brains in new directions so that they step out of the box that is currently constraining and limiting a broader view. And that's what the Mind-Lines Model is designed to achieve. Yet while you are already doing some of these things, there is so much more that you can develop.

Now we have not made the Mind-Lines Model as one of the models of Meta-Coaching. We already have so many models, adding yet another one only seems to be creating a pattern of overwhelm. Yet after saying that, there is something to be said for Meta-Coaches learning the Mind-Lines Model and using it.

Now I say all of this because I've just completed presenting the Mind-Lines Model to Neuro-Semantic Trainers and Meta-Coaches in Hong Kong. This was a tremendous opportunity that Mandy Chai made available to me. Not having presented Mind-Lines in over six years, this gave me the opportunity to revisit ML and consider what it would be like to include ML as a model of persuasion for Meta-Coaches.

What Mind-Lines as a model offers that is not explicitly stated, described, and practiced in Meta-Coaching is the structure of sending someone's brain in one of seven directions. And when you do that, you help that person expand his or her meanings. Knowing that there are seven

directions further enables you to observe the natural direction a person's mind goes in and to also notice the direction where the person's mind does not go. Then when you use one of the reframes, you can invite your client to entertain new ideas and a new direction.

There are seven directions:

- Down to de-frame and de-construct what the person has created.
- You can re-frame the content of what the person has defined the thing to be.
- You can counter-frame the belief by using it (or some part of it) on the person.
- You can pre-frame the positive intentions or causes for the belief that is now limiting.
- You can post-frame the consequences of it and the problems it will create in the future.
- You can out-frame it by going above and beyond the belief and qualifying it in various ways with the meta-stating process.
- You can analogously-frame the belief with a story or metaphor.

Now don't you think that that is a lot? It gives you, as a Meta-Coach, a lot of things that you can do with a client in the coaching conversation. And it enables you to be pretty systematic about it. Then you don't have to guess, hope, or wish. Then you can choose which direction to send a person's awareness based upon what you know.

- If your client is vague, confused, unsure, not-knowing, deframe and generate clarity and precision.
- If your client is locked into a meaning and can't think what else it could mean, reframe the content of that belief.
- If your client uses the belief on others but not on self, counter-frame and use it on your client! Confront him or her with it and really shake them up!
- If your client engages in self-contempt for the belief and creates a second problem because of the first limiting belief, pre-frame to enable the person to become kinder and gentler with oneself.
- If your client doesn't see any reason to change the belief, see any problem with it, post-frame and put the consequences in his or her face so that they feel aversion to keep it.
- If your client's belief simply needs to be qualified and textured with some other considerations, then out-frame with the required resources.
- If your client finds stories and non-propositional language most impactful, then frame with an analogy as you invent a story or narrative that will memorably engage them and change the belief in that way.

The Mind-Lines Model is a model about how to work with the structure of meaning. It enables you to directionalize the brain so that a person makes their meaning frames new and more useful for their objectives. The book for this model is surprisingly titled, *Mind-Lines: Lines for Changing Minds*. But beware: learning this model presupposes that you have or are taking the red pill and entering into the wild and wonderful inner world of *meaning*. May you be a wonderful meaning-maker and shifter as a Meta-Coach!

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #18
April 27, 2011

COACHING IS NOT THERAPY

The question always comes up, yet this week here in Hong Kong it has come up many times. Maybe that is because we have a several therapists in the process of becoming a Meta-Coach, maybe because we have a lot of people who came through “therapy NLP” —you know, NLP that was presented exclusively in a therapy context of “fixing people.” Or perhaps because we have a lot of people who like fixing others! Whatever the reason, the question has come up repeatedly, so I sat down and wrote the following as a new page in the Training Manual (yes, those translating to other languages, here is yet another change in the TM!).

Therapy

Time: Living entirely or mostly in the past
State: Experiencing internal hurt, wounds, traumas.

Intention: Wanting safety, equilibrium, quietness, peace.

Self: Lacking ego-strength to face the world, to face a particular challenge
Lacks sense of value, worth and esteem for self.

Feels like a victim and has much or lots of victim talk and mentality.

Power: Needs to be re-parented, easily experience transference to the helper as if a new “parent.”
Needs “fixing” — remedy for problems of self.

State: Resists change, fears to change, defends against it
Reactive, defensive, fears to be open, vulnerable.

The Psychology of Therapy is a *Remedial Psychology* that provides insights about how to nurture, support, listen, enable the expression of

Coaching

Living in the present with an eye on the future
Experiencing an anxiousness and restlessness for more, internal well-ness, and health.

Wanting dis-equilibrium, challenge, to be stretched.

Has the ego-strength to face what *is* in one’s world.

Has unconditional self-value and worth, or “high” self-esteem even though conditional.
Feels high level or completely *at cause*, response-able and empowered.

Fully able to be an adult in thinking, feeling, accepting responsibility.
Does not need “fixing” or any remedial solutions, wants generative change.

Embraces change, wants it, plans for it, gets excited about changing.
Proactive, open, disclosing, self-aware.

The Psychology of Coaching is a *Generative Psychology* that awakens, disturbs, challenges, and stretches to unleash more and more

the person's story, to facilitate transference, to avoid counter-transference, to re-parent and love the person back to health. It is a conversation of that involves an independent–dependent role moving the client to more and more independence.

The therapist is working to develop okayness in the client, to get him or her *up to okay*, to strengthen the person's ego-strength, to finish the so-called “unfinished” business of the past and get the person *up to now*— in the present and ready for taking on life's challenges.

potential talents and possibilities. It is highly confrontative, direct, and explicit. It is a dialogue of colleagues and involve inter-dependent roles.

The Coach is working to move the self-esteem to a totally *unconditional* status so the person does *not* have to prove anything to be fully and completely okay, and now ready for a new restlessness— a dis-equilibrium to think more, feel more, be more, say more, do more, have more, and give more.

Refer— Please Refer

When you are a coach, I would highly, highly that you refer when you come upon a situation with a client that needs therapy rather than coaching. Even if you have the skills and are fully competent and knowledgeable about therapy issues, even if you are licensed and have a Masters Degree in Counseling/ Therapy, *refer*.

Why? Because the *role and relationship* you have with a client as a therapist is so very, very different from that of the *role and relationship* you will be establishing when you are doing coaching. That's the first reason. There is another.

The *message* you send in the two roles are very different. If you confuse these two; if people see you as a therapist *and* as a coach, they may very well *not* want people to know that they are seeing you. “What's wrong with you that you have to see a therapist?” “Oh he is not my therapist, he is my coach!” “Yes, okay. If you say so!”

If you want to have a therapy practice and then a coaching practice and keep them separate, if you can do that, if you can change gears and operate from two very different roles, the more power to you. It is your final decision, and you have to decide. My recommend is that you keep the roles very separate and do not do work with the same client on both roles.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #19
May 4, 2011

COACHING AND THERAPY

What “Fixing” Means– Part II

After the last Meta-Coach Reflection (“Coaching is not Therapy”), several therapists wrote to say that they did therapy and they do not “fix” people. That’s good. I’m glad that they think in terms of resourcing people, facilitating learning and growth with people, etc. That’s certainly how I mostly thought about it when I was in that field and that’s very much in line with the theoretical foundations of NLP and Self-Actualization Psychology.

And yet ... All of that got me thinking. Is it ever right and proper to “fix” someone? We say in NLP that “people are not broken” and that would mean that they do not need fixing, wouldn’t it? Or not? I think that NLP presupposition is certainly true for the great majority of people, for the average person. But for everyone? True enough, most people simply need some instruction, some coaching, some support and training and they will step up and take charge in their lives.

Most people. But everybody? Well, as with almost every presupposition or statement, there are nearly always exceptions. Obviously, if someone has a damaged brain or nervous system, they are not in the norm range of what works and what is true for most people. Some people are damaged in their neurology, they have lesions in their brains, they could be paralyzed, have a fatal disease, etc.

Then there are people that have such damaged maps, given or taken on from others, or created themselves that they have what we call “personality disorders.” The book that I wrote with Bob, and Richard Bolstad, *Personality Ordering and Disorder Using NLP and Neuro-Semantics* (Crown House, 2000) is about the 14 personality disorders mentioned by the DSM IV. People with such can have different degrees of dysfunction and some live lives of brokenness—the way they think, feel, talk, and act reflect a “brokenness” and needs fixing. *They* may not be broken, but their cognitive style is, their behavioral style is, the way their emotions work is.

So if you are trained as a psychotherapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, or mental health worker and you know the tools of NLP and Neuro-Semantics, you will be working to “fix” the areas that are broken for the person. And that means a lot of support, sometimes working to activate transference so that you can assist them in “finishing” some relational work that got messed up, helping them fix the cognitive distortions by which they mess themselves up, etc.

People can be “broken” in another way, they can be living in such self-delusions that how they think, feel, speak, and act in the real world can so *not work* that all of their responses can, as it were, *break them down* as they beat against a territory for which none of their maps work and for which they seem unable to remap. For them, they need someone who can help them “fix” those

maps. That typically means a lot of time building up a relationship so that they can have enough safety to face the self-delusions and begin to create some more effective maps.

So what shall we say about the language of people being broken or not, or needing to be fixed or not? I like the premise that “People are not broken, but work perfectly well” even if it means that their maps regularly and consistently and methodology to create a living hell for them. They are not broken in that they do not work systematically—they are living out of, and actualizing, their morbid and toxic maps. And that creates a broken life.

Yet in terms of them being adjusted to normal reality and being able to have a normal love life, work life, life with friends, recreational life, etc., they are being broken against the hard reality of the constraints of the territory, and in that sense, they need someone to help fix them— fix their maps, fix their habits, fix their language patterns, fix their thinking styles, etc. And that’s what a therapist does. And yes, the therapist will have to work with them to co-fix such problems and to do that, the therapist will have to get through the defenses and get the person’s cooperation.

Psychotherapy is a noble profession. And most of the time it is a tiring and mostly thankless profession. Most therapists around the world make half or a third or less than a Coach. Most do so out of pure compassion and commitment to improving the lives of people. Most spend lots and lots of hours patiently getting through defense mechanisms.

Most do not have the luxury that a Coach has of challenging the client, telling the client to grow up, get over it. Counselors, who don’t work with such psychologically traumatized and distorted cases, sometimes do. But when it comes to the really serious problems of “personality,” when people suffer from psychological distortions as in the Personality Disorders, these are people who need help in getting things corrected— fixed.

I remember in my psychotherapy training a quotation from one of the ego-psychologists (derived from psychoanalysis), Sullivan. His statement is a summary of the healing that happens in long-term therapy: “We are hurt by people; and we are healed by people.”

When you first hear the word “fixing” it may not immediately strike you as an honorable term describing an honorable process, yet it is. We fix all kinds of things in our lives. When things break down, no longer work, are messed up, we fix them or send them out to be fixed. We call a repairman. We call on someone to make it right again. So with people and their mental maps; they also can experience something that “breaks” (a hope, dream, understanding, expectation, identity, expectation, etc.) and require it to be fixed. *Fixing* something doesn’t mean that the person is bad, inadequate, completely disempowered. It means that something needs to be put together and made whole again.

The problem in we human beings is that when our mental mapping experiences a breaking, we have to use our mental mapping to remap what is broken. That’s the Catch-22 of the human experience. And that’s where therapy comes in— to fix that which is broken.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #20
May 11, 2011

THE LISTENING PLATFORM

Learnings from Hong Kong and Sydney

Last week, after completing the 37th *Coaching Mastery* in Hong Kong, Cheryl Lucas wrote and asked about some of the specifics of what happened and wanted to hear about the highlights of the Meta-Coaching in Hong Kong. She asked if the graduates are on the English speaking egroup or if the graduates have a separate egroup. To the first question, yes most of them are on this exclusive English egroup and yes, we also have a Chinese egroup for Meta-Coaches and most of my posts are being translated and sent out every single week by SiewHong Png who lives in Taiwan (many thanks to her for her persistence and skill in translating!).

This was the second *Coaching Mastery* in Hong Kong, organized and sponsored by Mandy Chai who is planning two more this year— another in Hong Kong which she is planning along with a new co-sponsor and then back to mainland China for our third one there in Guoughzou. In Hong Kong, as in Sydney, we had a small group, just 23 graduates, but a group that impressed me with their commitment to their learning and development. And to that end, Mandy has taken the lead in setting up several MCF chapter meetings to support the new Meta-Coaches there just as Chris Day has done the same for Sydney and Chris Young for Melbourne Australia.

In these intense Coaching Boot Camps my own learning has been focused on learning how to benchmark the competency skills and how to give effective feedback to participants— *feedback that is truly transformative for the person*. I don't say that I have fully developed that skill, I have not, but I'm learning and with every experience with the Team Leaders and in the 21 coaching sessions during *Coaching Mastery* I am learning more and more distinctions and slowly improving my skills. (That was the reason for the new M—P Benchmarking Diagram that I sent out as Reflection #15.)

When you benchmark, you are learning the two core competencies of *receiving* and *giving feedback*. And while you are given a bit of an experience in your first experience of *Coaching Mastery* each day in the meta-person role which you provide on one of the five core competencies. And when you are on the Team as a benchmarker, you focus on how to listen to the entire coaching session and *receive* the coach's activities in listening, supporting, questioning and state induction. Then you *give feedback* to the benchmark criteria of the behavioral sub-skills of each of the skills as well as the behavioral sub-skills that reflect incompetence.

Doing that is not non-trivial. Nor is it an easy task. What those on the team find consistently is that it requires a very intense focus, intimate knowledge of the benchmarks for the skills and of the feedback form (and how to record it), as well as how to listen holistically to the coaching session.

Now what I've learned (and keep learning) is that *listening is the platform for all of the coaching competencies*. This means that the coach's skill in actively and empathically listening determines the quality of the coach's support, questioning, state induction, and receiving and giving feedback. It is *that* important! The quality of all of the other coaching skills are a function of the coach's ability at sensory listening, pure listening, and sacred listening.

If the coach listens with, or through, judgment, assumptions, or needs— the listening will not be pure. It will be contaminated. If the coach doesn't get his or her ego out of the way, the listening will be through the lens of his or her ego. And then the questions will not be right; the support will be weak or misplaced, the feedback will not be right, nor will the states induced and the frames suggested.

Amazingly, everything goes wrong when the quality of the listening goes wrong. And equally amazing, everything goes right in an incredible way when the coach's listening is pure, active, sensitive, and sacred. Do that and the scores of every other competence rises. When you *really* listen, you are trying to genuinely gasp what it is like to be the other person and to see the world from that person's perspective. This means that the kind of empathy required for a coach requires two elements: first a genuine caring about the other person and second, the ability to see the world through that person's eyes.

So in the skill of benchmarking, I am learning to listen to each and every question, statement, induction, and framing of the coach through this lens: *What did the coach hear that has elicited this question?* (Or statement, or induction or frame)? What listening generated this response?

Another thing I've been learning is this. I now also listen from the perspective of noticing all of the semantically loaded responses of the client that the coach has *not* responded to. That is, as the client speaks— I note words, statements, responses that are repeated and especially those repeated with emphasis and consider these to be *semantically loaded*. Then I wait for the Coach to respond to these. Frequently, when the Coach does not respond, I might then interrupt and ask if the coach plans to respond to one of them. Doing that is tutoring the new Coach *how to listen* and how to recognize *coachable moments* in the session.

The coaching platform is a platform of intense, pure, and sacred listening— do that and you will be able to ask great clarification questions, exploration questions, well-formed outcome questions. You will be able to repeat specific words as acknowledgments and from there make a confirmation that validates the person you are listening to. This is the basis for the art of coaching.

If you don't learn that— your coaching could be technically correct, but not effective. And worse, it will never be inspirational, transformational, and crucible-holding. Instead, it will be externally superficial even though you are doing and saying all of the "right" things. It will lack spirit. It will not touch spirit. The person will never really let you in.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #21
May 18, 2011

MASTERY YOUR LISTENING BLOCKS

What blocks your listening? Given that *listening is the platform for coaching and for all professional communications* (Reflection #19), then if you are wondering what skill to develop first to become truly effective and professional as a Meta-Coach or Professional Communicator, then search no further. It is listening. The solution to expertise in coaching is to fully give yourself to developing attentive and sacred listening.

This past month I have literally benchmarked dozens and dozens and dozens of coaching sessions (more than 80 sessions!) and the wonderful thing about benchmarking is that it absolutely requires you to listen. To benchmark, you have to really, really listen to what the coach asks and what the client says in response. And you have to listen with such intensity that you have to catch every word, every gesture, every semantic use of speak, every tone, tempo, emphasis, etc. If you want intense practice in listening, try benchmarking! Or even better, volunteer to be on the Assist Team at *Coaching Mastery*.

Now in listening to the dialogue conversation between coach and client in order to benchmark the skill of "Listening," I also listen to what the coach says and/or asks to determine what he or she has heard. I set in my mind such a questions as:

“What did the coach heard? What did the coach hear that led to that question or that response? Did the coach hear this or that particular word or phrase? Did the coach hear what the client is *trying to say*?”

This raises the distinction between *listening* and *hearing*. A coach can literally hear the words that are said and yet not really *listen* to the client as a person trying to communicate something. A person, as a coach, can see what a person is doing and yet not really *see* the person's use of space or gesture. This reminds me of the old biblical phrase, “seeing you *see* not, hearing you *hear* not.” So if you are not truly and deeply and effectively listening, what's blocking you?

Listening Blocks

If we humans are often, and even typically, challenged in terms of listening, what is it that creates our blocks to clear, clean, and sacred listening? And what can you do to address these blocks?

First, listening to yourself! What mostly creates a listening block is that you are listening to someone else, namely, yourself. No wonder you can't hear the other person! You are busy inside chatting at yourself. When you are busy inside talking to yourself, you will be less and less able to listen on the outside to what the client says. When you are listening to your agenda and skills:

How am I doing? Was that good or bad? Now why did I ask that? Am I getting enough

meta-questions? Am I going to lock down the KPI?

Second, believing in your own view, opinion, and maps. Even when you do turn your attention away from yourself to the other person, what they say is often filtered through your views so that if they say anything that differs from your map, you can hardly hear it because “it is wrong.” So have you set an frame that values and appreciates *what your client is saying*? Are you interested in their stories, details, babbling, repeating themselves? Are you fascinated by how they do not answer your question, how they get caught up in their story, how they express themselves in ways that do not fit for you?

Third, lack of openness. To listen requires that you open your mind and consider something new or different. And to be open requires that you entertain the possibility that you might not know, might be wrong, might have to correct yourself, etc. First you have to be open to your client—to whatever and however the client speaks. You have to be open to not getting it, to mis-hearing, to the feedback from the client. So, are you? If you are not open to these things, what do you need to do so that you access a more open state?

Fourth, tiredness. Listening requires energy. It requires the energy to focus, to remember, to follow a line of thought, to track, to wonder how it all fits together, and to what it not being said. A block to effective listening is the state of feeling fatigue which can arise from not taking care of your body with exercise and sleep, with eating too much, drinking too much, etc.

Fifth, failing to recognize the utmost importance of listening. Sometimes we fail to listen because we haven’t learned and do not recognize its importance. Our lack of understanding and appreciation blocks our listening. Do you recognize how important listening is? Do you have some great reasons for listening? I believe that the client will eventually lay out the real problem and the solutions if I listen long enough, carefully enough, and supportive enough. What belief enables you to attentively and sacredly listen?

Listening—the platform for effective Coaching! That means— *you cannot coach better than you listen*. Here’s to the unleashing of your ears and eyes and mind so that you can learn to listen in ways that open up the world and experiences of your client. Do that, and then you will be able to ask questions, meta-questions, induce states, set frames, identify patterns and so on at levels you never imaged possible!

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #22
May 25, 2011
ACMC Report

COACHING MASTERY GOES TO INDONESIA

It was a real privilege and delight to take Module III of *Coaching Mastery* to Indonesia this past week. And even though almost every participant that attended lived in Jakarta, we conducted the training in Bali in a beautiful hotel, Oasis Hotel which is right on the beach and ocean. The training was on the 5th floor ... that had a sun balcony (sky balcony) overlooking the beach and ocean and so the scenery was quite stunning. This is a tropical area so hot and humid ... but we were in a small but beautiful air-conditioned meta-room.

One thing that most of the other Meta-Coach Trainers regularly ask me is this: Are there any new learnings that came from taking *Coaching Mastery* to Indonesia? And because there almost always are new learnings, it is just a matter of identifying them, reflecting upon them, using them to change something, and then informing people about that.

Now beginning in Norway this Feb. I was introduced to Lene Fjellheim way of using music and dancing for energizing participants. Years ago she introduced the ritual of “every participant moves to a different seat after every break.” So that means sitting in a new and different place or more times a day! Additionally, music is put on and with it she leads singing the words and dancing to them to gather up one’s manuals and things and moving. The result from all of that? People are energized, delighted, have fun, change perspective, and sit with other people. Now after I introduced the Well-Formed Outcome set of questions there, one of the songs that we began planning repeated is the Spice Girls song, “What do you really, *really* want?”

I commented while there, the WFO will never be the same. And it has not been. I can hardly ever control myself from asking, the first coaching question, “What do you want?” by throwing in a second “really” and emphasizing it or saying it in a way that mimics the song, “What do you really, *really* want?”

I say all of that to tell you that today Meta-Coaches are being trained to ask the question in a way that implies that *there are wants behind the wants—meta-wants*, “What do you really, *really* want?” And in the Bali training I heard many of the Coaches opening their coaching sessions with that question. It was great! It adds a touch of humor, a touch of playfulness, a recognition that the first want may not be the *real* want.

Now one of the cultural things in Bali that surprised me was the worry, the fear, and the dread that many (not every) participants created for themselves about the score of the skill assessments. It was worse than in Hong Kong which so far was the worst, after Mexico. In these cultures, to make a mistake, to not do something with excellence *the first time (!)* is embarrassing,

sometimes even shameful, sometimes even so much as losing face. Unlike in the US or in many other western countries where there are many who take “making mistakes” as part of the “trial and error” experience in learning, people are afraid to make mistakes. People are trained and educated to avoid making mistakes at all costs. They consider it one of the worst things that they can experience.

Yet this very meta-state (fear-of-mistakes, rejection-of-mistakes, embarrassment of mistakes, etc.) undermines learning, interferes with skill development, and slows down the process of reaching benchmark. Here is a paradox. To accelerate learning and to develop more thoroughly and deeply you have to make more mistakes, welcome them, and more passionately learn from them. Paradoxical— because that is the last thing someone scared-of-making-mistakes want to do! Paradoxical because the meta-state of embarrassed-about-making-mistakes works against the very act of making a mistake or knowing one made a mistake!

In Hong Kong a few weeks ago I urged over and over and over— *Ask dumb questions!* You will serve your client better and be smarter in what you are doing if you will please ask dumb questions! Forget the know-it-all state, that’s the most stupid thing you can do. The most intelligent thing is to know-nothing and operate from that state. So in Bali I kept urging, Forget the score, you are more than your score. Then one of our team leaders, Kim Davis (from Darwin Australia), took that line and turned it into a chant and into a song and led the group several times, with the whole audience doing the wave as they sang, “We are more than our scores; I am more than my score.”

With the training in Bali, we now have 26 brand new to Meta-Coaches (taking our numbers to 1331 worldwide) and one who revisited. We had one from Australia and one from Sweden and the rest were from Indonesia. Most from organizations and would be using coaching first and foremost as managers, but about half wanted to create a coaching business using Coaching and would eventually become a Personal Meta-Coach. Religiously, most belong to the Moslem faith and a good many Christians, and a few Buddhists. I have to say that I was really impressed with everyone in terms of their compassion and humility, as well as their acceptance and tolerance, there was not the slightest judgment of others for beliefs. If only the rest of the world could be that way!

We had a small assist team of 7 Meta-Coaches, and with Mariani (the organizer) and myself, there were 9 which perfectly fit the 27 (groups of 3 for the benchmarking). Our team was a new and fresh team, so I conducted two days of training in benchmarking prior to *Coaching Mastery* and we did nine coaching sessions to train up the benchmarking skills. And I was really impressed with each and every team leader — their spirit, their commitment, their attitude, and their skills. One just graduated 4 weeks ago from ACMC (Vera Wee) and was back and was one of the toughest of the benchmarkers!

Kim Davis — Australia

Margot Brews — South Africa

Wahyudi Adkar — Indonesia

Billie CH Teok — Malaysia

Helene Kempe — Australia

Vera Wee — Singapore

Tessie Lim — Malaysia

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #23
June 1, 2011

“I DON’T KNOW” DOESN’T STOP A META-COACH

What do you do when a client says, “I don’t know!” What do you do when you run up against the “I don’t know” roadblock? Do you quit? Do you shift to another subject? Do you ask the tormenting question that they cannot answer and which they just told you they cannot answer, “Why don’t you know?” I hope not! I marked some coaches down for “irrelevant questioning” for doing that recently! So if not that, then what’s a Meta-Coach to do?

Ah! Lots of things. That’s because “I don’t know!” does not and will not stop a skilled Meta-Coach. The fact is that there are many ways to respond to: “I don’t know!” Do you know them? If not, here are the 15 key ways to respond.

First, be sure to pace and match by saying something like, “That’s great! Not knowing means this will really be a valuable conversation we’re about to have!” Or, “That’s okay. So if the coaching can help you to know that, would that be of value to you? Would that enable you to move beyond this barrier of ‘I don’t know!?’ Great, then should we move right along and enable you to know?”

So, as with all NLP and Neuro-Semantic processes, always begin by matching and validating the person’s not-knowing. Once you do that, then you can begin to explore what kind of *not-knowing* it is. There are many kinds.

1. Lack of Information — Do you need some information?

Perhaps the person just does not have the information that he needs and that’s why he does not know what to answer. What information do you need in order to know? Do you know how to get that information?

2. Insufficient information — Do you have enough information?

Perhaps she has information, but does not sufficient information to be able to answer the question. What information do you already have? How do you know that it is insufficient? What criteria are you using?

3. Confusion— Do you have too much information?

Or the person could be confused, his knowledge is *fused together* (con-fused) and needs to make distinctions that he is not currently making. With all the information that you have, do you have distinctions that allow you to sort it out, to classify it, to see structures within it?

4. *Not-prioritized — Is the not-knowing due to the lack of prioritizing?*

Perhaps she does not know because she has not prioritized the things of importance, or the things to be done and so doesn't know what to choose. She needs to identify her values and sort them out in terms of importance. What are your values that you can use to prioritize that information?

5. *Fear of knowing — Are you afraid to know?*

What do you feel about knowing, about gaining that knowledge? If you did know, what would that mean to you? Is there any fear in you about finding out?

6. *Repression — Do you not allowed yourself to know?*

From the fear of knowing, comes a taboo about knowing, and eventually an unconscious repression of knowing or of some information. Do you have permission to know?

7. *Self-Distrust — Do you not trust yourself?*

The not-knowing could be that you have not given yourself permission to know, that you don't have permission to trust yourself with the information. Do you trust yourself with knowing, with finding out? How much do you trust yourself with the information?

8. *Unwillingness — Do you want to find out?*

The not-knowing could be a lack of desire to know or even an unwillingness to know, to explore, to find out. Do you want to know? Are you willing to find out? Are you ready to make a decision that you will find out?

9. *Over-identification — Are you confusing the map with the territory?*

The not-knowing could arise from an identification that a person has made between some information or knowledge and how he identifies himself or something else. Is your identity tied up in this information?

10. *Unsafe — Are you simply not willing to tell me?*

Perhaps the statement about not-knowing really means that the person does not feel it is safe to share the information with you. Perhaps she feels that it makes her too vulnerable and exposed and/or weak and so does not want to tell what she knows. Do you feel safe enough with me as your coach to share this?

11. *Ignorant about Cause — Do you not know what causes this experience?*

Sometimes we say that we do not know when we are really saying that we lack knowledge about causation, what causes us to think, feel, say, or do something. Sometimes we know, we just do not know about an experience's origin or source. Are you really saying that you don't know where this came from, its source?

12. *Distortion — Do you have a distortion in your mapping?*

Perhaps the not-knowing really means that he has a distorted map, one that is twisted in such a way that it prevents him from being clear about something. What do you need to

do to start sorting out what you do know— a mind-map, a flow chart, a list?

13. Blind-spot — Do you have a blind spot that prevents you from knowing?

Perhaps there is a blind-spot in something that is your strength, somewhere where you have become over-focused, and you have a blind spot that's preventing you from knowing. Are you surprised or even shocked by your own responses and just don't know where they came from?

14. Inexperience — Do you lack experience in or with something?

Perhaps you do not know something due to inexperience. You don't know something because you have not and sufficient experience with some area or skill. Is this an area where you need more experience in practice?

15. Lack of Strategy — Do you not understand how it works?

Perhaps you do not have a strategy and that's why you don't know the strategy for doing something. It's new or different to you and so you don't know how it works. Do you have a strategy for how to accomplish X?

Overview of 15 responses to “I don't Know.”

- 1. Lack of Information — Do you need some information?*
- 2. Insufficient information — Do you have enough information?*
- 3. Confusion— Do you have too much information?*
- 4. Not-prioritized — Is the not-knowing due to the lack of prioritizing?*
- 5. Fear of knowing — Are you afraid to know?*
- 6. Repression — Do you not allowed yourself to know?*
- 7. Self-Distrust — Do you not trust yourself?*
- 8. Unwillingness — Do you want to find out?*
- 9. Over-identification — Are you confusing the map with the territory?*
- 10. Unsafe — Are you simply not willing to tell me?*
- 11. Ignorant about Cause — Do you not know what causes this experience?*
- 12. Distortion — Do you have a distortion in your mapping?*
- 13. Blind-spot — Do you have a blind spot that prevents you from knowing?*
- 14. Inexperience — Do you lack experience in or with something?*
- 15. Lack of Strategy — Do you not understand how it works?*

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #24
June 8, 2011

DON'T COACH TO FEELINGS

“I just want a feeling!” That’s what clients often say. And when they do, it’s a trick. It’s a seduction aimed to throw you off. And yes, it is not that the clients are *trying* to trick you. It’s not that there is a conspiracy plot under foot that is trying to undermine Coaches or Meta-Coaches. It’s that our language and our way of thinking is a trick and can so easily deceive us.

Now undoubtedly you have often heard it said in *Coaching Mastery* or read it in articles on the Meta-Coach’s egroup that, “*A KPI can’t be a feeling.*” If you haven’t before now, you have now! But do you know why a KPI cannot be a feeling? Would you like to know why?

Primarily a KPI cannot be a feeling, but the KPI (*Key Performance Indicator) needs to be a *performance* indicator. And if a *performance*, then external and behavioral—something you can see, hear, feel. And the KPI, as the “evidence procedure” for how you will know that you have reached your goal, ought to be some external, actual, and sensory-based evidence of the goal having been achieved, not one of the feelings which results from having achieved the goal. The KPI answers an epistemological question—a question about how you will know that you know.

How you will know that you have reached your goal cannot be a feeling because you can so easily generate feelings without reaching a goal. That’s something every storyteller, actor, hypnotist, sales person, marketing person, trainer, teacher, and coach worth his salt should be able to do in ten seconds! Inducing a feeling is easy ... and cheap ... and worthless as the answer to having evidence that you’ve achieved an important outcome.

We could make that a national campaign— *Ten Second Feelings! Get them while they are hot!* The skill of inducing emotions is part and parcel of effective communication and no big deal. Change your voice, use emotionally-laden words, tell a great story, use your gestures in a systematic way—and emotions are induced. If you can’t do that, go back to NLP 101.

Actually, not only can the KPI not be an emotion or feeling, but neither should a coaching goal, outcome, or agenda. Emotions and feelings can be results, effects, and consequences of a goal, but not the goal itself.

While you, as a Meta-Coach, certainly deal with emotions and address them and even call them forth in your sessions, if your coaching focuses on coaching to feelings primarily, your vision in coaching is at a pretty low-level. Perhaps emotional mastery, or emotional choice, or emotional intelligence, or emotional control, but not merely the accessing and feeling of an emotion. To have an emotion, any emotion, you need a meaning and an experience. Give that experience a

certain meaning and the emotion will follow!

But for some Coaches, coaching to an emotion seems to operate as a big temptation. A client comes in and says that he or she “does not want to feel something” (perhaps stressed, upset, sad, angry, guilty, jealous, out-of-control, etc.) and the Coach is off and running— chasing down an emotion! Or perhaps the client says that she wants to feel confident, peaceful, congruent, respected, self-esteem, and off the Coach goes seeking to create that emotion.

If this describes you, my message is, Be Strong, Resist the Temptation! Don't give in! Don't be a sucker for coaching to an emotion! Whenever a client *wants a feeling*, be sure to ask the more appropriate questions:

What do you need to do in order to legitimately feel that emotion?

What meanings do you need to give to X or Y activities so that you generate that emotion?

Feelings and emotions arise from *what we do in a given context to a certain set of criteria*. The criteria sets some values and standards that generate meanings and the activity in a given context defines where, when, with whom, and what needs to be done to experience that emotion. That's why the best response as a Meta-Coach is first to match and validate and then to get the full context for the emotions.

That's great! And this feeling will come in what context as you are doing what?

Great! And what do you need to do to elicit that feeling so it is appropriate and legitimate? Do you know how to do that? Do you have the resources for doing that?

The permission? Are you willing? When will you start? What criteria will you use to evaluate your success or effectiveness in doing that?

If the client objects or acts like he will bolt from the coaching room, and there is some question about the client *doing* what it takes to generate the emotion, then back up and ask:

Do you want a legitimate or an illegitimate emotion?

If you want an illegitimate we could give you some drugs to feel things or hypnotize you and put you in a trance so you hallucinate the feeling. Is that what you really want?

So while coaching does address emotions and there is a place for examining emotions, the objective and outcome is not an emotion first and foremost. It is a change in actions or meanings that will naturally and inevitably generate more positive emotions.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #25
June 15, 2011

INSIDE-OUT COACHING

In one sense, everything we do in Meta-Coaching is *inside-out coaching*. Someone recently asked me about how I came up with the title, *Inside-Out Wealth*. Before I answered them, I asked a question. “Why do you ask?” The person told me that he was impressed with how one short phrase, “inside-out” packed so much semantic meaning in it and that after he read the book by that title, he really appreciated the succinctness of that title.

Now it was at that moment that I wish I had not asked the question, because with that set up and that much expectation, even I was anticipating a great answer. I didn’t have one. And I knew it. The truth of the matter is that I had been conducting the Wealth Creation workshops for nearly a decade before I came upon that phrase. And when I did, which was on a 5 mile run one day in South Africa, I set it aside in my mind, and didn’t revisit it for another year. The truth was that I wasn’t that impressed with it when it first came knocking at the door of my mind. Only later, when I presented the Wealth Creation workshop again and talked about it in several interviews, did I use the phrase “inside-out wealth” that I began to realize that that phrase captivates a lot of meaning and summarizes the key concept.

Creative ideas are like that. Often instead of a great “Aha! Now I see the light! Hallelujah!”, they emerge as little tiny possibilities or even little irritations, like an annoyance in the mind that you want to scratch and make go away. Or at least that’s what often happens to me.

The idea of *inside-out wealth* arose from the paradoxical realization that you have to be inwardly wealthy to produce outer wealth that will last and do you and others good. True wealth comes from the inside as you find your way of creating value that enriches others. Do that and the money will follow. Why? Because people will always invest in the value that makes their lives better, that solves their problems. So the paradox is that financial wealth is just the sign, the scorecard, the indicator that you have the richness or wealth within you for creating and giving value.

Now not surprising, this *inside-out* idea was also the central idea in Timothy Gallwey’s work, *The Inner Game of Tennis* (1972) which launched the field of Coaching as we know it today. So when I retitled *Frame Games* (1999) in the next edition, I used the title, *Winning the Inner Game* (2007). That arose because for years I had been talking about the two games— the inner game of meaning and the outer game of performance.

Inside-out Coaching means that first of all, and primarily, you coach to the Inner Game. Yes you do so for the external goal, the KPI of the external performance, that people can measure and record. Yet first and foremost, you as a Meta-Coach go after the Inner Game. If your client can win *that* game, the outer game of their desired outcome will be a cinch— a piece of cake, a walk

in the park. That's also why we call it *Meta-Coaching*, we coach the *higher* game, the *inner* game, the game of the person's frames of meanings and understandings. That's because true success, true effectiveness, true wealth, etc. is inside-out.

If you or your client gets the *inside* right, you and your client has a self-actualization drive built into your neurology that will ensure that what is *within* will be manifested, expressed, and performed *without* (outside). That's what neurology does. It is designed to function and express itself in the world, in the environment. Try as you may to restrain it, to mask it, to stop it, what you are thinking and feeling on the inside will come out. It is the same principle as encoded in the old proverb, "As a man thinks, so he is." (Proverbs 23:7).

And I think we can safely say that this principle holds true for just about everything. The best training is *inside-out training*, the best consulting is *inside-out consulting*, *inside-out parenting*, *inside-out loving*, *inside-out health*, etc. What's within describes what's real in that dimension and what's within will have a tendency to be expressed.

Trying to reverse this is the big myth of individuals, organizations, companies, groups, countries. When there are problems, we tend to first go for the things *outside*— the symptoms, the first expressions, the behaviors. We rally our forces and resources to stop the expressions, to eliminate the symptoms, to cover-up the behaviors. We tend to think, "That's the problem." Companies who don't like their quarter profit, who think the ROI is too low, who have problems with employees in terms of attitude, work habits, retention, etc. bring in consultants, trainers, and coaches to "fix the damn problems." "Make them go away!"

Yet *the outside-in approach* is most often just putting band-aids on symptomatic expressions. Dealing only with the first problem mentioned as a coach, the external signs of a company in decline, the financial or health or relational problems of an individual as an exclusive *outside-in* approach most then like will deal with only expressions of the problem and not the real problem.

Yes, it is the *external symptoms* of problems that first gets the attention of individuals and leaders. And yes, you are probably brought in and asked to provide some help because of those *externals*. But don't be deceived. Distinguish. There are problems and then there are symptoms. And as the quality expert, Edwards Deming, said repeatedly, "Ninety percent of problems in an organization are system problems." So look at the whole system— the matrix of frames that governs the inner game whether in an individual or organization. That's where you'll find the leverage for transformation. Coach that *inner game* with an *inside-out* approach, and you'll be a *Meta-Coach* worthy of the title!

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #26
June 22, 2011

THE COACHING ART OF DIAGRAMING CONCEPTS

Because (as you know from *Coaching Mastery*) my memory is getting so much better with every year I get older (!), I seldom take notes when demonstrating coaching sessions. So people frequently ask the following questions:

“Do you ever take notes in a coaching session?”

“Would you recommend taking notes while coaching?”

“If you do recommend note-taking, how would you take notes?”

Answer: Yes I do recommend taking notes. Especially take notes if you have not used the *Learning Genius* of Neuro-Semantics to update your beliefs and strategies about your memory, a piece of paper with notes on it will greatly help you remember. And if you work with someone who is presenting more than 5 levels of frames about something, I highly recommend note taking. Be sure you maintain rapport as you do so, and be sure that you make notes about the critical and relevant things, not everything. That’s a bit about the *how*, but there’s more.

Advanced Neuro-Semantic Note-Taking

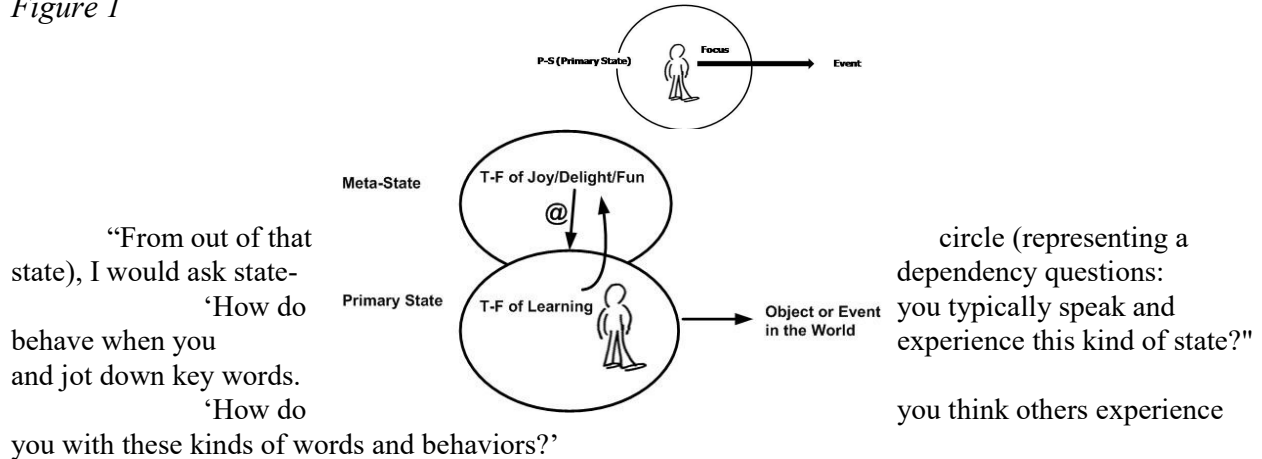
Years ago (1992) I wrote an article for *Anchor Point* (an NLP publication) about “Clipboarding.” In it, I recommended taking notes as a therapist (that was before the Coaching movement) with a client using the NLP Model. In that article I described how to use diagrams with a client to provide a *visual picture of the processes*. That’s because NLP and other self-development processes can be, and often are, abstract processes. Here is a bit what I wrote:

“When I learned NLP, I sketched new diagrams for clients. I would diagram the Complex Equivalences that client's offered in their languaging with the formula: EB = IS (External behavior equals some Internal State). If the client said that his complex equivalent for raising the voice meant "nagging," I would ask what if she equated this to: "trying to make my point," "trying to get heard," "feeling frustrated," etc. By writing different **Internal Significances** to the same **External Behavior** (or stimuli) had the effect of loosening up the person’s frame.

If you looked upon her voice raising as indicating her stress level, her feelings of frustration and insecurity, how would that play out for you? What would that then mean to you? Would you feel more resourceful?

I also began diagraming *states* on my clip-board. I would draw a stick person within a circle with two royal roads into that state: "mind" as internal representations and "body" as physiology and neurology. The combination and synthesis of mind-body would result in the conglomerate experience of an "emotion"— a kinesthetic-meta as we say in NLP. So what did you have on your "mind" when you were in that state? How did you represent it? At what distance did you entertain those pictures and sounds?

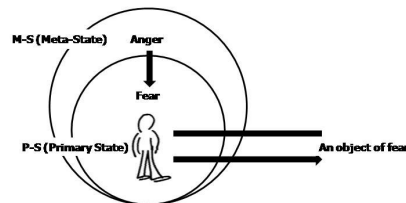
Figure 1



This would invite them to take second or third position and expand their frame-of-reference. Eventually in the process I would ask clients *the ecology questions*:
 ‘And how do you feel about this state with these typical responses?
 Does it work for you or does it limit you?
 Does it make life more of a party or does it cramp your style?’

When I later discovered the Meta-States Model (1994), I began diagramming states-about-states as I would talk with a client. Now as the person talked about what he or she believed or thought about their state, I would draw a line out of the state circle to a position above it and then draw an arrow pointing back to that circle. Non-verbally this demonstrates and process of "going meta" in meta-thinking, meta-evaluating, and meta-commenting as the person is experiencing that process.

Figure 2



Coaching and Diagramming as Note-Taking

How do you use a clip-board or white board or whatever media you want and take notes at the

same time? Obviously sit in such a way that you can draw and show your drawing *while* you are engaged in the coaching conversation. Doing this enables you to use the visual-digital system for comprehension of the process and to anchor the experience in the diagram. If you ask, so what do you think about the state of learning? And the person says that she enjoys it; “It is fun.” Then draw a line from the learning state to the joy state.

Figure 3

If you then want to convey the idea of a *gestalt state*, then draw a summation } symbol to the right of the circles. In that way you can symbolize the synergy that emerges from the systemic process of meta-stating. This *gestalt state* (}) consists of something “more than the sum of the parts.”

“What happens when you fully enjoy your learning state? Does that create a passionate state of joyful learning?”

Before I learned NLP I didn't know that by using a clip-board and drawing diagrams thereby created a *visual anchor* for people. I did wonder why so many clients kept asking for the sketches! At first I really could not figure out why in the world would they want those scratches. Eventually I learned that they functioned as “notes” for the session and a visual anchor for the shifts and changes in their consciousness during the consultation.

Take notes, create *process diagrams* of the experiences, the states accessed and the meta-stating levels of the person's self-reflexiveness awareness as it happens in the session. What I think you'll discover is that your clients will want the diagrams. If so, then you'll want to make a copy for you so that you also have an anchor for your memory of the session.

Something else will happen as you do this. You will be modeling the person's experiences as they have them and relate them in the session. And by tracking the flow of the person's mind-and-body system, you will be able to recognize patterns (pattern detection), catch coachable moments, and track your client through the session. If the person begins to mismatch you and you've been tracking through diagramming, just turn the diagram to the person and ask him or her the process. Get them to draw a flow chart of their consciousness. Once the person has done that it will be very difficult for them to then mis-match themselves. Here's to great note-taking and diagramming!

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #27
June 29, 2011

COMPETENT UNDER PRESSURE

It's one thing to be competent at something, it is quite another to be competent under pressure. But I have just stated the obvious. Because you have attended the *Coaching Boot Camp* that we call *Coaching Mastery*, you fully know the difference between knowing, understanding, and even being sufficiently skilled at something *and doing so under pressure*.

Something happens to almost all of us when we *have to* perform. And when you *have to* perform under the observing–evaluating eye of a teacher or presenter or something in charge, the intensity of the pressure increases. And if you have to perform in order to reach a certain skill level, there's even more pressure!

In fact, the structure of pressure seems to be this: *The more you have at stake in a performance, the more pressure you will experience*. That's because “pressure” like “stress” is an inside job! All that's occurring on the outside is that someone is watching what you are doing. That's all. So what's on the inside? Well, that depends. It depends on what the watching means to you; it depends on what the activity and skill means to you; it depends on how you talk to yourself, treat yourself, and motivate yourself. It depends on how much the skillful activity is part of your identity. It depends on how critical you think or believe your performance is. It depends on what and how you think about the time element— if you don't do it today, what do you think? “I'll never do it!”? “It's just a matter of time and I'll get it!”?

The meaning that you give is the state you'll experience. What does stress, pressure, ease with yourself, judgment, being observed, and so on mean to you? Whatever it means creates your inner state. So, the Neuro-Semantic / NLP questions are:

- How do you stress yourself out about a performance?
- How and what kind of pressure do you create for yourself?
- What kinds of thinking and feeling do you go into when you are under pressure?
- What happens when you get to your threshold and feel overwhelmed?
- What cognitive distortions increase the pressure and stress?
- What meta-stating resources do you need to set as supporting frames for performance that will make any kind of performance anxiety redundant?

We test all of this in the *Coaching Boot Camp*. Why? Well, as we mentioned, because running your own business as a Coach or using Coaching to manage, lead, consult, or train involves stress and pressure. And if you can *learn how to handle pressure in your training* as a Meta-Coach, then you will be much more likely to be resilient, relaxed, and resourceful in real life situations that are stressful. In fact, your ability to maintain and demonstrate your competency under

pressure will be a tremendous way to sell yourself and your Coaching and to create credibility for what you do as a Meta-Coach.

So how competent are you now under pressure? Gauge yourself from 0 to 10 in terms of remaining relaxed, resourceful, and resilient when under stress. How much more could you increase your state of competency and composure?

If this is important to you, then as a Meta-Coach, consider building your own customized Matrix of Frames around this experience. In recent years, we have specifically led you to do that around the competencies of Listening and Supporting and Receiving feedback. In fact, we now have pages in the manual for recording your own customize Matrices. So now all you need to do is to take the Matrix Model Questions (see your training manual) and answer those questions for each of the eight Matrix Model distinctions and build up your own “Competent under Pressure” Matrix.

This will serve you well whenever a company asks you to do a coaching session in front of a group of observers (whether HR professionals or managers in the company). It will prepare you when you present in front of your local MCF Chapter meeting, when you present at a Coaching Conference, when you set for your PCMC credentials, or when someone wants to record your coaching session. Then you will know that you are not only competent, but also competent under pressure.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #28
July 6, 2011

COACHABILITY AND THE KNOW-IT-ALL DISEASE

I'll start with the bottom line: *If you think you know-it-all— you are severely deluded.* Now of course, this idea of knowing-it-all is not literal, it's rather a phrase that marks out someone who operates from a closed-mind. It indicates someone who think, feels, and talks *as if* he or she has got such a solid grasp on something, that there's nothing else to learn. The person behaves as if he or she has received the last word about something, so there's no curiosity left in them. Now they have closed shop.

The first time I got a shock of meeting people like that was when I got a contract to do some “in service training” with teachers in the District 51 School system here in Colorado where I live. My father was a teacher and a perpetual student so I just assumed that teachers would be great learners and that doing a training with them would be the most dynamic workshop imaginable. Was I wrong!

The first in-service training I did was one of the hardest workshops and strained every skill I had to keep people interested at the most minimal level. I went home thinking that I had lost my touch, that I was having a really “off” day, that somehow I must have done something wrong. But then time after time, it was the same thing and I began to see that it was the people coming into the training room— grumbling, fussing, complaining, not wanting to be there, not interested in improving skills, not asking questions, etc. I had just learned NLP and I was ecstatic about what I had found. I was thrilled with the possibilities of what it meant for teaching. Yet my audience was mostly disinterested. They were suffering from the know-it-all disease. They false believed that having a Teacher's Certificate qualified them for the rest of life!

Here's something even more shocking. Years later as I began traveling, I began coming across one NLP trainer after another who suffered from the same syndrome. The symptoms of the know-it-all disease is lack of curiosity, unwillingness to re-examine a model or pattern, the lack of continuous reading, studying, ongoing learning, etc. What truly shocked me were the NLP people in many different fields who had not read a current NLP book in years and years. And who were not even interested, “Oh, I know that stuff.” No curiosity about finer distinctions in the Meta-Model or any pattern, or any new application. “Oh, same old stuff” they would done on in a dis-interested voice.

The know-it-all syndrome is a disease of spirit. It is a dampening of the self-actualizing drive within that comes from thinking that what you know and what you can do *makes* you a “somebody.” It involves the false reasoning, “If I admit that I still need to learn, develop, and

grow then I must be inadequate. So I must put up a front of knowing it and not needing to learn anything else.” So while it is used as a pseudo-proof of adequacy, it actually hides ignorance (not knowing something) and stupidity (not using the intelligence you do have).

How coachable is a person with this dull and dulling attitude of “Oh, I know that stuff. I don’t need to go back to school.”? Not very coachable at all! How open to new ideas, new experiences, and new levels of development? Not much at all. How curious and playful and joyful? Again, very low.

This is the delusion. You are deluded if you think that. I am deluded if that’s my attitude and mind-set. That’s because *there is so much more to discover in everything you already know*. Partly because half of what you know is just not so and needs to be cleaned up, updated, and/or replaced. Partly because whatever you know, you only know at a surface level. And partly because whatever you know is not as integrated as it could be.

Coaching requires a deep curiosity. It requires a willingness to examine things and re-examine, to question, to wonder, to play with ideas and possibilities, to turn things upsidedown and view from all kinds of different perspectives. Coaching is not only an accelerated learning methodology for adults, it is an advanced form of systemic learning as we learn to integrate our learnings for actualizing new potentials. As such it combines academic subjects with personal applications. And that requires that a person knows fully and completely that he or she is *not done*. There’s more! There’s so much more.

In fact, the seduction and addiction is that the more you learn, the more you *can* learn, the more you *want* to learn. And the more you develop, the more excellence you can develop, and the more you step up to the next level of experience, the more experiences become peak experiences and you have multiple peak experiences every day.

So may you and your clients, you and your loved ones, you and your colleagues always be discontent at a high level and hungry, really hungry for all of the new learnings that you and they will be experiencing in the coming days and years. May school never be out for you! May you be a self-actualizing learner operating from a fabulous state of total curiosity and know-nothingness!

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #29
July 13, 2011

WHEN SKILLS DETERIORATE

Your skills will deteriorate, and so will mine, if we do not keep them in top shape. You can learn and fully develop very high level skills and then, if you do not keep practicing them, refining them, renewing them, you will discover that they will deteriorate. This past week I talked to several of our people about this. They were actually surprised and amazed at how much some of their core coaching skills had deteriorated since they last took Meta-Coaching.

[Of course, there is also the factor that in recent years we have completely reformatted the Meta-Coach Coaching Boot Camp and have tightened up the rigor of the program and the demandingness of the skills, but that's another subject.]

I thought about this also when I was listening to Colin Cox presenting the *Five Keys to Mastery* in the post-conference. In every field, experts practice and practice and practice, and now we know that they engage in a very special kind of practice— *deliberate practice*, focusing on specific refinements that continually take their skills to the next level of development. In Martial Arts, in sports, and in the professions those who want to stay at the top of their game keep practicing the basics as well as find more and more of the critical success factors. They know that mastery is in the details.

Twenty-five percent of the group for *Coaching Mastery* this week were re-visiting, some from 2005, 2006, 2008, and even 2011. That's the highest percentage ever! And most of the Meta-Coaches from the earlier years told me about their amazement at how challenging the program has become. They love it and value it. They know and welcomed it as a stretch that will take their skills to a whole new level, but still they said that it was much, much harder and challenging than they expected.

Prior to all of this, I spoke about this to an Expert Coach. He is still an expert and still shows incredible power in his coaching, yet when I benchmarked him, there were a few skills that had slipped and were in decay— deteriorating. I called his attention to them and, as I would expect of anybody who lives on “the pathway to mastery,” he asked for more feedback, became animated about wanting to update his skills in those area, and said that he will be re-visiting Meta-Coaching himself. How about that! Ah, it tells me why and how he is an expert and will remain so.

Now the problem with skill deterioration is that it typically happens so slowly and gradually, that most of us never notice. We take a shortcut here and then another there, and eventually, the way we express a particular skill whether in listening and supporting to create relationship or questioning to explore a matrix of meaning, or use our words and gestures expressively to induce state— the shortcuts cause us to lose our edge. And as we blunt the expression of a skill, it rubs

smooth over time and due to the gradualness of it all, we just don't notice. This is again a great reason for re-visiting *Coaching Mastery* — then you can be benchmarked by numerous people and be sharpened against the edge of the behavioral benchmarks.

There's another factors. In addition to the subtly of a highly refined skill plus the gradualness of the deterioration of the skill, there is the satisfaction of the familiarity of a high level skill. And this familiarity and comfort leads to self-deception. "I'm pretty good. Maybe I'm even hot!" And of course, think that way and you'll lose any motivation to search for the edge and keep yourself refined in the stretching process of the Coaching Boot Camp.

So there you have it—the fact is *your* skills can and do deteriorate. So, what will you do about that? Those Meta-Coaches who regularly return to the trainings and keep refining their skills always leave with new distinctions, new challenges and stretch-goals, and a new appreciation for living on the edge.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #30
July 20, 2011

KEEPING YOUR SKILLS FRESH, ALIVE, AND GROWING

If skills deteriorate (#28), and they do, then let's ask the prevention questions:

- How do you keep your skills *from* deteriorating?
- What do you need to do, and how often, to keep your skills at their current level?
- How do you get your skills to stay fresh, alive, and even growing?

1) Use this Exclusive Meta-Coach Egroup.

As a Meta-Coach, you have numerous resources for this. First and foremost, this egroup. Not only the posts I put out weekly, but those that you can put out as you discover something that enriches your Meta-Coaching—a book, an idea, a process. Why not write about it and share it?

And we also have a new plan from the leadership team for generating more creative ideas. We are asking every Regional Director, those responsible for running effective MCF chapters, to communicate back to this egroup about *what's happening* with their chapters. So if you are a Regional Director, you can expect to be hearing from Cheryl Lucas and Germaine Rediger about this. This will encourage Meta-Coach practice groups everywhere. It's amazing how much energy and fresh ideas can be triggered by hearing about what someone else is doing.

Then there are the questions that various Meta-Coaches send out to this egroup from time to time. If you have identified your speciality and have questions about how others are handling things, you can post a question.

By the way, when you post—always put your name and email address at the top so that people have a way of replying to you individually.

2) Keep revisiting the Meta-Coach trainings.

Next, there are the *Coaching Pathway Trainings* that are being offered everywhere around the globe by Neuro-Semantic Trainers. You can keep returning to these to refresh your core competencies; return as a participant or return to help out on the assist team. I'm speaking about *Coaching Essentials* for your basic NLP, *Coaching Genius* for your foundational Meta-States skills, and of course, *Coaching Mastery* for your boot camp experience and benchmarking. The first time you go through any these trainings, you are being introduced to the system, so each time you revisit, you deepen your core competencies and begin to create an in-depth understanding of how they fit together.

3) Teach the Meta-Coaching System.

Then there are your own opportunities to teach and train the Meta-Coaching Skills. You don't have to be an official Neuro-Semantic Trainer to do that. After all, the best way to learn something is to teach it! So get out there. Teach someone. It will force you to integrate the learnings and the skills in an in-depth way and if you have never done this, get ready to be surprised at the process. And no, it won't count for certification, of course not. Yet it will be a gift to the person you are offering it to. So start with everyone in your immediate circle of influence.

4) Do something radical— Read!

Next are the books. I have written the series of Meta-Coaching Books for several purposes, one of which is to provide the content of the coaching models, patterns, and processes in print so that you have total access to the models and not keep them as if some great secret. And what if you have not been a person who learns from books? Then stop selling yourself short and do some buddy coaching with someone on this list so that you can learn how to become a great learner by reading. Why not? There's no need to keep that limitation, is there? A great way to learn how to learn from a book is to read a section and then summarize it. "What's the point here?" "What's the process?" Summarize to yourself or another person.

5) Get involved in the MCF Chapter Meetings.

Obviously, there are the MCF chapter meetings. So get involved. If there is not one in your town, create one! Step up to the leadership challenge of pioneering a MCF chapter. You can. Any single Meta-Coach has the right to do that. And on the websites (www.meta-coaching.org; www.metacoachingfoundation.org) you will find information from Cheryl Lucas about *how to run a chapter meeting*. Take a step up to leadership and lead out in creating a chapter; it will give you a place for share celebrations and challenges.

6) Get involved in the Coaching Community.

Then there are the other Coaching Chapters, get to the ICF chapters if they are in your area, or any other one and support "Coaching" as a field and show them what you can do as a Meta-Coach! Search the business journals in your area and internet for Coaching Conferences or Congresses and watch for the "Call for Papers" and plan to go and present one of the models or patterns of Meta-Coaching.

7) Revisit the Training Manual ten times.

How many times have you used your *Coaching Mastery* manual and the manuals from Modules I and II as a daily study guide? "I can do that?" Yes, you can!

There are numerous ways to keep your skills fresh and sharp. If you don't want your skills to deteriorate— you can develop a discipline as a Meta-Coach for staying on the cutting edge. And that's one of the great secrets of mastery. To your mastery of the most systematic and systemic coaching system on the planet!

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #31
July 27, 2011

THE FACILITATION MODEL

There are several questions central to and for the field of Coaching regarding facilitation. And to the degree that you can effectively answer them, to that extent you will be able to distinguish what is true *coaching facilitation* and what is not.

- How do you, as a Meta-Coach, need to think about the art of facilitation as you work with individuals and teams?
- What does *Coaching Facilitation* involve and how does it differ from other forms of facilitation?
- How do you *facilitate* the coaching processes?

For years (from 2002 to 2007) I struggled to get my head around this subject. Then in 2007 I came up with a Facilitation Model for Meta-Coaching and, surprise of surprise (!), I based it on the Meaning–Performance Axes of Neuro-Semantics. Today the Facilitation Model is the first model presented in the *Coaching Mastery Training Manual* and there also you will find a description of the model in terms of its theory, variables, guidelines, and patterns. There also you will find the list of *the unique processes* that we facilitate in Meta-Coaching. As a Meta-Coach, what do you facilitate? Here are the key processes:

- 1) Communication: precision, clarity.
- 2) Meaning-making
- 3) Benchmarking intangibles, measuring.
- 4) Relating: trust, connection, rapport building, openness, transparency.
- 5) Changing: multiple levels, transforming.
- 6) Self-Actualization: unleashing potentials.
- 7) Learning and Unlearning
- 8) Modeling structure: pattern detection, unpacking of structure.
- 9) Creativity: creating, innovating.
- 10) Problem-defining and problem-solving,

In the training manual, you can now also find the following list of sub-skills in the art of Facilitating:

- 1) Identify a process and articulate its primary design and objective.
- 2) Specify the steps required to fulfill the process.
- 3) Sequence the steps into the most time and energy efficient strategy.
- 4) Identify potential blocks and interferences to actualizing the strategy.
- 5) Recognize when and where those ideas and experiences that block and interfere occur.
- 6) Identify one or more responses to get a person through the blocking or interfering thought or feeling.
- 7) Using transition words, phrases and stages to move person smoothly through steps.
- 8) Verbally match the “frames” of the person (beliefs, values).
- 9) Elicit higher “frames” as “resources” for giving new inspiration and vitality.

10) Supporting the person.

More recently (2011 Reflection #15) I put out a new diagram of the Facilitation Process that was formulated around two dynamics— What the coach does and what the client experiences. I then had the diagram color-coded so that the higher the quality of the Coach’s behaviors, the more likely the richer the Client’s experience. And this was described in terms of three core processes— relationship, exploration, and performance.

Question #1: How do you, as a Meta-Coach, need to think about the art of facilitation as you work with individuals and teams?

Answer: The unique kind of facilitation that a Meta-Coach does is *process facilitation*. This differs from *content* facilitation. We facilitate communication, awareness, reflexive, transformative, unleashing, motivational, decision, etc. processes. The particular content is supplied by the client. That’s because the client is the expert of the content. The coach is the expert of the processes by which a person thinks-feels, communicates, changes, identifies and unleashes potentials, etc.

Question #2: What does *Coaching Facilitation* involve and how does it differ from other forms of facilitation?

Answer: It involves two things: care and challenge. The Meta-Coach cares as he or she creates relationship, listens, supports, receives information from the client, empathizes, seeks to understand the client accurately, patiently explores, distinguishes person from behavior, acknowledges, confirms, invests time, energy and commitment, and so on. The skilled Meta-Coach creates a relationship of safety and connection so that the client lets the coach inside the Matrix of Meaning frames.

The Meta-Coach also challenges and does so by questioning, and by indepth probing to the frames in the back of the mind, by asking very personal questions, by operating from a know-nothing state, by giving feedback, by confronting, by refusing to buying into a client’s limiting beliefs, by believing in the client more than he or she probably believes in oneself.

And when these two facets of *coaching facilitation* come together and gestalt, the Meta-Coach facilitates through the state of “ruthless compassion” (to use Graham Richardson’s phrase). This very special state can be described also as: caring challenge; confrontative care, a fierce conversation, a crucible style, challenging compassion, and so on. This is what *facilitation* means for a Meta-Coach.

Question #3: How do you *facilitate* the coaching processes?

Answer: By using the processes of creating relationship, exploration, and performance to enable a client to stop selling him or herself short and to step up to one’s full potentials and possibilities. There are seven core facilitation skills and there are approximately 50 other coaching skills that enable you to facilitate the self-actualization of your clients.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #32
August 3, 2011

THE ART OF BEING PRESENT

To be a licensed and qualified Meta-Coach, you have to have some skill in *releasing judgment*, *getting your ego out of the way*, and being *completely present to your client* so that you can support and listen. That's fundamental. I say "some skill" because this is where it all begins and where it always comes back to. Every time you sit down with a client to coach, you come back to this place. And, ideally, each time you do, you continue to develop these skills and deepen them. If you don't, then your skills will deteriorate and you'll find yourself giving advice, judging, making interpretations, and trying to straighten your client out! And then you are not making us proud as a Meta-Coach!

Now if you want to continue your development in this, then you need to know that *the art of being present to your client requires your own self-actualization*. You have to move beyond D-Cognition to B-Cognition. That is, you have to move to the higher level cognition— thinking, mind-set, awareness, perception where you live in the *Being-Realm* instead of in the *Deficiency-Realm*. Living in the D-realm and you will think, perceive, and speak in terms of D-cognition. Do that and your ego will constantly be getting in your way: *You* have to succeed; *you* have to do it your way; *you* need to be right, etc.

When Abraham Maslow described *B-listening* and *B-cognition*, he described the ideal kind of thinking, perceiving, and cognizing for a coach, especially a Meta-Coach. In the following he talked about a "therapist" — translate that to "Coach."

"The good therapist must be able to listen in *the receiving* rather than *the taking sense* in order to be able to hear what is actually said rather than what he expects to hear or demands to hear. He must not impose himself but rather let the words flow in upon him. Only so can their own shape and pattern be assimilated. Otherwise one hears only one's own theories and expectations."
(*Toward a Psychology of Being*, p. 87, italics added)

This passive listening receives what is said, it "lets the words flow in upon you." *Forceful listening* seeks to get what you hear into your categories of understanding! *Receptive listening* hears what is "actually said." You learn this skill in NLP when you learn to listen literally. That is, assume that what people say is *literally* what they mean, "I *see* what you are saying." "Those words are *music* in my soul."

"The good therapist is able to perceive each person in his own right freshly and without the urge to taxonomize, to rubricize, to classify and pigeon hole. ... Ordinary cognition is highly volitional and therefore demanding, prearranged, and preconceived. In the cognition of the peak-experience, the will does not interfere. It is held in abeyance. It receives and doesn't demand."
(p. 87)

Ordinary listening “volitionally” works at taking what is said and classifying it, demanding that it fit some model or format. That’s why you are not listening literally to what is actually being said, only what you are prepared to hear. That’s why your listening is not fresh.

“There are substantial differences between the cognition that abstracts and categorizes and the fresh cognition of the concrete, the raw and the particular. ... Most of our cognitions are abstract rather than concrete. That is, we mostly categorize, schematize, classify and abstract in our cognitive life. We do not so much cognize the nature of the world as it actually is, as we do the organization of our own inner world outlook. Most of experience is filtered through our systems of categories, constructs and rubrics.” (pp. 88-89)

Maslow’s word *abstract* here speaks about your concepts, understandings, beliefs— the *meta-stuff* in your mind. That’s why you are not seeing “the world as it actually is.” Instead you are seeing *on the outside* “the organization of your own inner world” as “filtered through your systems of categories.” That’s why you are not actually *listening*! You are not actually *hearing* your client.

Now if you have been to *Coaching Mastery* this year, you know that we are holding people more and more to this standard of listening. One of the skills I’m seeking to develop in myself is the ability to *listen literally, actually, freshly to what is actually said* and not to my concepts of what that means. And when I can do that effectively as I listen to both coach and client in a session and then give feedback, I have been asking: “Have you *actually heard* what the client said?” “What did you hear?” Then I’ll offer some things said but not heard by the coach.

Are you hearing *through your meaning filters* or are you *literally and actually hearing what is said*? That’s the distinction. It is a much more rigorous standard.

“Abstracting is in essence a selection out of certain aspects... Abstractions, to the extent that they are useful, are also false. In a word, to perceive an object abstractly means *not* to perceive some aspects of it. It clearly implies selection of some attributes, rejection of other attributes, creation or distortion of still others. We make of it what we wish. We create it. We manufacture it.” (p. 89-90)

Abstractions are false! Even if useful, they are still constructs you invented! And when you use them you prevent yourself from truly *seeing your client and being present to your client*.

“In order to perceive them fully we must fight our tendency to classify, to compare, to evaluate, to need, to use. The moment ... we classify a person ... we cut ourselves off from the possibility of seeing him as a unique and whole human being ... to the extent that we can prevent ourselves from only abstracting, namely placing, comparing, relating, to that extent will we be able to see more and more aspects of the many-sidedness of the person ...” (p. 91)

“It is not surprising that self-actualizing people are so much more astute in their perception of people ... understand another person in his uniqueness and in his wholeness, without presupposition ...” (91)

Ah, self-actualizing! As you become more real, more authentic, more whole in yourself you allow others to also be more real, authentic, and whole. This adds some depth to the meaning of being a Self-Actualization Meta-Coach doesn’t it?

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #33
August 10, 2011

WHY BE RIGOROUS?

Here's a statement that will be shocking to many of you:

If you took *Coaching Mastery for APMC credentials* prior to 2009, and have not revisited the program in the past three years, then you have not experienced the rigorous standards of the Meta-Coaching approach. Prior to 2009 before we completely reorganized *Coaching Mastery* we did not really hold the standards. Or, I should say I did not. We did not in the same way that we do now. In fact, many if not most of you certified as a Meta-Coach prior to 2009 probably would not qualify in terms of competency on the core skills!

Have we raised the standards? Yes we have! You have? Why? Why have you done that?

Because the difference that will make the difference in the field of coaching will be the actual competency of the coaches who can effectively coach.

Also, I have been discovering in my travels and interviews with expert coaches that if we as Meta-Coaches are going to truly lead the field of Coaching, we simply cannot accept low or poor performance regarding the relationship skills (listening and supporting), the exploration skills (questioning and meta-questioning), the mirroring skills (receiving and giving feedback), and the experiential skills (inducing state, mind-to-muscling tasking). To accept low level performance in a Meta-Coach because we like you, we care about you, we want to be nice to you, we don't want to hurt your feelings, etc. actually *dis-respects you* and sells your self-actualizing potentials short. It implies that we don't really believe that you can rise up to the challenge. And if we treat you, the Coach, that way, then you'll end up treating your Clients that way and that will intensify the downward spiral of competency development in everyone. Everyone loses.

So that's why! That's why the team of Meta-Coach Trainers have been raising the bar, setting higher standards, holding the standards, and being much more rigorous in the benchmarking of the skills. Now let me hear everybody say, "How Fantastic! Meta-High Fives to the Meta-Coach Trainers!!"

Rigorous, from *rigor* originally referred to something that was "stiff," and so the word now refers to something that is difficult, challenging, and uncomfortable. It refers to being strict with standards, to strict precision, to exactness, and to being scrupulously accurate. What are we rigorous about in Meta-Coaching? Several things:

- The behavioral standards of the core coaching skills.
- The standards for being ethically professional as a Coach.
- The integration of the Coaching Philosophy— Living a self-actualizing life as a Meta-Coach. That is, living and practicing what you are coaching others to experience.

Are the standards that we have in Meta-Coaching actually *standards* or are they just *aspirations*? If they are actually standards, then how do we hold them so that the credentials ACMC actually *mean* something? Why hold these high standards? Here's why:

- To establish *the credibility* of Meta-Coaching in the field.
- To provide an expression of the *excellence* that we seek to actualize in Neuro-Semantics.
- To create a *competitive advantage* for Meta-Coaching by distinguishing it from the low standards that are common among Coaches.
- To create a *consistency*, reliability, and dependability in Meta-Coaches around the world.
- To set forth a *vision* and mission for Meta-Coaches to keep developing, growing, and taking their skills to the next level.
- To be able to *sell Meta-Coaching*, and yourself as a Meta-Coach, as we develop the quality of this brand.

The reputation has already begun, the reputation that Meta-Coaches are world-class in their skills and their systematic approach to Coaching. With Self-Actualization Psychology governing what we do with in Meta-Coaching, enabling people to “be the best they can be,” to actualize their highest meanings into their best performances, we have a wonderful brand.

Already we have a good brand. Yet as Jim Collins wrote, “The enemy of great is good.” We don't want to be just pretty good— as Meta-Coaches we want to be great! We want to actualize *excellence* in Coaching methodology, psychology, and competency. Lots of people talk about excellence, lots of Coach Training schools verbalize that they are striving for excellence, yet that not how they operate.

That's not the pattern we want to replicate. We want to actually *actualize excellence* and given the Mind-to-Muscle approach built into the Neuro-Semantic models, we know how to close the knowing-doing gap. That's why we have opted for a very rigorous approach in the training and the benchmarking of the competencies.

Years ago I presented Meta-Coaching at the 2003 ICF (Australasian) Conference in Sydney along with Michelle Duval. There we heard Sir John Whitmore give the keynote speech, *Coaching: Partnering For Success— Building Excellence.*” This is how he ended his presentation:

“Coaching must maintain its good name. Standards must be monitored and raised continually. Cowboys must be exposed. Coaches must be role models for the value of being guided by their own inner authority.”

Today Meta-Coaching is a rigorous coach training process and that means it requires an attitude of forever striving for excellence. It requires energy, passion, and ambition (lots of it). It requires discipline and follow-through. It requires accountability and continual learning and feedback. Obviously, it is not for the faint-of-heart. It is not for those with low resilience or low ego-strength. And that's why the licensing process is rigorous, that's why we ask those leading the MCF chapter meetings to be rigorous and to not just “let people get by.” To challenge people to stretch to being the very best Meta-Coaches they can be. In all of this, we refuse to sell people or human nature short!

To the rigorousness of your ongoing development!

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #34
August 17, 2011

RIGOROUS UP THE LEVELS

Let me begin by offering you a couple *what ifs*...

- *What if* you and I, as Meta-Coaches, hold the standards of the most systematic Coaching methodology (Meta-Coaching) and do so to such an extent that when a person is coached by a Meta-Coach anywhere on the planet, that person will experience a ruthless compassion in service of them actualizing their highest potentials? How about that?
- And, *what if* we replicate and standardize the benchmarks for the core competencies as well as the transformational (change) competencies and the advanced competencies so that when someone experiences a Meta-Coach, you and I know that they will be encountering a highly qualified and ethical professional who will give them on the experience of their life!

I was recently asked about my vision for Meta-Coaches and Meta-Coaching as a methodology. What is my vision? My vision for every certified and licensed Meta-Coach is that he or she can sit down with any coaching client and *then* ...

Facilitate a conversation like none other that gets to that client's heart of things and create a transformative difference.

Yes, that's a mighty big vision. And since I can't do that one alone, I need *you* to help me make that real. So, how about you? Can you perform at that level? Are you committed to developing your skills so that it is just a matter of time before you are able to do that fully? If you are, then it is just a matter of time—and practice, and commitment, and follow-through and self-coaching.

One key thing to remember about this is this: Unlike tangible brands like Coca Cola and Pepsi and KFC and McDonalds and Toyota, *we have an intangible brand*. Where is this intangible brand? It is not something that you can hand to a client. It is not a book or CD that your client can read or listen to. Your brand is *the experience* you facilitate.

The Meta-Coach brand is the fierce conversation that delves into the Matrix of meaning and unleashes the highest and best in your client.

So, what are the tools you use to achieve this high goal? Answer: The 7⁺¹ models of the Meta-Coaching System. [You know the 7 models, do you know the 8th one? Oh yes, that's one of the questions that you face on the last day of *Coaching Mastery* driving "The Test." So now do you remember?]

Stepping up to this vision and branding of Meta-Coaching is probably one of the biggest (if not

the biggest) challenge of your life. It is not easy. It is not simple. If you are looking for ease and simple, grab your bags and catch the next plane to Los Vegas for a gambling expedition! It is not here. Here is rigor. And Meta-Coaching even at the ACMC level is the most rigorous of all coaching methodologies. Yet just to let you know, the rigor does not end at the ACMC level. In fact, that is just the beginning level. There you learn the first seven core competencies and the kinds of coaching conversations, but there is much, much more. Want to know what?

The rigor continues at the next level, the PCMC level. When you set for assessment at this level, there are four additional core competencies that you must demonstrate competency:

- *Clenching a KPI* so that you and your client are tightly focused on what is most important for the client and you have a clear measure of that objective.
- *Pattern detection* so that you are able to pick up on the dynamic meaning structures of your client's Matrix.
- *Framing* so that you are able to construct and set frames with your client *as* the client experiences his or her crucible of transformation.
- *Tasking* so that what your client begins in the session, your client continues between the sessions as he or she is mind-to-muscling insights and understandings and implementing in real life so that the change is actualized.

Pretty powerful, eh? Yes, indeed. That's the PCMC level. Here you, as a Meta-Coach demonstrates full competency of the four core areas of intimately connecting (relationship), exploring, mirroring, and experiencing (inducing state). Here also you create and hold the frames of the session— yours as a Self-Actualization Coach (via framing and KPI specificity) and your clients (via pattern detection) so that the fierce conversation turns into *actualized performance* (via tasking).

A Professionally Certified Meta-Coach distinguishes him or herself from the ACMC coach by being so much more dynamically structured in the Coaching Conversations. At the PCMC level, you are able to think strategically about where you are with your client and the *kind of conversation* you are having. So what you learned at *Coaching Mastery* about the 7 kinds of conversations (clarity, decision, planning, experiencing or resourcing, change, confrontation, and mediation), you now use as your template for the kind of fierce conversation you facilitate with your client.

But there's more! At the next level, the MCMC level, the coach at the master level works systemically with the client's mind-body system to such an extent that he or she is able to *recognize, elicit, and fully use coachable moments*. This is the key distinction of the Master Certified Meta-Coach level. With this skill you are able to *see* what most coaches are blind to and more, you know what to do at those moments to fully use them for the fierce coaching conversation. This is what enables a master coach to cut through the clutter, to recognize leverage points for transformation in the system, and to work so smartly, succinctly, and powerfully.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #35
August 24, 2011

BEHAVING ETHICALLY AS A META-COACH

I have been asked by several Meta-Coaches to write about the Ethics of Coaching. So here goes. You have in your training manual the *Code of Ethics* that we developed for the Meta-Coaching System and you also have a code of ethics in your Licensing papers that you signed with the MCF. This grew out of the general Professional Ethics that we incorporated into Neuro-Semantics from the very beginning as those of us who launched Neuro-Semantics set forth the vision of taking NLP to a higher level of professional ethics. And we detailed that as many giving credit, acknowledging sources, cooperating with others (sharing), collaborating, operating from abundance, and so on. At the heart of our ethics is the basic idea of respect and honor, the treating of people as you want them to be treated.

As a Professional Coach, there are several other things important for operating as an ethical professional:

1) Communication.

Accurately, factually, and thoroughly *communicating* what Coaching is, what Meta-Coaching is, what you are selling, what you will be delivering, and what your client can expect from you. It is not good behavior to do less than this. Your clients deserve to know what they are buying and what you are able to deliver. That's why we offer you a "Disclosure Sheet" so that you can make explicit the legal dos and don'ts, an accurate statement about your training, what you are trained to do and not to do. And when it comes to communicating clearly, precisely, and thoroughly— expect to say what you say numerous times (even as much as seven times). Then document your messages with materials so that it is in print and available to your clients.

2) Accountability:

As a professional Meta-Coach, make yourself accountable to your client. Invite your client to frequently give you feedback on how you are doing, how the sessions are going, what they are getting or not getting out of the sessions, changes that they would prefer. Also let your client know that you are held accountable by an international organization, the Meta-Coach Foundation and that the MCF will receive complaints if your client feels that there's an ethical issue that needs to be discussed. This is part of the information that you should have on the Disclosure Sheet that each client receives.

3) Confidentiality:

The coaching relationship is one of intimacy, vulnerability, and raw emotions and so to invite your client into that kind of a "crucible" experience, you need to make it safe and you do that by making the sessions confidential. If there's any exception to this, you and

your client needs to detail that out in the contract that you establish with him or her at the beginning. The basic ethical principle is this: *Whatever happens in the session stays in the session*. If you have to report to a supervisor or manager about your session, agree to report only on the external behaviors that both client and manager have agreed to. The coaching conversation itself should not be shared.

So with the notes that you make during (or after) the session: Consider them confidential and not to be shared. And if you want to make an auditory or video record of the session, make sure you get your client to sign a release form; never but never secretly record a session! That is unethical and can get you in big trouble legally.

4) Collaboration:

Your job as a Meta-Coach is to fully collaborate with your client to identify and define with precision the client's outcome. Ethically, you demonstrate your professionalism by working with, cooperating, and collaborating with your client. It is not to impose your agenda, values, goals, etc. It is also your job to collaborate with the Meta-Coach community— to be a part of it, to contribute to it, to enrich the brand that we are creating, etc. A professional in any field will be a part of the field, maintaining license, supporting practice groups, promoting the brand, etc. It is unethical to use materials, models, patterns, etc. and not acknowledge sources, pay royalties, give credit, etc.

Ethics have to do with how we treat each other and therefore the quality of our relationships. It has to do with how we get along with each other, talk to each other, hold confidences, are willing to be held accountable, support each other, tell each other the truth, disagree in an agreeable way, resolve conflicts honorably, etc. And while such ethics certainly affects legal issues in every culture and society, more than that, they speak about *the quality of your person* and therefore your credibility.

Currently the Meta-Coaching System is the *only* Coaching Association anywhere on the planet that has an accountability board (the Meta-Coach Leadership Team of Meta-Coach Trainers). Even the ICF has not set up an accountability board. This means that we have a process by which we hold a licensed Meta-Coach accountable to the Code of Ethics.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #36
August 31, 2011
Managing The Coaching Conversations Series #1

MANAGING THE WHY CONVERSATION

Clients often want to know why. They are interested in information, personal information, that would explain something that they find confusing or mysterious:

“Why am I this way? Why do I act against my own best interests?”

“Why am I not able to get myself to do the very things that I really do want to do and achieve? What’s going on within me?”

“Why was my childhood like it was? I don’t understand why a parent would do the things that my parents did to me.”

“Why can’t I find my passion. I’m interested in lots of things but nothing grabs me like a *passion in life* like some people have.”

Now as you know, in NLP we do not ask why when people are in a negative state. We don’t do that because whatever explanations of the “why,” it will justify the negative state and strengthen it. So when people ask *the why question*, and they are not in a great state, there’s an inherent danger. Not only that, we also avoid “the why of history” question so that it does not put us into the role of Psycho-Archeologist digging around into people’s histories rather than working as a Meta-Coach challenging and enabling clients to unleash potentials for their future. All of this raises the question: How do you manage the why conversation?

Frame it as a Clarification Conversation.

The first thing to do is to *identify* what the person is searching for is *clarity* and, of course, when you do that, you have just identified the *kind* of coaching conversation you are about to engage in (*Coaching Conversations: Meta-Coaching Vol. II, Seven Kinds of Conversations*). So set a frame to classify things:

“So you want to gain a greater sense of clarity about X, is that what you want from this session?”

“So what we are going to focus on is your level and quality of understanding so that you have a clear map about those events?”

Once you frame it in this way, then you can ask the confirmation questions that enable you and your client to determine and measure success:

“So by the end of the session, how will you know that you have clarity, that you understand, that you are able to attain a comprehension of those events?”

And with that, you move into the client’s strategy of understanding. Yes, as with every experience, there’s a structure, and so also with “understanding.” You can find an entire chapter on the strategy of understanding in *Sub-Modalities Going Meta* (2005). And that will empower

your client to have a meta-level understanding of understanding—how they know that they know something and enable them to create more clarity in their mental maps.

Second, frame the conversation for action.

Next, be sure to frame the conversation so that it ends in action. With this framing, you are staying true to the Meta-Coaching approach of coaching from mind-to-body, coaching for results, coaching so that it makes a behavioral difference in the client’s life and is not just a “nice chat” that goes nowhere or makes no difference.

“When you have the clarity of understanding that you want, so what? What difference will that make for you? What will you be able to do that you can’t do now?”

“What do you want to be able to do or to achieve by gaining this information?”

“When you fully understand, what will be your next step?”

Typically even we have more clarity of understanding, we still have to release the past, forgive ourselves, someone else, life or even God, and build a new map for how to live more creatively and fully human from this day forward. So if that’s the case:

“What will you need to let go and release even after you understand?”

“Who will you need to forgive? Yourself? Person X?”

“Are you ready to release the past or forgive now?”

Here also you may want to gently confront especially if your client is always learning and never changing, if that happens to be his or her pattern or style:

“How does not having full knowledge about this stop you from unleashing your highest and best potentials? How does it interfere with you taking the next steps in the goals you have set up for yourself?”

Third, frame for permission to live fully even with inadequate information.

Every study I’ve ever read in the field of creativity says that a core competency for creativity is the ability to live with uncertainty and ambiguity. How about that?! And one of the core competencies for excellence in questioning and supporting is the ability to ask questions from a know-nothing state of mind. There’s something wonderful about not needing to know everything and still exploring from a state of respectful curiosity. How about you? Are you able to take effective action and do what you can even if you are uncertain or confused or living in an ambiguous situation? Let’s find out:

“Go inside and give yourself permission to live comfortably and gracefully with inadequate knowledge, with partial and uncertain information ... How does that settle?”

There is no absolute knowledge and *you will never have it!* You will never *absolutely or perfectly* understand anything. Are you okay with this? Is your client okay with this? Here’s the paradox: When you give up *the need* to know everything, the *demand*, you become much more open and receptive to the knowledge that’s all around you.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #37
Sept. 7, 2011
Managing The Coaching Conversations Series #2

WHAT IS META-COACHING?

The new phenomenon called “coaching” means a lot of different things to different people. In spite of the field moving on twenty years (1991, Leonard Thomas, Coach U.), there still is no singular definition of what coaching is. And there is still a lot of things being done under the banner of “coaching” that is not coaching.

In spite of that, most people in this field do distinguish it from the other helping professions, from therapy, consulting, and mentoring. Most know that it is for healthy people, and not people who are inwardly hurting and experiencing different forms of dysfunction. Most also know that it has something to do with the newer psychologies — Cognitive, Humanistic, Positive, Developmental, Strength-based, Brief, etc. Most also know that it has something to do with challenging, stretching, and getting better results. Most are beginning to connect it to peak experiences, peak performances, meaning and meaningfulness, contribution, creating a legacy, leadership, etc. All of that is good— very good.

So what is coaching? How do you describe it to someone who does not know what it is? And how do you define Meta-Coaching? So imagine someone asks the C-question: “Coaching, what do you mean by coaching?”

- Coaching is stepping up to your next level of development and performance.
- Coaching is being stretched out of your comfort zone to be all you can be.
- Coaching is fiercely focusing on what’s crucially important to you for crystal clarity.
- Coaching is setting great big goals and creating a plan to make them real.
- Coaching is a commitment to yourself to not sell yourself short, but to tap into the potentials within that are clamoring to be released.
- Coaching is making a promise to yourself to be the best you that you can be for your loved ones and colleagues.
- Coaching is the ego-strength to take on a project that will change your world and the worlds of many others.

How do you answer the question? What answer gets the most attention from people, that evokes them to ask you to tell you more? What answer induces people into a state of inspiration and hope regarding what coaching can do in their lives and moves them to ask you to become their coach?

This is your basic framing exercise. It is about how you frame *coaching* itself, how you classify it, and the central activities you put in this category. And since you know, as a Meta-Coach, that whoever sets the frame controls the game— how will you frame it for those you meet?

Now in the *Coaching Mastery* training manual, there is a definition of Meta-Coaching. It is one of the questions used for “The Test” on Day 8 (as you well know!) which people find as one of the hardest questions to answer. Yesterday I wrote an article on “The Science of Coaching” for the ICF in Taiwan which they asked me to do to help promote Meta-Coaching in Taiwan, I updated the definition so that it

is fully current with what Meta-Coaching has become and what we focus on. So here is the updated definition that is now in the manual:

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

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

That's a lot. And as such it speaks about the richness of what you do as a Licensed Meta-Coach. And it is focused— it presents coaching not as a nice chat, a grab-bag of tricks, or merely a way to think positive. It is a way to become more of who you are, it is a way to become authentically human as a person reaches to be his or her very best.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #38
Sept. 14, 2011
Managing The Coaching Conversations Series #3

MANAGING THE DECISION COACHING CONVERSATION

There are seven kinds of coaching conversations. That is now a new chapter in *Coaching Conversations* (2011) and you can also download that chapter and read it from the VIP area on www.meta-coaching.org (if you are a currently licensed Meta-Coach). I devoted Meta-Coach Reflection #35 to the first of the conversations, *the Clarity Conversation* under the title, “Managing the Why Conversation.” I also wrote about the Clarity Conversation Reflection #22, “‘I Don’t Know’ Doesn’t Stop a Meta-Coach.” With this reflection I now turn to the next conversation, the Decision Conversation.

Why do clients come to coaching? Why do your clients hire you to coach them? In part, so that they can become clear about their potentials, to become clear about a choice in life, to understand their life, meaning, values, etc. And once they are clear, the next step is decision. “What shall I do?” “What shall I choose?” People who are psychologically healthy often engage a Professional Coach so that they can think through the process of making a solid choice. So given that, *how* do you, as a Meta-Coach, manager the Decision Conversation? What are the processes and steps that enables you to be effective in facilitating this conversation about choice and decision?

1) Facilitate the client to fully identify the Pros and Cons of the decision before them.

At the primary level of any decisions are the factors that you and I think consider advantages (pros) and disadvantages (cons). So first, get all of these expressed. Keep asking your client, “What advantages are there for you if you made this decision? And what else? And what else?” Do the same with disadvantages. Here you will be able to easily detect if the person has a “driver” in terms of being oriented *toward* or *away from* in terms of meta-programs.

Here also you will begin to notice the person’s level of internal conflict. Calibrate to how much the person self-interrupts. Does the person begin talking about an advantage or disadvantage and before completing the thought, interrupts self and talks about the other side? Calibrate to the intensity of emotion in this inner conflict.

My recommendation is to write out all of the pros and cons. Once you have them written out in two columns, hand the paper to your client and ask, “So what do you think?” “How do these balance out?” And, “What else? What other advantage or disadvantage?” This may also become a task for the next week or two outside the session. Often once we have downloaded our first thoughts and feelings, others begin to emerge from the back of the mind.

2) *Get your client to weigh the balance of the two choices.*

You can do this in several ways. A quick way is to invite them to use their two hands and put one choice in the right hand and the other in the left and ask, “What is the relative weight of these two choices?” “Which carries more weight for you?” And let them show you with their hands as if they were scales. You can do this much more thoroughly by asking them to give each item a “value weight” on a scale from 0 to 10. Then have them add up all of the numbers. You can use the diagram that is in the *Coaching Mastery training manual* for this.

3) *Invite your client to do the same with the counter-choice.*

To *not* make a choice is to make a choice! To decide that you will not make a change or go after an opportunity is a decision. So what are the pros and cons of that? The diagram in the training manual includes this level of choice as well so facilitate the awareness of your client regarding the choice of staying the same.

4) *Invite your client to take a meta-moment to observe belief frames.*

Unless there is a tremendous difference between the choices, invite your client to step back and notice the pros and cons they have created, and ask, “What are the values, standards, and criteria by which you are making your evaluations?” “What is your higher values and objectives by which you have given each item the value that you have?”

5) *Ask more meta-questions for increasing the depth of exploration into your client’s matrix.*

At this point you can also ask about their belief frames regarding many areas:

What do you believe about these advantages? These disadvantages?

What do you believe about these standards and criteria that you have set?

What do you believe about yourself as a decider? Are you decisive? Are you indecisive?

What do you believe about risks, about stepping out and seizing an opportunity?

With these meta-questions, you are facilitating your client in having a deep conversation about the frameworks of their matrix. Here you may discover the true leverage point of change and may be able to facilitate developmental and transformative coaching at a much higher level. Here you may want to use the format of a “Risky Conversation” that’s in the *Inside-Out Wealth* training. For those of you who have experienced it, you know the magic of embracing and entering into what seems “risky” and the effect that has on one’s sense of fear and how it empowers courage.

6) *Invite your client to begin to create resources for making empowering decisions.*

Through these steps, limiting beliefs may emerge, limiting experiences that the person still uses as a reference point in their processing, limiting decisions, limiting states, and so on. If so, punctuate that, hold it front and center, remind them that it’s a frame and that they are never the problem, the frame is the problem. Then inquire using FBI meta-questions:

- What do you need to believe about X so that it does not stop you from making the kind of empowering decisions that will unleash your potentials and enable you to be fully alive and fully human?
- How do you want to build the resources you need to handle this limiting Y (belief,

- decision, memory, etc.)?
- How do you need to adjust your identity so that you can be the person you need to be in order to make the choice you really want to make? Who do you need to be in terms of your identity to make this happen?

Here's to your developing skill as you handle the Decision Conversation with your clients so that when they walk away from the session and when they complete a coaching program with you, they look back and know that you as their Meta-Coach facilitated them making great life enhancing decisions and that through your facilitation, they became more skilled and decisive.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #39
Sept. 21, 2011
Managing The Coaching Conversations Series #4

MANAGING THE DECISION COACHING CONVERSATION

Since last week and after the Meta-Coach Reflection #37, I had so many of you who wrote and asked that I write about managing all seven of the conversations, I decided I'd do precisely that. So this Reflection makes the fourth one on "Managing the 7 Coaching Conversations" and it continues the *Decision Conversation* that I began last week:

#22 and #35: 1: Managing the Clarity Conversation

#37 and #38: 2: Managing the Decision Conversation

There are seven kinds of coaching conversations that we recognize in the Meta-Coaching System and I have an extensive chapter about that in the new edition of *Coaching Conversations*. I also have a chart of the distinctions between them and how to think about these. And this is part of the PCMC competence—for those of you planning to reach your PCMC credentials.

Deciding on a direction in life or a plan or a career choice or some other significant decision is the theme what you facilitate, as a Meta-Coach, in a Decision Conversation. What you are co-creating with your client is both a *great decision* and the *improved ability to make great decisions*.

Can you imagine what it must be like to live life without the ability to trust yourself to make smart, intelligent, thoughtful, practical, and ecological choices? Wouldn't that be a nightmare? Oh, yes, I forgot, we all were like that once. And many people are still like that! For them, making a decision is not easy. And for some people it is far from that, for them decision-making is painful, distressful, hard, and a state that they try to avoid. And that's why they seek out a Coach! They need someone to help facilitate the process.

Why or how could *making a decision* be so hard? Those of you like me, with an "active" meta-program, it's not so hard. With my meta-program, I am often wrong, but never in doubt. How about you? The opposite meta-program *reflective and then inactive* is often in doubt and never wrong! Ah yes, that's the disease of perfectionism—needing the decision to be the right one, the perfect one, the flawless one, the one that is guaranteed to work.

Making a decision can be hard because it exposes a person to risk, to the possibility of failing at something. And that exposes one to criticism, rejection, shame, embarrassment, and a whole host of states/ experiences that few people want and many more "can't stand." *Making a*

decision can be hard because all of us are culturalized (trained) to avoid responsibility when things go wrong and to blame. But if we *make a decision* and commit ourselves to something, then if something goes wrong, who can we blame?

So in facilitating a Decision Conversation, these are some of the back-of-the-mind issues that you will probably want to flush out as you go through the conversation or bring it to an end.

Are you fully ready to make a commitment to this decision and go for it?

If you hit bumps along the road and have a set-back or two, are you still committed?

How easily could you be stopped? Are you un-stop-able?

The Decision Conversation is complete when your client is ready to make the commitment. Michelle Duval had (maybe still does have) a funny-strange-weird way of testing for commitment when she took on a client. She used to say,

“Are you willing to do anything it takes to reach your goal? If it required that you go outside and lie down in the middle of the busy highway in front of this building and kick your legs in the air, would you do that?”

If your client isn't ready to make a commitment, then all the work you could invest in co-creating something with that person could go down the drain in an instance if later they go, “You know, I don't think I really want to do this.” Now sometimes it happens that way. The way to avoid that is through the Clarity Conversation that taps into the person's *toward* and *away from* values and then through the Decision Conversation. Clarity first, then decision. If the decision doesn't come, go back to Clarity!

So what's the KPI for a Decision Conversation? “How will you know that you have made or are closer to making a decision by the end of this session?”

“I will have detailed out 5 to 10 pros and cons for each side of the advantages and disadvantages and have them written out.”

“I will be able to gauge the emotional *value* of each side and have a clarity about the price I'll pay if I choose one over the other.”

“I will be able to raise my right hand and say, ‘From this day forward I will exercise 3 to 5 times a week.’”

“I will test John and tell him of my decision.”

Then test it:

“Can you do that now?” [If so, then what do you *really* want?]

“Is there anything that stops you from doing that now?”

“How do you know that you cannot do it now?” [Listen and calibrate very carefully, the person will be running some test inside that lets them know, “not now. Not yet.” Find out about that test.]

“To what degree can you do that now? Gauge that. How much more will you realistically be able to do that at the end of the session?”

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #40
Sept. 28, 2011
Managing The Coaching Conversations Series #5

MANAGING THE PLANNING COACHING CONVERSATION

Clients who are *clear* on what they want (the Clarity Conversation) and have made the *decision* and are now *committed* to what they want (the Decision Conversation) now need a plan. Nothing succeeds without a plan. If even the plan is the most minimalist plan, just a seed of an idea in one's head, it is still a plan. That's what a decision decides on and makes a commitment to— "I am going to ... do, experience, design, build, create, eliminate, etc. X!" So once your client is clear and committed, your job is probably not over. Now they probably need you to facilitate a Planning Conversation with them so that they can build a workable, realistic, doable, practical, ecological, and resourceful plan.

So check it out, ask the testing questions:

"Do you have a plan? How much of a plan do you now have? How much of a plan do you need? Is the plan realistic, ecological, actionable, a powerful strategy, etc.?"

Then, depending on what you receive from your client, now ask a series of primary "down" questions for precision and specificity:

"Show me your plan— is it written out as a business plan, a decision tree, a mind-map, what does the plan look like? When does your plan start? What is the launch date? How do you know to launch it then? What needs to happen for that beginning? Who's involved with you? Where do you begin the plan? Do you have the required factors to begin it? (Money for capital, personnel for staff, equipment for carrying out the plan, etc.)"

People plan in many different ways. Is your client a procedural planner and need a step-by-step sequence of actions? Is your client an optional planner, wanting two or three options at every step? Is your client a detailed planner and wants to flesh out a full script? Knowing your client's thinking, emoting, and choosing style of meta-programs enables you to know the best way to facilitate the creating of a plan.

Throughout the process you will want to ask meta-questions about the planning process and specific aspects of planning:

What do you believe about planning? Are there any limiting beliefs that is sabotaging you from effective and robust planning? What experiences have you had regarding planning and what conclusions, interpretations, and understandings did you build from those experiences? What are the best planning schemes for achieving success in the

given area that you already know?

From all of this you can see that planning is not all external and superficial. There are all kinds of frames in the background of your client's mind influencing him or her and the choices that have been made or are being made. Sometimes the person has built an identity that interferes. "I'm just not the kind of person who plans. Writing things out goes against my nature." Now you are in position for delivering some great FBI questions:

"So who do you need to be in order to become the kind of person who plans and who doesn't let the habitual nature of your identity frames control you, and how would you like to step into that new sense of self and map out your future in a brilliant way that guarantees that you will actualize it in your life?"

If your client resists planning, and presents self as "I'm just a spontaneous kind of person who just likes to jump into things and see what happens," acknowledge it so that he or she feels heard, and validate that, and then ask lots of questions:

"So your style is to be spontaneous, just jump in and so what happens. That sounds like a strategy that works for you in lots of areas. [Yes it does.] Okay, excellent. And where does it not work? Where have you jumped in and then wished you had thought it through or had a Plan B or had not jumped it at all? Where could you become an even more powerful and effective decision maker and planner for your future?"

By exploring around the edges of a person's mental-emotional maps you, as a Meta-Coach, begin opening up new areas and facilitate a more thoughtful, mindful way of moving through the world. And that's one of the great benefits of coaching.

What about the KPI? Ah, getting a KPI for a Planning Conversation is one of the easiest ones to get. Ask, "How will you know that you have a plan or the beginning of a plan at the end of the session?" The client will generally say that they will have a set of notes, a mind-map, a decision tree, etc. It is usually an external manifestation of a plan. A plan, however, could be an experience. The client may want to run through, with you, a role play to do something and find out how well they can pull that off and then identify a gesture, or phrase, etc. to practice during the week. And that's the person's plan.

When you facilitate the Planning Conversation and come to the end, you can now ask meta-questions about the final product:

"So what criteria does this plan meet that's critical for you?"

As you look at this plan, do you know your first step, your second? Do you have a good sense of the flow of activities that will begin to make your dream real?

Is this doable? Do you have a strong enough belief in this outcome and in yourself so that this plan will come to pass? Any questions or doubts? Are you un-stop-able?"

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #41
Oct. 5, 2011
Managing The Coaching Conversations Series #6

MANAGING THE RESOURCE/ EXPERIENCE COACHING CONVERSATION

From Clarity, Decision, and Planning come the next of the seven kinds of coaching conversations, *the Experience Conversation* in which you facilitate your client to have an experience that builds up resources within them to be able to make their outcome a reality. Now that you have your contract and the client has a plan for making their desired outcome real, the coaching question is, “Do you have all the resources that you need in order to complete it?”

What are these resources? As a Meta-Coach part of the definition of what you do is to *mobilize internal and external resources* and apply them to the client’s agenda. So some resources are external: People, capital (money), tools, technology, time, skills, etc. And some, probably the majority, are internal resources: beliefs, understandings, skills, identity, meanings, etc.

Another reason clients come and hire a professional coach is that they want to *experience* something in the coaching conversation that will release them from any and every interference and unleash them to the possibilities that are clamoring inside. So it is your job to *give them an experience*. But what experience? It could be an experience of clarity, decision, commitment, or planning. Or it could be a role-play, a rehearsal, a pattern from NLP or Neuro-Semantics, or a process for being able to know or feel something.

It is especially in the Experience Conversation that you, as a Meta-Coach, need to be able to induce state, to facilitate an experience so that your conversation is not just talk *about* something but an experience of something. Again, start by calibrating your client’s basic style. Some people *associate* into experiences so quickly that you will be chasing after them and never have a chance to actually *induce* state. And this may be their problem. They are not only always feeling, but feeling so quickly and intensely, and what they need is the experience of being able to observe their state, reflect upon it, and have a choice about it.

Those with the opposite meta-program can reflect, observe, think about a wonderful state, but they hold themselves back and find it most challenging to enter into a state, be with it, and feel it fully in their bodies. That will be the experience and the skill that they will need to develop and have facilitated.

And your skills as a Meta-Coach in these instances will be working with state— identify, accessing, holding, anchoring, interrupting, designing, meta-stating, gestalting, etc. As you manage this conversation, you’ll want to use both precision and meta-questions so that you can

ground the state with the first and explore it for its frames with the second.

Precision questions of where, when, which, with whom, and how will ground the state of the experience so that you can begin to work with it. When you do this, anchor in all systems. Set a visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and linguistic anchor so the experiential state that you're working with can be accessed and held. These questions can also enable you to interrupt and shift the states of your client and facilitate your client to learn how to do for oneself.

The meta-questions enables both of you to begin to explore the matrix of frames that create the experience. It is here that you and them will discover *the structure* of their current experience and the structure of the experience they want to create. Here you will ask what it means to them? What they believe? Understand? Value? Etc.

Where do you get materials for patterns that will give your clients experiences?

- Grab your NLP Practitioner Training Manual or Coaching Essentials. There's lots of patterns in those.
- Grab your APG or Coaching Genius manual, there are 14 patterns there.
- Grab your NLP Master Prac. Manual.
- Or grab the two books that I have written for the Experience Conversation, *Sourcebook of Magic, Volumes I and II*. The first is a book by Crown House Publ. that has 77 basic NLP and a few Meta-State patterns. The second is a spiral notebook that has 143 Meta-State patterns.
- If you have experienced the Self-Actualization trainings — there are 4 training manuals with patterns for actualizing: Unleashing Vitality, Unleashing Potentials, Unleashing Creativity and Innovation, and Unleashing Leadership.

So there's lots of resources for giving you experiential processes or patterns for working with your clients. If you are new, get the pattern out and read it. Be precise, exact, and don't cheat your client by pretending to know 300 patterns! As you use a pattern over and over, eventually you will know it by heart, after that you will be able to make it conversational.

What is the KPI of the Experience Conversation? Generally, it will be to have experienced X (whatever X is). And how will the person know that he or she has had that experience? They will have a memory recall that they can play on the theater of their mind and they will have some result, some outcome from the pattern.

“Can you do that now?” No, no memory of having done it.

“Do you have that outcome now?” No.

Great! That what you are about to experience in the next hour of coaching will be new and will facilitate you experiencing the very resource you need, or at least one of the key resources, that will unleash you for being your very best version of yourself!

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #42
Oct. 12, 2011
Managing The Coaching Conversations Series #7

MANAGING THE CHANGE/ TRANSFORMATION COACHING CONVERSATION

If there is anything that lies at the very heart of coaching, it is the Change Conversation. And this is the fifth of the seven kinds of coaching conversations that we have identified and detailed in Meta-Coaching. Here we are talking about generative change, not remedial change. Remedial refers to creating a remedy, that is fixing something that is broken or needing a remedy. That's the kind of change that fits for therapeutic change when people suffer from various traumatic experiences and don't feel that they have the resources to handle it.

Coaching change is generative— generating new responses, new identities, new resources, etc. It is creating something that adds and supplements a current strength or that opens up a whole new way of life. This kind of change may be at the level of performance— taking a skill to ever-increasing levels of expertise and eventually to mastery so that the person can perform at the peak of their potentials and skills. It may be at the level of development— evolving and growing and becoming more and more of who a person can become. It may be about maturity, moving to another level of development along the lifespan. Or it may be at the level of transformation— transforming values, identity, meanings, direction, and even one's paradigm in life.

So as a Meta-Coach, *you'll be asking change questions* to formulate the outcome of the change that the client is seeking:

- What needs to be changed? In what area or dimension of life?
- Changed from what and to what?
- What level of change: performance, developmental, transformational?

You will also want to ask lots of meta-questions so that you can map out the semantic landscape of the person's life and the areas of the change:

- Why make this change? What will you get from making this change?
- What's your highest intention?
- How ready are you to make the change? Have you made the decision for it yet?
- Who else will be affected when you make this change?

There are two models for facilitating change in Meta-Coaching: the Axes of Change which you learned on Day 5 in *Coaching Mastery* and the *Crucible of Change* which you may have learned in *Unleashing Potentials* or via the book by that title. What's the difference between these two models? How do you make up your mind about which to use?

The Axes of Change is a systemic and systematic model for walking a client through the four key processes that facilitate and create change: motivation, decision, creation, and integration. When you do this, you make the process explicit as you ask questions about each of these change factors. That makes this Change Model a *conscious model*. And because it does, it enables the client's conscious mind to be a part of the process, and indirectly enables the client to learn how to manage his or her own motivation axis, decision axis, creation axis, and integration axis.

Using the Axes of Change, you are also able to diagnose where the client is in relationship to being able to actually create the change that they say that they want. The questions and distinctions in each of the axes, based on meta-program distinctions, enables you to coach to their meta-programs, expand them, and create a more robust capacity for change.

The Crucible of Change is a more intuitive process that relies more on the parts of the mind that are outside-of-consciousness. Here you use three *holding* factors that facilitate the safety of change: unconditional valuing of self, witnessing and pure observation, and acceptance. Also using the metaphor of a place where you are at your best taps into a hypnotic process making the conversation one of a guided tour to the client's inner sanctuary of safety. Then you bring forth the three *transformational* factors that turns up the heat and light for the client: truth (honesty, authenticity), appreciation (acknowledgment of values), and responsibility (ownership of one's responses and powers). And because this is a more unconscious process, you facilitate it by iterating and inviting the person to spin around in the middle of the crucible being worked on by truth, appreciation, and responsibility. Eventually, love, joy, and ecstasy emerges.

Change is a systemic process. In the mind-body-emotion system, when you change one thing, you can count on the fact that many other things will be affected. In fact, your very presence, changes things. And your questions and everything you do in the coaching facilitation will trigger change. And because the client's MBE system is a system within a family system, a business system, a cultural system, a linguistic system, a spiritual system, a financial system, etc., as a change agent you will want to make sure that the changes that occur are ecological— healthy and congruent within all of these systems.

Now if the change created in the coaching office is to last you will want to link it to activities and contexts outside where they are needed. This is where tasking helps, where future pacing, where provoking the client to fight for the change, etc.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #43
Oct. 19, 2011
Managing The Coaching Conversations Series #8

MANAGING THE CONFRONTATION COACHING CONVERSATION

Confrontation— people pay to be confronted in coaching? You bet! Especially the higher ups. And especially leaders, CEOs, politicians, and people who suffer from the presence of too many “Yes People” catering to their every whim and fearful of delivering bad news. For those of you in Executive Coaching, the Confrontation Conversation is not only a critical one, but a regular one.

Yet CEOs are not the only people who need to be confronted. We all do. And we all also tend to live in contexts where people are often too nice and too fearful of creating conflict, and so truth is often not told. Or if it is, it is only when someone gets so frustrated or angry that when they tell the truth, it is discounted as just their problem, their angry words.

In the Confrontation Conversation you will primarily confront two things— incongruencies and blind spots. Both of these are typically unconscious (outside-of-conscious awareness) of the person and so beyond the ken of what they know about themselves. So the confrontation is that of *giving feedback about how you and others experience that person* like a mirror gives feedback. In this the Confrontation Conversation is not “confrontative” in that we are getting in someone’s face and screaming at them or calling them names or being aggressive or rude. That’s not confrontation. That’s being out-of-control and obnoxious.

What is confrontation is being willing to be real with a person, truthful, ruthlessly honest and to do so in a way that is in service of the person’s development, actualization, and highest values. It is not to straighten them out, give them a piece of your mind, or unload your frustrations over irritations. If that’s your purpose or state, you are not ready to confront. The confrontation has to come from care, from compassion, from really wanting the best of your client, and a willingness to be wrong, to back down, to let the person dislike us, to be rejected or misunderstood, etc.

Blind spots are those areas in a client’s life of which they are blind, but others see. And we all have them! We are mostly blind at our strengths— at the very point of our best skills we are most blind to the opposites. This is especially true of our driver meta-programs. Global processors cannot the details even though they think they can. The details they see are usually very general and global. Yet what we are mostly blind to are our frames. We live inside them and so are often totally unconscious of them – even when they are pointed out to us. And this is especially true the higher we go up the levels to the frames-by-implication.

Incongruencies are those areas in a client's life that they may be aware of, as when they feel an internal conflict. Or areas they may not be aware of as when they do one thing and later do another and fail to recognize the conflict. In the first case the incongruency is simultaneous and so is felt; in the second case the incongruency is sequential— at different times, in different ways, with different people and so unknown and not felt.

Confrontation is the art of bringing up something that could be unpleasant or even threatening in as pleasant and supportive way as possible to enable a person to become aware of what he or she has been unaware of.

“Do you realize that the three times you have said you are ready to make this change you have been shaking your head side to side?”

“We identified your primary meta-program several sessions ago as that of mis-matching and I'm curious as to whether you are aware of how you are using it now in this conversation?”

“What you have just said and the tone of voice that you used, do you recall? If that's how you are speaking to your reports, then my sense of it is that it comes across as disrespectful bordering on contempt. Do you realize that? Has anyone every pointed this out to you before?”

Where can you learn more about the art of effective confrontation as a coach? You can check out the articles that I wrote last year on the Art of Confrontation on this egroup. These are now available in the VIP area of the Meta-Coach Website if you are a currently licensed Meta-Coach. There is also the Training Manual on *Defusing Hotheads and Other Cranky People*.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #44
Oct. 26, 2011

COPING WHEN YOU GET EMOTIONALLY CAUGHT UP WITH YOUR CLIENT

One of our Meta-Coaches recently wrote to talk about an experience when she was coaching a teenage who wanted to make a decision. She was in some internal conflict because his decision was contrary with her mother's. What complicated things for the coach was that she is "close to both of them" and knew both of them very well as well a lot of the background issues on both sides. As a result, she described her own conflicted emotions which she said that she was not managing her own feelings very well. The question she then posed to me was based on **the Responsibility to/for distinction**. She wrote,

"I remembered what you presented in *Coaching Mastery* that 'You are not responsible *for* your client.' So if *not* being 'responsible' for the emotions and choices and life of our clients is what allows a professional coach to be effective with his or her clients, then Would you kindly share how to manage a state when a coach has become emotionally involved with a client?"

Ah yes, this kind of a scenario happens. And not surprisingly. Coaching is a very intimate experience. As a coach, *you* put your heart and soul into having the fierce conversation that your client needs to have. As a coach you invite your client to come out from behind him or herself and be real, to enter into the realm of authenticity, to relate to at least one other human being (you) in a real way without pretense, defense, and ego-protecting devices. You also spend time listening to your client like no one has ever listened before. You then journey with that person until he or she achieves the dream or dreams that the person may have never thought possible to accomplish. So no wonder there can be an emotional bonding and connection—and a very deep one at that!

There is also the other side, when your client does become real and authentic with you and shares fears, painful choices, ethical struggles, ending of relationships, and so on. And again, it is easy to get your own heart involved, to care and want the very best for them and to suffer along with them with there are disappointments, when the person's dreams are not achieved. So what's a professional coach to do?

1) Know the dangers of intimacy and prepare yourself.

As you recognize that you will put your heart into things and care, prepare yourself to be a real live feeling human being. Feel and know also the boundaries of those feelings. You can only do so much. So do what you can. And realize that sometimes that is nothing that you can do, nothing more than adopt an empathetic stance with your client and just hold the space for their

emotions.

“My job is to support this person, offer the best I can, invite them to consider various perspectives, empower, facilitate, and unleash potentials. They have a full right to all of their emotions and choices.”

2) Set your boundaries.

The responsibility To/For distinction enables you to know *what specifically* you can, and is ethically proper, to give and not give. Believe in your client and in your client’s ability to handle their life and their emotions. Refuse to treat them as fragile and weak and needing you to rescue them from themselves! Give them permission to make their choices and live their lives and suffer the consequences that arise. That is the human condition. Your job—to the extent that they want you to—is to facilitate them finding the resources to deal with it.

3) Confront with grace and firmness.

So what if they are obviously going in the wrong direction or at least you suspect that they are creating some conditions that are going to really mess things up for them? Warn them. Take off your coach’s hat, offer your impression, put your coach’s hat back on and ask them what they want from the coaching? Tell them that it is your opinion, own it as your own, make a suggestion if you want to, and then *put the full responsibility of them making the choices they do where it belongs—on that person’s shoulders.*

“It is your life, I cannot make your decisions, from the limited information and understanding I have, I’d recommend X, but that’s just my fallible opinion. Now what shall we make this coaching session about?”

Confronting is part of coaching and so when you do, do so with grace and firmness and leave it with the person. It is that person’s responsibility to do with that information what he or she will.

4) Do a coaching session with your coach.

You have a coach, right? I hope you do. If not, get a coach! Get a buddy Meta-Coach from one of the Meta-Coaches! There are hundreds who would be willing to do that with you. Also there is supervision in Meta-Coaching that Cheryl Lucas, our MCF president, is leading out to create. Contract with someone who has been a Team Leader at *Coaching Mastery* or someone now qualified as a Meta-Coach Supervisor. You’re a professional, are you not?

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #45
Nov. 3, 2011

“TOO MANY RULES!”

And Too Little Understanding of Modeling Excellence

Here is what I heard yesterday and the day before: “There are too many rules in Meta-Coaching, it’s just too hard with so many rules.” Of course, because I was training Meta-Coaching, I made sure that I then practiced the very coaching (and its “rules”) as I then validated the person and explored the question. “Okay, so you feel there’s too many rules. Help me understand... What rules are you talking about?”

“Well, just all the rules.”

“Okay, good. So I understand that you feel that there’s a lot of rules, yet I don’t quite know what you are calling a ‘rule.’ What qualifies as a ‘rule’ for you? Can you tell me that?”

“Well, the rules about sitting like the client sits. And then the rule about repeating specific words ...”

And so it went, the Meta-Coach –in-training that I was talking with then started describing the sub-skills of the core coaching competencies as the “rules” that he felt were imposing constraints on him. With further exploration about his *beliefs* about those rules, I found out that he really did not like “structure” and that such “structure” meant to him “being controlled,” “being told what’s good and bad,” and that if that was the case, then the person or system doing that was being a dictator.

“So if I tell you about how to use a piece of machinery, informing you about *how it works* and *how you can most effectively use it* is being a dictator to you? I’m ‘controlling’ you, I’m taking away your freedom?”

Well, he hated to admit that, but he eeked out a mild “yes” and then in a moment of self-reflection said that in saying so, he felt silly and that it didn’t make as much sense saying it out-loud as it made when he just thought it in his head. So I continued.

“So if I tell you that one of the rules for driving is to drive on the road and not to drive off the road onto the sidewalk or in someone’s yard, that I was taking away his freedom, controlling him, and being a dictator? If I said, ‘Cars work best, will last longer, and you’ll get to your destination quicker with less damage to your car if you do that,’ then you have to feel that I’m imposing lots of rules on you?”

Then, knowing that he played some instruments of music, I shifted to use that as a metaphor.

“To play the violin effectively, there’s some facts and rules about the strings and the bow and how to use them and what strings to stroke the bow to produce certain sounds, so if you are told them, do you feel controlled? Do you feel that now you have no freedom? Or is it in the very process of learning the rules and using them that gives you the fullest

freedom to make music?”

That got him and as it did provided a reframe about “rules” and “control.” And that’s useful because of a basic fact that we all face, namely, that freedom emerges as an experience from within the rules or constraints or processes. We have more *freedom to drive* when we stay on the road than driving on and off of it. We have more *freedom to make music* when we understand the instrument, how it works, the music sheet and its symbols, etc.

Knowing and living with the constraints of a system frees us to operate within that system.

Later I explained to the whole group that Meta-Coaching arose as I modeled four expert coaches, two Executive Coaches (Dan Bagley, NLP Trainer, Florida; Graham Richardson, NS Trainer, Sydney), one Personal Coach (Michelle Duval) and one Group Coach (Cheryl Gilroy). I modeled from them the core competencies of a professional coach which you know as the Seven Core Competencies of Meta-Coaching. What I found in interviewing and watching and modeling from them was *the innate processes* that allow deep connection, intimate exploration, confrontative mirroring, and experiential feeling to occur.

It is these *inherent structures of the excellence* that some people mistakenly dismiss as “rules” that constrain their behavior. Yet the truth is that these structural processes of coaching describe and define coaching at its best. And if they constrain, they constrain a person *from* veering off the road and making noise instead of music.

Nor has the process finished. Since 2002 I have modeled 27 other experts in the field of coaching and so the models of Meta-Coaching continue to grow, evolve, and develop. And while these experts mostly come from a NLP background, some are from many other Schools of Coaching. This is the powerful facet of modeling excellence, identifying the best and *the best of the best* as processes and then developing processes for transferring those skills.

So what keeps Meta-Coaching from becoming a hodge-podge of bits and pieces from many schools, an eclectic heap of activities? The theoretical framework of Self-Actualization Psychology as well as Cognitive-Behavioral Psychology, that’s what! The premises that we operate as a system and enables us to be systematic in how we think about the process of coaching a person to unleash his or her potentials and move to the next level of development.

The bottom line is that the so-called “rules” within the sub-skills of the *skills of coaching excellence* offers precise step-by-step instructions how to learn and incorporate the intuitive skills of expert coaches. If you want that, use the rules to guide your thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting. If you want to try to reinvent the wheel, the computer, your air conditioner system, etc., then spend lots and lots of time doing that! Otherwise, be wise enough to step onto the shoulder of giants ... the perspective is expansive up there. And it may be your first step to meta-land!

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #46
Nov. 10, 2011

RULES AS FRAMES

From the responses that came in from last week's post to the Coaches Egroup, it seems that among us, the word "rule" or "rules" still operates as a semantically loaded word that can evoke a strong reaction in some people! Yet, what is a "rule?"

1) Some *rules* are the internal structure of a process. Consequently, when we model, the modeling identifies the *rules* which make up the inner processes of that experience. For example, the *rules* for playing a violin or driving a car or effective coaching are the *critical success factors for being able to perform those actions*. Call them rules, call them factors, call them mechanisms, call them frames— when you make them explicit, then if you want to model that excellence, you have to follow those rules.

Ah yes, "have to follow" those internal processes, constraints, or rules! This is great! Now we know what we "must" do in order to step up to excellence. But of course, some people hear these modal operators (have to, must) and have semantic reactions.

"Why do I have to do it that way?"

And the answer is—because that's how that experience works when you do it most effectively and elegantly, that's why! No, you do not *have to do it that way*. You can do it anyway you want. Yet if you do, you won't be showing, manifesting, or expressing expertise. The "have to" or the "must" is a description of a constraint or a requirement, a prerequisite.

I observed a coaching session this past week. A young lady had a dichotomy inside herself. "I just want to follow my heart" she said, "and not the rules." For her, following a procedure that had been identified as the structure of an excellence *meant* not following her heart. This created a false Either-Or dichotomous choice within her. She felt that she had only one of two choices, she was on the edge of an either-or decision. The question that a coach could have asked and which I eventually suggested in the consultant role:

"Is it possible to follow the rules of that structure *and* at the same time follow your heart?" Or, "Could you follow the rules in order to follow the ultimate and true desires of your heart?"

It took a long time to get there, first the coach had to ask what following her heart meant, and then what were the values in her heart that she wanted to follow, and eventually it became clear— where she wanted to go was precisely where following the rules would take her!

2) Other *rules* refer to cultural procedures. These are the rules that we invent that help us get along with each other. They are the rules for greeting, saying goodbye, running a meeting, letting

people know what's expected, boundaries for how to interact, and so on. These social rules give us a way to smoothly achieve important ends with each other. For example, the rules for how to acknowledge a mistake and apologize, how to give instructions without sounding bossy, how to tease and play without being inappropriate. Many of these rules are the rules of polite company, others are ethical rules, moral rules, etc.

These also are frames. They indicate beliefs or preferences that we have mutually agreed upon and most of these are adaptable and can be adjusted to reflect the understanding and values of a group. Following them generally means knowing when and where and with whom to be appropriate within a certain context. And we generally do so in order to get along, show a graciousness in understanding how a social context works. These frames create the culture of a family, business, or group.

If lots of people find the rules are too confining, they can be reinvented. That's where John Searle's formula for constructing social reality comes in (X counts as Y in C) that is foundational in Meta-States (see *Meta-States*, The APG training manual, or the spiral manual, Cultural Modeling).

3) Another set of *rules* are what we call *policies*. In every organization, there are those who set the policies about how the company or association works. The policies may be about pricing, bonuses, competition, hiring, firing, and scores and scores of other things. Such rules are often formulated and created in committee then passed on to the executive board to approve or amend them before approving. As such they are rules that arise as an executive decision from a singular person (perhaps the CEO) or from a leadership team.

In Neuro-Semantics, using this as a metaphor, we often speak about making an executive decision about a life-choice or pathway. "Will your executive mind, the part of your mind that makes decisions, now take responsibility to be in charge of this?" Or, "to establish this as your pathway?"

Rules are just frames— frames about structure, decision, or ways of acting with each other. And as frames they involve beliefs, values, understandings, identities and all of the other logical or meta-levels of the mind.

Meta-Coaching Module III — *Coaching Mastery Boot Camp* — in 2012

May: Hong Kong
May & June: Mexico City (Parts I and II)
August: Belgium; First European
September: Brazil
October: New Zealand
Oct. & Nov.: China (Parts I and II)
November: South Africa

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #47
Nov. 16, 2011

NEW BENCHMARKING SYSTEM FOR META-COACHES

While in Hong Kong for this year's NSTT, I came up with a new and different way to do the benchmarking of the Presentation and Training skills. Why did I do that? Well, I was highly motivated due to the exceptional difficulty of benchmarking at NSTT. Let me explain.

In Meta-Coaching, the first days a Coach-in-Training coaches for 22 minutes and is benchmarked on 2 skills then 4 then 7. And those who have been on the Assist Team know all too well what a demanding task it is to do that. It is not uncommon to have half of the team complaining of severe bouts of brain-strain the first few days! Now imagine benchmarking 7 skills the first day of NSTT for a 5 minute presentation! That's right for a 5-minute presentation and benchmarking 7 skills!

That's *why* I was working on another method for a faster recording process for benchmarking the presentation skills. What I came up with was a *continuum line* marked out from 0 to 3.5 with some of the skills summarized above the line and *all of the sub-skills for each competency* listed below the line. From feedback from our team of benchmarkers — Colin Cox, Lena Gray, Mandy Chai, Wilkie Choi, Michael Chan, Paul Chan, Teresa Chan, Connie Tong, and Eric Lueng —using the *Line Benchmarks* made it a lot easier.

So returning home I put the 7 core competencies of the ACMC level of Meta-Coaching in the same format. Then it dawned on me that whether we use this for the benchmarking sessions or not, this also would be a great way to train awareness and understanding of the benchmarking process and so would be an excellent tool to use at MCF Chapter meetings and for the pre-training days of *Coaching Mastery* for the Assist Team.

One of the benefits of the *Line Benchmarks* is that as you make marks for the visual and verbal behaviors of the Coach that you are benchmarking, you (and later that coach) begin to see where the coach is basically operating. The key to the line benchmarks is that at **the level 3.0 mark**, it is *the amount of coaching behaviors* that you see and hear that indicate where the Coach is operating. For the 3.0 mark, we want to see *7 to 10 examples* of each of the sub-skills. Less than that, if only 3 or 4 examples of each, the Coach is probably operating somewhere near the **2.5 mark**. And fewer yet, and the Coach is not yet at the level of "getting by" in demonstrating the essential skills.

Here is an example. Using the key coaching skill of listening, here is the Line Continuum.

LISTENING

Interrupting	Misses Points		Signals for talking	Silence	
Talking over	Mind-reading	Insufficient	% Talk Clarity Q.	Invites self-listening	
Telling	Distracted	Paraphrasing	Repeats words – Mirrors	Awareness Q.	
0	1	2	2.5	3	3.5

- 1) Looks at the client, makes eye contact
- 2) Gives more time to client for speaking (60/40 or 70/30)
- 3) Signals client to talk via sounds, nods, words
- 4) Repeats the words precisely
- 5) Tracks words and gestures over time.
- 6) Checks for clarity, asks about the meaning of words.
- 7) Invites the client to attend to and listen to self, invites self-listening
- 8) Feeds back the client’s words and gestures to provide a mirror so client can “see” him or herself.
- 9) Asks about what’s not been said
- 10) Silent after person finishes speaking to give a moment for reflecting.

Viewing the benchmarks in this way clearly identifies the activities that are *not-the-skill* at level **0**, the skills that show incompetence at level **1**, and the skills that are still below the level of competency at level **2**.

Attached is a PDF File of this new way to benchmark and record the benchmarking scores — I invite you to use it —

- At MCF Chapter meetings when you have Coaching Sessions
- For benchmarking yourself by video-taping one of your own sessions

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #48
Nov. 23, 2011
Managing The Coaching Conversations Series #9

MANAGING THE MEDIATION CONVERSATION

The last of the 7 kinds of Coaching Conversations is the *Mediation Conversation*. This one differs from all of the other ones in that it involves coaching two or more persons rather than a single client. Here your role as a Meta-Coach is to facilitate a conversation where two or more persons can talk through, think through, and work through the differences over which they are in conflict. This may involve a board in a corporation or a small business, it may involve a couple, friends, people within a department, members of a work team, etc. In fact, given that whenever people gather, there will be differences, and with differences come conflicts. We conflict over the differences.

Now if you have persons in your coaching room (or wherever the encounter occurs) who are calm, collected, mature, with high levels of emotional intelligence, you can probably simply use your basic coaching skills of supporting and listening, repeating back and clarifying, testing understanding, asking for individual and collective outcomes, inducing state, receiving and giving feedback. If so, you are in *The Discussion Stage* of conflict management and this is where the work is that of facilitating understanding and clarity.

But more typically, as a Coach, you will not be able to start here. No. That would make the coaching too easy and lacking all the energy that actually makes you earn your wage! More typical is that when the people come together, they are in *The Emotional Stage* of conflict management. In this stage, they feel threatened, upset, hurt, embarrassed, shocked, dismayed, depressed, and dozens of other strong emotions.

So here, as a Coach, your task is that of the first task (creating a trusting relationship), although now it is not just with one person, it is with two or more. Now your skills of listening and supporting are going to really be put to the test! Can you support people when they are upset? When they feel misunderstood? When they feel threatened, violated, hurt, and so on? Can you support them in those states? Can you make it safe for all of them in your office (or in your space) so that they feel your rapport, your connection, your belief in them, your respect, and your care? Did I say this is challenging? If I did, I understated it by a thousand miles.

The first stage of conflict manage is the emotional stage and the task here is simple to identify what people feel, let them register it, let them ventilate their emotions, invite them to own and disclose them as theirs, and so your skills of Listening–Supporting means that as you listen, clarify with them, seek to help them express themselves clearly, and defuse their negative emotions— fear, anger, sadness, embarrassment, etc. It’s a big job! In fact, most people, *if they*

can get through the emotional stage, can pretty much move on to the discussion stage and work things out.

The Discussion Stage is second and here, as Coach, your job is mostly to slow things down, let each person describe the situation from one's own perspective and to hear the other's description. The key are the words *describe* and *description*. This is what most people cannot do. They can evaluate, they can judge, they can tell their story, they can call names, they can mind-read, they can do all of the ugly and hurtful things that we humans are so masterful at. But to empirically describe in sensory-based data— that's what's hard.

And that's your task! Coaching here means listening, feeding-back, mirroring, challenging, testing, and confronting. It is enabling and empowering each person to *describe the sensory-based facts without their evaluations*. This requires patience, persistence, the ability to hold the frame of the session, the ability to interrupt effectively, the ability to call time-outs, hold people accountable, and to be tough. A coach who does not hold firm boundaries here is likely to see the whole thing fall apart, people letting their emotions get the best of them, getting out of control by yelling, judging, name-calling, etc.

I set a rule for firmness by framing it in this way:

“You guys can leave here and have a fight, call names, insult each other, threaten, give ultimatums. You can do that anytime, anywhere. So you don't need to come here, pay me, and practice making each other feel bad. So, we are not going to do that here. And to guarantee that, I need your commitment and your permission. I need your permission to interrupt you, hold you accountable, check your emotional state, call time-outs, etc. Will you give that to me?”

Once you have an agreement, then you may want to set numerous other “fair fighting rules”—rules that help people have their say, feel heard, and come to understand not only the other's positions and wants, but their perspectives, the reasoning behind their conclusions, etc. Here the NLP Communication Model premises are fantastic— positive intentions behind actions, the meaning of the communication is the response you get, seek first to understand then to be understood, etc.

The final stage of conflict resolution is *The Negotiation and Resolution Stage*. Once things are on the table and people have shared their perspectives, understandings, beliefs, wants, emotions, etc., then we can begin to do problem-solving and ask for possible solutions. The danger is people presenting “positions” as hard and fast decisions. The frames for this stage are win/win or no resolution; it is discovering creative possibilities, it is thinking long-term rather than short-term.

The first KPI for a Mediation Conversation will be to let every person have his or her say and be heard and the evidence is that each person will be able to repeat the other's point and point of view to the other's satisfaction. Once you reach that KPI, you may invite them to set another: To identify three or more possible solutions for consideration that will be win/win for all parties.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #49
Nov. 30, 2011

DO YOU NEED TO BE A PSYCHOLOGIST TO BE AN EFFECTIVE COACH?

In a recent email that I received, a Meta-Coach asked if she needed to be a formally educated Psychologist to be an effective coach. After answering her email, I thought that might be a question that others have. The following is part of what I sent and part of what I have thought of since.

In terms of lacking formal Psychological Training—most of such training in Universities would not help you anyway. Most of it is the history of psychology, overviews of the key thinkers in psychology, statistical analysis for research, study of abnormal psychology, the DSM IV, etc. Now the only part that would be helpful would be psychotherapeutic approaches and/or an internship, yet even then, so much of it is about problems, disorders, and operates on a whole different set of assumptions from coaching, namely, that people are broken. And even that all depends on the given professors and their leanings. The more they would lean to Cognitive psychology or Brief and Solution Focus therapies, the better.

Actually, with two degrees in Psychology, I learned more about *human nature, and the structure of human experiences* within my basic NLP Training than all of those psychology courses. It was much more practical and it focused on structure rather than content. And that's one of the places where traditional psychology truly misses it. I remember that when I took my first training in NLP and learned the Meta-Model, I said to myself at that time, that learning the Meta-Model was worth more than my first graduate degree in psychology.

A few years after that I went to a University in Denver, Colorado and spoke the students in their Masters Program about NLP. I presented to them the foundations of NLP for about four hours. When I told them that critical to working with people was *recognizing their states* and working with them—I saw a room full of blank faces. “What?” someone asked, “What are you talking about? How do you do that?” Here were people one year away from graduation and didn't have the foundation of state accessing, calibration, shifting, etc.! I was really shocked.

So in my opinion, your basic NLP and Neuro-Semantic trainings and readings gives you some very powerful models and tools for working with people, it focuses on *the structure of experience* rather than theories. After all NLP gives you the tools for modeling and identifying the structure of an experience rather than theories about such.

Now when we apply all of this to coaching, there's something else that gives you an advantage over getting a degree in psychology. Self-Actualization Psychology or humanistic psychology! NLP, having emerged from the first Human Potential Movement, is based on a *kind of*

psychology that's very different from the old kind of psychology. It's based on adult developmental psychology— the psychology that studies people at their best, their highest development, and how they actualize their highest and best. It is not about dysfunctions and unhealthy responses.

So my encouragement to you is to *believe in and use the NLP Presuppositions*. Why? Because they summarize the Humanistic Psychology model and develop your best skills for using that. Learn the Neuro-Semantic and Meta-Coaching premises and use them as the foundation of your work. A degree in Psychology can be helpful, it can open doors into places where you may not be able to go without such, but in terms of working effectively with people— the models of Meta-Coaching offer you a systemic and systematic approach that you will find nowhere else.

To your highest and best!

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #50
Dec. 7, 2011

COULD YOU PASS A “COURT OF LAW” BENCHMARK? Qualified to Decide

I was called for *jury duty* this year. In the State of Colorado this is one of the duties of every citizen and each year I am always hoping that I will be in town and have the time for it if I'm called. Over the years I've been on three juries, the foreman each time, and have been through 7 or 8 court processes without being on the final jury. In the US democracy, everybody has the right to have a court hearing and often the choice for “a jury of your peers” trial rather than a trial solely by a judge.

Anyway in October this year, 55 of us were called in and we sat through 7 hours of court procedures for a criminal case. In the process, the District Judge of the case, Thomas Deister, so happened to be a personal friend and actually one of four key persons who brought me to Grand Junction originally in 1984. While Tom is my age, his hair has turned completely white and with his full white beard which is very nicely trimmed, he is the picture of a wise judge.

Now what happened all morning in the court absolutely amazed me. I hope it does you as I tell the story. For two and a half-hours Tom did nothing more than *set frames*. He established one frame after the other after the other. He sat frames about how a court of law works, how a jury is to function, what “presumption of innocence” means, what “proof” in a court of law judging a criminal case means, and how it differs from proof in a civil case, what roles the prosecution is to play and the defense is to play, what “following the law” means, and so on. Having just spent more than two weeks listening really, really hard for *frames* in trainers at NSTT and in Coaches at *Coaching Mastery*, here was a judge setting frames like crazy and doing a fantastic job.

All of this was in preparation for the trial. It was in preparation for both the selection of the jury, the commissioning of the jury, and it was also in preparation for everybody else as citizens to understand how a court of law functions. Since the jury would be making a decision about the guilt or innocence of a man and since this is a court of law, Deister belabored that the jury would be commissioned to deal with a very sensitive, tough, and emotional subject—one of sexual abuse. He emphasized that the decision could not be based on feelings, intuitions, or suspicions, but upon evidence. “Are you able and willing to do that?” he asked over and over.

Now the criminal case as a sexual abuse case and as the first 20 people were seated in the jury box in the court room (with the rest of us watching), Deister set forth six “facts of the law.”

- 1) “Charges” are not “evidence.”
- 2) Everyone accused has the presumption of innocence.
- 3) The defense has no need to prove innocent. The accused has the right to be silent and juries are not allowed to speculate on that silence.

- 4) The burden of proof is on the prosecution — to prove guilt.
- 5) Proof has to be by “beyond reasonable doubt.” This dis-includes vague doubts, speculative doubts, imaginary doubts, and “what if” doubts.
- 6) The decision by the jury has to be unanimous.

I not only wrote down “the points” that Deister was making but timed him (as any good benchmarker/ modeler would!). It took 85 minutes to cover his 6 points along with pointed questions to each potential jurer. And, of course, with an involuntary audience, one that *had* to be there (a jurer could be arrested for failure to show up), I noticed that Tom still spent time making *undeniable statements* to pace everyone’s experience:

“You probably have lots of important things to do today and probably would prefer to be somewhere else than here.”

“You are here because you received a summons to be here as part of your responsibility as a citizen of this state and you may wonder why you were chosen. Well, let me tell you about that...”

With each point that Judge Deister made, he told little stories to give a flesh-and-blood example. Then he went through the points and asked each and every person in the jury box pointed questions— very confrontational questions:

Does the nature of this trial bother you?

Can you be fair and unbiased in listening and coming to a judgment?

Do you know the accused, anyone on the defense, any of the names of the people who will be testifying?

Will you be able to listen to young children or young girls testify and be okay with that?

Do you have any religious or philosophical beliefs that would interfere with you hearing this case?

Can you start from the premise of the presumption of innocence unless the evidence proves otherwise?”

Even if you disagree with the law, can you still make a judgment that upholds the law?

And on and on it went.

Three men said that they had a problem with “presumption of innocence.” One said, “Where there’s smoke, there’s fire.” “If a person has been accused of sexual abuse, there must be something to it.” The judge asked if he could put that view aside. After ten-minute discussion he said he could not. He was excused. So were 3 others for the same reason. They could not set aside their judgments! Two were dismissed because they had little children had home and felt that they could not listen without thinking of their own children and therefore they said they could not be fair and unbiased.

“Do you believe that children sometimes lie?” was one question. Everyone who was a parent immediately said, “Yes of course.” Some of the single people hesitated about that one!

“How do you know when a child is lying?” was another question. One man said, “I read their body language.” So that was followed up with more questions, “What do you read in their body

language?” One man said, “If they turn away, don’t look at me, fidget with their hands,” things like that. An attorney then asked, “Would you be nervous to come up on the stand and testify in front of one or two hundred people?” “Yes.” “So will your body language then indicate that you are lying or that you are nervous?”

“So if people get nervous on the stand, and you don’t know them so don’t know how any given person particularly acts or behaves when nervous, how will you know if they are lying or telling the truth?” Great testing questions! And all of the questions were designed to check the juries to see that they would not make decisions based on mind-reading, using their intuition, or feelings but basing it on the facts, the evidence presented and evidence beyond a reasonable doubt.

Afterwards I thought, “Every Meta-Coach ought to sit through a court of law process like this!” This would stop the mind-reading and biased judgments. What Deister was doing was trying to sit 12 people who could be a jury who could *cleanly listen, listen without judgments or biases, listen based on sensory-based, factual, information or evidence, and then follow a process (the rules of law) to come to as good a judgment as possible.*

Wow! That’s the kind of coaches we are seeking to develop and empower in the Meta-Coaching System. At the end of the day, another attorney stood up and asked, “What will you take away from this experience?” Well, that was my hallucination! Now if that had happened, I would have stood and said this:

“I take away from this the absolute importance of framing, framing, framing. I take away from this the personal challenge of unbiased listening and non-judgmental fact-finding. I take away from this the importance of shaping a team of 12 people to become a jury of one’s peers and that if a district judge can do that, so can I. It’s a matter of asking lots and lots and lots of pointed and personal and confrontational questions. I take away the importance of dismissing those not ready for the task! (17 were dismissed that day).”

This “court of law” that Tom Deister led that day was to qualify a group of people so that they would become a team and deliver as clean, solid, evidence-based decision as a team could. That day was an important part of my own continuing education in group-and-team coaching.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #51
December 14, 2011
PCMC Preparation #1

PREPARING FOR PCMC

With every week more and more Meta-Coaches are asking me in person or through email about what they need to do to get ready for the PCMC level. Recently in Guangzhou China, several of the Team Leaders asked about PCMC level— What's required and how to get ready? Several also wanted to know if they could set for PCMC level at the next *Coaching Mastery* course. They were planning to be the first PCMC level coaches in China!

Given this growing interest and request, I am planning to write a series on ***PCMC Preparation***. As I do, if questions arise, feel free to write and pose it. Currently we only have 14 people who have reached PCMC level, yet I think that we will see more and more reaching the *Professional Certified Meta-Coach* level in the coming years.

The Requirements

Now if you look in your *Coaching Mastery* Training Manual, you will there find the requirements for the PCMC level. Over the last couple years, we have moderated the requirements so that now they are as follows:

- 1) NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner Certification
- 2) 10 hours of Self-Coaching
- 3) 10 hours of coaching by a Meta-Coach, this can be through a Buddy Coaching contract and demonstration of it can be communicated verbally as a verbal (oral) description. It does not have to be written out. Simply ask for email confirmation from the person who did the Meta-Coaching for you for the 10 hours and sent to Dr. Hall.
- 4) 400 hours of paid professional Coaching. Use format in the Training Manual.
- 5) One case study of a Coaching Client: use format in Training Manual.
- 6) *Recommendation*: Serve as a Team Leader and Benchmark at a *Coaching Mastery* course. This will give you a rich experience of group/team coaching, develop your meta-detailing skills as you learn to see the structure of coaching sessions, and receive the training on the Training Day prior to *Coaching Mastery* as well as specialized time with the Meta-Coach Trainers.
- 7) Re-visit *Coaching Mastery* as a participant, coach 7 times which will enable you to discover how close you are to reaching "3" on all of the skills, lock down a specific KPI, and reach benchmark on framing, pattern detection, and tasking as well.
- 8) Attend the PCMC Assessment day (or two) after *Coaching Mastery*. You will do 45 minute coaching sessions and benchmarked by two trainers (and the others), receive 45 minutes of feedback and analysis.
- 9) The investment is \$2,500 USD. And once paid, you can set for PCMC assessment as many times as it takes.

How do you prepare for PCMC assessment?

The first and most obvious answer is to get all the practice you can. Yet the kind of practice is not just practice. That's because if you practice wrong, you only habitualize bad habits which usually makes it harder to learn the proper coaching skills. The kind of *practice* that counts and that will prepare you is *deliberate practice*. Anders Ericsson describes this kind of practice as identifying the next specific piece of behavior within a skill that will stretch you and enrich your competence of a particular skill.

And how do you find that specific piece of behavior? That's where sensory-based feedback from an informed colleague comes in. This is where the MCF Chapters is designed to play a very important part in your ongoing development as a Meta-Coach. Given our blind-spots and our inability to see ourselves with the necessary clarity, we need each those who have trained themselves to get their ego and projections out of the way, who have released judgment and mind-reading and who can provide clean feedback that is empirical and behavioral.

When you know the specific piece of behavior to practice, then you can focus on that behavior. That's *deliberate practice*. In Meta-Coaching, it could be using meta-questions, listening for levels in a client's speech, listening for the client's meta-comments, identifying the behaviors that indicate a "coachable moment," practicing the distinction between an acknowledgment, a confirmation of a person, a celebration, and a confrontation, etc.

If you are attending a MCF chapter, then you can identify a place for your next *deliberate practice* when you are in a meta-position watching a coaching session. Watch to identify 2 or 3 effective coaching responses (verbal or behavioral) in the coach that you do not do but that would enrich and enhance your coaching skills.

Another thing you could do is to go through all of the sub-skills for each coaching competency and make sure that you can do that sub-skill as part of your repertoire of responses. You can then ask someone to benchmark you on those sub-skills or if you are really brave, video-record yourself in a coaching session and then benchmark yourself using the sub-skills of each of the seven core competencies.

How do you know if you are engaged in *deliberate practice*? Easy. If someone were to ask you, "What are you working on as a Meta-Coaching? What are you doing to take your Coaching skills to the next level?" You would immediately identify precisely some very specific actions (verbal or behavioral) that you are aiming to master.

**From: L. Michael Hall 2011 Morpheus
2011 Morpheus #52
December 21, 2011
PCMC Preparation #2**

KPI PREPARATION FOR PCMC

Now probably the most scary thing about preparing for PCMC is *getting a KPI in your coaching session*. This is one of the prerequisites for the PCMC credentials— being able to “lock down a solid KPI.” Actually, this is one of the four additional benchmarks that you will be benchmarked on for the PCMC level (the others are: tasking, pattern detection, and framing). So how do you prepare for getting a KPI when you sit for the PCMC assessment?

1) First, learn the fourteen questions of the Well-Formed Outcome process inside-out. These are the precision questions that help to funnel a client’s goal. So, of course, you begin by asking the first coaching question: “What do you want?” And this will be the question that you will be repeatedly asking because you can almost always count on the client *not* telling you what they *really, really* want in their first answer. In fact, this may be the very point of the coaching— to find out what they want— the Clarification Conversation.

The novice coach asks the first question only once, “What do you want?” and then runs off with that without checking clarity as to its meaning or checking on what’s behind that want. The more experienced coach, and the coach who is becoming truly professional, asks “What do you want?” five to ten to thirty times in a session. And you can ask it by listening with your third-ear as you ask clarification questions because your client may state what they really want by framing it as a problem, a complaint, or an off-handed comment about something. When you hear that, you can then ask, “Is *that* what you really want?” And when you do, you will often hear your client say, “What?”

Client: “But Jim would never go along with that and no one can influence him to change his mind; he’s a command-and-control kind of manager.”

Coach: “Oh, is that what you want?”

Client: “What? I don’t understand. Want?”

Coach: “Yes, do you want to develop the ability to influence your manager, Jim.”

Client: “Yeah, if only...”

Coach: “If only what?”

Client: “If only that was possible. But I don’t think I ever could do that.”

Coach: “Is that what you would want? To think that you could and to have the skills that would enable you to do that?”

Client: “Well, sure, I’d love that.”

2) Learn to dance with the 14-questions. As I hope the little conversation illustrates, it is not a case of merely knowing and asking the 14-questions. Sometimes I have actually broken out in

laughter when I hear a novice coach-in-training take the 14 questions and ask them like a District Attorney drilling someone on the stand in a court of law. They fire them at the client hardly giving them a chance to answer and when they get all 14 shot out, they blow the smoke off the end of the gun and put it in the holster. Inside they think, “Done.” “Asked the 14 questions, KPI!” Then, when they hear the laughter of the benchmarker, they look up, “What?” “I got the KPI, right?”

If you want to be professionally elegant as a Coach, you have to learn to dance with the 14-questions. It’s a dialogue that you want to have with your client and depending on what your client says, you dance to the next question or your return to a former question. The questions are sequential and often you can ask them precisely in that order, but not always. You need to always be ready to jump to certain questions.

For example, if you client says that they want to get the ACMC Certificate or a raise or someone’s love, you immediately jump to *the Intrinsic Distinction*:

Coach: “Is that something within your control? Is that something you can initiate and sustain?”

Or if your client says something that immediately strikes you as unecological. Say they want to sleep only 5 hours a night. Immediately jump to *the Ecological Distinction*:

Coach: “Is that ecological for your health? Would that create sleep deprivation? Is that realistic? What do you know about the human body, medicine, sleep research, etc. that would suggest that’s possible?”

Here also you will want to ask lots of clarification questions. This will save you from giving advice, teaching, making suggestions, etc.

Coach: “Do you know anyone who gets back on 5 hours of sleep? How well do you know this person? How is their physical and mental health?”

Here also, if you are unsure or don’t have background in a given area, turn this into a tasking experience and invite your client to do some research prior to the next session.

Coach: “Since neither of us have any expertise in this area of sleep research, and if this is something that you really want to explore, to make sure this is ecological and will not do harm to your health and well being, what do you think about checking into this area before our next session?”

Asking questions in the dialogue of coaching is a dance— a dance of meaning and meaning-making for clarity and decision and planning. So once you have memorized the 14-questions and understand several ways to ask each question, use them as a dialogue / dance for letting the client’s meaning emerge and move between you and your client.

Next time, 3) *Distinguish the big What and the smaller Whats.*

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #53
December 28, 2011
PCMC Preparation #3

KPI PREPARATION FOR PCMC

In the last Meta-Coach Reflection I began listing ways to prepare for “locking down the KPI” when you sit for PCMC credentials. The first two suggestions are these:

- 1) *First, learn the fourteen questions of the Well-Formed Outcome process inside-out.*
- 2) *Learn to dance with the 14-questions.*

*3) Distinguish **the big What and the smaller Whats.***

Here’s another secret for being able to get a KPI in a coaching session. *Whats* come in various sizes! Okaaaayyy, and what does that mean? It means that there are a number of *whats* that you will be asking as you funnel your client’s objective in the coaching conversation. You know the first what—*What do you want?* That’s your opening question and the one that you’ll repeat until you and your client discover *what* is the most important thing the coaching session should focus on.

Then, whenever you get a “No” to any of the other Well-Formed Outcome (WFO) questions, you ask the next *what*. These whats are revealed by the answer *no*, This gives us the following *smaller whats*. For the Questions see the following chart.

1) The What of Intentionality.

Do you know *what* intentionality is driving you? Is it big enough? Is it strong enough? If not, your first problem is intentionality. Use Question 2.

2) The What of Context.

Do you know the context of your desired outcome? Do you know the *what* of that context? If not, this is the next problem, so answer Questions 3-5.

3) The What of Process.

Do you know *what* you have to do and have a well-developed plan for carrying out *what* you need to do? If not, then focus on satisfying Questions 6-10.

4) The What of Responsibility.

Do you know the *what* of who’s problem it is and who can solve it? If not, then you may have an ill-formed goal that you can do nothing about, or only some and it depends on someone else. If to the question “What can you do about it?” the answer is “nothing” or “very little,” then this what is a problem and you need to adequately explore and answer Question 7.

5) *The What of Accountability.*

Do you know *what* you need to have present so that you can measure progress, identify and use milestones along the way, and receive the appropriate feedback that will shape and hone your behavior so you can reach your outcome? If not, then answer Question 10.

6) *The What of Resources.*

Do you know *what* you need as either an external resource (time, money, personnel, knowledge, etc.) or internal resources (courage, determination, resilience, knowledge, skill competency, etc.) in order to achieve your desired outcome? If not, then this is part of the Process Questions (6-11) as well as one of the Meta-Frames of Criteria, so answer Question 11.

7) *The What of Criteria and Alignment.*

Do you know *what* will fully satisfy your values, vision, intentionality, mission and identity regarding this goal? If not, then this presents a problem and obstacle blocking your success. Questions 11-14 look at these meta-frames of the values that establish your criteria and standards, so answer Questions 11-14.

8) *The What of Evidence.*

Do you know *what* will be present and what external evidence will occur that will prove to you (and others) that you have succeeded, that you have reached your objective, and that you can stop pursuing the goal and begin enjoying its attainment? If not, then answer Question 14.

From: L. Michael Hall
 2011 Morpheus #54
 December 20, 2011

USING THE WELL-FORMED OUTCOME QUESTIONS

Ask the well-formed outcome (WFO) questions sequentially. Ask them one by one, if *yes* answer, get more details until you have every indication that the person is fully answering *yes*. If *no*, then you have a *problem* as indicated by the third column. Now you have your next *what* (your smaller *what*) to work on. So in service of your big *what* (the answer to question #1), answer this smaller *what*. This is *what* is in the way or stopping the next progressive step. How do you handle that *what*? Look at Column four— this identifies the *Coaching Conversation* that is indicated by the problem and this will be the *solution*. Now within this solution there are many, many possible *interventions*— hundreds. There are as many interventions as there are patterns in NLP and Neuro-Semantics and in other disciplines. The solution category provides the general category of *Coaching Conversation* that the client needs. Satisfy that and you are ready to move down the list to the next WFO question.

Well-Formed Outcome Questions	Positive Response Gives an answer	Response indicating a Problem Doesn't know something and so needs to know or do something.	Coaching Conversation Indicated
Target: 1) <i>What</i> do you want? Are you stating it in the positive? What does it look and sound like?	Yes, it is stated in the positive and described empirically.	No I don't know what; I need to know and to get clear.	#1 Clarity for understanding
2) <i>Why</i> do you want that?	Yes, I know the value of this, the benefits I will derive.	No I don't know; I need more energy and motivation to do this.	#1 Clarity #2 <i>Decision</i> : Is it important to you? Is it important enough to go after?
Context: 3) <i>Where</i> do you want this?	Yes, I know where this will occur.	No, I don't know. I need more understanding and/or a plan.	#1 Clarity #2 <i>Decision</i> #3 <i>Plan</i>
4) <i>When</i> do you want this? <i>When</i> do you expect to achieve this?	Yes, I know when and have a time-frame for my goal.	No I don't know. I need to know and/or decide on when to plan for this.	#1 Clarity #2 <i>Decision</i> #3 <i>Plan</i> : Develop a time-line and a schedule for it.

5) <i>With who?</i> Who is involved? (Relational context)	Yes, I will do my myself; or Yes, I know the persons I need to enlist.	No, I don't know. I need to find a partner, suppliers, customers, etc. I need to develop a collaborative team.	#1 Clarity #2 Decision #3 Plan
Process: 6) <i>Do you know how to do this?</i>	Yes, I know how to do this.	No, I don't know how. I need the how-to knowledge.	#1 Clarity #3 Plan #4 Experience
7) <i>Can you do this?</i> Start it and sustain it until the end?	Yes, within my realm of response.	No, it's not within my control. Or it is partly dependent on others to make some response.	#1 Clarity for a new <i>Target</i> . #5 <i>Change</i> as an adjustment of the current target that is an ill-formed goal as it is.
8) Do you know the <i>actions</i> to take in reaching this goal?	Yes.	No, I need to discover the actions or know more of the actions that will be required.	#1 Clarity #3 Plan
9) Do you have a <i>plan</i> for the steps and stages of the goal?	Yes.	No, need a plan.	Plan.
10) Do you have milestones and a way to gather <i>feedback</i> to monitor your progress?	Yes.	No, need to design a feedback process and identify monitoring system.	#1 Clarity #2 Plan
11) Do you have the internal and external <i>resources</i> ?	Yes.	No, need resources.	#4 Experience #5 Change #6 <i>Confrontation</i>
Criteria Frames: 11) Do you have the internal and external <i>resources</i> ? Are you resourceful enough to make this happen?	Yes.	No.	#4 Experience #5 Change #6 <i>Confrontation</i>
12) Is it <i>compelling</i> ? Do you really, really want this? Do you have a big enough <i>intention</i> to govern your attentions?	Yes.	No, it's not compelling or not enough. I need to add energy to it so it feels more motivating.	#4 Experience #6 <i>Confrontation</i>
13) Is it <i>ecological</i> ? Fit into all the areas and <i>systems</i> of your life? Is everything within you <i>aligned</i> with this?	Yes.	No, it violates some of my highest values.	#2 Plan #5 Change

14) How will you know that you have reached your goal? What <i>evidence</i> will indicate to you to stop?	Yes.	No, don't know how to tell.	Clarity. Decision. Plan.

From: L. Michael Hall
2011 Morpheus #55
December 28, 2011

THE 2011 YEAR OF META-COACHING

As 2011 comes to a close, so does the presentation of *Coaching Mastery* around the world. We completed the 42nd *Coaching Mastery* in Guangzhou China the first week of December. That brings us now to 1420 people who have been licensed as a Meta-Coach in 37 countries since the first one in Sydney, 2002.

This was the third time that we have presented the Coaching Boot Camp in China and with each time, the process is being refined and becoming better for the development of the coaching skills and attitude. After the first time when we were overwhelmed with far too many people than we could handle (96 showed up!), Team Wang the sponsor and his team as well as Mandy Chai have really worked hard to make sure that those who do attend have all the prerequisites and know that this is a “coaching boot camp” and that it will be tough.

I was delightfully pleased to see a tremendous increase in the basic understanding of NLP and Meta-States with the current group of 33 participants. Yet the very best improvement to things was in the team that we had to lead the teams and benchmark the skills. The Assist Team named themselves the 7 Wolves (!) were made up mostly of guys and they devoted a tremendous amount of time, effort, commitment, and love to being a great Assist Team. I could only wish that all of our Assist Teams were as committed and engaged as they were! Most nights they stayed up with participants till midnight doing processes with them, even doing entire practice coaching sessions, and sometimes they were up until 1 am or 2 am! So a big Meta-High Fives to the 7 Wolves (which ended up being more than seven):

Eric Lu – Will Yao – Leo lu – Andy He – Teng (Zhengyun Teng) – John Liu – Anderson Jiang – Wing Rong – Leo Yan – png siew hong – Frank Lee

Now in both in China and Mexico, we do the Coaching Boot Camp in two parts. In this last group, we started with 38 participants, I had to dismiss one of them. Then in the second part, we ended up with 33. Personally, I don't like separating it like that, but we do that to fit the culture in those countries. Of course, dividing the training in two parts prevents *the intensity* that typically occurs when people are immersed in Meta-Coaching for 8-days. In China *Coaching Mastery* occurs in two 5-day sections and so one challenge is getting everybody to return after a 4 week interval.

It is a delight that in 2011 two of the *Coaching Mastery* courses were trained by others. Cheryl and Carey trained *Coaching Mastery* in South Africa and Omar and David trained it in Mexico. And in the process, we have seven or either others in the process of becoming a licensed Meta-Coach Trainer. The challenge, as always, is keeping the quality of the training so that the Meta-Coach Brand can be one of the premier Coach Training programs in the world.

