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Distinction for Intelligent Clarity series

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DISTINCTIONS:
FOR INTELLIGENCE AND CLARITY

Many years ago I learned an especially important principle, *a principle* that provided an unique insight, which in turn changed my life. In a sentence that insight is this: *Mastery is in the details.* Every true expert in every field is an expert because he can distinguish critical details that others overlook. I discovered this insight originally when I was modeling wealth creation. And in learning it, I discovered the principle of *meta-detailing.* To create wealth, you have to pay attention to the details. You also have to know the game that you're in and how it works. Both are important and important simultaneously.

Sudden this distinction became a life transforming one for me. I used it to inform how I went about my own wealth creating strategy. Then I used it in every modeling project I undertook. As a result, that led me to wonder, "If I have not been paying attention to and focusing on the critical details, what was I paying attention to? Where was I focusing my attention?"

Meta-Detailing as a Critical Distinction
"What is meta-detailing?" It is the ability to *see the big picture* **and** to *zoom down* to take care of the necessary and critical details. It is a synthesis of global and specific thinking patterns. It gives you the ability to *not* get lost in the details (especially irrelevant details) or lost in over-generalized dreamy concepts that are up in the clouds.

With meta-detailing, you learn to operate from a higher sense of where you stand with things, what you are doing, why you are doing them, what you seek to achieve. This keeps your work with details clean. Otherwise you might forget where you are and what you're doing. Otherwise you might go off on tangents and side-alleys and get lost. You would not be able to discern a *trivial* detail from a *critical* one.

The meta-state of meta-detailing enables you to stay focused, directed, insightful, and persistent. It enriches your abilities to make decisions. Having a higher sense of how various details play into the larger picture enables you to operate from an almost intuitive "knowing" about what is truly important and what is not. Meta-detailing also saves you from *living in the clouds* with great plans and tremendous visions, but without the practical knowledge involved in how to take care of the details. Visionaries suffer from this one. They can develop a "bad relationship" to details. The person who says, "I'm a global person; I don't do details." will also be a person who probably will *not* develop expertise and excellence in their field.

A Distinction to Live Your Life By
Here then is one distinction and it did for me what distinctions do for anyone who makes them

—enable you to *not* confuse different things. When you do not make a distinction that you need to, when you fail to distinguish between things that differ, you create *confusion* in your mind. That is, you *fuse* two or more things together (*con*), hence *confuse*. And when you create confusion in your mind about things, it is almost impossible to make correct decisions or to act in an effective and efficient way. Given that, here are a set of very personal questions for you:

- What distinctions do you need to make in your life?
- What distinctions are you *not* making which are creating all sorts of problems for you?
- Do you know how to go about learning to make new and critical distinctions? Would you like to?

But What if I'm Unconscious about Distinctions?
Great question. That is indeed one of the big problems about distinctions. *You and I are mostly unconscious about the distinctions we need until we learn to make them.* Wow! Talk about a Catch-22 of consciousness! This explains why an expert is an expert in an area where you are not an expert. That expert is making distinctions you are not *and you're not even aware of the distinctions she is making.*

But here is a saving grace. At the heart of "thinking" itself is making distinctions. To think, after all, is to *discern.* It is to discern what a thing is and what it is not. It is to discern what it does and what it does not do. And in every field there are what we call "critical success factors." But if you cannot discern them, if you cannot distinguish them, if you cannot set them forward in the foreground of your mind and focus on them—you will not be able to make use of them.

Distinguishing things that differ is the secret of success, of mastery, of expertise, of thinking. Bateson argued at the General Semantic Conference in 1950 that "difference" (distinctions) is what gets onto the map and that this is "the difference that makes a difference." Korzybski warned about the danger of identifying and identification. He wrote, "If we identify, we do not differentiate. If we differentiate, we cannot identify." (*Science and Sanity,* 1933, p. 404).

To this end, with this article I begin a new series of articles: *Distinctions for Intelligent Clarity.* Over the next weeks and months, I will be presenting a number of distinctions that make up the content of NLP and then others which we have made the heart and soul of Neuro-Semantics—distinctions that make for sanity and for expertise. This will help you be a more critical and discerning thinker, empowering you in your everyday life.

DISTINGUISHING
SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

To think with clarity and precision is to make critical distinctions—distinctions that provide essential maps if we're to experience well-being and sanity. To that end, there is no distinction more critical than the one between self-esteem and self-confidence. Fail to make this distinction, and you will construct an internal "sense of self" which will put your sense of worth and value "on the line" undermining your mental sanity and physical well-being. It's that crucial. Fail to make this distinction and it makes you extremely vulnerable to the outside world.

What is this distinction? It is actually a very simple one to understand, much harder to integrate and live. It is the distinction between yourself *as a person* and what you can do—your *behaviors.* Conceptually this is also an obvious one that doesn't take much to point it out.
• What you *do* is an expression of you. It is your behavior that we can see as you act or hear as you speak or even as you use your body to gesture or move.
• Who you *are* is your person, your identity, your inner self, your soul. It is that inner essence of your sentient being who acts.

When you were an infant, this distinction was crystal clear. You, *as a person,* was considered valuable and worthwhile *unconditionally.* Why? Mostly because you could not do a thing! You could not talk, walk, pay the rent, carry on a decent conversation, pick up after yourself, etc. You could not even focus your eyes, roll over, or effectively communicate what you needed. In spite of being completely ignorant and incompetent— *you were precious, lovable, and of immense value.* We did not rate you, measure you, gauge you by your behaviors.

Then began the great confusion. As you learned to *do* things, and you grew in your *confidence* about what you could do, we began linking the two. "If you can do X, you can feel good about doing X, and good about yourself. This proves you are worthwhile." Today this shows up in every article and book that recommends that you "raise your self-esteem by improving your skills." "For greater self-esteem, buy A, wear B, drive C, etc." The message is "You *are* what you have." "You *are* what you do."

Now in Neuro-Semantics, we address this confusion and misunderstand in the morning of Day One when we teach the Meta-States Model. The second pattern leads a person to create three meta-states: self-acceptance and self-appreciation for what you *have* in terms of talents and dispositions which lead to what you can *do.* Then we introduce self-esteem for what you *are* in your inner person. We emphasize that self-confidence is *conditional* upon *competence.* If you can do something, you can feel confidence in yourself that you can pull it off. Self-esteem, however, is *unconditional* and not

based on anything. That's why it is irrational to use the modifiers "low" or "high" for self-esteem. It cannot be low or high since it is *an unconditional given*. It just *is*. That's why the verb "esteem" (to appraise) is a judgment that you make about yourself, not a feeling.

None of this is rocket science and numerous people in the Human Potential Movement from Rogers to Maslow to Nathaniel Brandon (*The Psychology of Self-Esteem*) and others have written extensively about this for years. I first put it in writing in 1985 in my book on *Emotions*.   Here is a chart I put in that book:

So I found it really disturbing to find this very confusion in the 2020 book by Scott Kaufman, *Transcend: The New Science of Self-Actualization.* While most of that book is excellent, he really makes a terrible mess regarding this distinction.

> "The latest research suggests that a healthy self-esteem is an outcome of genuine *accomplishment* and intimate connection with others...   As psychologists Richard Ryan and Kirk Brown note, becoming too focused on improving one's self-esteem is an indication that something has gone awfully wrong in self-regulation and well-being. . . .   What is a healthy self-esteem? Modern research has identified two distinct faces of healthy self-esteem: self-worth and mastery." (p. 59)

Kaufman then gives six statements for each, self-worth and mastery. His "mastery" statements are all about self-*confidence:* "I am highly effective at the things I *do.*" "I perform very well.." "I deal well with challenges." The statements for self-*worth* are a mixture of emotional statements, "I like myself," "I am comfortable with myself" and partial self-esteem assertions.

> "Self-worth involves the evaluation of your overall sense of self: Are you a fundamentally good person with social value in this world?" (p. 60)

Talk about academic confusion, this is it! An "overall sense of self" is *your self-image,* not self-esteem. And a "good person with social value"—that's *your social self,* not your self-esteem. It's hard to believe that an otherwise intelligent writer could create this level of nonsensical confusion, but he did.

Don't you love his over-generalized statements about research ("the latest research" "modern research")? This highlights the problem with any and every so-called "research" that starts off with sloppy and vague definitions. Calling something "self-esteem" but essentially confusing it with self-confidence about what you can *do* would result in the "research" being complete invalid. Whatever "facts" the so-called "research" found are irrelevant because are based on inadequate definitions in the first place. And worse of all, this misleads more people as it creates a fallacious understanding about what self-esteem is.   Now you know why making this distinction is so important for your sanity and well-being.

Distinguishing Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence
Self-Confidence   **Self-Esteem**

Based on your abilities	—	Based on innate human value
Earned and developed		As a given, unearned
Conditional: has conditions		Unconditional: no conditions
Temporal, transitory		Permanent, enduring
Based on what you can do		Based on an assertion
Circumstantial		An inherent quality of a person
Sense of being effectiveness		Sense of your essential self
What you do		Who you are

For more: See *The Crucible and the Fires of Change,* chapter 7 "Unconditional Positive Regard."

DISTINGUISHING
SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SELF-EFFICACY

This distinction comes by way of Mauritius where Bruneau Woomed asked if I'd write about it. Not only does self-esteem radically differ from self-confidence (#2), but self-confidence also differs from self-efficacy. Because the difference between these is, generally speaking, the difference between someone highly skilled in their job or activities and an entrepreneur, it is a difference worth noting.

As noted in the last post, self-confidence refers to the confidence that you have in *what you are doing.* It is your trust and faith (*fideo*) with (*con-*) yourself. Given that, self-confidence is based on your skills and competence. As you learn and practice and get better at doing something, you have the basis for self-confidence. Now you can trust yourself to be able to pull off that activity.

I say *you have the basis for self-confidence* and yet you may not feel self-confidence. That's because there's another factor involved in *feeling* self-confidence—your convincer program. "What convinces you that you can *do* X?" And here we all differ. For some people, if they can do something one time(!), they immediately claim that they are now confident that they can do it. Others also will reply on extremely low numbers of doing something as *evidence* that they are now competent. Usually this is false and it sets a person up for disappointment. So when they can't pull it off regularly or on cue, they are shocked, "But I did it last week!"

On the other extreme are people who seem to never satisfy their convincer program. Even though they have done something for years and can perform at a high level of competence, they still do not feel self-confident. Some will demand that the performance by essentially *perfect* before it counts. Others compare themselves to others and so that they see themselves as *less than* and therefore undeserving of "self-confidence." Others simply discount what they can do.

Thankfully, most people are in-between these extremes. Depending on what they are dong (whether it is getting dressed, preparing a meal, solving a logistic problem, leading a team, maintaining an exercise program, etc.), they require the appropriate amount of repetition for the activity. Then when they can perform fairly well, they give themselves permission to *feel self-confidence about that activity.* They think of themselves as "pretty good" or maybe "very good" at that activity.

If they keep practicing and learning, if they keep raising the bar and stretching themselves to up their game—they may eventually know themselves as "really good" at what they are doing. Regarding significant activities (sports, chess, mathematics, etc.), ten years of deliberate practice will bring most people beyond basic *competence* to the state of *expertise.* Yet that is still self-confidence, not self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy refers to another subjective state. Whereas self-confidence is based on *the past,* self-efficacy is based *on the future.* To feel self-confidence, you look to see *what you can do* and, in fact, what you are doing. By way of contrast, self-efficacy is an efficacy that you have *in yourself* about your thinking, emoting, speaking, acting, and relating. With self-efficacy, you look into the future and project that "I can handle that! Yes, I have never done it, but it's no problem, I know that I will be able to handle it!"

This explains why self-confidence tends to be much more of a *feeling* than anything else. You *feel* it. Self-efficacy is much more of an evaluation. Having walked the pathway from incompetence to competence with regard to lots of things (e.g., learning to read, learning to write, ride a bike, drive a car, take a entrance test, interview for a job, etc.), after awhile, you *jump a logical level and conclude—* "This is a new learning, a new development, and I know how to learn and develop. It's just a matter of time."

Self-confidence is a primary state— you feel comfortable and familiar with an activity and you know you can pull it off *because you have pulled it off many times.* Self-efficacy is a meta-state. You are now thinking and feeling good about a new challenge that you've never done (i.e., fly a helicopter, buy an investment property, start a new company, etc.). You feel good because you have *gone meta and concluded that you can trust yourself to figure it out.*

This explains why an entrepreneur absolutely needs self-efficacy. The risk taking of entrepreneurs is not one of foolish jumping. Instead it is based on having *learned how to learn* and how to get things done with and through others. It is the ability to work collaboratively with others and not to only do things by oneself. Now you also know why self-efficacy is not a quality of youth—a youth has not had enough experience. When youth *look like they are entrepreneurial*, they are generally being overly self-confident and that's why it often bursts like the dot.com companies burst in the late 1990s.

DISTINGUISHING
SELF-CONFIDENCE AND EGO-STRENGTH

After the last post, another question was brought to my attention, "What's the difference between self-confidence and ego-strength?" Given that I've been highlighting important distinctions between self-esteem and self-confidence, self-efficacy and self-confidence, it seemed right to focus on this distinction as well.

We again start from the definition. *Self-confidence* is the "faith" and "trust" you have in yourself *to be able to do* something (*credeo,* Greek, faith, trust). You trust that you can *do some activity or some skill.* As such, self-confidence is your mental judgment and the feeling that follows that conviction. Unless you are messing it up with perfectionism and creating a standard that hardly anyone could meet, then when you discover that you can do a thing (i.e., ride a bike, type, produce a report, play tennis, swim, etc.) you *count it* as evidence.

At that point your self-confidence is a function of your competence. That means that the question about self-confidence is always a behavior question, "Can you do X?" "To what extent can you *do* X?" "How well can you perform X?" Then, the *degree* to which you can perform, that degree determines the degree of your self-confidence. Is it low, medium, or high? It depends on your performance level.

The worst mistake people make about self-confidence is trying to base it on a feeling. Many people often go to a coach or counselor with the goal "to feel more confidence about X." Big mistake! And the problem with many NLP practitioners is that they do not make this distinction. Falsely thinking that self-confidence is a feeling, they then jump in to access *the feeling of self-confidence* and then link it to the target activity. An even bigger mistake! That will only result in creating *a false confidence that is not based on reality!*

If you want to feel confident, then focus on *competence.* If it is public speaking, then learn the key variables that make a person skillful in public speaking, practice those skills, get feedback, refine how you present yourself, your material, use your voice, breathe, etc. When your *competence improves, so will your confidence.* The person who *feels* confidence about something that they are incompetent about is a fool.

Ego-strength is not about specific skills and competencies, it is about *the inner ability to face reality as it is.* It is the "strength" of your "self"—your mind or ego (capacity to face reality). That's why small children have no ego-strength at all. So for many, the first day of going to school is very disturbing for them. "Will the teacher like me?" "Will I have any friends?" "What if someone laughs at me?" "I don't want to be away from mommy."

The mental strength required in ego-strength begins with *knowing your world and what to expect.* Once you have a good idea of what's going to happen, then you need the mental strength to know *what to do to cope with the situation.* This is true if you are going into a meeting for the first time, or meeting a person on a blind-date, or making a presentation to a group you have never met, etc.

Ego-strength is the "strength of your self" to be able to cope, to be flexible enough to handle a situation, and to not go into a "fight, flight, freeze" response. If you do the latter, then in some way you feel threatened or overwhelmed and so you go into a stress response. Instead of effectively coping, you freaked out. You ran, froze, or become inappropriately aggressive.

With ego-strength, the question becomes, "What mental or emotional resources do you need so that *inside yourself* you feel that you have the strength to cope with situation X?" Do you need more acceptance of things as they are? Appreciation of differences? More ability to question and explore? More ability to match people and create rapport? More ability to manage your stress? More ability to catch cognitive distortions in real time and minimize them? Whatever mental or emotional resource that you need, as you identify it and then access and practice that resource, you develop your own ability to "remain calm and cool under pressure."

With both self-confidence and ego-strength, once you develop these complex meta-states, and they begin to habituate—you lose consciousness of them. You don't even think about them. They are not of concern to you because they become part and parcel of your inner "sense of self." Now they give you a center from which to operate. Now you are ready and free to begin to unleash the potentials within you that are hidden. Now the adventure of life truly begins. If you want to read more, check out *Unleashed!* and *The Crucible and the Fires of Transformation.*

DISTINGUISHING
RESPONSIBILITY FOR / RESPONSIBILITY TO

Here is a distinction that most people do not know and do not make and because they don't, it creates tremendous mental and emotional distress in their lives. What's also interesting about this one is that in many languages, it is *not easy* to even talk about this distinction. That's because, for the most part, it does not exist in that language. Here is the distinction short and sweet:

- *Responsibility For* describes what you are *able-to-respond-to* that belongs to you and *for* which you can be held accountable.
- *Responsibility To* describes the person or persons you are responsible to, namely, the relationships that you have and the obligations that are inherent in them.

So one refers to personal accountability and the other to relationships—two very different subjective experiences. They are not the same, not at all! What is inside of *responsibility for* are all of the things that you and only you can do. Most essentially are the four personal powers that enables you to *respond*— thinking, emoting, speaking, and acting. These are *your* powers and only you can make these responses. Your mental responses are so much yours, you cannot say that anyone else "makes" you think, imagine, question, doubt, remember, etc. Those are your functions. You are *responsible for* them. And whatever responses you make mentally, you will experience the consequences of them.

Your emotional responses are also so much yours, that you cannot say that someone else "makes" you feel something. Your emotions are yours. You create them. When you experience an emotion it is the result of your thinking, valuing, believing, etc. that you have learned or experienced. Someone may *trigger* you with a word, a gesture, an action, but your emotional response is yours no matter how much you wag your finger and try to blame them. So also with all of your linguistic and behavioral responses, they are yours. They may be in response to what someone else said or did, but they come from you and so you are responsible *for* them.

Think of all of these responses as your "response zone" or your "locus of control." Imagine standing in a circle and out of that circle comes these four crucial responses. And if every adult lives inside of their circle of responses, then you are *not* responsible for their powers— what they think, feel, say, or do. They are. But if you have a relationship to them, you may be *responsible to* them. If so, then the kind and quality of the relationship will then determine what you are responsible *to give to and receive from them.*

Imagine two circles. The circle you live in and out of which you make your mental, emotional, verbal, and behavioral responses. That is the circle you are *responsible for.* Then the circles of the people all around you in your life— family, friends, associates, colleagues, acquaintance, the public

in general. Each of them, operating from out of their power zone, are responsible *for* themselves. *To* some of them you are responsible *to* give and receive certain things— whatever conditions that the relationship requires. Generally, adult to adult, it will be an equal and mutual exchange so that what we want, we receive, and what the other wants from us, they receive. In that state, we say the relationship is working. If you are giving but not receiving, then eventually your relational "bank account" with that person will go bankrupt and the relationship will explode or die, or possible be reconstituted.

The adult–child relationship is a dependent one, the parent gives and the child receives. As the child grows older, and becomes more and more capable of responding, more is expected in return. So with any other dependent relationship, as boss–employee. The big distinction in *responsibility to* relationships is that they are *conditional.* All relationship are conditional. There are conditions to be met in order for the relationship to thrive. That's why it takes an independent person who has identified and developed her response-powers to be capable of healthy relationships.

DISTINGUISHING
REASONS FROM EXCUSES

It is so easy to become confused whenever two things that should be separated are fused together into one thing. Then, if we do not, or cannot, easily separate them, we may become confused and not even know it. That's the way it is with the many differences about *self* (self-esteem, self-confidence, self-efficacy) that we have covers. It is also true about reasons and excuses. Korzybski wrote:

> "If we identify, we do not differentiate. If we differentiate, we cannot identify." (*Science and Sanity,* 1933, p. 404)

The solution is what Bateson phrases as "the difference that makes a difference?" I did that in the last post (#5) making a critical distinction between responsibility *for* and responsibility *to.* Two small words separate the two experiences, but what a big difference that makes a difference that is. Let's now do this with reasons and excuses. Certainly you have been on both sides of this question: Is this description a legitimate reason or is it an excuse?

When you explain the events, circumstances, intervening variables, unrecognized factors, etc. are you making an excuse for yourself or are you offering a reasonable and rational explanation? When you tell your boss about the traffic or the extra demands at home, is that a legitimate reason for you not being able to do X or is that an illegitimate excuse by which you are trying to get out from doing X? If it is legitimate, what standards or criteria are you using that legitimizes it?

To distinguish an explanation from an excuse, let's look at the function of each.
> *The function of an explanation* is to explain the source of something, how something works, the processes involved, the variables and factors that give us a fuller understanding.
> *The function of an excuse* is to explain away a fault, accusation, blame, etc. It is to avoid being held accountable or responsible, to release one from a commitment.

What is an excuse according to the dictionary? To give an excuse is "to explain a fault or an offense in the hope of being forgiven or understood, to seek to remove the blame from, to grand pardon, or forgive." The term, coming from Latin (*ex-cusare, causa,* accusation) literally refers to trying to get *outside* of an accusation.

If that is what it is and how it functions, we can now more easily recognize *when* excuses tend to rise up in our minds, namely, when things go wrong or when things get tough. Something doesn't go as it should, as we expected, as it normally does—and lo and behold, we start hearing ourselves make excuses. "I didn't realize..." "Well, Mark was late and that's why..." "That traffic drives me crazy and I get stressed out, so no wonder I ..." "I just forgot..." "I always forget when ..." "I'm just not a visual person..." "I get too tired if I don't get a break..."

Typically, *excuses come to life when there's a context of frustration, disappointment, stress,*

fallibility, etc. And it can be activated so easily! Just have anyone ask you something about it. "Why are you late?" "Did you exercise today?" "Is that report ready?" "You seem stressed, what's going on?"

Excuses also tend to emerge whenever we feel insecure or defensive. If you're feeling secure in yourself, you will feel less the need *to explain yourself* (even to yourself!). You will have the confidence, efficacy, and ego-strength to simply deal with life as it is. But let a human being get into a state of insecurity and the number of excuses begin to rise exponentially.

I once worked with a lady who ran a small business. She had 42 employees and was a wiz at what she did. I met her in a workshop where she volunteered to do the "Excuse Blow-Out" pattern with me. I asked, "What excuses do you need to blow-out?" She said she made all kinds of excuses for not exercising. As she then thought about her work-week and daily life, "When and where does it happen?"
  "When I think about going to the gym."
"And your excuse?"
  "I will hurt myself if I go to the gym; so I better not."
"Is that true? Will you hurt yourself?" I asked expecting her to say, "Well, no, I'm exaggerating."
  "Yes it is."
"Really? So you have hurt yourself going to the gym?"
  "Yes, I have an auto-immune system disease and whenever I over-stress myself physically
  I have a set-back, the last time I was in bed for two weeks."
"That sounds like a legitimate concern. [pause ....] What does your doctor say or recommend?"
  "He wants me to exercise."
"So when you exercise, what are we talking? Ten minutes, thirty, what?"
  "Good gracious no. That's nothing. I used to work out for two hours."
"Oh my God!" I exclaimed. "I don't have an auto-immune system disease and the idea of working out for two hours exhausts me! [pause] What about working out for 15 minutes?"
  "But that's nothing..." She said in a somewhat whinny voice.
"Ah, is that the excuse?! Would it do you good? ... Would it at least be something and a place to start?"
  "Yessss" she said in a slow and still whinny voice.

Where there are legitimate concerns, there are established facts that should be considered. Then around those facts, you can design a strategy to deal with the situation. Excuses are ways in which we sell ourselves short. With an excuse, you excuse yourself from excellence.

  [By the way, we have an *Excuse Blow-Out Pattern* in Neuro-Semantics. You can find it in
  Secrets of Personal Mastery as well as in *Achieving Peak Performance* and the *APG*
  manual.]

From: L. Michael Hall

DISTINGUISHING
CAUSE & BLAME

If there's a place where confusion is king and the land is the Land of Misery, it is the confusion between identifying a cause and blaming someone. This is the confusion also between a person being responsible for something which we hold that person accountable verses blaming and accusing. The first describe a healthy relationship for healthy people, the second describes a sick and toxic mind-set that leads to destructive relating. And inside of that mix is another difference. That's the difference between that which *causes* something and the *symptoms* that result.

To clear out these confusions, let's start by defining what we're referring to.

Cause. In a simple and limited context, a *cause* is that which brings about or produces an effect. If you slam a face with sufficient force, blood will rush to the skin and it will redden. The slam would be the cause of the redden skin. If you fall of a ladder and break a bone, falling is the cause of the break. Well, it is one *cause.* Even in this example, falling is not the *sole cause* while it may be the primary one. A wobbling ladder may have contributed, someone yelling that distracted the person may be another, or what if the person had a heart attack and then fell. So there could be many causes—multiple causes which include direct causes and contributing factors.

Responsible. To be *able* to make a *response, response-able.* This describe one who has the capacity to mentally, emotionally, verbally, or behaviorally make a response. When you hold someone responsible for something, you are essentially saying, "You are the one with the power to do X, to correct it, and/or to change it."

Blame. This means to find fault, to censure, to condemn, etc. It originated from *blasmer* to reproach, sometimes is used in the sense of "to hold responsible for a fault." Whereas *cause* looks for the factors and variables that influence a result, *blame* focuses on the inter-personal relationship in which one person *reproaches* another by finding fault and condemning. Blaming describes a negative way of relating, so no wonder we all have such a strong reaction to being *blamed.*

Symptoms. A symptom is the result or consequence of a cause. People frequently confuse emotions as the problem, but they are symptoms of thinking, interpreting, valuing, etc.

When you say, 'X caused Y' you are holding X responsible for Y. You are implying that X directly caused Y. Ask, "What did X do that directly brought Y about?" Take inflation. For most of 2021 inflation in the US has been at 7 percent.

What is the cause of inflation? Who is to blame? Is influence a symptom?

Granted that inflation results from multiple causes, we do know the primary cause—printing money.

That devalues the currency and makes money less valuable. It invites manufactures, retailers, and everyone then to raise prices. So who set the policy to print more money or push for legislation that resulted in printing more money? Now we go to those in the government who passed multiple bills that created a flood of money into the economy. So I hold President Biden responsible for the current inflation and more specifically his policies.

Did he and the democrats have good intentions? Yes, I'm sure they were doing what they thought best. Yet beyond intentions, we need to go to what and how they thought—their understandings and beliefs about economics and government. In this case, believing in "big government," and that it's best to have a central government making decisions, they responded to the pandemic and the downturn in the economy by passing multiple spending bills. They made that response, so they are responsible.

So far there has been no blame or fault-finding. So far, I have only been identifying the persons with the power to respond to the situation. So when does blame come in, if ever? Blame would arise when it becomes obvious that "printing more money" does not work, but that flooding the economy with more money actually results in inflation. Once that becomes clear, then to continue doing what does not work gives place for "finding fault." That people make mistakes, misunderstand how something like the economy works, etc., that's human nature. It is continuing to do what is harmful that enables one to take the next step, namely, reproaching the person for making things worse.

I use this example because it has been one of the main conversations politically for some time. We spent more than a whole year throwing money at the economy and now we have the worst inflation in decades. The first step in any confrontation is *holding someone responsible for his or her actions.* When done respectfully, this is a caring relational skill. The second step is issuing a warning that *rebukes* in order to help the person get back on track. What makes the rebuke ineffective is typically *a closed mind.* The person cuts off feedback, refuses to face reality, and is driven by bias and ideology. By the time of a rebuke, things are usually in a pretty bad way and so it often does not work.

DISTINGUISHING
FEELINGS & EMOTIONS

The difference between feelings and emotions is a tricky one and a confusion that everybody falls into. That arises mostly due to the English language. These words (feelings and emotions) are used so synonymously, and so often, as if synonyms that you hear it everywhere. It is in the way we talk; it is in the books and articles that we read. It is everywhere! So while I don't see a change in this, we can change *our understandings so that we are not confused about the difference.*

Now NLP does indeed make this distinction. *Feelings* refer to the sensory sensations that you experience with touch, smell, and taste. It is the internal or proprioception, also known as kinesthetic sense, and your vestibular system. The *kinesthetics* which are deep in your body are the sensations (that is, feelings) and those that focus on the outward senses (temperature, texture, etc.). NLP has popularized the use of *kinesthetics* to talk about feelings. These feelings are *not* emotions.

An *emotion* is made up of feelings *and cognitions.* This, in fact, is what turns a kinesthetic sensation into a full-fledged emotion. This also explains why so many "emotions" feel so similar. The kinesthetic sensations are the same or very similar. What differentiates the feeling from the emotion are the *cognitive understandings* that you hold about something. This frequently comes up in trainings, so I often explain that there are five emotions which are pretty much made up of the same kinesthetics, the same hormones, and the same activity in the neuro-pathways. They are fear, anger, stress, excitement, and lust.

All of these emotions involve the activation of the lower parts of the brain (i.e., hippocampus, thalamus, amygdala) and the activation of the "general arousal syndrome." If you cognitively find something unpleasant—you may experience stress in the form of fear and/or anger. If you interpret the event as desirable—then you may experience the same stress as excitement or lust. The differentiating factor are your thoughts—which arise from *how you interpret things,* your semantic schema.

This means that feelings are not emotions and do not contain emotions, but emotions involve and contain feelings. Emotions is the higher logical level and, in fact, are *meta-states.* To create any emotion, you have to answer a question like, "What do you think-or-feel *about* X?" X could be an event, a person, an idea, etc. "What do you think-or-feel about a roller coaster?" Whatever the person's answer, it will determine whether she will experience fear or excitement. "What do you think-and-feel about an action movie with lots of car chases?" Does it evoke excitement, fear, anger, or even lust? It could. It all depends on the way a person *interprets* that object of the state;

Now when a person says "I feel X," you really don't know if the person is talking about kinesthetic sensations or emotions. So ask, "Are you speaking about sensations in your body, some kinesthetic

sensations, or are you referring to an emotion?" Sometimes this can be very confusing because we humans often use the wrong word. "I feel angry" could mean stress, upset, frustrated, bothered, out-of-sorts, etc. "I feel happy" could mean contentment, satisfied, excited, pleased, healthy, and on and on. In this our emotional language is full of ambiguities and confusions which is why it is always worth the trouble to dig a bit deeper to understand what a person is actually saying.

To make the distinction, you can also ask, "Where in your body do you feel X-feeling?" As a general rule, if the person cannot point to where in the body he feels it, it is probably a mixture of feelings (secondary, tertiary, feelings), an emotion, or a judgment. "Where do you feel self-esteem?" That's a mental judgment that comes from your concepts about self worth. "Where do you feel forgiveness?" Again, a judgment about how to treat an ethical violation and how to think about the one who did it.

True feelings are kinesthetic sensations and out of them we create our "emotions." Inside of every emotion there is the kinesthetic component. This is what gives the emotion its *motion* so that we are moved to go forward or away from something. The "e" (originally "ex") speaks about the motion now moving us from where we were to somewhere else. It comes from an evaluation in your mind.; And together these are key facets of emotional intelligence, emotional well-being, and emotional energy and vitality.

DISTINGUISHING
CONTENT & PROCESS

Here is a distinction that is at the forefront of the NLP and Neuro-Semantic models and it is this distinction that makes both *meta-fields*. It is this *distinction* also that is key to problem-solving and transformation.

> *Content.* Regarding whatever you are talking about, this is the story or the details. Content defines *what* you are talking about. Content focuses on what is immediately on "the theater of your mind," what you represent and what you think is critically important. When we ask for more content, we need more sensory-based information: where, what, when, with whom, how, which, etc. We need the factual evidence and the contextual references.

> *Process.* Similarly, whatever you are talking about, process refers to the structuring which governs the content. And because mental-and-emotional structures are dynamic, it refers to the controlling processes of the content. This takes us to a higher level—the hidden frames that make up the assumptions and premises governing the content. Process speaks about how the information, the data, is being formulated and interpreted.

Now both of these deal with the same message, but at different levels. One is at the primary level (content), the other is at the meta-level (process). Whenever you are not aware of the higher level structures, you can get so caught up in content that you entirely miss the hidden, and usually invisible, influence of the over-arching frames. Then you cannot discern what is going on above and beyond and behind the content. The content fills your mind and seems all controlling and dominating. Yet this actually describes the mind of a child.

Learning about the structuring of the processes above content takes you to a meta-level where you discover a great many hidden and invisible influences. Here "whoever sets the frame controls the game."   Here meaning can be formatted in many different ways. Here framing and reframing occurs. This also is the mind of an adult— someone who has learned to "step back" (go to a meta level) and pay attention to the formatting or the code that is being used.

Content is the story of the fear of a big dog that a person develops as a child. It involves the details of where one was, what happened, and how the person responded. Details. Content. Process refers to *how* a person encoded that memory and *what* he is doing with it today. If you remember it *as if you are still there*— you are associating into the story so that the experience seems like it is current. It is not. But you are cuing your body to respond *as if* it is. Process is also the place where you can make transformative changes.

> Put the content of the story up on a movie screen and step back from it several rows.
> As you see it, feel the distance, it is about you, but a much younger and inexperienced you.

Make the picture a black-and-white snapshot. That will cue your brain that it is an old picture, not current.

Index the time of that story, what you were wearing, was the sun shining or was it raining that day. Identify as much as you can about that event.

Run that movie to the end .... then forward on to a time of delight and joy. Step into the movie at the scene of pleasure and rewind it backwards while you are in it and do it in two seconds. Really fast.

All of these *process instructions* gives you a chance to change the frames, the formatting, and the code that determines how you interpret and experience the content. The principle is simple, yet profound: Change the code and the experience changes.

And there's always a code. That's what the *processes* reveal. Changing content is much more difficult because whatever happened in the past, happened. And you can't change what happened. But you can change how you interpret it. You can change the code and how you store it and what you use it for today.

NLP revealed the two levels in the Spelling Strategy back in the 1970s. At the content level are the details of how a word is spelled. At the meta-level are the processes: You hear the word (auditorially) and you make a picture of the letters (visually). You then compare the picture of the word you create with a memory of what the word looks like (visual remembered). If they look the same, you feel a sensation of congruence (kinesthetic positive) and you are ready to spell it. If the picture does not look the same as the remembered picture, you feel a sensation of incongruence (kinesthetic negative) and you cycle back around to try to make a better picture.

Discovering the hidden processes is in the back of your mind, or the back of someone else's mind is not always easy. The structures hide. They are comprised of dynamic structures that are hard to see ... hard to see, that is, until you have been trained to see them. And, of course, that's what NLP and Neuro-Semantic trainings are about—learning to see what's invisible in the back of the mind. Then if you are running some old programs that are no longer relevant, you can upgrade your programming. Welcome to the world of transformation!

From: L. Michael Hall **
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March 14, 2022
My Perspective on
the War Putin Started

WHAT'S WRONG WITH US?

Whenever I wrote about political matters, I always write from a *humanistic point of view.* That is, from the Psychology of the Bright Side of Human Nature—Self-Actualization Psychology. That's because that is the psychology that gave birth to NLP and to Neuro-Semantics.

The sovereign nation of Ukraine has been attacked by the Russian leader who I can only describe as delusional and a sociopath (Putin). Yet after 19 days of his War against Ukraine, the people of Ukraine are still *not* asking for anyone else to fight for them—they are perfectly willing to stand their ground and do their own fighting. All they are asking for is for Nato and the West (the US) to provide the tools they need so they have a better chance to defend themselves. But we are not giving them what they need.

If anyone has earned the right to ask for help, it is the Ukrainians. While thousands of civilians have already been killed, the world seems to be stuck in a purely reactive mode. We help the refugees and are hardly helping at all in supplying the soldiers and non-soldiers to defend themselves. Meg jets have been offered by Poland, but Binden put a stop to that. Why? From what he has said, it seems clear that it is his paranoid fearfulness and timidity.

What's wrong with Binden? My guess: his political calculations regarding his own party and power. That's what's on his mind. What is not on his mind are *the people who are being killed.* Let Putin utter a threat and Binden shakes in his boots fearful of what Putin would do— seemingly blind to what Putin *is doing right now in the ongoing killing.* Is this history repeating itself? World War II began when leaders, afraid of offending Hitler because "what might he do," thereby allowed him to invade several countries.

Why won't we come to the aid of a freely elected democratic nation? The answer we are giving is pretty bureaucratic: Ukraine is not *technically* part of the alliance. Let a dictator invade with 200,000 soldiers, bomb the hell out of cities, kill thousands of women and children, etc. and still we do very little to intervene. We still are not giving the Ukrainians the weapons they need and are asking for. Our leaders keep making excuses about why we are not helping. So the dictator continues to destroy; he has total control over the media in Russia and is jailing journalists who dare to inform the people. Consequently the Russian people mostly are not even aware of what Putin and his army is actually doing. What are we waiting for? A technicality—we are waiting for a Russian missile to land in a Nato country. We are waiting for Putin to use chemical warfare.

My question is: How sane is it to wait for a crazed dictator to make things that much worse before we take action?

Arnold has spoken up about Putin's War addressing it to the Russian People.

https://twitter.com/Schwarzenegger/status/1504426844199669762?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ct
wcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1504426844199669762%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5Es
1_c10&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Forf.at%2Fstories%2F3254043%2F

The second entry here is about NSTT**--- Neuro-Semantic Trainers' Training.** I usually don't quote things that people write on Facebook, but this one was truly beautiful. It is from one of newest and youngest female trainers —

Abir Louati

For me, the NSTT training is a journey that enables you to dive inside yourself, hands you the keys of life, connects your body, heart and emotions, and makes you see life from a different perspective and with another level of awareness.   This is what I expected when I decided to enrol in the NSTT. Besides what I had expected, I found better and unexpected stuff— I found what nations, governments and policies couldn't do. In this edition, I attended a mini version of the world that pulled together different, and sometimes opposing, cultures, traditions, religions, and life styles. Yet, despite all the differences, this NSTT edition managed to unify them and managed to make everyone accept each other without any kind of judgment, and try to lovingly and respectfully put each other at ease.

I understood that it is not impossible to unify the world and make it a much better place than we are witnessing it now. For me, this is our life mission as humans and Neuro-Semantics community. I shall thank God for his blessings and this wonderful opportunity

My comments to Abir were these:

You have described something about NSTT that I felt but have not put to words---the world-unifying nature of Neuro-Semantics. We are united in a vision of people growing and developing to be the best version of themselves and using their meaning-making powers to create a positive inside--out life. And with that vision---individual differences melt away. We are all humans, equally involved in the same adventure of discovery, and we can help each other. Beautifully written!

DISTINGUISHING STATES:
Primary, Meta, Gestalt

What I'm focusing on in this series on critical distinctions are the essential *differences* that make a difference. I'm doing that because "expertise is about distinctions." That is, critical distinctions within a relevant domain is what separates the person who is an expert from those who are not. The well-trained person, an expert, can see, recognize, and work with distinctions that others are simply blind to. The distinctions I'm mostly focusing on here are those that are critical for personal development, psychological well-being, healthy relationships, etc.

Here's a distinction about mind-body states that we make in Neuro-Semantics and about which most NLP practitioners are clueless. Unless they have studied *Meta-States* (2012) or any of the Meta-State books, they will not even be aware of this three-fold distinction. Yet *all states are not the same.* As there are many different kinds of emotions and many different kinds of thoughts, so there are many different kinds of states.

Levels and Complexity of Mind-Body States
Primary States. A primary state is directly *about* an event or trigger in the outside world. As a primary state, it is a state of mind, body, and emotion made up of one of the primary emotions that you can easily identify in your body. Ask about where in the body you feel the emotional state.

> Where do you feel fear? Where in your body do you feel anger? What about relaxation? Or stress? Where and how do you feel love, apathy, joy, sadness, etc.?

Also ask about the trigger that elicits or provokes the primary emotional state.

> You are afraid of what specifically? You are angry about what precisely? What triggers your love, your joy, stress, relaxation, disgust, attraction?

Meta-States. When you have a state that is meta to a primary state, you have a meta-state. And most human states are meta-states. What do you think or feel about joy, or anger, or fear, or love, or any other emotional state? Whatever you think-and-feel is a state about that state, a meta-state. This means you have thoughtful anger, kind anger, gentle anger, respectful anger, patient anger ... all which would give the state of anger a better quality. Or you can have stressful anger, hateful anger, fearful anger, rageful anger ... all of which would turn anger into a monstrous experience. The mental-emotional state you apply to a state *sets the frames of meaning* about the first state. That's what makes the meta-states so powerful, so dynamic, and so determining. Nor does this occur just one level up, you can have multiple meta-states about a state.

Gestalt States. As a system of thinking-and-feeling in the mind-body, states-about-states set up numerous systemic processes, one of which is *the gestalting process.* This refers to the fact that when more than two meta-states are applied to a primary state, there is a strong likelihood that

something "more than and different from" the sum of the parts will emerge. This *emergent property,* as a property of systems, then brings into existence something *other than* what you can define by making a summation of the component pieces. You have a gestalt; you have a gestalt state. Courage is like that. Made up of fear at the primary level and possibly responsibility, love, and risk taking at the meta-level, "courage" emerges. So also with resilience, forgiveness, magnanimity, self-esteem, wisdom, inspiration and dozens and dozens of other of the most wonderful human experiences.

"Why is it important to make this distinction between the kinds and levels of states?" you ask. For lots of reasons. First and foremost is that fact that each level of a mind-body state operates in very different ways. The functioning processes of primary, meta, and gestalt states are very different. And if you don't know that, you will be easily seduced into treating the higher level states (meta and gestalt) as if they were primary states. I noted in the book, *Meta-States*, that this explains much of the so-called "research" on NLP in the 1970s and 80s. Those doing the research did not know the difference and so "proved" by their faulty research design and lack of competent skills that "NLP doesn't work." Actually, they proved that they did not understand what they were doing!

Primary states are directly related to the *outside world.* They are *about* something external which ground them in reality. Meta-States and Gestalt states are directly related to the *inside world*— to a previous state or experience. In them, you are relating to yourself. Perhaps you are reflecting back on some emotion, some concept, some memory, some understanding, etc. While it is your representational mind that governs primary states, it is your self-reflexive mind that governs your higher states. And when you are meta-stating, you are working mostly with your *outside-of-conscious mind,* your intentionality, and your highest values. It's an entirely different world.

Now for a meta-question— what do you think about what you've just read? What do you feel? How fascinated would you be to learn more about your self-reflexive consciousness and run the higher levels of your mind?

DISTINGUISHING
THE D & B MOTIVATIONAL LEVELS

Abraham Maslow introduced the two dimensions or levels of human motivation in 1941, the D-Motivation level and the B-Motivation level. He developed this distinction to answer the long debated question in psychology at that time, "What is the most important or deepest motivational drive in human beings?" At that time they called that *drive* "instinct." Freud suggested sex, then later death, the life. Adler said the social instinct, and also the inferiority instinct. Jung had other ideas as did every other psychologist of the time.

What Maslow discovered in his many studies—he studied chimpanzees with Harry Harlow (he began as a Behaviorist), then the Blackfoot Indians as an anthropological study as guided by Ruth Benedict, then female sexuality. From his studies he recognized that some needs operate by *deficiency.* When you lack what you need, you feel a driving motivation to obtain the gratification. And when you satisfy the need, the motivational drive goes away. It dissipates. Other needs operate from an entirely different principle, that of *abundance,* and a different dynamic, that of *being-ness.* When you lack a *being-need,* you also feel a driving need to gratify it. But unlike the D-needs, when you satisfy the B-need, the need and its capacity expand. Not only does the need grow, but so does its very capacity.

This means that D-needs and D-values operate from the principle of "the more, the less." The more you gratify the need, the less it drives you. Conversely, the B-needs and B-values operates from the opposite pattern of "the more, the more." The more you gratify the need, the more you want, the more you are capable of experiencing the *being* need and value.

For humans, Maslow identified four levels of D-needs and D-values: Survival (food, water, air, shelter, sex, etc.), Safety (structure, order, security), Social (love and affection, bonding and attachment), and Self (competence in doing and value as a member of the group). These things motivate; yet they are time-limited motivations. Eventually you get enough. Eventually, the more gratifications, the less motivation. Now for animals, that's just fine. They can be healthy and happy with their D-needs met.

But not humans. No way! This is where Maslow, although an atheist, discovered that "man has a higher nature." There are needs, drives, values, cognitions, etc. that are *being*-values and needs and that operate from "the more, the more" principle. These are also non-instrumental needs—that is, they work best when they are indulged *for their own sake and not as a means for something else.* Another contrast. The D-needs are instrumental which is why we humans cannot live *in* them. There's something in us that keeps pulling us upward—upward to meaning, knowledge, justice, fairness, equality, beauty, order, giving love, contribution, excellence, making a difference,

collaboration, etc.   D-motivation and B-motivation—what a distinction!

If you don't distinguish between the D and the B-needs and values, you are very likely to substitute the D-values for the B-values. Do that and you live the life of an animal! You might come to think that "the purpose of life" is consumption. Or you might think it is sex ... or money ... or safety ... or self-esteem. And what's wrong with that way of thinking? Lots! It is low of a bar for humans. You were made for so much more. You are missing out on all of the B-values which make life truly human, truly meaningful.

Yet there is more danger. Fail to distinguish the D and B-realms and then if you fail to gratify your B-needs, you are in danger of suffering from a whole range of meta-pathologies. When you lack a rich sense of purpose and meaning— you are susceptible to depression, finding life futile, feeling hopeless, joyless, etc. You may experience an existential angst, "Is this all there is?" And with that, your very spirit will sicken, you will lose heart, and you will have no persistence or resilience when things get tough.

Conversely, making the distinction between these two realms with the needs and values in each and you will be able to find your passion or passions in life. That's because *passion occurs in the B-values.* That is the secret to becoming fully human/fully alive.

DISTINGUISHING
EQUALITY AND COMPETENCE

Equality is one of the *being*-values that Abraham Maslow identified. If that's true, then the sense of human equality is one of those values which are wired into us and an essential part of what makes us fully human/ fully alive. But what does *equality* mean?

What is obviously *does not mean* is that we are all equal in intelligence, talents, abilities, or genetics. Genetically, we are all different in many unequal ways. This lack of equality goes to our DNA which goes back to our neurological gifts or challenges. We are also *not equal* in terms of our family heritage, our social status, our financial status, the advantages or disadvantages of our town or country. In all of these areas, there are lots of inequalities.

In the 18th century a new budding idea was given birth. In the first democracies in the late 18th century, the idea was conceived that "all men are created equal by their creator and endowed with certain inalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." At that time, that was really radical! For the many millennia of human history, people had accepted as a given that people are not equal in value and therefore made no attempt to establish equality in the eyes of the law. Instead, they had built up caste systems, hierarchies of power, and myths about royal blood lines.

The idea that all people are created equal then lead to an equally radical concepts, namely, that we can, and should, create political, economic, and social systems to actualize that idea. In 1776 that gave birth to the US Constitution and launched an "experiment" in democracy which sought to answer the question, "Can free men and women govern themselves?" Or do we need those who are innately "superior" (those of the higher classes, the ruling classes) to govern us?

This idea of equality is not an equality created by people being educated, trained, or manipulated to be the same, to have the same talents, beliefs, understandings, skills, etc. That's impossible. And if it were possible, it would be a nightmare. It is rather a belief in *all people are to be equally valued in the eyes of the law.* All are to be treated by the same rules and applications of the rules. No one should get preferential treatment. Those who make the laws should equally have to obey the same laws as everyone else.

At the same time we are *equal before the law,* we are also very different. We differ in our talents, skills, interests, capacities, understandings, meanings, beliefs, preferences, habits, and on and on. And this diversity lies within the concept of *equal as persons.* Consequently, what does *not* matter any longer is ethnic background, family of origin, birthplace, creed, skin color, lifestyle, etc. No person is "better" than another. No one is "superior" than another. We are all human beings—all

members of the one and only "race" on planet earth, the human race.

In making distinctions about people, we distinguish competencies of skills, not their humanity. In terms of their humanity, we are all one; we are all equal. In terms of skills, competencies, what we can do, what we are good at—we are all very different. Some are smarter, some are faster, some are stronger, some have more money, some are more interested in money, some are more loving, etc. And because we are all equal in humanity—the differences do not create a basis for superiority of persons.

Now we can look upon someone superiority in a skill, knowledge, competency, etc. as *a human possibility* that the rest of us can learn from and model. Now we can respect and honor every such superiority, knowing that it is a gift to humanity which can enrich us all. This explains why it is perfectly fine to give accurate feedback to children about what they excel in. If one is superior in math or music or literature or whatever, that is God's gift to that person. It is not that person's "superiority." To have a contest and give "prizes to all" so that "all can win" confuses this distinction between equality and confidence.

Let's honor our equality as persons and our equality in value as human beings while simultaneously embrace our differences. Let's respect each person and challenge each one to be the best version of him or herself.

DISTINGUISHING
LINEAR AND SYSTEMIC THINKING

We all begin our thinking life by learning to think linearly. This comes naturally. Something happens and then something else happens and *lo and behold,* we connect them in our mind as a Cause-Effect structure. This gives rise to the "X causes Y" formula which then becomes an essential way that we think, reason, and feel. This actually is associative thinking because what we are doing is associating one thing with another, and we do so even when one does not actually *cause* the other.

> "He pushed me and I fell down and scratched my knee; he hurt me." "She stuck her tongue out at me and made me feel bad."

Ironically, what initiates our linear thinking then messes it up. Once we get going in our cognitive development and can follow one thing to another, the associative thinking that started it all now keeps interrupting us. We may start with X and then go to Y, but then Y reminds us of N or B or D and each of these may remind us of yet another association, and so we are off and running— unable to think in a straight linear way. One associated reference "rings the bell" of a dozen other associations. While this is great for creativity, it messes up linear thinking.

NLP began and significantly contributed to psychology by taking the TOTE model of Cognitive Psychology and filled it in with the key "languages" of the mind—visual, auditory, kinesthetic, language, etc. That led to the Strategy Model, a step-by-step process of moving from one representation to another until we move through the components that lead to an experience (i.e., spelling, motivation, buying, selling, negotiating, getting up in the morning, etc.). This was a tremendous advance. It also started the formal processes of modeling. From here NLP people began searching for ways to model all kinds of experiences and expertise's.

Then they hit a block. NLP as a field became stuck. We found out that we could model those skills and behaviors that was comprise only of micro-behaviors. If we could detect eye-accessing cues, hear representational predicates, limit a behavior in time, etc., then we could model that behavior. But long-term behaviors, behaviors that emerge in a system over time, and behaviors that result from complex layers of states— these kept eluding us— Leadership, Management, Heath and Fitness, Wealth Creation, Magnanimity, Forgiveness, Courage, and on and on. And these seem to be the very experiences that are most important to us.

The challenge here is that these go beyond *linear thinking* and include *systemic thinking.* That's what the Meta-States Model provided. In reflecting upon one's current state, you think-again about it which means you circle back to it. Then as you rise above it, you can entertain a different set of thoughts-and-emotions about it. As this new set of reflections applies a state to the state, we have a set of inter-related variables or elements—a system and not only that, but multiple layers of

systems. In this way, we can now specify the structure of all of the meta-level phenomena, not as a hierarchical system, but as a fluid holoarchical system.

To understand Meta-Stats is to think systemically. You have to hold in mind the primary state thoughts and emotions while simultaneously taking into account the meta-level thoughts and emotions which establish the frame for that state. In doing this, you *include* the primary state variables and *transcend* them to the higher level. And you may do this two or more levels up. The lower is embedded within the higher. The higher is governing and coalescing into the lower.

- In *calm fear,* you transcend and include the fear into calmness (as the meta-state) so that *calm* is the meta-level frame for fear. It is the classification. *Fear* is the member of that class.
- In *respectful anger, respect* is the governing frame/ class for anger. As you meta-state or "transcend and include" anger in the category of respect, systemically *respect* governs the anger, managers it, and qualifies it. To realize that is to engage in the systemic thinking that is inherent in the Meta-States Model.

Linear thinking will only take you so far in understanding "the structure of experience." Where it ends, you need systemic thinking to take you further. You need the Meta-States Model to model the dynamic structure of the experience and to discover the layers of experience.

Want more? See *NLP Going Meta* (2002) for how to model using meta-levels. Also, *Systemic Coaching* (2012).

DISTINGUISHING DEGREES

"If we identify, we do not differentiate.   If we differentiate, we cannot identify."
Alfred Korzybski.

To think in terms of degrees or percentages, to think in terms of what's "in the middle" represents an advance in *thinking.* It is advance from what comes most natural to us, namely, to think in terms of polarities. As children we think in polarities in order to create our first categories: night and day, black and white, good and bad, etc. Such dichotomous thinking shows up in our *either–or categories.* "Either you are a success or a failure, either you are a teacher's pet or the teacher hates you."

What does *not* come so naturally and what has to be learned is to think in terms of degrees. When you can do that, then instead of asking, "Are you angry or happy?" you ask "*How* angry are you?" "What is the degree of your happiness?" "Is your resilience low, medium, or high?" "If you were to gauge the level of your relaxation from 0 to 10, where would it be?" This kind of thinking is less definite, less rigid, and much more flexible. It allows for degrees. It enables you to view and even expect that experiences and processes will be ever-changing.

A great deal of human misery is a function of polarized either-or thinking. Many who suffer depression, discouragement, high levels of frustration and stress, anger, fear, etc. do so because they fail to make *distinctions of degree.* Instead they use polarized language: "It is always this way!" "She will never change." "My job sucks." "My boss is an asshole."

Use that kind of polarized language and you can get yourself *stuck in a negative state pretty easily.* That's because when you use such language, things are definitive and rigid. There's no movement or possibility of movement. That's where the magic of *degree language* creates the possibility of change. "How much does your job suck? Does it suck 90% of the time?" "Is there the possibility that there is even 1% of the job that does not suck?"

Thinking in the polarized either-or way is known as Aristotelian thinking. It is characterized by an elimination of the middle. That is, there's nothing in the middle, you are either at this end or that end of the continuum. But that's the problem—*the middle has been excluded.* Yet the world that we live in is a world of degrees—*processes.* And that means that just about everything has a middle, something in-between conceptualized polar opposites.

Of course, it is a lot easier (a lot!) to reduce the world to a set of either-or categories. Do that and *you don't have to do so much thinking.* Conversely, it requires a lot of cognitive effort to think about degrees, about *how much* a thing is one thing and not another thing. We see this in a raw and crude form in the current polarization of politics and from that comes the pressure to be politically correct.

Conversely, to see things in terms of degree, to identify the nuances of a subject, to recognize that different criteria apply in different contexts, etc., all of that requires a lot of *conscious thinking,* the "slow thinking" of Daniel Kahneman (*Thinking Fast and Slow*, 2011). And that requires effort.

When you learn what Alfred Korzybski called Non-Aristotelian thinking (*Science and Sanity* 1933/ 1994), you learn to think more systemically. Now you can include in your thinking many of the systemic factors that make up a subject. And with that, while your thinking will become more complex, it will also be more able to make sense of the dynamic processes.

Do you have "an internal critic?" Most people do. Next time you experience that, ask some degree questions: How loud is the voice? What tone is the voice? Where does the voice seem to be coming from? Where does it seem to be going? Once you ask these questions, you can also begin to *play around with the variables* which are inside of the degrees. "Suppose you move the voice so that it comes out of your left shoulder. What happens then?" "Suppose you make the tone and accent that of Elvis Presley. What effect does that have on you?" "Or what if you lower the volume so it becomes a whisper? Or so low you can't hear it?"

Degrees— every human experience, because it is a process, has degrees. And if it has degrees, then its variables are variable. That is, you can change it! You can turn it up or down. You can alter it this way or that way. And as you do, you will start to discover that your *subjective experiences are under your control to a much larger degree than you ever thought possible.* And that then puts you on the pathway to unleashing more of your potentials and becoming more of who you can become.

> **For more:** See *Figuring Out People* (2005) and the meta-program on Aristotelian thinking #7. Also, *Systemic Coaching* (2012).

THINK IN CATEGORIES
BUT NOT CATEGORICALLY

When you first learned to think and to talk, you thought in terms of categories. Mom or dad offered you a specific item— and then categorized it by putting it into a classification. "This is a toy." You learned about items that were *food* items. Some things could be eaten and other things could not. There were some things that you could do and that were permissible, and then there were things that were not. As you learned about items, you simultaneously learned about categories. "These are play clothes; these are school clothes." You also learned to put activities into certain categories.

To think in categories is to use a system of classification for thinking. It enables you to sort things out. It also prevents becoming mentally overwhelmed. You learned the 26 letters of the alphabet: A B C D E F G etc. The *letters* are the members of the class, the classification is *the alphabet.* Most of us learned the letters by singing them until they became a single unit. Even today you may not know what letter comes before, say Q, unless you back up and say the letters in before Q. It's in this way that we can overcome the severe limitation of conscious awareness— the $7^{+/-2}$ bit of information at a time.

But thinking in categories is *not* the same as categorical thinking. *Categorical thinking* is defined as "being without exception or qualification, absolute." That's a very, very different thing! Here then is a critical distinction, the distinction between categorical thinking and category thinking. To think categorically is to think in absolute and rigid terms. Categorical thinking has been called Aristotelian thinking because it assumes that categories are absolute. It confuses the map with the territory. "It is X, period." End of story. This primarily describes the thinking of a child who has just discovered some category and does not have the cognitive flexibility to recognize that *we are the ones who do the categorizing* and that anything can be put into multiple categories.

I bring this up because of the importance of category thinking. It's essential for clear and precise thinking about the variables in a given field. It answers the first question of meaning which we all ask, "What is it?" That is, how should I categorize X? This is also critical for being able to work with the meta-levels in your mind. After all, over the years you have been building up a set of categories which now make up the *frames of your mind.* They make up a matrix of frames. And while we have many in common, we also—all of us—have unique and idiosyncratic categories.

Take something as simple as making a mistake in writing or saying something. What category do you put that item? Do you have a category called "failure?" Perhaps you put it into the category of "learning." Maybe the category of "human fallibility." *The category you put it in determines what it means to you.* That's because the category is your *frame.* It is your internal *mental context* which you use to "make sense" of things. And the amazing thing about human beings—we have multiple

levels of categories.

There is *John*, a person. Categories that we all share would be as follows. John is a "man," and "man" is in the category of "human," which is in the category of "mammal," which is in the category of "animate being" (not inanimate thing), which is in the category of "sentient beings," which may be in the category of "life" or "living," etc. These levels of classifications or frames enable us to sort things out and have multiple members of a class. And because they operate as *logical levels*, it enables us to think more clearly about things.

This is how we *learn.* It describes an essential aspect of learning. First you learn some *items* in a field, then you learn the first level *categories.* After that you may perhaps learn of other members of the class, as you become familiar and knowledgeable about a category, you become ready to learn about the meta-classification, and all of the other higher categories, all the way up.

Today I was asked about how I think about and keep in mind the Well-Formed Outcome questions and distinctions which we use in Meta-Coaching. I said that I think of them in terms of 6 categories (although you could set up less or more categories). So, for example, to set a goal you first have a *Subject,* a *Context*, *Processes, Supporting elements*, a *Decision,* and *Closure.* Then within each there are typically two to five detailing questions in each category. So to learn how to benchmark, a person needs to know both *the category* and the *kind of questions* in each.

> Thinking inductively: What questions would help me get the subject as a category? How many ways could I ask questions about the category of *the subject*?
> Thinking deductively: What category would X-question fall into? It would be a member of what classification?

When I start a coaching conversation, I want to know *the subject.* To attain that I could ask, "What do you want to talk about?" But that's pretty wimpy. So I strengthen it, "What do you want?" That's a bit better, it puts the focus on the person and the object. But I could do better. "What generative change do you want to make?" "What would be the most transformative change that would be a complete upgrade in your life?" All of these questions are questions about *the subject.* If you are watching a coaching session, and especially if you are benchmarking one, you have to engage in *category thinking* so that you know how to think about the question and where to put it. "What is the category of this question?"

So while categorical thinking is extremely limited and more often than not, an ineffective thinking pattern, *thinking in categories is essential* if you want to be a clear and precise thinker.

A TRUTH MINISTRY?
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!

If there ever was a bad idea, a really bad idea, it is the idea that the Biden White House is now proposing, a *Dis-information Bureau.* If that comes to pass, then I will recognize George Orwell as one of the great prophets of our time— *1984* has become a reality.

Last year I wrote In a series of articles on *facts.* The fact about *facts* is that even defining a fact, let alone identifying true facts, is a very challenging task! All of science is dedicated to that and the fact is that *facts keep changing.* We all know about facts in medicine that keep changing, facts about how to eat healthily seem to change almost weekly, but even facts in physics change. There were major paradigm shifts in physics in the last century. And as noted in the series on facts, there are all *kinds of facts*—empirical, social, psychological, mathematical, historical, political, etc. And there are multiple *levels of facts.* Furthermore, after you have a fact, you still have to interpret the fact. You have to answer the question, "What does this particular fact mean?" [The Neuro-Semantics of Facts is on the Gift section of www.neurosemantics.com]

So for someone, *anyone,* to think they have a monopoly on facts or truth is the height of arrogance as well as stupidity. *Stupidity* because they don't know or have forgotten that "the map is not the territory." They don't know, have forgotten, or were never taught that *truth is about statements.* When it comes to something be "true or false," we are talking about a statement that is asserting something. If I say, "It is raining." that statement is either true or false or partly true and/or partly false.

When we engage in the most fundamental human activity—searching for truth— we are looking for a *construct* about our *understanding* of something. We are searching for statements that are true and that we can count on. A statement is true when it asserts something, an understanding about what something is, how it works, its value, etc. When we test it, assess it, then we can find out if it is valid or not in a given context.

Truth is not a thing and therefore nobody "has" it. *Truth* is a concept, a construct about the validity of a mental map. So the very idea of having a Truth Ministry, a Dis-Information Board, assumes that someone, or some group of people, *absolutely know the truth* and can tell us *The Truth.* Consequently, that puts an end to the adventure of *search for the truth.* Now I no longer need to keep my mind open or ask challenging questions, I just check in with the Dis-Information Department of Political Correctness to find out The Truth. And they will also prevent open discussion or any and every argument that may not be the majority opinion. They will "protect" the rest of us from even being exposed to something they consider not to be The Truth (as if we needed protected).

Searching for the truth— debating, questioning, testing, reformulating, collaborating with people with different points of view, learning about our epistemologies (meta-epistemology), learning about the way we learn and reason (meta-learning), etc.—all of that is very different from *absolutely knowing and having The Truth.* Here is an important, nay a critical distinction, the *ideal of truth* and the claim of *possessing The Truth.*

I would have thought that we as a human race would have gotten over this after the Dark Ages. That's when inquisitions were invented to torture anyone who did not agree with the politically correct Truth of the time. If not then, then maybe during World War II when dictators arose in so many countries claiming to have the *final truth.* But here we are again. Now Joe Biden thinks that the way to counter Elon Musk's "uncontrollable" freedom of speech on Twitter is to create a Dis-Information Governance Board. It sounds like an Orwellian Big Brother hijack of Woke ideology to impose on anyone who disagrees.

In the name of the First Amendment that guarantees free speech, and in the name of every healthy science that is an open ongoing search for truth— this proposed Dis-Information Board should be defeated so it never sees the light of day. If Woke ideology people want truth, let it be fought out on the marketplace of free ideas where healthy debate can identify the strengths and weaknesses of each side. Shutting down heretics belongs to an age long past. If you think you're right and that your position on something is true, then let there be a respectful dialogue among people of good will.

DISTINGUISHING TRUTH
AND MY TRUTH

If you are honest, and not operating from a particular agenda, than as you think about an issue, your thoughts represent your best knowledge and understanding *at that moment*. If you have an open mind and are continuously learning, and not rigidly dogmatic, your thinking will change. You will learn better about some things, change your mind about other things, and expand your perceptions about others. Whatever, your thinking will not stay the same. It will inevitably change.

Your thinking will not stay the same because you are not all-knowing or all-wise. No one is. As you keep learning so your understandings will expand and get richer. And because you are a fallible human being, you will discover errors and falsehoods in what you know which you will discard for a clearer perception of the truth. And this will continue until the day you die. You will never close the book on learning or correcting your thinking.

Further, you will do all of this in your pursuit of Truth (Truth with a capital T). Yet you will never reach it. That's true for all of us. Truth is our ultimate goal and one that we will never finally reach. It is the north star that orients our search. By contrast, *your truth* is your subjective understanding of truth *right now*. It may be completely false, but still, it is your *truth*--- your subjective, perceptual, and emotional truth. And you have the right to it, to state it, and to live by it. It's your life. Ideally, you know it is your truth and not *the Truth*. Knowing that, you will continue to search for truth, listen to other views, test your truth against reality, etc.

The greatest truth seeking technology ever invented is undoubtedly *the scientific method*. Not "science" as the content of what we have discovered so far, but the scientific method itself. This is *the process* of coming up with an idea as a hypothesis, formulating it into a highly specific set of distinctions with a question that you can explore. Then you can experiment. You can go out and see what's actually occurring in the world, or set up a trial in a lab to determine what happens when you hold everything constant but one variable.

The scientific methodology grew out of regular everyday thinking when we get an idea and then go see if it stands up to reality. "I think that X leads to Y in this particular context. Now let me see if that's actually true." Then, with multiple examples wherein X leads to Y, we can tentatively conclude, "Yes this seems to be a regular pattern." Then if after 20 cases we find cases where it does not work out that way, we re-examine our original idea. "What else is involved that I have not thought about or taken into consideration?" Then with the revised idea, we test it up against reality.

Now in human history, at times people have set up a *Disinformation Governance Boards* to tell people the Truth. But this only occurred under totalitarian governments run by dictators. Leaders

in free countries where there is some form of democracy do not do that. Instead they encourage *freedom of thought and freedom of speech.* These are connected. Where you don't have freedom of speech, freedom of thought is endangered. In Orwell's *1984* Big Brother controlled speech and even prescribed allowed "the words." We see this today in many forms, prescribing the pronouns to be used, prescribing the words you can't say, etc. In like manner, last week former President Obama called for more *censorship*. This is definitely the wrong direction!

Just a couple days ago, May 6, Tweeter labeled Breaking911's headline which came directly from Associated Press, about "J&J Vaccine" tweet as "Misleading." A few hours later, they took that down. This is the problem with any Truth Ministry. They shut down ideas they disagree with or are offended by. Biden's *Dis-Information Board* put up Nina Jankowicz to be the Czar. But in the past few years she has been a significant distributor of dis-information herself. She called Hunter Biden's laptop discovery "Russian dis-information" and never retracted her statement.

In a free society *free speech and free thought* along with the *scientific method* is the primary cure for dis-information, falsehood, lies, manipulative ideology, etc. Only in the marketplace of *free speech* can we question people about their meanings, inquire about evidence, re-examine the evidence, ask hard question, test for biases and fallacies, and keep refining information.

When there is only free speech for one group and other groups are censored, we do not have free speech at all. It is control. When Tweeter uses formulas for shutting down one group to protect the ideology of another, what kind of "free speech" is that? It was *critical thinking skills* that have brought us out of the dark ages and created a context for healthy debate. Then the victory goes to who can make the best argument and win the minds and hearts of people without relying on manipulation or deception.

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Framers (Trainers)
Report on the ISNS Wisdom
May 6, 2022

BELONGING

In April, we make *belonging* the theme of the Zoom Community Meeting. In introducing the theme of belonging, I noted that as an international community, we are interested in far more than the number of people who attend trainings or conferences. We are interested in promoting the sense that people feel like a part of, and belonging to, Neuro-Semantics as a community dedicated to presenting high quality NLP—that is, NLP with integrity, in a context of collaboration, and creativity.

More recently I read about some of the studies of Prof. Carol Dwerk on the role of stereotypes with regard to females and mathematics. She had asked classes of females in math courses about their "feelings about math." And one question she asked was, "Do you belong in math?" And, as with studies about priming, this study also showed that the more conscious a woman would be about her gender (female) the less her sense of *belonging* to math. And women with a "fixed mindset" suffered the most. The longer they continued in math courses, they "had a shrinking sense of belonging."

In a way that's a funny way to talk about belonging. "Do you belong to math?" Generally *belonging* speaks about a deep and intimate connection with other people. It is more about your social relations and interactions than your conceptual relationships to a course of study. And yet ... you and I do *belong* not only to families and friends, to associations and groups, we also *belong* to ideas, to beliefs, to understandings, and to courses of study. So, we might now ask, "Do you belong to Neuro-Semantics?" "Do you belong to NLP?"

One form of *belonging* would be a membership question. Are you a member of, or do you have a license in, a given study, like NLP? If so, you could be a certified Practitioner, or a Trainer, or a Coach, etc. That's one way of belonging.

A deeper way of *belonging,* however, speaks about your *heart* or *spirit.* Do you emotionally and experientially feel that you belong to the NLP community or the Neuro-Semantic community? That's a very different question. You could have membership in a group and not feel that you belong. *Belonging* in the deepest sense is, like all things most human, is *inside-out.* So with the female who are a part of a math course, but who did not feel like they *belonged* to math, so a person may be a part of something and not feel as if he belongs to it. *Belonging* involves a voluntary, personal, and intimate sense of connection.

Because *belonging* is a subjective experience and because it is an experience we have all had, think about three to five experiences that you have had in which you felt that you belonged. It could be a family group, a friend or group of friends, a team, etc. What factors contributed to that experience for you?

Behind or above the experience of belonging are *beliefs*. What beliefs support you feeling like you belong to something? What would you need to believe about NLP as a Communication Model, as a description of human functioning so that you felt that you *belong to NLP?* What values would support you in feeling that you belong to Neuro-Semantics as a NLP community? Would there by any beliefs that would hold you back from belonging?

Ultimately belonging involves relating, connecting, inter-acting, etc. So what skills do you need in order to take the initiative? What skills do you need so that the sense of *belonging* would feel stronger for you? What skills would someone else need that would make you feel that you are welcomed and invited in? Have you ever supported another person so that he or she felt that they belonged to something? Here's to developing the beliefs and attitudes and skills that will empower us so that we can facilitate *the sense of belonging* in all those we influence.

WHEN EXTREMISTS CAN'T COMMUNICATE

A debate which is currently going on in the US is between pro-choice (pro-abortion) and pro-life (anti-abortion). The pro-choice side frames the debate overly simplistically as if it is about only one subject, the woman's body. They carry ridiculous signs, "My body, my choice." If only it was that simple! Of course, it is not. The pro-life side frames the debate equally simplistically as if it was also about only one subject, murder. They carry equally ridiculous signs, "Abortion is murder." And, of course, it is not murder. Terminating a life, yes; killing, perhaps, but not murder.

Why can't the two extreme sides *communicate?* Why can they not "seek first to understand and then be understood" like reasonable open-minded people? Mostly because they have taken such extreme positions. In terms of cognitive distortions, each side is biased and fallacious due to over-generalization, labeling or name-calling, tunnel vision, personalizing, emotionalizing, awfulizing, either/or thinking, etc. No wonder there is almost no ability to think through and talk through the issues. All the sides can do is yell, scream, call names, and make threats. Not only is that not very civilized, it gets us nowhere. What does? Dialogue. Open-minded thinking things through in a context of respect.

For there to be communication, we first have to break up the *either/or thinking pattern.* For both sides, there are many factors and variables. It is not a simple choice between either nurture the potential life to birth or terminate the potential life. It's just not that simple. So what are the many variables? Here's the key ones:

> What the mother wants; what the father wants; the mother's health, the condition of the pregnancy (planned, accidental, or forced by rape); the couple's connection (dating, single sexual activity, engaged, married, their ages, etc.); the finances (single mother, as a couple), the couple's mental health (capable of love and support, extending themselves, parenting skills or lack thereof), etc.

Once *sex has resulted in pregnancy,* what then? To engage our critical thinking and problem-solving skills, we can ask a series of questions. And it is *the ability to ask and entertain questions that enables thinking to begin.*

1) *Was this new life planned?* If it was not, then what? Was it an accident, did it occur via violence and rape?

2) *How old is the mother-to-be?* Is she a young teenager, a college student still living at home, a professional woman in her 20s or more, a married woman?

3) *Was the pregnancy wanted?* If not, are the parents willing to adjust and want the baby? If they

cannot, resenting the coming baby sets up a very problematic psychological environment for the child.

4) *Is the potential new life healthy?* If not, then what kind of problems are anticipated? Are there severe retardation and/or deformity? How much anticipated medical attention, time, cost, etc.? What would be the child's quality of life? How would this affect the parents, the family, the extended community?

5) *Would the birth be supported?* If yes, by who? Who would be all of the baby's support group? Both mother and father? If not, then what would be anticipated?

6) *Are there resources for the birth?* What is the financial condition of mother and father? What life situation in terms of time and effort? What capacities do each have? What would be missing? Is it ecological to plan for a birth at this time?

7) *Who will be primarily responsible for the well-being of the baby?* The mother, the father, both, grandparents, etc.?

8) *What beliefs and understandings do you bring to the subject of terminating a potential life?* Do you make any distinction between the first four months and afterwards when the baby has a heart-beat? What about the last trimester?

That's a lot of variables to take into consideration. With each there is the question of how much weight do you give to each one? What is most important to you? How does your hierarchy of values fit with the hierarchy of values of the other persons? No wonder the issue is so problematic and why it certainly cannot be framed as a simplistic either/or choice. There is no simple answer. Ideally everyone who has to make such a choice needs to think it through, consider all sides, clarify one's values and be respectful to those who disagree.

> Postscript: In spite of the extreme statements that many are making, ultimately even if Row vs. Wade is overturned, that does not mean abortion will be illegal; it means that it goes to each State to make that decision. Many states will keep things as they are, others will impose some restrictions on abortion.

> **For more:** See *Executive Decisions: Deciding Wisely* (2020) and *Executive Wisdom: Being One of the Wise Ones* (2022).

EXPERTISE AND
THE ART OF MAKING DISTINGUISHES

While there are a great many distinctions that can be made—and perhaps hundreds which are crucial distinctions, I have only mentioned a few in this series. There are more. In fact, there are many, many more! Consider all of the distinctions in the following categories:

- Every *meta-program* offers a significant distinction in the different ways we can think and perceive, thereby enabling all sorts of competencies. That gives 72 using the current count of meta-programs. The book *Figuring Out People* (2005) has 60 distinctions and with the new ones, another 12.
- Every *Meta-Model* distinction offers a critical linguistic variable without which you cannot be a clear and precise critical thinker. The original book, *The Structure of Magic* (1975) provided 12, and with *Communication Magic* (2001) we now have 22. [See *The New Meta-Model* on the Shop, www.neurosemantics.com].
- Every *state* that you *apply to yourself* (meta-state yourself with) creates a distinction in your frames and ultimately in your attitudes. It can change the very nature and quality of your inner world of meaning. You can find a great many in *Meta-States* (2012), *Dragon Slaying* (1997), *Meta-State Magic* (2003).
- The *cinematic features* of each representation system (the sub-modalities), offer distinctions in how to code information and how to use sensory-based coding for symbolic purposes. *Sub-Modalities Going Meta* (2005) offers many of these.

We make distinctions because *genius is in the details.* We have long known this principle, yet it has only been in the past decades with the modeling of expertise that we discovered just how true that principle is. It's the details, or more precisely, the *meta-details,* that distinguishes the expert from the non-expert. Accordingly the more global you are in your thinking, the more distance you put between yourself and your ability to produce expertise. The fewer critical distinctions you know and use, the less effective and less competent you will be. And if you process information at a detail level, but don't know the meta-category that governs it, you will be lost in the details without any guidance.

In Neuro-Semantic NLP, we put a premium on distinctions—on meta-detailing. We do that knowing the *meta-function and meta-formatting of the Meta-States Model*—something the field of NLP generally still does not know. It is the synergy of a global principle and the critical details of that principle that combines to create the ability to meta-detail. You then are able to hold a principle or concept in mind while you simultaneously specify how it shows up empirically.

Walt Disney did this when he created Micky Mouse as a cartoon figure. The concept that he wanted to convey in his artwork was that of *charm*. He wanted to create cartoon characters, especially the

lead character of a mouse, who would be *charming*. But how does *charm* show up in a mouse? What does it look like? Walt detailed it as puffy checks, big eyes, and large eye lashes. These are the critical success details within a larger frame or concept.

The reason "genius is in the details" is because *to think is to make distinctions*. Making distinctions lies at the very heart of thinking. Korzybski said that to not make the essential and critical distinctions is to confuse or to identify things that should not be confused. So we make meta-details in every field to create the unifying concept and its critical details.

When I wrote about wealth creation, one of the key skills was meta-detailing (*Inside-Out Wealth*)[1] When I modeled expert coaches and created the benchmarking of that excellence, it was meta-detailing that specified the success factors (*Benchmarking*). You have to know both the meta-principle and the corresponding details. This is not an either/or dichotomy. It is a synergistic combination of both sides of the Scope meta-program (#3).

If you are going for expertise in a field, here is a most crucial skill— *meta-detailing*. Going meta to the higher principle and then detailing it down to the empirical details. That's lies at the heart of the structure of expertise.

> For more, see *Sub-Modalities Going Meta* (2004) where there is an extensive description of the skill of meta-detailing.
> 1. *Inside-Out Wealth* presents meta-detailing as a key success factor in the wealth creation process.

THE NEURO-SEMANTICS WITHIN 3RD & 4th GENERATION NLP

I recently came across Dilts' description of the *generations of NLP*. When he first published the book on *NLP II: The Next Generation* (2010) while there's lots of really good stuff in it, I found it really lacking. How? It was lacking because it *only* described Robert's field of NLP and the people and training he does, and it therefore left out nearly all of the rest of the field. Except for a single mention about the Meta-States Model, he left out all of the Neuro-Semantic movement and field within NLP and our presence in 70 countries with thousands upon thousands of coaches and trainers.

Now with *Third Generation NLP* we have the following description:

> **Third generation NLP** has been developing since the 1990s. Understanding and exploring Third Generation NLP involves looking back to the origin and legacy of NLP as well as looking to future developments. The applications of third generation NLP are *generative, systemic and focused at even higher levels of learning, interaction and development—including those relating to identity, vision and mission.*
>
> This is very much about an inter-connected view of working, living and the environment and the experience of a global thinking culture. It is at the top of the Spiral Dynamics model and is poised to help the world prepare for news ways of thinking.
>
> Third generation NLP emphasizes *whole system change* and can be applied to organisational and cultural development as well as to individuals and teams. The techniques of third generation NLP are "field based," incorporating principles of self-organization, archetypes and what is known as "fourth position"—a whole system perspective. They include; *acting with alignment and integrity, 'sponsoring' and supporting others, resolving complicated problems, developing multi-level perspectives and so enabling and creating dynamic and ecological change.*
>
> The assumption of third generation NLP is that the wisdom needed for change is already in the system and can be discovered and released by creating the appropriate context. Robert Dilts quotes Isaac Newton as having said, "If I have been able to see farther than others, it is because I have been standing on the shoulders of giants." (Italics added)

Since, again, Neuro-Semantics is not even mentioned, I will contribute that. In Neuro-Semantics, the entire development of the *Meta-Coaching System* is about generative change. Since 1994 we have also been focused on the higher levels of learning as manifested in the Meta-States Model and the APG (Accessing Personal Genius) trainings which several hundred trainers train in 70-plus countries. *Systemic Coaching* (2012) presented a full systemic approach and the *Matrix Model* (2016) is itself a systems model.

From the beginning, Neuro-Semantics has made alignment, collaboration, and integrity central to its vision. Books on *Self-Actualization Psychology* have focused on generative change from the *inside–out.* In Neuro-Semantics, using the Precision Funnel, we have specified the way to think about and solve problems using four central conversations: the well-formed outcome, problem, solution, and innovation (*Creative Solutions,* 2017).

More recently, my focus in Neuro-Semantics has been to hone in on the most crucial skill of all, *thinking* and the problem of *not-thinking* or *pseudo-thinking.* From our thinking comes our communicating, learning, deciding, metaphoring, trancing, predicting, etc. Neuro-Semantics has also been leading out in getting back to the subject of *being* itself— authenticity (*Get Real,* 2016), *Inside–Out* (2022), *Inspiring the Heart* (2022), *Unleashed!* (2007).

In all of these ways and a great many more, Neuro-Semantics has been engaged in 3rd Generation NLP even though almost none of it has been recognized.

> **NLP 4th** generation is an international co-creation movement exploring and modeling spiritual transformational experiences. It is the study of the subjective experience of Connecting to Higher Levels and Expanded States of Spiritual Consciousness, of both people and collectives. First modeling of spiritual leaders and healers in Bali on ability to connect to Source, determining basic and operational presuppositions, sharing views and discoveries on this level, practicing intention experiments, coordinating further developments and spreading the word.

From the Internet:

> **First Generation NLP.** In the beginning ' first generation' NLP– we had the tools and models that Bandler and Grinder derived from their study of innovative and effective therapists. The techniques and skills that were created were mainly focused on problem solving at behaviour and capability levels with individuals. These included the meta model, anchoring, eye accessing cues, predicates, 6 step reframing, etc. These early applications of NLP were all applied one-on-one, with the focus almost entirely on the individual and so works at the levels of environment, behaviour and capability. NLP was considered something which one "did to other people." This led to some NLP applications as seeming to be manipulative when used in non-therapeutic contexts. It was very concerned with the lower levels of Spiral Dynamics and the areas of protection, control, conformism and achievement or success factors. Most of the first generation tools and techniques were focused on problem solving at level of behaviour and capabilities.

> **Second generation NLP** emerged in the mid to late 1980's and emphasised the relationship between self and others. The areas of application widened to include business, health, education and sales. Also the tools expanded to include higher level issues which were related to values, beliefs and 'meta programmes' and integrated distinctions like time lines, sub-modalities and perceptual positions into new formats like Re-imprinting and the Swish Pattern. Second generation NLP is very concerned with the 'why' questions and was a period of exploration focusing on caring and sharing with others, relationship and self development.

Now while all of this is an interesting way to characterize the history of NLP, it is also very biased. It is one person's, or at best one camp's, point of view. And that would be fine except it is not owned as a perspective, a map, it is presented as *the way it is* (e.g.., the territory). Whoever wrote it should know better if they know NLP! When I wrote about the history of NLP, I did not categorize the "generations," I tried to keep it much more open. And I constantly acknowledged, "this is from my perspective." See *NLP Secrets: The Untold Story* (2019).

L. Michael Hall
2022 Neurons #22
May 30, 2022

DIVING DEEPER INTO THE HEART
OF GUN VIOLENCE

Thinking superficially will lead you to look at a gun, which does the immediate violence in a mass shooting, and, presto, you will suddenly and absolutely know the problem. You know *the* problem and *the whole problem*—guns. Of course, at this point you are thinking very shallowly. You are not considering *who* is holding the gun, or pointing it, or *why*. You are also not considering *the context* of the shooter—his immediate context, his mental health or the lack of it, his ability or inability to cope with reality, his inner anger, rage, depression, mythologies, prejudices, etc.

Thinking a bit more systemically, we need to *consider* three of the key factors: the person, the weapon, and the environment. To focus exclusively on the tool for the violence (in this case a gun) is to ignore *the much more important variables— the context and the person.*
*   Why are almost all mass shooters young men?
*   Why are they young men with a history of adaptive problems? (Violence, drugs, alcohol, gangs, domestic abuse, etc.)
*   Why are they individuals with mental disorders?

These are the questions that need to be asked. With all of the strict gun laws and background checks that have been passed, the solution is not more of the same. Why? Because the problem is not external; it is not the gun. A person who wants to kill can use a knife, a hammer, a car, a bomb— all sorts of external devices will do. The problem is internal. *The problem is inside the person who wants to kill.*

Yes something is seriously wrong, but what's wrong are not the gun laws. We already have laws that prevent guns getting into the wrong hands. What we don't have are laws that identify *those wrong hands.* We need "red flag" laws for that. Even more we need to address the *environment* in which young men grow up. Today they are exposed to an incredible amount of violence on TV, in the movies, on the internet, sometimes on their streets. But where are they to learn how to interpret the difference between make-believe movie violence and real violence? We need to do more to address the idea that violence solves problems. It never does.

We also need to address *the home environment* where there is far too often a lack of respect for self and others, discipline, focus on self-improvement. We need to address *the school environment* where there is a failure to teach the most important things—how to learn, how to care about learning, how to learn about oneself, how to care about others, how to grow up and be a moral person, etc.

The problem is an *inside–out* problem. What happens *outside* is but a symptom and/or expression of the inside world. And that's where the problem is in these young men. In a book that I'm working on at the moment on *Predictive Thinking,* I wrote the following on the subject of hope. In presenting a Hope Spiral, one that can go up as well as down, I wrote this:

"If frustration is not positively dealt with, it tends to become a toxic form of anger—unuseful and destructive. That's when it spirals downward. People then turn their anger against the world, against others, the government, God, or whoever (or whatever) they think is the cause of the interference. This *anger,* is not only unuseful, it is more typically counter-productive. And if the anger finds no effective and legitimate expression that helps to deal with the block, the anger becomes toxic. It then becomes *rage.* Such rage is then anger lashing out, usually mindlessly and that, in turn, creates even more problems for the person. It ruins relationships and resources.

Rage in the context of loss of hope often results in destructiveness. It could be destructiveness against oneself (i.e., suicide, drugs, alcoholism). It could be destructiveness against others and society (i.e., violence, crime, gangs, nihilism). These are expressions of *hopelessness.* People of hope do not do these things; only those without hope. Hope immunizes us from those forms of destructiveness. Hope is the cure for being human and living humanly." (*Predictive Thinking,* p. 116, to be published in a month or two)

Now take a high-school drop-out such as the kid in Uvalde, Texas, a kid who was bullied by others, and who apparently had learned that violence is a solution. He was also a person who was undoubtedly *living without hope.* And living without hope can turn a person ugly and bitter inside so that it becomes mindless rage and violence. That's the problem we have to solve. We have to create *cultures of hope.* Problems that have their source on the *inside* have to be solved by an *inside solution.* That's where we need to look.

For more, see the two newest books from Neuro-Semantics:
www.neurosemantics.com/shop/
Inside–Out: Empowered from Within (2022)
Inspiring the Heart (2022)

From: L. Michael Hall
2022 Neurons #23
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OUTSIDE-IN SOLUTIONS

This past week President Biden wasted his "address to the Nation." I say that because he apparently does not understand the *principles of change.* Namely, for lasting change, the change has to be *inside–out.* If we have a problem with crime (and we do), if we have a problem with mentally ill people (and we do), and if we have a problem with gun violence (which we do), then *the problem itself* is an inside–out problem.

This is actually true of all problems. They are all *inside–out.* That's because *it is the person* who plays the most determinative role in crime, mental illness, and gun violence. Therefore any so-called solution that ignores the person, or that thinks we can control the person by laws, that solution will be inadequate. During Prohibition in the 1920s, laws did not solve the problem of alcoholism. It actually created additional problems, namely the black market.

The solution to human problems, all human problems, is *inside–out.* It begins with the person—his or her thinking, emoting, speaking, acting, and relating. The solution has to start there—with the person. In the US, the democratic party or leadership has seemed to have gone over to the *outside–in* approach. This is the approach of controlling *the outside, the externals.* "Control the guns as the instruments of the violence, then the violence will go away."

But if external control was the answer, then prisons would be one of the safest and most loving places on this planet. After all, there's lots of rules and regulations and controls in prisons. They are not allowed to have guns or knives or weapons. But, of course, prisons are not one of the safest places, not at all. And why not? Because you can take away all of the external instruments and a violent person will find another way!

External *outside–in* approaches to gun violence, are at best only band-aides to the problem. They deal with a symptom, not the cause. Control has to come from within. Control that truly *controls* for violence has to be *self-control.* Imposing it from without is the approach of Socialism and Communism, which we have seen in China in recent days in how they are trying to "control" covid. The problem with imposing from outside is that you need bigger and bigger government, and more and more intrusive government.

Conversely, true control such as self-control, self-management, self-leadership, E.Q., self-determination, etc. is *inside–out.* That means the solution goes to non-controlling and non-manipulative responding. It goes to teaching, coaching, training, enabling, empowering, self-actualizing, etc. It goes to new approaches to mental illness. It goes to cultural change in terms of cultural values. It goes to healthier families, parents who take parenting serious enough to be trained in how to parent, how to communicate to teenagers, how to demonstrate the respect of human life. It goes to teachers and administrators to teach basic morals and ethics, to demonstrate care and respect.

I expected Biden to promote the *outside–in* approach in his speech. As a politician who wants more and more big government, what else would we expect? But he is wrong, dead wrong. True and lasting change has to come from within. A person with a heart of violence— hate, angry, rage, fear, inadequacy, etc., will find a way to be violent and won't care about gun laws. Look at Chicago— laws that totally ban guns and yet shootings and killings every week. What needs to change are the hearts.

For more, check out—
Inside-Out: Empowered From Within
Coaching Change
The Crucible and the Fires of Change
Inside-Out Persuasion

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP
—THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE—

I realized something recently that I not realize when I wrote the book on *The Collaborative Leader.* The realization occurred during the two-day Pre-Conference Workshop on *Collaborative Leadership* in Cuiaba Brazil for the PNL Conference in May.   I realized that the modifying *leadership* with the idea of collaboration is another way of talking about *real* leadership. After all, could you even be a leader and not collaborative?

Interesting question. Could you be a leader and not collaborative? If you are not "telling" people things—what to think, what to do, or giving orders, or delegating—are you leading or bossing? Sounds like bossing to me. If you are leading, you are *leading what?* Certainly not the mind because you are imposing rather than questioning or facilitating. Certainly not the heart, because it seems more about getting things done rather than taking care of the people you are leading.

What is a leader? Is he or she not someone who *wins the minds and hearts of people?* He wins their thinking and caring to the vision of what can be done together. She wins their inner spirit so that they are ready to put their heart and soul into something. A person who talks in monologues, who lectures, who tells, who orders, who operates by "command and control" is actually not *leading anyone anywhere.*

It was this that led me to realize that *collaborative leadership is actually the only kind of true leadership;* everything else is unreal and inauthentic. We may use the word "leader" while describing a military "command and control" approach. Yet our misuse of the word does not endow the person with leadership, it is a word, not reality. It is a map, not the territory.

Now in terms of "collaborative leadership," we have two references. First, leading people to collaborate, that is, enabling and empowering the collaborative processes for those who follow. Second, collaborating with people in leading and in the leadership processes. That is, co-leading with other leaders.

The first meaning of *collaborative leadership* is the easiest of the two even though it is not easy at all. It seems especially not easy when you have followers who are independent souls who have their own minds and who are active players focused on getting things done. Leading them is like "herding cats."   Paradoxically, we want independent thinkers and people with an entrepreneurial spirit, do we not? After all, they are self-motivated, can work independently, and take responsibility. They are unlike passive followers who wait to be told what to do and who skillfully avoid responsibility.

What's challenging is getting such people to not merely cooperate with each other, but to

collaborate in thinking, learning, and deciding. That means getting them to *think together, learn together, and decide together*. What's so challenging about that? It takes time. It takes patience. It takes personal development. You can't command these. You have to show the way; you have to be collaborative yourself.

Most difficult is *collaborative leadership* when it involves co-leading with other leaders. The reason is pretty obvious—ego. Here the leader's ego gets in the way because now the leadership is not about the leader at all, it is *through* the leader. Now it is about the success of everyone and of the team. Co-leadership means that there will be times when the other co-leaders outvote you. Nothing will challenge your motives and ego-strength as this. Will you go along with the others and support the decision? This will challenge whether you are in it for the glory, the self-promotion, or for the vision.

Why is any of this important? Because today, as never before, companies do not need a single, independent leader; they need a robust leadership team. And the trend that feeds this is growing stronger every month, thereby making collaborative leadership the way of the future.

Are most leaders ready for this? No, not at all. Most leaders in most companies still operate by many of the worse traits of the 19th and 20th centuries. For many, they don't even know that "command and control" is a strategy for generating resistence and dis-engagement, not leading. They don't even know that group and team coaching has become an essential for all teams, especially with the leadership team.

> For more: See *The Collaborative Leader. Unleashing Leadership: Self-Actualizing Leaders and Companies.*

ATTITUDES– WHAT ARE THEY?

Attitudes, we all have them, but what are they really? Are we talking about beliefs? Could they be values? Do they comprise our identities? Perhaps they are temperaments, and people are born with them, they are genetic. Nor does the dictionary provide much help:

> "A position of the body or manner of carrying oneself, a state of mind or a feeling, disposition, an orientation, from Latin, faculty."

From all of this we can conclude that the word *attitude* is itself a systemic term designing simultaneously *a disposition* of all of your innate capacities to operate. It is not a static, linear, or merely one component of personality. It involves every aspect of *being a person*—how you think, feel, intend, speak, act, and relate. And, of course, as you are orienting all of these faculties, or powers, in a certain way, it shows up in physiology and even in your neurology. And when it becomes "the way you carry yourself," then we can *see an attitude* in her actions and behaviors or in his talk and gestures.

What is an attitude? It is a multiple meta-level phenomenon. It involves *both* your primary state *and* your meta-states. Your attitude begins with your first-level thinking as you represent something, then it is enriched by numerous higher meta-levels of believing, intending, imagining, emoting, etc., and all of that is simultaneously grounded in your body and your movements.

When you think about it, *an attitude is a pretty amazing phenomenon.* Even though an attitude is pretty stable, it is comprised of variables which we usually consider fluid and changeable. After all, thoughts and feelings come and go all day long as do our intentions and movements, but attitudes endure. If there's anything truly distinctive about attitudes, it is that they are pretty stable and dependable. What attitude would you like to develop and program into your meta-mind? What attitude have you had enough of and are ready to let it go?

Cheerful	Grumpy	Proactive	Procrastinating
Optimistic	Pessimistic	Hopeful	Despairing
Charming	Annoying	Loving	Hateful
Persistent	Quitter	Patient	Impatient
Playful	Serious	Dedicated	Non-committal

An attitude provides a summary of your *style of being* who you are and how you move through the world. What's your style? What style isn't working for you and which is? An attitude is developed as you choose how you think and feel about something and then you repeat it so often that it becomes an automatic program within you.

Actually, it is *the stability* of attitudes that often deceive us into thinking that they may be sourced in temperament and/or inherent in neurology. But, of course, they are not. *They are learned.* Sure, we will differ from each other in our tendencies toward one attitude versus

another, optimism versus pessimism for example. Yet because attitudes can and do change, they are not innate.

- Have you always had the same attitude toward everything?
- Have you never changed your attitude toward someone or something?

Certainly the stability of attitudes can mean that you have always sustained a single attitude toward a single thing. That's possible. It is also possible, in fact, probable that you have completely changed several attitudes. Reflect back on your childhood or teenage years and see how many attitudes you have changed is the process of growing up. Consider things that you once thought were stupid, something you would never do, something you could not even imagine doing and now you do.

A true and deep attitude change will not merely be an old or childhood beliefs that has changed. It will be much deeper. *Your very orientation in life has changed.* I recall instances in grade school wherein the very idea of getting up in front of the class and speaking struck me as the very last thing I would ever want to do on Planet Earth. A teacher once said, "Why you could grow up and become a public speaker." I must have been in the fourth or fifth grade. That's when I seriously began questioning whether she was qualified to be a teacher! And now look at me. My current attitude is, "It's such a privilege and honor to speak to a group."

In nearly every aspect of life, what makes the most difference is *attitude.* Employers are constantly asking for a good or a better *attitude* from employees. Parents frequently talk to their teens about their *attitude.* Therapists and coaches not infrequently give feedback regarding a person's *attitude* and that the person needs to shape it up and/or change it. Where in your everyday life do you need to super-charge your attitude? What's your attitude about work, exercise, budgeting, selling, cleaning, or a thousand other things?

Now given the importance of attitude, this series of articles will look at *the Neuro-Semantics of an Attitude* and how you can opt for and develop the attitudes that will bring out your best and unleash your inmost potentials.

THE META STRUCTURE OF
AN ATTITUDE

From the first article, you know that an attitude involves a meta-level structure. It is far more than just a thought, feeling, or mood. And often, we find it difficult to identify our own attitude (although others seem to be able to pick up on it better than we do) and that's because the attitude is what you and I are *thinking in the back of our mind,* and not in the front. Having *learned* it over the years and having habituated it, we are frequently completely *un*conscious of it. It sets us up for an orientation in life, a style of interacting, and yet you and I can be unaware of it. Amazing, right?

Consider the attitude of being cheerful and optimistic. It is *so much more* than just feeling positive about one specific event. Something goes well, you feel good about it, you like it but that, alone and by itself, does not equate to having a cheerful optimistic attitude. A pessimist can have that experience, and have it often, and still be basically pessimistic. How is that possible?
      "Aren't you delighted that you got that raise?"
      "Yeah, but that doesn't change the crappy things that goes on at work."

It's the *thoughts in the back of the mind* that sets up an attitude. It's the beliefs, the values, the understandings, the decisions, the identity that you've created, the permissions, the memories, the imaginations, and on and on. It's these meta-level thoughts that establish the overall attitude so that it seems you're stuck with it. This explains a lot.

It explains why a single event, or even a good number of contrastive events, may not change an attitude. It explains why a person can hold an attitude constant for years upon years—decades. By building up a meta-level system of beliefs upon beliefs, decisions upon decisions, etc., you and I can lock in an attitude so that it seems stable and unchangeable. Now true enough, counter-examples are powerful mind changers. And sometimes, just sometimes, even a single counter-example can *change a mind.* Accordingly, in the *Mind-Lines* model, we use counter-examples to see if we can shock a rigid mind into some flexibility.

But what really helps with the transformation of an attitude, is another attitude—*an openness to information and a willingness to change one's mind.* Talk about a wonderful attitude to adopt—that is it! And that explains the NLP presupposition that the person with the most flexibility will have the most influence in a system. It explains the tremendous importance of *openness to feedback* and why those most open to consider and re-consider things are those who are the best at learning, the best at accelerated learning, and the best at making important changes to be more effective and productive.

All of this explains something else about attitudes. Namely that within every attitude there are beliefs and belief systems and values and value systems. So with cheerful optimism, lets *go meta and see what we can find in the back of your mind.*

- What do you believe about being cheerful?
- What do you believe about being optimistic?
- What do you understand about these words? How do you define them?
- What memories or imaginations come to mind with them?
- Do you have permission to be cheerful or optimistic? Has either of these been tabooed or forbidden in your experience?

These are a few of the meta-questions that you can use to begin your journey into *the meta place*, your own personal *meta-verse*. Once you have some answers, continue with the meta-questions. Once you get a belief, "I believe that being cheerful is being shallow and superficial." Ask, "If that's the case, what do you believe about that?" Then continue up the meta-levels. See where it goes. See how far the rabbit hole goes!

Generally, when you have a negative or unpleasant meaning, things will get worse as you move up. That means that you have more and more negative beliefs, decisions, values, or whatever holding the first negative ones in place. That's why unpealing the layers of your previous thoughts, which are now incorporated in the back of your mind, like pealing an onion, enables you to get to the problem frame that's spoiling your life.

Now this is what we do in Neuro-Semantics as we model the structure of an unpleasant attitude that's creating stress and distress in your life. This is what Meta-Coaches do. In the end, we facilitate people discovering the structure of their experiences thereby putting into their hands the tools for transformation if they choose to use them.

GESTALTING AN ATTITUDE

Not only is there a meta structure to an attitude, but something wonderful and mysterious tends to happen with many attitudes—they arise from an emergent property which cannot be calculated by adding up all of the parts. Courage is like that. Starting with a primary state of fear or sense of danger, various beliefs, values, meta-programs, etc. come together in a certain mixture so that out of the mix, they combine in such a way that the result is *courage.* You could add together "fear plus responsibility plus vitality plus other resources" but that doesn't explain the phenomenon of courage.

Because of the dynamic interaction of the various elements in the human system, something *more than and different from* them arises. In systems language, this an *emergent property* that arises from the mixtures. And emergent properties arise in physical as well as psychological systems. This makes reverse engineering impossible. We can't start with the end and backtrack to all of the elements. Instead, we have to experiment. We have to add this quality, mix it up well, and see what happens. If not, then we try another element, add it and see what happens. This will play a significant role when it comes to coaching an attitude into existence.

When I researched wealth creation and then wrote *Inside–Out Wealth* (2010), two of the secrets are attitudes: *seeing opportunities* and *seizing opportunities.* These attitudes obviously lead to and help to generate certain skills by the same names. Both start with a context in which there could be, or may be "opportunities," a context that others may view as boring, bothersome, tedious, etc. Others do not *see* what the person who can *see as opportunities.* Because this *seeing* is a mental perception, it is not done with the eyes, but the mind. So what elements do you need to generate that? Creativity, playfulness, mischievousness, upside-down thinking, thinking out of the box, asking weird questions, etc.?

The only way to find out is to identify a context where you do not immediately see an opportunity and then add one element and see what happens. Then try it with another. And another. Then add two or three together and see what happens. When you find that a certain combination of resourceful components mix together in such a way that you can suddenly see opportunities, you have probably stumbled upon the right mixture for you. Now try it out in other contexts and see if it transfers there.

Add hydrogen and oxygen together and you get something very different from each element on its own. You get water. And water behaves in ways that neither hydrogen and oxygen operate; it freezes at too low a certain temperature and becomes gas at too high a temperature. These are emergent properties that do not exist otherwise.

To generate the simple meta-state of *joyful learning,* what are the essential components that you

need to bring and mix together? The fascinating thing is that there can be dozens of formulas which will all produce the final result. First you create a foundation for *learning*—what does this mean? What goes into that state? For you, is it receptivity, curiosity, playing, focus, etc.? Then do you need to bring a belief that gives you a fun strategy? A value that identifies joyful benefits? A kinesthetic sensation of "wow?" An insight of "aha!"?

Sometimes we can create this attitude very quickly and very simply. "Think of something joyful ... Go there, be there now. See what you see when you see that joyful thing. ... Hear what you hear, notice the sounds and tones. Feel what you feel, notice your breath, posture, face, etc. Good. How much are you accessing the *joy*? Good. And now *feel all of this* about learning..." When this meta-stating works, you have made "learning" a member of the class of "joy."

But this will not work in just that way for everyone. Some will need additional components in order to generate the gestalt state of experience of joyful learning. Do you have an attitude of joyful learning? Would you like to have that attitude? You now have a basic structure for how to set that up so that it becomes the attitude in the back of your mind which, in turn, will create a new style and orientation for you.

ATTITUDES AND META-PROGRAMS

How do you create an *attitude*? So far the process involves a meta-state structure involving two or more states with their frames of mind. This creates something more than just a thought or just an emotion, it creates a holistic experience, one comprised of physiology s well.   Yet the meta-structure of an attitude not only implies meta-stating as a process for generating new and better attitudes, it also implies the presence of meta-programs.   So as meta-states create meta-programs, in the meta-stating process, meta-programs will inevitably be created or implicated. Yes, sometimes an attitude is made up of various meta-programs!

Now a *meta*-program is a perceptual filter that enables you to see or perceive things in a certain way and, at the same time, thinking and feeling. Many meta-programs, in fact, not only describe an attitude but they *are an attitude*.
*   Consider optimism or pessimism—these are both an attitude and a meta-program (#6)
*   Similarly, trusting or cynical are attitudes and meta-programs (#42).
*   Toward and Away From (#35), as the motivation direction meta-program, become attitudes when they are driver meta-programs.
*   So also many others: Judging/ Perceiving (#37); perfectionism/ Optimizing (#40); Competitive/ Cooperative (#43).

Further, a great many of the meta-programs, while not attitudes themselves, lead to and participate in particular attitudes. That is, there are meta-programs which are required for some attitudes. Global and/or detail are not "attitudes" per se, but play a role in many attitudes. Many other attitudes require both sides of a meta-program. For example, the attitude of emotional well-being implies having full choice for either associated and un-associated (#20). To be holistic in taking care of yourself and others, you will need both attention to self and others (#24). To be healthy in your sense of self-authority and going along with authority, you need to reference both internally and externally (#23).

Conversely, there will be some meta-programs that will actually *interfere* and even *prevent* some attitudes. They contradict it or counter-act it. This is especially true if they are a driver meta-program. If you want a friendly rapport-building attitude, you have to give up mismatching. Mis-matching will interfere with building rapport. If you want a dynamic attitude of being proactive, then you'll have to switch from Perceiving (#37), Options (#36), or Reflective (#27). Those meta-programs will prevent you from actualizing your meanings into actions.

A non-screening (#9) meta-program will stop you from developing a laser-beam focus and therefore from any genius state. And a screening meta-program can prevent you from being in sensory-awareness. The either-or (#7) meta-program inevitably stops systemic thinking which builds up a holistic attitude.

If attitudes are sometimes comprised of certain meta-programs, the question then for any attitude that you desire to create in yourself is: "What meta-program will you need in order to experience X attitude?" And if a meta-program is a *way of thinking and/or perceiving,* then it is quite learnable. Simply ask a question that presuppose it and then use that question to keep directing your mind to that distinction.

How do meta-programs then relate to attitudes? In three ways. Some meta-programs 1) *are* attitudes, 2) some make up the *components* of other attitudes, and 3) some *prevent* certain attitudes. Knowing this and being able to discern for this will become really important when we discuss *changing attitudes, decommissioning negative attitudes, and developing some great attitudes*. Then as you will need to look inside the meta-stating process, you will also need to look into the role that meta-programs play.

ATTITUDES IMPLY
BELIEFS AND VALUES

In speaking about the composition of an *attitude*, we have noted several of the constructs that go into the process. We have noted the meta-stating process, the gestalting process, the meta-program process. Yet there's more. Attitudes also imply *beliefs and values* and where you have beliefs and values, you have *identities.* The bottom line is that where there is *an attitude,* there will be inside it and supporting it beliefs and values.

Consider optimism. To develop an optimistic attitude, what do you have to believe? Don't you have to believe that the future can be better than the past? Don't you have to believe that you actions make a difference and that you can do something that will reap positive rewards? What else do you have to believe? Along this same line, optimism implies certain values—things we consider important.

In this way, within any and every *attitude* are also beliefs and values. A learning attitude of curiosity and openness implies that learning is good, it contributes to the quality of life, that there are things we don't know which are important, that learning opens doors to creativity and higher quality development. Woven into the very texture of an attitude then are beliefs and values. So when you know an attitude, a constructive one or a destructive one, you at the same time know several of the person's beliefs and values.

And that leads to identities. Notice how closely related an attitude is to an identity. "I am an optimist person." "I am a continuous learner." There's a principle here. Namely, whenever you live with an attitude for a period of time, there will be a natural tendency to *identify with* it and use it to *identify* yourself. There should therefore be a warning on every attitude: Be careful with this attitude, it will slowly begin to define you. When this happens, changing the attitude seems like a much harder objective.

The warning, of course, is mostly for anyone with any of the destructive attitudes, especially attitudes like pessimism, fatalistic, perfectionism, entitlement, hedonistic, etc. Live in the thoughts, emotions, beliefs, values, etc. that make up entitlement or victimhood, and it won't be long that you will start to think of yourself as entitled and/or a victim. Then, as with any meta-level structure, it will begin to operate as a self-organizing attractor.

If you believe you are entitle and that you are special above others, then you will start acting in arrogant and superior ways, putting others down, and demands special privileges for yourself. And why are you entitled? What do you base that entitlement upon? Some base it on being smarter, wealthier, of royal blood, having more power or influence, etc. Others base it upon

wanting it. "If I want it, I should get it." Talk about an attitude!

The fatalistic attitude that things are fixed (the fixed mindset, Carol Dweck), leads to other attitudes and problematic behaviors such as procrastination, giving up, irresponsibility, etc. In these examples, *the holistic nature of an attitude is easily recognizable.* It is not just some thoughts, or just some emotions, it involves how a person lives, acts, and relates. It involves how a person talks and the way a person shows up in the world.

Given all of this, when you have an attitude or when you recognize an attitude in someone else, you really have a full package of psychological components. You have beliefs, values, and identities all at once. You have key gestalts of the person's "personality" which then, in turn, tells you a lot. And if you are a coach, consultant, therapist, parent, or friend, attitude can become a pathway into the person's inner world. In this every attitude is revealing. Well, it is revealing if you know how to read it.

COACHING ATTITUDES

One of the less desirable jobs of leaders and managers, or anyone who works with other people, is dealing with their *attitudes.* A common complaint in lots of business and by lots of business managers concerns attitudes.

       "Our employees don't have the right attitude around here."
       "Some of our people have got some really bad attitudes."
       "Bill needs a swift kick in the attitude."

Sometimes another person's *attitude* seems like such a little thing, and yet it can significantly bother. Sometimes we let another's attitude irritate us and annoy us. We stress out about it as we become obsessive about it, gossip about it, mock it, despise someone for an attitude, etc. How often does one person's *negative attitude* set the tone at work and become the center of focus?

Sometimes the problem is our own attitude. Slowly but surely over the years we develop certain attitudes about certain things so that eventually what others would call an attitude, to us does not seem like an attitude at all. It's just "the way things are." "It's just how I see things." Then as we lose awareness of our own attitudes since we *live from them* and so don't notice them or reflect upon them, they become invisible to us. So when someone says, "I don't like your attitude," we are taken back, "What attitude? What are you talking about?"

What do you do if you discover some unpleasant attitudes in someone you care about or in yourself? Can we *coach* attitudes? And if so, how do we do that? When Southwest Airlines started, the CEO simply avoided all of this. He decided that he would "hire attitude and train skills." Since then, many companies have followed that lead. Finding it hard, difficult, or impossible to *change someone's attitude,* hiring departments start with the *attitudes that they want.* Those are the people who get hired. Actually, that's a really good idea. It saves companies a lot of time and trouble.

But suppose you already have employees who have some unpleasant, or worse yet, rotten attitudes. What then? What if you have employees or colleagues who have any of the following attitudes, how do you educate or coach them to change their attitude and develop a more positive and enhancing one?

- Entitlement: Because I'm special, I'm entitled to special treatment and privileges.
- Approval-seeking: I need constant approval and recognition.
- Competitiveness: Business is all about competing, being your best, getting the biggest piece of the pie, winning over your opponents.
- Blaming: I never accept responsibility, that leads to painful consequences, always shift the blame to someone else.
- Pessimism/Negativism: This company sucks, there's really no future for us. This job is boring

and pointless.
- Wokeness: I need to always tow the line and be politically correct. It's terrible to step out of the mainline.

As an overall view of the change process, *detection and awareness* comes first. You can't change what you're not aware of. And sometimes, just sometimes, *awareness per se is curative.* Yet that awareness has to be a non-judgmental awareness, an understanding awareness, and an awareness that's within the framework of wanting to be one's best self. So first, become *aware* of the attitude. For yourself, get some feedback. This is where 360 feedback in organizations can powerfully initiate the search for any self-sabotaging attitude. For another person, invite an invitation for feedback. "Would you like some feedback?" Or ask, "I'm confused a bit, what would you say your attitude is right now? What would you call it?"

Next, *identify the composition of the attitude.* Know that it is made up of thoughts, feelings, physiology, postures, tones, facial expressions, etc., identify what you see and hear in sensory-based terms. A great tool for this is to get a video and audio recording of yourself or the other person. It is hard to deny what is recorded.

Shift the components around. As you alter the words, the cinematic features of the images and sounds that you play about something, the overall gestalt changes. "Keep that pessimistic attitude while you break into a big smile." "Thinking about your work, say, 'This is a glorious chance to improve myself' while frowning and shaking your fist."

Adjust the attitude using new components. Say to the person who claims to be cheerful, but is frowning, scolding, shaking her index finger, etc. "as you release the tension and lines in your forehead, tell me one thing you are cheerful about..." Say to the one with a depressive attitude, "Please repeat that but this time, stand up straight, raise your hands over your head as if doing a 'Hallelujah!'"

Now practice until it becomes automatic. As every attitude is already an automatic pattern that's been programmed in, you have to now repeat the changes until repetition makes it the new automatic program.

SUPER-CHARGE YOUR ATTITUDE

In the last post, we explored the art regarding how to coach a more positive and self-enhancing attitude. That's part of the art of mastering your attitude, but there is more to it than that. The focus there was on *changing an attitude,* here I want to turn attention to *super-charging your attitude* so that the attitude you choose to develop becomes something incredibly powerful in your personality.

The amazing thing about an attitude is that it can define your whole personality and that's because of what an *attitude* is. An attitude is a gestalt state that operates not only as a frame of mind, but one of your highest frames of mind. It isn't only two or three levels up, it is usually near the very top in your *meta* place. Because an *attitude* is a holistic experience, it defines and orients all of your mind-body-emotion experience. An attitude includes your mental stance, your emotional stance, your physical stance, and your physiology. The following pattern was developed for the *Living Personal Genius* (LPG) training program.

Jonas said he had an wimpy attitude and wanted a stronger and more definitive one. While he said he believed in being proactive and not passive, yet he often did *not* take the initiative to make things happen. He planned to, he prepared to, but then he hesitated and frequently missed opportunities. As we talked, he said that he guessed he needed to do something to "kick his attitude into high gear." From that cue, I began exploring various component of proactivity with him.
> "What do you believe about time, doing things ahead of time, acting, taking risks, yourself as 'a proactive person,' your values regarding proactivity, etc.?"

He said the conversation helped. It refreshed his beliefs and his state. "But still there's something missing." "How do you experience your personal authority for acting?" He didn't know what I was getting at.
> "I'm talk about your 'locus of control,' that locus or circle. You could be standing in the middle of it, or it could be outside of you so you look to others for approval or information. Or you could be on the border, partly in and partly out." Jonas, do you have permission to be fully inside?"

He did not. That was the missing resource. So when we added that to all of the other frames of mind, that freed him to fully step into *proactivity* and own it as his own.

The Pattern:
1) Intention: Identify the attitudes that you want to intensify (or juice up).
> Choose the context. Where, when, and with whom do you want to charge-up your attitude? What is your current attitude? How robust is it?

What attitude would you like which would enhance you as a person?
What one attitude would you like to develop and program into yourself?

2) Identify your value hierarchy for the attitude.
Why is that attitude important? How is it valuable for you? (Repeat 5 times)
What would it allow you to do or to experience? How important is it?

3) Identify your representations of this super-charged attitude.
How do you represent this attitude on the screen of your mind? What do you see and hear? What do you say to yourself that accesses it?
How do you evaluate it?   What emotions do you associate with it?

3) Identify the qualities and properties of this attitude.
What references (images, sounds, memories, imaginations) do you need to access to access this attitude? As you do so, amplify it until has sufficient charge. Then enjoy feeling the energy of this attitude.
What other qualities or properties would you like to have in this attitude?
How much is the attitude super-charged now?

4) State:
As you access this attitude, what state/s are you experiencing?
How strong and robust is this state? Does it need to be stronger? If so, amplify it.
How compelling and memorable is this for you?
As you now apply this attitude to yourself and notice how it changes things for you, what do you discover?

5) Explore the other dimensions of the matrices (Others, Self, World).
Who else has this attitude? Who can you model as an exemplar?
Who will you become with this attitude? How will it affect your identity and sense of self?

6) Appropriate this attitude for all of your tomorrows.
How much would you like to take this attitude with you into your future?
As you anticipate experiencing it in the weeks and months to come, how is that?
Are you fully aligned with it? Does any part of you object to it?

7) Make an executive decision for this new upgraded attitude.
Are you now willing to make an executive decision that this shall be your attitude in that context?

Here's to you develop kick-ass attitudes that will turn your opportunities into actualities!

PICK AN ATTITUDE,
ANY ATTITUDE

Knowing that you can choose an attitude, develop it, be coached for it, super-charge it, etc. *what attitudes* would you like to plan to add to your personal repertoire of attitudes which will, in turn, enrich your life? Now that you know that you can *meta-state an attitude into existence,* you know that you are not stuck with or in your attitudes—they are yours, you create them and you can recreate them.   So what attitudes would you like to develop and set in your mind (in your *meta* place)?

Courage	Resilience	Optimism	Playfulness
Seeing opportunities	Seizing opportunities	Openness	Humor
Magnanimity	Forgiveness	Humility	Patience
Self-reliance	Entrepreneurship	Appreciation	Authenticity
Bias for action	Uninsultable	Decisive	Disciplined

There is the attitude for learning. It is an attitude of being curious and playful, of being open and receptive, it is an attitude of *wanting to know and to discover.* While that may sound mundane, that is actually an incredibly powerful attitude to have. It is the secret ingredient in successful people and creative people who live on the cutting-edge of new developments. If you have a closed attitude, "I have learned enough." "I already know that!" "What else is there to learn?" you cut yourself off from the human adventure itself.

There is the attitude of experimenting. This is an attitude of trying things to see what happens, it is an adventurous spirit that keeps you learning, keeps you young at heart. It is the apodeme of the scientific attitude itself. This leads to more tentative attitudes about the assertions we make and less rigidity about our beliefs. And that, in turn, leads to being more reasonable with each other and more humble in our approach.

There is the descriptive attitude. This attitude drives expert communicators, researchers, and inventors. Their attitude is always to seek to describe precisely and specifically whatever presents itself *as it presents itself* to the experiencing observer. This attitude results in as much "objectivity" as is possible for us subjective-thinkers and feelers.

There is the ecological attitude. As described in NLP, this attitude is about being holistic and integrative, about thinking and working systemically.

There is the empowerment or enrichment attitude. This attitude is governed by the question and focus, "Is this empowering? Will this enrich life? Will this bring you closer?" It is an attitude that leads to an active style of responding because one thinks, "I can always do something; I am never a victim at the mercy of outside forces. If I can't change the outside world, I can always

adjust my attitude on the inside." Consequently this enables a more tough-minded attitude about life.

There is the compassionate and caring attitude. This is an attitude that sees others first as *people,* as *human being,* and only later in terms of roles, status, position, views, skin color, etc. It operates from the principle of equality of persons, mutuality, and a win/win attitude. It is the attitude of the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you want them to do unto you" (Matthew 7:12).

There is, of course, the positive optimistic attitude. This is the attitude of looking for the silver lining in things, for solutions, for strengths, for win/win deals. This is the attitude of approaching life with a *yes* which then enables you to embrace life rather than fight it.

There is the attitude of ownership of one's attitude. Viktor Frankl said this is "the ultimate freedom," the freedom to choose your own attitude. "If one cannot change a situation that causes his suffering, he can still choose his attitude." (Frankl, 1984, p. 148).

There is the paradoxical attitude.   This is a fun one and can be both shocking and delightfully surprising. Counter-intuitively your attitude to is embrace the very thing that your first response is to reject. Strange enough, frequently that then becomes the solution. The very symptom that we want to get away from only goes away after you embrace it. This has been proven true so often that, in therapy, it is called "prescribing the symptom." And, as a paradoxical intervention, it emerges from a meta-stating process.

And what else? There is the attitude of acceptance, of acknowledging what is. The attitude of creative and positive defiance when standing up stubbornly for a value or belief can make a difference. There is the attitude of cheerfulness and appreciation. There is the philosophical attitude wherein you recognize and accept the limitations of life. There is the attitude of good will. There are dozens upon dozens of attitudes that you could choose that would upgrade the very quality of your life and they are there, in your *meta* place, just waiting for you!

GETTING AN UNLEASHING POTENTIALS ATTITUDE

As I get ready to do the Self-Actualization Psychology trainings for the diploma, I have been reviewing Maslow's works and some of what I've written. In look at the chapter titles in *Unleashed!* (2007) I noticed that the third chapter is titled, **The Attitude.** The following is what is in the book, a story about an attitude.

"Several years ago I wrote a book to apply the *framing* process to eating and exercising. *Games Fit and Slim People Play* (2001) was designed to look at what we think and do with food and exercise in terms of a "game." If how I eat and relate to food is a game, what are the rules? What is the name of the game? When do I play it? Who do I play it with? What do I win if I win the game?

After I wrote the basic manuscript, I decided to test it. So I wrote to our primary Neuro-Semantic egroup and asked for five volunteers. I wanted five people who were obese, who really wanted to lose weight and get to a healthy body weight and fitness, and who had tried everything without success. I proposed to provide the manuscript if those who volunteered agreed to read and apply the process. They were also to take before and after pictures of themselves and let me know how the process worked for them after three months.

What I didn't expect was the immediate response to that post on that group. The response was overwhelming.   Within one day I had forty lengthy emails (each one three to ten pages) from people explaining why I should consider them. And it didn't end there, more poured in throughout the following week.

So instead of five, I chose fifteen people from ten different countries and sent out the manuscripts. I read the letters to identify people who really needed it and who seemed to have all the motivation to follow-through. I looked for people who were proactive in trying to take action to manage their weight.

But then I got a surprise. Out of the 15 who had begged me to be a part of the experiment and who really, really, really wanted to be included, only eight of them read the manuscript and began using the process. Of them, they all lost weight and gained more fitness and six of them maintained it after three years. But seven of them, seven of them did not read past the first chapter!

I was shocked. I thought I had picked well. I thought I had offered enough motivation and given enough personal attention, and yet almost half could not get themselves to even read the materials. And three of them sent me critiques of the writing of that first chapter— typos and ungrammatical structures, which didn't have a thing to do with weight management.

"What frame of mind were they in when they were reading?" It certainly wasn't a commitment to their own success in managing their weight or becoming fit! Their task had nothing to do with examining the writing, it had to do with taking and using an approach that could help them unleash the health and fitness that they said they wanted.   But they didn't.

So what went wrong? What had I not anticipated in the group? What prevented half of them from getting the results they wanted and experiencing the health and fitness that would make life so much better for them?

> In a word, *attitude.* They didn't have a robust enough attitude or the right attitude to unleash their potentials. Attitude always plays a critical role difference between success and failure; between achieving our highest dreams or selling them short. So with that in mind, what attitude or frame of mind is necessary to become a self-actualizer and unleash your potentials?"

At that point I inquired, "What is the attitude for someone who wants to actualize his or her potentials?" Then from the studies and modeling, I identified and described 16 attitudes that are highly correlated to the self-actualizing process. I have not mentioned some of these in this series on attitudes—another indicator that there are so many attitudes and you are completely free to select and build them into your way of thinking and perceiving.

> ___ Openness to experience
> ___ Willingness to Become
> ___ Self-Authorization / Self-Responsibility
> ___ Transcending Passion
> ___ Playful Curiosity
> ___ Restlessness
> ___ A Beginner's Mind
> ___ Self-Challenging
> ___ Mental Agility
> ___ Embracing Change
> ___ Resilience
> ___ Follow-Through Discipline
> ___ Decision
> ___ Audacious Dreaming
> ___ Willingness to Become Completely Engaged
> ___ Willingness to Risk

Isn't it amazing? *Attitudes are free for the taking,* or should I say, *free for the developing.* And when you develop an especially powerful one, that attitude can wonderfully transform your life and relationships. It is a psychic gift ... yours for the developing. Here's to choosing some great ones for yourself.

WHAT ABOUT NASTY ATTITUDES?

I was just about to end this series when I got a question from a reader, "What about the nasty attitudes?" In his email, he mentioned several—snobbishness, hostility, sarcasm, self-righteousness, etc. Then upon reflecting about the unpleasant and even the *nasty* attitudes, I realized that there really is a whole list of *attitudes that are either unbecoming of a human being, downright ugly, or even toxic and dysfunctional.* What attitudes sabotage a person's highest meanings and best performances? Do any of these ring a bell or describe an attitude that you might fall into or take on—to your detriment?

Arrogance	Know-it-all	Sarcastic hostility	Prideful
Competitive	Grumpy	Obsessive-compulsive	Self-Pity
Fearful/ paranoid	Snobbish	Snowflake	Timid, Shy
Self-Righteous	Never wrong	Unapologetic	Superiority
Over-bearing	Resentment	Irresponsibility	Revengeful
Victim	Dishonesty	Deceptive	Unfriendly
Maliciousness	Cynicism	Greed	Viciousness

To answer the question, "What about them?" a good beginning place is to recognize where they come from. Here the answer is simple—*living in a negative emotion or thought.* When you *live* in a negative emotion (e.g., anger, fear, sadness, guilt, shame, etc.), you essentially *habituate* that emotion, and all the thoughts that come along with it, so that it becomes your automatic and default program. In that way your emotion becomes your *mood.* And as a mood, it is the attitude that you take in your mind, your body, your emotions, etc.—it becomes an attitude.

A *snobbish, supercilious attitude* comes from thinking you are better than others, from looking down on them, a haughty and disdaining feeling about others, feeling contempt for them, despising them, thinking that by pushing them down you push yourself up.

A *know-it-all attitude* comes from the need to be right, the hatred of being wrong, the over-valuing of knowledge, competing with others as if that makes you better than them.

A *sarcastic attitude* comes from repressed anger that you take out on others, using humor to put others down explicitly or implicitly.

An *obsessive-compulsive attitude* arises from the need to be in control, a fear of being out-of-control, a perfectionist need to make everything just right.

A *timidity, fearful attitude* comes from the lack of confidence in self to handle situations, an over-emphasis on the power and control of others or things.

A *shy attitude* comes from fear of being seen, of wanting to hide, a fear of being inadequate, a rejection of embarrassment.

A *self-pity attitude* comes from thinking that one is a victim, from feeling that you get no breaks, that the world is against you.

A *grumpy attitude* comes from expecting or demanding that everything goes your way, from a lack of appreciation for what you do have, from not counting your blessings.

If you give yourself to the thoughts and emotions that correspond to any of these nasty attitudes, then, and *lo and behold*, eventually you will find that they have habituated and now they are your automatic thinking–feeling patterns. What began as just a thought, just a feeling, you have turned into a perpetuated mood. You have *meta-stated* yourself with them so that now they operate as your general *frame of mind*, to wit, your attitude.

In other words, you have violated one of the most basic principles in Meta-States. You have *turned your mental and emotional generates **against** yourself.* No wonder if feels like an uncontrollable monster or dragon. No wonder *the attitude has you* instead of you having the attitude.

What is a person to do? Simple. Reverse the construction of the nasty attitude. *Stop* turning the thought or emotion *against* yourself, *stop* setting it as your frame of reference and frame of mind. And as you do that, *embrace* the thought or feeling that you are experiencing as *your* thought and feeling about something at that moment. Paradoxically, by embracing it you free yourself from its domination and move to a choice point where you can now run an ecology check.

> "Is this good for me?" "Will this serve me as a person or in my relationships?" "Will this support my health and well-being?"

If the answer is *no,* then you are in a position to make a creative and transformative choice. You can opt for a better thought and a better emotion that will improve the quality of your life and relationships. "What attitude would you prefer to have?"

Now perhaps once upon a time, in a given situation with a given person or group, the thoughts-and-feelings that you entertained were appropriate. Perhaps. But are they any longer? The damage is *in perpetuating a negative awareness* instead of embracing and using it and then releasing it. So, if you have perpetuated a nasty attitude and it is definitely getting in your way of unleashing your potentials—now is a great time to *release it*.

GETTING THE NLP ATTITUDE

Richard Bandler once defined NLP as an attitude. *"NLP is an attitude, backed up by a methodology that leaves behind it a trail of techniques"* Now if that is true, and I think it is, then what is the NLP attitude? Do you have it? *Many, if not a great many, people trained in NLP do not have the NLP attitude.* What explains that? There is in my opinion an understandable reason why that is the case.

Let's start with the presuppositions of NLP and consider what they imply in terms of attitude. If X is a basic premise of NLP, what can we infer would be the central attitudes which correspond to that premise? In the following I put the attitudes in *italics*.

> There is no failure, only information that informs us of how to improve—*curiosity, persistence.*
> The map is not the territory, only symbolic of it —*fascination, exploration, skepticism.*
> The meaning of your communication is the response you get— *openness, wanting feedback.*
> Mind and body are part of the same system —*synergism, systems thinking.*
> Every person operates from his model of the world—*respect, seek understanding, compassion.*
> Person and behavior are different phenomenon— *respect of persons, more than behaviors.*
> Behind every behavior is a positive intention— *honor persons, optimism, look for the positive.*
> "Lose your mind and come to your senses" (Perls) —*sensory awareness, appreciation.*
> If what you're doing isn't working, do something different— *flexibility, freedom of choice.*
> "It's never too late to have a happy childhood" (Bandler)— *creativity, ecological thinking*

In learning NLP in the 1980s I trained with one of the founders (Bandler), but as I got to know him, one thing I knew was that whatever the secret of NLP is—it did *not* lie in the persons who put it together. Bandler's life was a mess! (See *NLP Secrets: Untold Stories,* 2019). So I looked deeper. I looked inside the model for its working premises. Guess what I found. I found *the spirit* that lead to the discoveries and creation of NLP. Accordingly, when I wrote the master practitioner book, I titled it, *The Spirit of NLP* (1996).

So what is the NLP spirit that brought it about and that continues today to make it work?
1) *Learning.* It's an attitude that there is always so much more to learn. It's an attitude of know-nothing in order to avoid our own biases and stereotypes.
2) *Openness.* It is an openness to what I don't know, to the feedback I get even that I may not want or understand, and more openness to change in a process world.
3) *Curiosity.* It's an attitude of curiously exploring everything. An attitude of asking, "What else is there? What am I missing? What allows this to be as a possibility? What else can I use this for?
4) *Questioning.* It's an attitude of boldly questioning everything, and then asking meta-questions of those answers. It is questioning with the Meta-Model to get precision and specificity.
5) *Flexibility.* It's an attitude of being willing to change whatever is no longer working and adopt something new and different.

6) *Persisting.* It's an attitude of never giving up, always looking for a way to make things happen, a "can do" attitude of determination and a bit of stubbornness.

7) *Passion.* It's an attitude of passion to live life fully, to be fully present in the hear and now. It's a passionate attitude about connecting to others, making a difference, and adding quality to whatever you're doing. It's an attitude of adding more ecstasy to life, to relating, and to being the best version of yourself.

8) *Playful.* It's an attitude of being playful, experiencing more fun in whatever you are engaged in, especially learning and skill development. It's the attitude that *getting there* is where there is the most fun. It's the lighten up attitude, stop taking yourself or words so seriously.

9) Skepticism. It's an attitude of suspecting that what you see is not all there is, that there is more and you have to hunt for it. "What else lies out there to discover?" "What else lies in this experience that I can use?" It's an attitude of skepticism about words knowing that "the map is not the territory."

10) *Creativity.* It's an attitude of creating higher quality products, services, and information. An attitude of inventiveness, "How can I make this better?"

Now, back to the question I the first paragraph. Why do so many people trained in NLP *do not have the spirit of NLP?* Here are some suggestions:

- They are trained exclusively in the techniques, the content and miss the attitude.
- The techniques are offered as final products rather than specific historical discoveries and so are open to updating, correcting, and even being made redundant.
- The technique are treated as "real" rather than one way to map a resolution.
- Those training the techniques do not themselves have the spirit of NLP. So the attitude is not demonstrated.

The problem however is deeper and more pervasive than just that many NLP people do not have the right attitude. What's deeper is that so many of the techniques as processes *will not work without the right attitude.* Using them as if a formula out of a cookbook will seldom get the results that someone with the right attitude, even those less skilled, will get.

GETTING THE NEURO-SEMANTIC ATTITUDE

In the last Neurons I described "the spirit of NLP" and the inherent attitudes which are presupposed from the NLP Communication Model. Of course, one problem with that is that *so many people who have learned NLP never learned **the attitude.*** Now if you ask, "So what?" the answer is that basically ***NLP will not work*** *without the attitude.*

Why is that? As an explanation, remember that NLP is "the study of the structure of *subjective experience.*" And subjectivity itself is inevitably governed by factors that are not, in themselves, objective. That's why, in the domain of NLP, it is not a matter of mathematical formulas or rigid procedures. It is not "scientific" in terms of how the inorganic world of things work and can so easily be quantified. The ever-changing, fluid world of living things, because they are open systems are more likely to be qualified. So we use the "scientific" methodology of qualitative research when it comes to living things.

In the case of qualitative and phenomenological research, *attitude plays a big role.* If you are to study the subjective experience of a person, you cannot be dispassionately objective. Treat a person as a *thing,* relate with basic kindness or respect—and you get nothing. For human beings to open up and reveal their structures, you have to care, be respectful, be patient, be kind, etc. So making NLP work for you requires *the right attitude.* In the previous article I mentioned:
>   Learning, openness, curiosity, questioning, flexibility, persisting, passion, playful, skepticism, creativity.

Reading that, my wife said, "All of that is also presupposed in Neuro-Semantic NLP, but what else? Are there any other attitudes that really separate Neuro-Semantics from classic NLP?" Good question. Having not previously entertained that thought, I began. What I immediately said was that there are three really unique and important *attitudes* required in Neuro-Semantics that were not emphasized in classic NLP.

1) Apply to self. The attitude of turning inward and first asking, "How does this apply to me? Am I living or doing this? How good of an example am I of this?" This is the attitude of not merely wanting to be congruent, but of taking the responsibility to be congruent. And it is built into the Meta-States Model since that is a model of *self-reflexivity*—the dynamics that occur when you reflect back onto yourself.

2) Implementation. Following directly from "apply to self" comes the attitude of implementing what you know and closing the gap between what you know and what you do. This implementing attitude is one of risk-taking and requires the "active" meta-program so that instead of over-thinking something, philosophizing about it, collecting all the knowledge and wisdom that you can about it—*you take action.* William James called this having "a bias for

action" and not letting opportunities pass by.

3) Ethical commitment. It was the unethical behaviors that I saw in the field of NLP that led Bob and I to create a vision for the ethical use of NLP in our first vision statement. Knowing that anything powerful can be powerfully misused, we set out a vision of men and women using NLP for the greater good and living up to a set of professional ethics in how we treat people. Some of the early NLP developers had that attitude, but many did not. We wanted to make an ethical mind-set explicit in Neuro-Semantics.

After these first attitudes, several more came to mind over the next couple days. *4) Humility.* In this attitude you know that you do not know it all. In fact, you realize that the more you learn, the more you discover that there is more and more that you don't know. Trainers in NLP who seem to be afraid of that(!), adopt a know-it-all attitude that comes across as arrogant and self-serving. Perhaps the use of words like "mastery" or "genius" has led to such arrogance. The true master is the one who knows that he or she has a lot more to learn!

5) Collaboration. Because it was the attitude of collaboration that led to the creation of Neuro-Semantics, from the very beginning those who have joined have tended to be the people who have a vision of a *community* and a collaborative community—all working for the good for the whole. Again, it was the argumentative competitive attitude that we saw in the field of NLP that we were wanting to move away from.

From: L. Michael Hall
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SANITY IN SPITE OF THE MEDIA

Today everybody knows that *the news* is not exactly the epitome of sanity. Today we know that what is called "the news" is 90% *bad* news—news of tragedies, catastrophes, diseases, disasters, war, threats of war, inflation, government corruption, riots, and on and on. If something *bad* happened, it is "news." If something good happened, well, that is fine, but don't expect it to make the evening news.

Now there is just something wrong and twisted about that. As a culture, we *discount* the good stuff in order to highlight, foreground, and devote lots of energy to the bad stuff. Giving it that much attention and energy of course, implies that the bad is more important than the good. Of course, if you do that in your relationships, you are "looking for a fight." John Gottman's research indicated that for every negative word or exchange, you need five positive words or exchanges just to stay even. So, what does that say about our social relationships with each other when the news is 90% negative?

Now if only that was the only thing wrong with the media, but it isn't. The media is not only overly focused on the negative, which is obvious, today it is mostly biased and prejudiced, which is not so obvious. How much? I don't know. Some media outlets seem to be nearly 100% biased, others only 70 or 80%, but they are all biased. Each media outlet has for the most part stopped providing *journalism* and is now into *advocacy and persuasion.* Some are fully into *propaganda.* The "woke" agenda that drives so much of the mainline media has gotten to the point where Orwell's vision of a totalitarian future is well underway. No longer can you count on the words or names they use to mean what they have traditionally meant. And when a Secretary of Education cannot even define "woman," you know things have gotten really weird and completely biased.

For decades, we have been aware that various media outlets have been "spinning" the facts. And to some extent, this is inevitable given the nature of human perception and thinking. Putting a positive (or negative) *spin* on things comes with our subjectivity. We cannot be fully and absolutely objective. But now *spinning* the facts and the truth has reached a crazy level. Biden's big announce in August that we have "Zero" inflation is a case in point. Zero inflation? This was not only a spin of the truth, but completely *out of context.* If he had said "from July's inflation rate of 7.1% to August's inflation rate" it is zero, that would have been understandable. But he did not. He left the impression that there is no inflation—a completely false idea.

To stay *sane* in the midst of the current agenda-driven and highly biased nature of the media—you and I have to do a *lot of critical thinking.* Otherwise we will be brainwashed with the media's propaganda. Critical thinking means questioning what you hear, the language it is coded in, and the hidden presuppositions that are implied but not stated.

Media today inevitably controls our perspective of things. By presenting only the facts that fits with a given media's agenda, by taking facts out of context, by quoting someone only in part, by presenting 15 negative stories about someone and only 1 counter-balancing positive story, all of these influence the so-called "facts" that we use to reason. Once upon a time you could hear *both sides of an issue* on any news broadcast. Today that is becoming increasingly rare.

Like the "January 6 Commission," which conducted all of their interviews and questioning from only one perspective. Those Representatives who could have questioned and interviewed from the other perspective were cast off of the commission and not even allowed to participate. Just knowing that tells you that those in charge of the commission already had their conclusions and the hearings were designed to confirm what they already wanted to prove. It had nothing to do with a search for truth.

Recent corrections and apologies from the CDC (Center for Disease Control) revealed that they had put out a lot of mis-information about shots, masks, social distancing, etc. As it turns out, getting the shot did not prevent covid and masking children does more harm than good. If you listened uncritically to the media, you would have accepted a lot of false information.

For training in *critical thinking,* there's no better place to begin than with the NLP Meta-Model of Language. You can find it in *The Structure of Magic* (1975) and the extended Meta-Model in *Communication Magic* (2001). Just knowing *how language works in our neurology* will give you a great heads up for how to be an independent thinker in a biased media environment.

To then deepen your critical thinking skills, *Executive Thinking* (2018) provides lists of cognitive biases, distortions, and fallacies to be wary of. And because bias is built into the human brain as default patterns for thinking and reasoning, once you know what these are, and become practiced in recognizing them, you can save yourself from a lot of unsanity.

THE SELF-ACTUALIZING ATTITUDE

Just when I think I have finished this series on attitude, another idea pops up in my mind. This time it came from reviewing the book, *Unleashed!* (2007) and coming across a chapter that was titled, "The Attitude." Like so many things these days, I had not even remembered writing that chapter. The theme of that chapter can be easily summarized: The experience of self-actualizing and peak experiencing do *not* work automatically, instead they require a special attitude. Then to detail that self-actualizing attitude, the following are listed.

1) An open attitude. Open to the possibilities and potentials that clamor within, open to the changes that may bring, open to giving up inauthentic roles and becoming real, open to being more vulnerable as a human being.

2) A willingness to 'become.' This is part of the open attitude. *Becoming* occurs best from *being* and refers to developing and orchestrating your inner gifts as you make informed decisions about your destiny. It is the adventure of *becoming* your real self and your best version of you.

3) A self-authoring attitude. To *be* and to *become* requires that you primarily own your own "authority" and not defer to others, to authority figures, to external rules, etc. As a meta-program of self-referencing this means that you become *the author* of your story, your experiences, and your values. Doing that gives you a "circle (locus) of control" over your innate capacities.

4) A transcending passion. This passion for life starts with *being* the best you and then *transcends* to seeking to making a difference in the world by contributing your uniqueness. As you get this attitude, you experience a never-ending motivation, a compelling reason to get out of bed each day. You fall in love with an ambition that drives you.

5) Playful curiosity. In all of this, instead of getting really "serious" about things, you continually see what is humorous in being human—what is silly, ridiculous, incongruent, etc. and this keeps you playful. This is important. After all, passion without playfulness invites the demonic—the hellish rigidity, dogmatism, and perfectionism that plagues so many high achievers.

6) A restless attitude. Self-actualizing people are forever restless because they live in the realm of "the more, the more." That's the *being* dimension. Unlike the *deficiency* dimension of the lower needs which operates by "the more, the less," this works by the reverse principle. The more you satisfy the *being*-needs and values, *the more your capacity and passion grows.* The new discontent that then arises typically means that another higher level *being*-need has opened up.

7) A beginner's mind. Because self-actualizing people have a passionate learning state of curiosity and playfulness, school is never out for them. They are constantly learning and developing. Out of that comes a never-ending flow of freshness and creativity.

8) A self-challenging attitude. Knowing the dulling effect of boredom, familiarity, and the comfort zone, self-actualizing people have a hunger that makes them long for a challenge. To be "put to the test" is a thrill for them.

9) A mental agility. With a beginner's mind, they are naturally flexible and so they easily adapt to changing conditions. No wonder then that they can shift perspective, learn so quickly, and become the pioneers of tomorrow.

10) An embracing of change. If we ask, "Who are the change embracers who are not put off or threatened by change?" the answer is, "those who are self-actualizing." They are the ones Gary Hamel described, "the future belongs to the agile."

11) A resilient spirit. Self-actualizing people are forever unleashing more and more of their potentials because whenever they experience a set-back, they immediately (or quickly) *bounce back.* That's because they have *bounce* inside of themselves. This attitude prevents obstacles from sapping their energy.

12) A discipline of follow-through. This persisting attitude gives them stamina and tenacity to maintain their course. Ego-strength empowers them to create and follow a discipline practice and it is in that persistence that they succeed.

13) A decisiveness. Because so many people wait for "something to happen" and only react to the events of life, they suffer from the torments of indecisiveness. Not self-actualizing people. They decide and then persist and if things go south, they bounce back, learn, and readjust.

14) An audacious dreaming. They dare to dream—and to dream big. They tap into the powers of the imagination in order to create, first in their mind, a bright future that draws out all of their powers.

15) A total engagement. With all of the previous attitudes, they live in the here-and-now and are *fully present* to whatever they are engaged in. They do it whole-heartedly.

16) A risk willingness. Not expecting absolute safety or secure, they secure themselves in their a ability to learn, to be resilient, to be connected, etc. Consequently the risks they take are intellect and well calibrated.

While specific actions enable you to do what needs to be done, it is *attitude* that makes your actions energized with the particular *qualities* that the action needs. Just "doing what you need to do" is not enough. You have to embed your actions within a larger frame of mind—a meta-state. And because all attitudes are comprised of various combinations of meta-states, knowing how that works gives you the tools for supercharging your attitudes just right.

OUR ONGOING
HUMAN POTENTIAL MOVEMENT

At the end of September (the 22nd) we concluded 12 days of the *Self-Actualization series of trainings* at Lucid Trainings in Cairo, Egypt. There were four trainings, each one was 3-days and each training, while part of the Diploma that we offer, is also designed as a *stand alone* training. We call the series of trainings, *Seeking the Peak.* This refers to the peak of human needs and values, what Maslow called the *being*-realm. This realm describes humanity at its best. It describes what all people, regardless of ethnic background, culture, or religion truly needs to be fully alive and fully human.

That phrase, *fully alive/fully human* is perhaps the very best description of what "self-actualization" means. And it fits our core theme in Neuro-Semantics. *Fully alive* speaks about your body and neurology—alive, energetic, vitality, passion, etc. *Fully human* speaks about your mind, heart, and spirit—a human being "fully functioning." That was Carl Rogers' term for self-actualization. *Fully functioning* mentally, emotionally, linguistically, behaviorally, and relationally. And that's a function of meaning—your semantics. That's why one of our central models for guiding, and even measuring, the self-actualizing life is using the *meaning and performances axes* which, in turn, sets up the self-actualization quadrants.

Over twenty years of ongoing research, Maslow, his students, and his colleagues identified 19 *being*-needs/values. They identified those qualities and experiences that make us fully human, that expresses our best humanity. And at the heart of these qualities is the *being* experience which refers to them being *end* values and not *means* values. *Being* fully alive and fully human speaks about living beyond the instrumental values that's required to cope, survive, maintain safety and security, love and affection, bonding and attaching, and feeling social value.

But what is *beyond those instrumental values*? Maslow identified it as our *higher nature.* It is where we strive to fully express our best humanity. In Neuro-Semantics, this is our *meta-life* (to use Bateson's term), it is the meta-place where we construct meaning which, in turn, determines the quality and effectiveness of our lives. So, what does the self-actualization trainings entail?

1) *Vitality.* When it comes to having the energy to live life fully, you have to gratify the four classes of lower needs: survival, safety, belonging, and social. *If you do not truly and adequately gratify them,* you will experience deficiency and because deficiency takes up a lot of energy, leads to being desperate. When falsely gratified, creates neurotic needs (compulsions). Gratify them truly and adequately, and you will release lots of energy—energy or vitality to focusing on your passions and values, living the "good" life of the *being*-values.

2) *Potentials.* Vitality also involves the meta-life of the *being* values and so unleashing your

potentials up and down the hierarchy enables you to tap into your inner self, your true self, the self you can become. This makes for a highly meaningful life, an ever-increasing of your capacities, a deep authenticity, and it makes all of life an adventure. In *Unleashing Potentials* the processes for how to be released *from what's holding you back* and how to be liberated for what lies before you gives you a key to personal empowerment and freedom. Modules I and II offer six-days of personal self-actualizing where you create yourself and lead yourself.

3) *Creativity.* Having created yourself, the best version of you, you are now ready for creating solutions to the real problems outside of your skin. Having discovered your inner *construct* in your meta place for inventing meaning, you are ready as a meaning-maker to tackle the challenging problems for making the world a better place. Having modeled creativity as involving four stages: outcome, problem, solution, and innovation, this module gives one the practical tools (using the Neuro-Semantic Precision Funnel) for creating solutions and innovating them with precision.

4) *Leadership.* Self-actualizing people with these abilities are now in a wonderful position to lead groups, families, businesses, corporations, even countries to become self-actualizing groups. It's not easy. But given their problem-solving capacities, their meaning-making abilities, their bias for implementing and embodying what they do, self-actualizing people can lead the way. They lead the way as change-agents.

All of that occurs in 12 intense days of training. But, of course, that's also based on previous trainings in NLP and Neuro-Semantics. In all, along with the required reading and self-application, the *Self-Actualization Psychology Diploma* is equivalent to two-years of study at a University. The difference is that this is rigorously personal and practical. The focus is on experience, experiential learning, and self-application. The focus is on the actual *skills* for actualizing vitality, potentials, creative solutions, and leadership. The design is that people graduate with *the ability to actually **do** things.*

Nor is that all. Following up on that are four additional trainings: Unleashing Authenticity; Unleashing Productivity; Unleashing Resilience, and Unleashing Collaborative Leadership— another 12 days. And why? The reason is simple: *Neuro-Semantics is about actualizing your highest meanings and values into your very best performances.* All of our models, books, manuals, trainers, coaches, consultants, therapists, etc. are designed to focus on actualizing excellence in people's lives.

We had graduates from several countries— Egypt, Tunesia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, and Sweden. As a result, Meta-Coaches will be using the Self-Actualization Psychology to coach and trainers to do the trainings.

A TRULY TRANSFORMATIVE ATTITUDE

"Dichotomizing pathologizes and pathology dichotomize."
Abraham Maslow

If there's a sneaky attitude that is sure to create all sorts of problems in your life, and an attitude that prevents you from understanding what's wrong, *it is the linear either/or way of thinking.* As a thinking pattern, *either–or* is how small children first begin to think as they categorize their options in the world. Things are *either* this way *or* they are that other way. You are strong or weak, smart of dumb, selfish or giving, a friend or an enemy, etc. You are either working or playing, stingy or generous, thinking or feeling, winning or losing, and on and on. This is the first world that we all grow up in—and it is the world that some people never graduate from.

The *either–or world* is a dichotomized or polarized world. Now for children and for primitive people living in a dangerous jungle, it is a world that works just fine. For everybody else—it is a very limiting world and as a habitual attitude, it is itself dangerous. "Dichotomizing pathologizes and pathology dichotomize" was the mantra of Abraham Maslow. He wrote about that repeatedly over the years and his research demonstrated how toxic it is.

The attitude of seeing and framing things in terms of *either–or thinking* has one especially toxic and pathological effect—it *blinds* you to seeing systemic solutions. It *locks you out of* any and every synergetic solution. Now you cannot see things in-between the polar opposites. Now you are incapable of recognizing *both–and* variables.

If you suffer an either–or dilemma inside your own psychology such as the conflict between selfish and unselfish, mind or emotion (head or heart), pride or humility, scarcity or abundance, work or play, etc., then your emotions will tend to oscillate back and forth. You will be on one side of things, then flip to the other. And if you have a hidden frame that prohibits one side of the either–or framework, then you will have a complete *blind spot* to the inner conflict so that you don't understand what's going on. I see that frequently in coaching conversations. A manager wants to be effective and task-oriented *and* struggles with also wanting to be friendly and humane in his decisions. He is on the horns of a dilemma with seemingly no solution.

Organizations are often structured for certain either–or formulations. If structured for the stockholders, it is often at odds with the stakeholders (employees, customers, etc.). If structured for "results this quarter" it is often sacrificing core capacities for long-term well-being. If structure for competition, it cannot get people to cooperate, share information, and work as a team. Again, the very thinking that creates this problem *blinds* one to solutions.

To identify the subtle and hidden attitude of *either–or*, you first have to catch it. This means

stepping back and recognizing that you are on the horns of a dilemma. As you flush out your *either–or perspective* listen for these words— either-or, black-or-white, all-or-nothing. Next, put the two choices on a continuum as the polar ends. You now have a visual image that reveals that there's a whole world in-between. So ask, "What lies between these polar opposites?" "If one is at 0 and the other at 100, what is at 25, 50 or75 percent?" In this way, you can begin to perceive all of the things which lie between the either–or alternatives.

But we are not done. Not only is there *a world of choices in-between the duality of the either–or choices, there is also a world above.* So if you draw a diagram, move your pen to a position *above* the continuum and ask, "What is above these two that might be a synthesis of the two?" Between details and global, you might find meta-detailing. Between lose and win might be "playing a game."

Ask, "If these two dual options are members of the same class, what is the classification?" "If both are values, they are values within what larger value?" Between competition on one side and collaboration on the other side, both are ways of relating.

What is the higher level *attitude* that solves the either–or problem? There are several.

> First, the attitude of *both–and* in different dimensions. "I am both strong and weak, strong in some dimensions, weak in others."
> Second, is the *systemic* attitude which takes the whole system into account. "There actually is no 'mind' without a 'body' and no 'body' without a 'mind,' they are one thing—the mind-body-emotion system."
> Third, is the *gestalt* attitude that acknowledges the emergence of something that is "more than and different from" the parts. "I have learned how to work at my play, and play at my work. I take a vacation daily when I go to work."

Thinking more holistically is a higher level or meta-level attitude, one of synergy that brings about a unity to a world that is otherwise torn apart by framing things dualistically. This is what we do in NLP Communication to resolve conflicts. After all, conflicts are by their very nature polarized positions that people have dichotomized. By thinking in terms of both–and, systemically, and synergistically we move up to an *unifying frame that integrates the conflicting parts.* [Want more? See Chapter 16 *Synergizing* in the book *Unleashed!* (2007).]

From: L. Michael Hall
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RIDING THE WAVES OF AN EMOTION

The original etymology of *emotion* is actually very telling. What's most obvious in the term is the idea of *motion,* something is *moving.* And when something is moving, it is *moving out and away from something and simultaneously it is moving toward something.* Accordingly, the word "emotion" once upon a time, coming from Latin, was spelled "ex-motion" and indicated even more clearly, *a moving out* of the energy within the living system.

When you feel an emotion, you feel that something is moving *out* of you and going somewhere. But where is that energy going? It is a push from the rare, but not only that. It is also a *pointing toward* something. It is an impetus that forms and creates something. In this, emotions point to the future and to the inter-personal field, that is, to relationships.

> When you are angry, you usually feel that someone has violated some value that's important to you and your energy *goes out* to try to make corrections.
> When you are afraid, you feel that someone or something is threatening and dangerous, and so your energy *goes out* to move you out of harm's way.

This is the case with every emotion. It offers you energy and a direction for that energy. It's a myth and falsehood that emotions go round and round in circles, either clockwise or counter-clockwise. You can *impose* that idea on them, but that is not how they function. You can forcibly impose the idea that emotions spin round and round as some are contending in NLP. At best that's a hypnotic induction and as far as I can tell, it won't take you anywhere useful.

Now in speaking about emotions, I'm speaking about a complex combination of feeling and thought. We call the "feeling" part *sensations* or *kinesthetics* and they can be internal and/or external sensations. A sensation by itself is not an emotion. To have an emotion, you also have to have some cognitive thought, memory, or meaning.

That's why when you have emotions (or *emote)* you are communicating with the significant people in your life. You are communicating about what's going on *inside* of you and you are communicating as a way to reach out to shape your way of relating to others.

In this way emotions combine the past and the future. The past is in your emotions because you learned them in your past; you learned them from previous events and experiences where you thought, reasoned, drew conclusions, and created meanings. With that background, they are now informing your current situation and bringing forth the emotions that you have developed. But there's a problem The problem is that what happened in the past, especially during childhood, is typically no longer relevant in adult life.

Then to complicate matters, a second problem is that you often seek to understand *why* you feel as you do by reasoning that "the past caused it." But that's fallacious reasoning. The "past" did

not cause anything. Instead, it was the source and context in which you *learned* something that's still present. Yet what was meaningful in your past may not be meaningful any longer.

Your emotions also relate to the future. That's because emotions are intentional. With any emotion, you are intending to *do* something. The question is what? "What are you attempting to do in feeling and expressing a given emotion?" We now ask a different question from "why am I feeling X?" Now we ask, "What is this emotion for? What is it seeking to do?"

Emotions energize us to move forward to achieve goals, ideals, and possibilities of our future. Now imagination goes to work and you end up creating possibilities which you then try on *emotionally* as you experiment with it. It activates you with the energy to do something. Here the purposes of your emotions sends you forward into the future to possibilities and to new choices for your life. Here reasons would send you backwards to the past trying to explain the source of where you learned how to generate the emotion originally.

One way to think about your emotions is to imagine them as *waves*—waves moving you out from where you are to somewhere that you could be that would actualize the meaning that created the emotion. If the emotion is healthy and appropriate, then you can ride it on out *actualizing* your highest values into your best performances. This is the true usefulness of emotions—energizing and empowering you to make your *inside world* of your beliefs, intentions, understandings, etc. *real* in the outside world.

VALUES—
WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

If that question, *Why are values important?* strikes you as redundant and self-evident, it should! After all, we define a value as "that which is important." And yet the question is not only a legitimate question, but a deep question that cannot be answered quickly or superficially. Answering the question takes us into the heart of our psychological nature as human beings and takes us into the realm of ontology (*being-ness*). More pragmatically, it also takes a person into very personal questions such as, "What are you living for?" "What motivates you to devote your energy, effort, time, and money into X?"

Values, like most other things human, occur at multiple levels. At the lowest levels, we *value* the items that allow us to survive and feel safe—food, water, shelter, sleep, sex, exercise, money, etc. Answering the question as to *why are they important* is easy. These are the items that allow us to survive, thrive, feel good, and be ready to engage in the adventure of life. But *why is that important?* Ah, now we have moved up to the next logical level, we have self-reflexively considered *the why* of the first why.

Now that first area of values offers its own challenges. And primarily because those items are real, tangible, and empirical items. You can see them, hear them, feel them, smell them, and taste them. Unwittingly that has seduced most of us into thinking that "values" are externally real "things." But they are not. You may *value* an item that you can see-hear-and-feel, but the actual value is intangible—living and feeling alive to life. Another seduction: You might over-value any one of these tangible things. You may semantically load it up with too many values and try to transform it into "the purpose of life." Many people do that. They make food "the purpose of life," or sex, or money, or just about anything that contributes to survival.

The next levels of values, using Maslow's hierarchy of needs, involve the things we value in others, in family, friends, and society. Maslow named them safety and security, love and affection, worth and dignity. The values in these levels arise because we are social beings and we need each other. In fact, all of the higher intelligent and pack animals also have these needs/ values. As a social group, they provide protection and stabilization, bonding and attachment, and worth and recognition. I love what Maslow said about that. "Be a good animal; have healthy appetites for these needs." Yet in the end, you have only achieved the status of a *good animal.*

We *value* the needs of these social levels, even though they are less tangible, because with these, we not only survive, we thrive. Psychological research in the past hundred years have demonstrated repeatedly just how much we need stability (safety, security) in order to be psychologically healthy. If you are *insecure* in your world, you will tend to be on guard,

defensive, non-trusting, suspicious, paranoid, etc. Not good. If you do not have *secure attachments* with other people, you will lack the social closeness and bonding that makes you a good friend, a good parent, a good employee, a good leader. You will again, be defensive, over-sensitive to sleights, untrusting, feel like a victim, blame, etc. And if you do not have a sense of your *social value and dignity* in your groups and communities, you will never feel "good enough," always feel that you have to do more, have more, be more in order to be okay.

So what we *need,* the requirements for physical and psychological well-being—these *necessities* are the first things that we value in life. This means that you and I have inside of us *the intrinsic foundation* for a set of values. That was one of Maslow's major discoveries (more about that later in this series).

The final level in the hierarchy of needs are all lumped into one category—*the self-actualizing needs.* These are the things necessary for we humans to be fully human, to move beyond being a good animal, and being a *good human.* Here we have needs for knowledge and meaning, for beauty and order, for giving love and making a difference, for pursuing excellence and contributing, etc. You do not need these to survive, you don't need these to be psychologically healthy—you need these to be *inwardly healthy,* or we may say, *spiritually healthy—healthy in your spirit and heart.*

Why do we need values? To survive, to thrive, and to *become* all that you can become, to unleash your highest potentials and live life to the full. Sounds pretty important to me and yet ... we have a value-crisis in today's world, the subject of the next post.

AND THEN THERE WAS META-THERAPY

Over 20 years ago I developed *The Meta-Coaching System.* Why? The purpose was to bring Neuro-Semantics into the field of Coaching and offer the distinctions that we make as well as higher quality NLP. At the time, coaching was a new field and I especially wanted to offer the distinctions that we make which distinguishes coaching from the other helping professions.

Fast forward 22 years and last December I flew to Portland Oregon to be with my colleague and longest lasting best friend, Dr. Carl Lloyd. While Geraldine was in Seattle with her sister, Carl and I drove there. That gave us many wonderful hours which we spent reminiscing about our friendship since 1975, as well as talking about therapy. The reason for the talk about therapy, in part, is because Carl has been a tenured Professor with two doctorates and lots of post-graduate studies, a Supervisor with new therapists, the director of a psychiatric clinic, and a psychotherapy for decades, and a therapist himself. As Carl began asking me about the therapeutic processes within the Meta-States Model, that re-initiated a new flame of passion in myself. It gave me lots of ideas about research questions that one could use for a thesis or a dissertation.

Afterwards I returned home and one of the presentations I created was *The Unexpected Expansiveness of the Meta-States Model* which I shared in several zoom meetings. Nor did Carl let up; he kept writing and questioning things suggesting we integrate Meta-States into therapy. As a result I took a second look at the subject of psychotherapy—a subject that I had moved away from when I began focusing on coaching. Then with the research and books I wrote this year (*Inside—Out; Inspiring the Heart*), I decided I would take a new fresh look at psychotherapy and see if there was anything new that I could offer. That was the birth of *Meta-Therapy.*

After writing the book, Geraldine read it and kept urging me to create a training manual, "the coaches need this" she kept saying. I didn't immediately believe her; but I have learned not to dismiss a wife's suggestions out of hand. "I will think about it." I said. Then Jairo asked that I present it at INAP in Brazil. So I got busy writing a manual.

We have now completed that training. So what's the results? First of all, at the training we mostly had Meta-Coaches and only a few licensed Therapists. I didn't expect that. I was further surprised about *the applicability of the material to the Meta-Coaches.* I didn't expect that either. Then I remembered something that I had forgotten. The patterns we use in Neuro-Semantics was created in the years when I was doing therapy and in the context of therapy (e.g., Power Zone, Self-Esteem, Dragons, Emotions, etc.). I had forgotten about the context of their source. Having reapportion them for self-development and for Coaching, I had forgotten about some of the powerful therapeutic mechanisms within them. So that part was a delightful rediscovery. Carl's intuitions were right!

What I discovered was that *Meta-Therapy will round out one's Meta-Coaching training.* It enables a coach to more clearly distinguish therapy and coaching. It gives one a deeper appreciation of the patterns and an awareness of what's going on inside them.

I was glad to hear from the therapists who were present that they got a lot out of the training, insights and tools which will help them in their practices. I was then amazed to hear from the Meta-Coaches that, although they do not do therapy, and that was not their intention, they gained a deeper understanding and appreciation of the models and patterns in Neuro-Semantics. They said that this would help to deepen their coaching. Many mentioned the value of learning about *the meta place.*

Now some time prior to writing *Meta-Therapy,* I began formatting the mind or consciousness as a *meta* place. That began with *Inside—Out.* As I was finishing up *Meta-Therapy*, I starting writing little pieces about what is in the *meta* place. As a result, that led to thinking about writing the next book on *The Meta Place.* I first presented the meta place in Egypt in September to the trainers in the APG training. Now in *Meta-Therapy*, because that's where therapy occurs —that became a significant piece in the training.

With the training in Rio we have now launched *Meta-Therapy*. This will be the subject of the next "Wisdoms" Zoom which (I think) will be the second Saturday of November. I'll also be presenting this to several NLP Conferences in the next few months.

THE VALUE CRISIS
IN TODAY'S WORLD

If values are not only important, but critically important for us to survive, thrive, and *become* all that we can become, fully experiencing and enjoying life (Neurons #42), then *why* is there a crisis of values in today's world? Why do so many people not even know their values? Why do so many other people seem to be without values—living a *valueless life*? Why are so many depressed, discouraged, in despair, suffering ennui, etc.?

Nor is this a new problem. It has been around for a long time. As the modern age began arising in the 19th and 20th centuries, the more industrial the world became, as science provided more and more material goods and raised the standard of living, people began to depend less and less on tradition and religion for guiding them about how to live. And as societies began drifting from the old moorings of the values which had held people together, people looked elsewhere for guidance. While Abraham Maslow was not the first person to speak to this, many, many others had and continue to, he did address it succinctly when he wrote:

> *"The ultimate disease of our times is valuelessness ... this state is more crucially dangerous than ever before in history..."*

Maslow argued that values give us a *value life* which is actually essential if we want to become *fully alive/fully human,* that is live a self-actualizing life. He even called this value-life, the spiritual life (1971, p. 320) because it satisfies the human hunger for a set of values.

> "If you don't have a value life, you may not be neurotic, but you suffer from a cognitive and spiritual sickness, for to a certain extent your relationship with reality is distorted and disturbed." (1971, p. 194).

We start then from the understanding that *values are important.* When there is an absence of values, then we can suffer various meta-pathologies. This refers to simply lacking values to experiencing meaningfulness, despair, hopeless, etc. Maslow described these meta-pathologies, pathologies of your spirit, your heart as a form of value sickness. It is a form of being deprived of the *Being*-values (i.e., beauty, truth, honesty, honor, dignity, excellence, etc., 1971, p. 193). That is, deprivation of the B-values leads to meta-pathology.

Value sickness explains a great many psychological problems. That is, at the heart of what we call neurosis or character problems are often the lack of values or the valuing of the wrong things. How many people who made materialism or fame or riches "the purpose of life," later found it all meaningless, empty, and despaired to such an extent that they took their own lives? As they became depressed, it was not a depression due to the loss of money, of love, of a job, etc. It was the loss of meaning. And we see such suicides, not in poverty stricken countries, we see them in the wealthiest of countries, countries that have the highest standards, and by those who are at the peak of their careers. Perhaps man does not live by bread alone.

Maslow created a table in *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (1971, p. 317-9) of all of the meta-pathologies that can arise: alienation, anomie, anhedonia, loss of zest in life, inability to enjoy, ennui, apathy, fatalism, desacrilization of life, defeat, hopelessness, futility, cynicism, and much more.

All of that obviously describes, in part, the value crisis of today. But it does not tell the whole story. There's more to it. It made science (and makes sense) that science should conduct studies, research, and experiences as objectively as it can. The best science identifies possible biases and using various means (double-bind studies) tries to discover what is actually there with as little agenda as possible. But that's a far cry from trying to be value-free. That's a very different thing.

Actually, real science has a set of values—truth, honesty, replicability, responsibility, ethical practices when using animals or humans, etc. We know that today. But in the history of science, there was a time when science was casting off the influence of tradition, church, and religion when it went to the other extreme and sought to be *value-free.* Maslow's comment about that was, "A value-free model is quite unsuitable for a scientific study of life" (1971, p. 5).

So also with education, courts, media, television, movies, and just about every other aspect of social life—when any one of these try to be *value-free*, then end result is a crisis of values. Back in the 1960s Maslow said "Advertising is a rich source of meta-pathology" (1971, 319). What would he say about advertising today or social media today?

If we agree that disturbances, illnesses, pathologies, or diminutions are indeed a diminishing of full humanness or of the human potential, and if we agree that the gratification, or fulfilling, of the B-values enhances or fulfills the human potential, then clearly these are intrinsic and ultimate values may be taken as instinctoid needs." (1971, p. 320). The bottom line means that there is *within us an intrinsic set of values—values that we can live our lives by.*

VALUES—WHAT ARE THEY?

If there ever was a word that is suppose to convey an understanding of human psychology, motivation, purpose, ethics, pathology, and much more *which utterly fails* in its communication endeavor—it is the word "values." It fails because it sounds like a *thing,* and yet it is not. As a noun, it sounds like something external, yet it is not. It is not a true noun nor is it external. The term "value" is a false-noun, a nominalization—a verb turned into a noun. To *value,* as a process, is to think, deem, and treat something as *important, significant, and/or meaningful.* That's what we *do* when we value. We think, "X is important." Actually, saying that something is important is the easy part, living that value—that's harder. When we have to act according to our espoused values by devoting our energy, time, effort, and priorities to it—that makes it most challenging. And yet, that's what a value true is—*a lived significance.*

This raises the next question, a critical question for your well-being. "What is valuable to you?" "What do you value?" Fortunately this was one of the key subjects Abraham Maslow began studying. Then, out of the years of his research, he discovered that we humans have a built-in *value system*—namely our socio-biological needs and our higher semantic needs. He called the first our D-needs (for deficiency) and the second, our B-needs (for *being*). The first set of needs *drive* us with an impulse energy so that we would figure out how to gratify that drive. And these needs are at the same time our most fundamental values. Because we *need* oxygen, food, water, sleep, and shelter, so we *value* these items. We value these for survival, for life, for well-being.

We need safety and security—a stable world to live in, one that we can figure out how to protect ourselves, be safe, and have a sense of structure. So needing these, we value them. We need love and affection, belonging, a sense of attachment to others, a community and so we value the same. We need social recognition, respect, and dignity, and so we value these. *Our needs are our values.*

Then, above and beyond these first needs/values which enable us to have health and well-being are the truly unique *human needs/values*—knowledge, meaning, justice, equality, love, beauty, music, contribution, excellence, making a difference, etc. These are the higher needs, the *being-needs,* which are the *human needs/values.* While the first needs/values make us *fully alive,* these higher needs/values enable us to be *fully human.* So within them are our highest and most important values.

What are the intrinsic human values? They begin with the D-needs along with the B-needs. All of the things that the classic philosophers said were among the most important human values—truth, beauty, and justice are part of the *Being*-values. What's amazing about what Maslow discovered was that he reached the same conclusions, not philosophy but through psychological research. As he extended his studies about "good humans," he started identify "good

specimens." He started identifying people who were using a lot, if not most, of their talents and potentials and using them as those who had happened upon the highest human values. He reasoned that *if the healthiest among us,* those "fully functioning" or nearly so, and whose well-being and productivity was of great value to mankind, their *lived values must be innately significant.* From that, he, his colleagues, and his students began making a list of these *being-values.*

This was and continues to be quite revolutionary. What *truly* and *adequately* gratifies the D- and the B-needs consist of the essential and intrinsic human values. This enables us to generate a list of values which are *not* imposed from the outside and on which you must take them on faith or because you believe in some ideology or philosophy. We accept these values because these are the ones which enable our well-being and full functioning. Anyone looking for a set of values to guide one's life by or a set of values to invest your time, money, effort, etc, into can start here.

If that doesn't convince you, consider the converse. Again, that's what Maslow did. He looked at people who failed to gratify the *need–values,* and especially the *B-values.* What he found was that those who failed them suffered various pathologies. In the D-realm, the pathologies were physical and psychological addictions and in the B-realm, they were loss of motivation, depression, anhedonia, uncertainty, etc. He called the problems in the B-realm, meta-pathologies and he created long lists of these "sicknesses" of the spirit.

Values are what you need—what's required—to be fully alive/ fully human. That's why when a person suffers from value sickness, they have problems being human. It is why a value-crisis can be so devastating. It is why we live best when we live by the highest values. It is why education, coaching, therapy, parenting, and other domains desperately need to recover the highest human values—the *being-values.*

GETTING THERE/ BEING THERE
Instrumental / End Values

Here is a basic distinction about values: We have both *instrumental values* (means values) and we have *end values.* When what you value is a *means to an end* then you have something that is instrumental. It works like an instrument in that it enables you to achieve an end-result that you want. Actually, this is the kind of *value* that we are all most familiar with. That's because everyday that you have to *cope* in order to take care of your many driving needs (e.g., your need for food, water, oxygen, shelter, money, etc.), you are seeking an *instrumental value* that will enable you to achieve the end-result—surviving, living, well-being, not-dying, not-starving, not becoming deficient and desperate.

This is true for the first four levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (e.g., survival, safety, belonging, and social value). And this is what takes us a good part of our early teenage and adult years to learn and to attain. That is, we develop a life-style by which we can make a living, figure out how to stabilize our lives (safety and security), get along well with others (love and affection, attachment), and attain a place of recognition, dignity, and esteem socially. So until you have established a solid lifestyle and turn your coping abilities into automatic programs, that's what you focus on—the *instrumental values.*

Then what? What comes after establishing *the successful life habits* so that you take care of all of the lower deficiency needs (the D-needs)? These socio-biological needs comprise your innate "motivation" system—moving you, driving you, urging you to gratify them truly and adequately. Doing that also is a basic definition of health, well-being, and succeeding as a person. But that's not all there is. There is much more.

All of the instrumental values that you establish for taking care of and *coping* with your basic socio-biological needs, your animal needs describes what you need *to get there.* But *getting there* is **not** the purpose of life. Yes, gratifying the lower needs will give you *relief.* It will give you a basic sense of confidence in yourself and others. It will give you the thousands of *pleasures* that come along with breathing, eating, drinking, sleeping, feeling safety, love and affection, respect and dignity. But all of that is just *getting there.*

What is next? After you *get there,* then what? And what is *there*? "There" is where a whole other range of needs and drives kick in. Actually they kick in right from the start, but because the lower needs are prepotent, they take precedence over the higher needs (the B-needs). And they can blind us to the ultimate needs. That's the need to be *human.* You and I need to truly and adequately gratify the D-needs in order to really be ready for the *Being-needs.* As the *being needs* come on line—it's critical to recognize that there do not operate by the same mechanisms as the lower needs. The B-needs are not *instrumental needs.*

Instead, the B-needs are *being needs* and *end-values*—they are valuable and pleasurable *in and of themselves* and *for their own sake*. Instrumental needs get you there by taking care of your foundation—what you need to be health and well. But they are **not** the purpose of life. That's the role of the *B-needs*. Instrumental needs drive you to cope, to gratify them, and when you do—they go away. Amazing! They vanish. The drive, the motivation, the energy, and the urge of the lower needs disappear. The more you satisfy them, the less they drive you. As Maslow quoted, "The problem with eating is it kills your appetite."

The mechanism that drives the D-needs operates from a certain pattern, the pattern of "the more, the less." The more you gratify truly and adequately, the less motivation they provide. Their motivational energy runs out. Not so with the B-needs. They operate from a different pattern, a pattern of "the more, the more." The more you gratify the need for knowledge, meaning, love, beauty, music, order, excellence, contribution, justice, equality, etc., the more your capacity for it grows and the more you want it. The motivational energy amplifies. You become more passionate, not less. You become more and more *human.*

It is in the *Being-realm* where you are *being there.* Now the striving to get there ends. Now a new motivation arises—*being, being fully human.* Now you engage in living your passion but **not** because of what you get from it. Getting is over; now is the time for *being.* Now is the time for *living.* Now is the time to *express* yourself, your potentials.

INSTRUMENTAL AND BEYOND

When we distinguish values so that we recognize there are *instrumental values* (means values) and there are *end values,* we introduce two very different ways of living. The first way is what most people on Planet Earth know and do—*they live for instrumental values.* This creates a certain way of thinking. When your values are instrumental, you value objects and experiences as important strictly for what you get from them. Results! That's what you want and that's what you focus on—getting results. Getting whatever it is that you are valuing.

That's good! For things that are not valuable in and of themselves, but for what they lead to, this is good. Instrumental values answers the question, "What is this X good for?" "Why should I care about X, what will it do for me?" You have to know the answers to these questions in order to know *how to cope with everyday life.* If getting to work is important, then whatever means you use to get there, you can value. Bus, car, train, subway, walking, riding a bike, hitching a ride, etc. These are instrumental values.

Does that mean you cannot appreciate and value the bus, a car, the train, etc. and value it for itself? No, of course you could. And it never hurts to value an instrumental value and see its inherent value. But if that's all you do, then *your perspective is short and shallow.* When you save money for an emergency, it is an instrumental value and you can appreciate the money for itself as representing a safety net. But to think of money as an *end value* almost always creates an addiction, a compulsion, and a neurotic need. Not good.

To *only live* in a world of instrumental values means that everything and everybody is *just a means to an end.* If that's all you have in terms of values, then everything and every person has a price. And worse, *no person is inherently valuable.* Talk about a de-humanizing way to live! Thinking that way means that every person you meet, you evaluate, "What can this person do for me?" "What benefit can I derive from this person?" And if the answer is "none," they you will see and feel that that person has no value—no value to you. This is how we begin to devalue someone, de-personalize someone, and de-humanize someone.

Instrumental values are good for what they are good for—*getting you to a valued end.* But what end? Ah, now we are moving into the highest values, the *being values.* These are the values that are not instrumental, but an end value. And that means the experience you have with them is *being.*

What is this *being* state or experience? One way to understand it is to contrast it to two other states—doing and having. "Being" refers to being human, being a human being—a person who is more than, and different from, what you can do, say, think, feel, relate, etc. You were a *human being* at birth before any of your cognitive, emotional, and behavioral capacities were developed.

Another understanding of *being* arises when you realize that it is out of *being* that you *become.* This means that "being" is dynamic, fluid, and always in process. You are always *becoming.* In fact, every day our *being* grows an develops (or degenerates).

Now the *being-values* that Maslow and others identified can be used both instrumentally and for *being.* Truth is valuable as a means to understand what's real and is an inherent value. Truth sets you free, and truth in itself is beautiful and satisfying to the mind and soul. Justice is similarly both an instrumental value and an end-value. So also with all of the *being-values:* meaning, knowledge, excellence, making a difference, contribution, altruism, equality, etc.

In a *being-value,* you stop striving. You are not thinking about gaining, winning, defeating, conquering, developing, climbing a mountain, and so on. Instead you are thinking about the wonder and mystery and beauty of an experience or person. You rest in that value, just appreciating, just admiring, adoring, etc.

What is the purpose of the end-values? That question is mostly a silly question. If it is an end-value, then that's the end. The value is inherent. It is not for anything more than itself. Of course, the American (and Western) way of thinking can hardly process that. We are so quick to ask, "To what end?" "For what purpose?" In *being-ness* we stop asking that. We stop asking, "What should I do?" That's because the answer is, "Just be."

A VALUE HIERARCHY

Some years ago it became evident to me that asking the Well-Formed Outcome questions presupposed eliciting from the person seeking to create a really smart goal that was well-designed, you simultaneously had to elicit that person's *value hierarchy about that goal.* So that's what we did. And over the years, teaching Meta-Coaching scores and scores of times, and demonstrating it perhaps a hundred times, and supervising coaches doing it another hundred or two times, the idea of a value hierarchy crystalized in my mind. To elicit it is simple.
　　"Is this goal important to you?" Yes. "Okay, good, and why is it important to you?"

At that point most people say lots of words. But the skill is not in repeating all of those words, but it catching *the value that's presupposed.* And often, that is not easy. Ask the value question and some people tell stories, others give an extensive background of context, others stumble for words, using synonyms and metaphors trying to identify the value. But values tend to be single words. At best they are comprised of a short phrase of two to four words. Values also tend to be coded in nominalizations: truth, unity, tranquility, relationship, contribution, success, progress, responsibility, love, health, well-being, etc. Now as nominalizations, values are pretty abstract and conceptual summaries—summaries of what we think important enough and significant enough for what we live for.

Now in the process of generating a value hierarchy, once you get a value term—hold it. Then use that term as your next reference point. "So X is important to you?" Yes. "And why is X important to you?" It's the same question and you iterate it over and over as you go up the levels of values. Ultimately this generates a *value hierarchy.*

But don't be fooled. It is harder than it sounds. Not only do many people *not know* their values ad/or cannot articulate them, but many people jump levels. Some jump from writing a paper or exercising to an ultimate value—*leaving a legacy.* When you hear that, obviously, the person skipped a whole bunch of intermediate steps. So you have to back down. "And before 'legacy' what is important, but a little bit less important?" Others go round and round, giving you synonyms of the same value. What they give is not the next highest level, but another word for the same value.

Here's something else both fascinating and wonderful about *value hierarchies*—they are all different. Start with anything that you know is important but doesn't *feel* important, and the first level values will be instrumental values. Getting a job done is important to "complete things." But jogging three times a week isn't important for "completing things," it's important to "take care of my health." Every hierarchy for every activity and experience will differ. Well, at the lowest levels. But as you get close to the highest values, a person will tend to end up at the same places. A person's *being*-values will tend to be the same regardless of where it starts.

Lower values tend to be instrumental values; higher values tend to be *being* values. This also means that our values are relative. They are relative to the event, object, or experience that we refer to. It means we have different values—things we consider important about different activities. That's why asking for a person's values or eliciting them will *not generate* a *general set of values that transfer to every context.*

There's another elicitation process we use in Neuro-Semantics. By using the Pleasure Pattern, which is a pattern in the APG training (or *Secrets of Personal Mastery*), you can again elicit a person's value hierarchy. At the primary level, a person identifies a pleasure—a sensory-based activity or experience that the person enjoys and has fun with. It could be talking a walk, watching a sunrise, eating ice cream, baking, swimming, rock climbing, playing chess, watching movies, etc.   Start there and elicit all of the see–hear–feel sensations that make up the sensory pleasures. These are physical, tangible pleasures that satisfy the senses.

Now move to the meta-pleasures which are psychological, intangible and that satisfy the mind. "What is pleasurable about this pleasure?" People will say it gives them relaxation, time alone, rejuvenation, creativity, playfulness, etc. Holding that meta-pleasure in place, ask it again, "What is pleasurable about that pleasure?" The result again will be a value hierarchy for that context. And the highest values that emerge will tend to be that person's highest values—that person's *way of being* in the world.

THE VALUES OF A GOOD LIFE

If you have a set of values that define for you what's important and what's significant, at the same time *you have a definition of the good life.* Now how important is that? It's very, very important. Why? Because most people (yes, I know this is an over-generalization) do not have a clearly articulated description of "the good life." They certainly want it. They long for it. They strive for it. But if you asked them to express it or write it down—they would not be able to do that with any level of specificity.

Part of the reason lies in the fact that there are so many voices in today's world seducing us into their version of "the good life." Look at any advertisement for just about anything—and the central message is, "Buy this, experience this, achieve this, and you will have 'the good life.'" It seems that the good life for most is defined almost exclusively in terms of materialism—what you have or what you experience. The good life are the brand named clothes, jewelry, cars, homes, vacations, and on and on.

Now obviously, the good life starts with material things—food, water, shelter, safety, money, etc. You have to have material things to survive, to be safe, to have friends, work, etc. But the truly crucial factors for *the good life are intangible.* At the lowest levels, it is being loved and respected, engaged in significant job or task, using your best talents and capacities, knowing that you count, etc. Higher than that are the *being* values—truth, beauty, justice, contribution, order, making a difference, etc. While the good life includes the D-level needs as survival values, it mostly thrives in the B-level needs—the growth values.

As you live your life day by day and as you come to the end of your days, the question becomes, "Has my life been well-lived?" Ask that question, and your check-list changes from all of the things you have done and things you have accumulated to a check-list of the things that you have experienced and contributed.

> Have I made a difference? Is the world better off because of the way I lived?
> Have I loved, cared, and spread compassion to the people in my life?
> Have I experienced challenge and used my gifts as fully as I could?
> Have I learned and shared my learnings and wisdom with others?

With all of the value-confusion in today's world, it's important to know what *the good life is and how to live it.*

> Have I overcome limitations and risen above my circumstances?
> Have I suffered loss or hurt and found the resources within to become resilient?
> Have I assisted others to develop a champion attitude without expecting anything in return or having an ulterior motive?

Abraham Maslow wrote about *the good life* in his books about *Being* Psychology and Self-Actualization. He spoke about it as "the value life" and considered it the spiritual life, that is, a the life that genuinely and healthily activates your inner spirit.

> "If you don't have a value life, you may not be neurotic, but you suffer from a cognitive and spiritual sickness, for to a certain extent your relationship with reality is distorted and disturbed." (1971, p. 194) "To live the spiritual life, you don't need to sit on top of a pillar for ten years. Being able to live in the B-values somehow makes the body and all its appetites holy." (Ibid. p. 195)

What is the good life? *It is living from the inside–out.* That means that when you are living the good life, you are self-governing, self-regulating, make your own choices about life, being self-determining. You are living for those highest values—the *being* values: beautify, goodness, joy, aliveness, uniqueness, respect, contribution, integration, etc.

WHEN FACTS DICTATE VALUES

"This is an example of truth dictating what must be done, of the *is* dictating the *ought.*"
Abraham Maslow (1971, p. 117)

When you and I talk about values we generally talk about things that we value, we deem important, that we think it would good for us and others. But sometimes, just sometimes, we slip from a desired-value or a fact to an ought-value.
> "You know, you ought to find a job."
> "You ought to treat your wife and kids better."
> "You ought to exercise more and lose some weight."
> "You ought to communicate more if you're going to be a leader."

Sometimes we treat *facts* (what *is*) as if they are *values* (what *ought* to be). Is that possible? Is it possible that a fact can prescribe a value? Maslow thought they could.
> "Where knowledge brings certainty of decision, action, choice and what to do, and therefore, strength of arm. This is very much like the situation with a surgeon or dentist. The surgeon opening up the abdomen and finding an inflamed appendix knows that it had better be cut out because if it bursts it will kill the person. This is an example of truth dictating what must be done, of the *is* dictating the *ought.*"

From that Maslow said that he thought "the clear perception of value is in part a consequence of the clear perception of facts." Then he noted, "perhaps they may even be the same thing." Pretty amazing! Could they be the same thing? How could they be the same thing? When you perceive the *Being*-values, you are more likely to perceive the intrinsic nature of a person or thing. This occurs for people who are self-actualizing. This seems to be "a perception of the deeper *facticity"* of things and, "at the same time, of the *oughtness* of the object."
> "Oughtness is an *intrinsic* aspect of deeply perceived facticity; it is itself a fact to be perceived."
> (Ibid. p. 118)

All of this led him to then talk about *the demand character* of a fact. Sometimes, some facts carry with them a *requiredness,* that is, a built-in request for action. Yet who are the people who are able to *see* that? Maslow said those who have moved from the D-needs to the B-needs. Those who are living the value-life and seeking the *being*-values. Those are the healthier people who are more perceptive and who are less *ought-blind.* What this means is that via facts, they can perceive what the facts require—*the values that they imply.*
> "They can therefore permit themselves ...to be guided by the facts—they will have less trouble with all value decisions that rest in the nature of reality."

A wonderful example of this is the process of carving a turkey.
> "Carving a turkey is made easier by the knowledge of where the joints are, how to handle the

knife and fork—that is, by possessing full knowledge of the facts of the situation. If the facts are fully known, they will guide us and tell us what to do. But what is also implied here is that the facts are very soft-spoken and that it is difficult to perceive them. In order to be able to hear the fact-voices it is necessary to be very quiet, to listen very receptively. That is, if we wish to permit the facts to tell us their oughtiness, we must learn to listen to them... silently, hushed, quietly, fully listening, non-interfering, receptive, patient, respectful of the matter-in-hand, courteous to the matter-in-hand."

Compare all of that to those who seem to be lost in today's world in terms of values and ethics. What's wrong with them? Could it be that they are not willing to listen to the facts—the facts of life, of human nature, of economics, of relationships, etc. and *let the facts dictate what they ought to do and value?* If a person is blind to future possibilities, change, personal development, unleashing their potentials—he will strive for a status quo in "what is." Yet "true freedom consists of accepting and loving the inevitable, the nature of reality." (Ibid. p. 119)

The bottom line is that sometimes facts can dictate values. Yet this doesn't occur to everyone or at all times. It seems to occur to those who have released their biases and cognitive distortions so that they can "hear" what a fact is suggesting. It happens to those who live the value-life of the *being*-values and who have learned to become *ought*-aware.

In fact, he said that there are some words that fuse or combine facts and values and that we should call such words *fusion words.* He gave as examples— mature, evolved, developed, stunted, crippled, fully functioning, graceful, awkward, fully human, etc. He said that many fusion words were

> "Where knowledge brings certainty of decision, action, choice and what to do, and therefore, strength of arm. This is very much like the situation with a surgeon or dentist. The surgeon opening up the abdomen and finding an inflamed appendix knows that it had better be cut out because if it bursts it will kill the person. This is an example of truth dictating what must be done, of the *is* dictating the *ought.*"

THE MAGIC WORD "META"

If you know NLP, then you have heard about George Miller's famous paper. It was published in 1956 and, in part, launched the Cognitive Psychology Movement. Now that's a really influential paper! *"The Magic Number 7$^{+/-2}$"* also played a big role in the formative ideas of NLP as it identified how many 'things' we can hold in consciousness at a time. Even today 7$^{+/-2}$ still maintains a near magical role in psychology.

If that's a magic number, what I want to zoom-in on here, and highlight, is a magic word, the magical word of—*meta*. And no, not Facebook's new name! In NLP the word *meta* goes back way, way before that! I'm rather referring to the word which Bateson introduced as a way to model and understand cultures, schizophrenia, learning, and much more. And because Bateson introduced the word and used it so prolifically, the early NLP community did so also.

Now unknown to most NLP people, before they invented the name "NLP" in 1976, in the years from 1972 to 1976, the pre-NLP people were called "the Meta People." Frank Pucelik then established "The Meta Institute" in 1978 in San Diego and later in Oklahoma. Even today, Frank has "Meta International" as a NLP Association in Ukraine, Russia, and other former Soviet countries. But while they claimed the name, the early NLP people didn't give much attention to *meta* as a concept. While they used the name to name lots of things— meta-position, meta-level, meta-tactics, meta-representational system (language), etc., for the most part they looked down on *meta*.

How can I say that? Because in the 1980 book, *Neuro-Linguistic Programming,* meta was pretty much reduced to a tiny little place in the Strategy Model, the little "m" after a representational step—a tiny superscript. This *little meta* didn't seem to get any respect! In reading a strategy, it reads like an after-thought, and that's all.

But *little meta* was given a great big boost when I discovered a whole new domain of *meta*. The discovery of the Meta-States Model in 1994, *meta* was finally treated to the respect it deserved. It was then noted that *big meta* provided the doorway to Logical Levels, to one's "Model of the World," to the hidden and unconscious structures that govern all human "programming," and much more. The *big meta* within Meta-States led to the re-modeling of all of the major models in NLP.

That's what Bob Bodenhamer and I did in the late 1990s as we used *big meta* to take a fresh look at the Meta-Model, Sub-Modalities, Meta-Programs, Time-Lines, etc. Over those years, I kept attempting to map out *the territory of meta.* About 1998 I did that, along with Bob, and we came up with the four Meta-Domains of NLP. After that, in 2002 I constructed the Matrix Model with seven meta-dimensions.

At that same time, in Neuro-Semantics, we took *big meta* and designed the entire Meta-Coaching System from it. More recently (2022) I decided to return to the field of psychotherapy and again, using *big meta,* designed *Meta-Therapy.* Now in writing that book as well as the previous book, *Thinking as a Modeler* (2019), I found myself talking about *the meta place.* This came out of researching *being*, and Maslow's B-values, in the Self-Actualization books. Then as I wrote, *Inside–Out* and *Inspiring the Heart* (2022), and mentioning the *meta* place again and again, I got wondering:

- What is this *meta* place, really?
- What is in the *meta* place?
- Is it possible to describe the landscape of the *meta* place?

Meta is magical because it lies at the heart of being human. It is the source of creativity and the place where all of your potentials emerge. It is the place where we do coaching and where we do therapy. And because of that, that's where coaches and therapists take their clients—if they are skilled. Actually, *everything really important* to we humans occurs in the *meta* place. It is in the *meta* place that you will find the inner game and your "model of the world."

I wrote an introductory chapter about **the *meta* place** in the new book, *Meta-Therapy.* Upon finishing that book, I kept thinking about the *meta* place and the more I thought, the more facets of *meta* opened up. "I could write a whole book on meta" I said to my wife, Geraldine. She looked at me in a way that said, "Do it!" So that's what I'm now doing. On a recent day at the coffee shop, I shared a diagram of the *meta* place with her, and she got more excited about it than I did. "This puts everything in NLP and Neuro-Semantics in place and makes it make more sense." And, hoping that others will have that same response, I'm still in pursuit of the *meta* place and describing its landscape. And why? Because *meta* is such a magic idea.

IN THE LAND OF "META"

There's a landscape within your mind. It is *above* and *behind* your everyday experiences, it is *the meta place.*   And no, it is not a landscape of chaos, even though it may seem that way at times when you're confused or anxious. You know about *meta* (Neurons #51), but do you know about the *meta* place? Do you know what's there or how it is organized? Do you know how to enter into it and transform it at your will?

A little history. Freud pictured *the landscape of consciousness* as comprised of ego, id, and superego. These became the ego-states of Adult, Child and Parent in TA (Transactional Analysis). In that landscape were these three ego-states and the ego defenses. It was also a dark place of conflict and war with various instincts fighting each other (life instinct, death instinct, etc.).

Actually most psychologies and psychotherapies, however, did not offer any picture of the landscape of consciousness at all. Behaviorism said that mind, and everything inside the mind, was a black box which does not emit any light about what was inside. So Behaviorists didn't even attempt to figure it out.

Korzybski pictured mind as a set of levels—"levels of abstraction" and created a diagram that he called "the Structural Differential." But that, in itself, was probably enough to turn most people off (you can see it in *Science and Sanity,* 1941/1995). Maslow also thought in terms of levels. For him, it was levels of needs, the D-needs and the B-needs and he spoke about them in terms of being hierarchical. Then later, some of his students came up with the picture of the pyramid.

When Cognitive Psychology entered into the picture, George Miller and associates came up with a diagram picture, the TOTE model (test-operate-test-exit) in their book on *The Structure of Behavior* (1960). This diagram was mostly a linear decision-tree or strategy picture about setting an outcome and then testing it to see if it was "good to go" or not. If not, one was to operate on the outcome and test again and to do so until one was ready to exit the program.

NLP took over the TOTE diagram, added the sensory-representations to it and created the NLP Strategy Model, a linear decision tree diagram which details a person's strategy for how to achieve an outcome or create an experience. They then added a temporal *Now – Then pathway* and came up with a model of the mind when the mind thinks about a goal, the SCORE model. This added *symptoms* emanating from Now and *effects* coming out of Then. *Resources* would then move a person from Now to Then.

So, how can we picture the inner world of consciousness or mind? For years I worked with the NLP idea that we have a cinema in the mind (representations) which we use as an inner map for the outer territory. Discovering Meta-States Model led to the realization that *above* the cinema

we can *step back and edit* our movies with the various cinematic features ("sub-modalities"). After that, I added additional layers or levels following Korzybski and Bateson, thereby creating the *Frame Games* picture of the mind (see *Winning the Inner Game*). Eventually that led to the Matrix Model of 8 dimensions: two about process, five about self, and all grounded in state (see *The Matrix Model*). As a systems model, Matrix allows you to "follow the energy of a person through his or her system."

Catching up to the Future
Now this picturing and diagramming of consciousness has been further extended and expanded yet again. And this time, resulting in being able to identify *the landscape of consciousness.* Viewing mind as *the meta place,* there is a landscape which you can detect with 10 key locations— locations that you can use to describe where you are in your mind and where you move to at any given moment.

This landscape enables you to identify the *meta-level processes* and what you are doing which thereby creates your experiences—your emotions, behaviors, and talk. It's from the *meta* place that you create your sense of reality and create the quality of your performances and experiences. This is *the cause* of what you think, feel, speak, and do. And when you know the cause, that is, *how* you are creating your experiences, you have choice and the power of change.

What's the benefit of this? Namely that by entering into, detecting, and developing your *meta* place, you can gain true control—self-control and self-determination. It enables you to stop any and all victimizing that you do to yourself. Now you can find and unleash the genius within. Now you can catch yourself as you *think* and as you *construct the meanings that you then make actual in your behaviors.* Now you can become your own best programmer. Now you can make sure that your *meta place* is well-designed and serves to bring out the best version of you.

> Interested in more? The first chapter in *Meta-Therapy* provides an overview of the *meta* place. Then sometime in 2023 there will be a book *The Meta Place.*

KNOWING THE META LANDSCAPE

When it comes to your mind, and mine, there's always a lot going on in the mind, sometimes so much you can hardly keep track of it all. So we ask about the processes going on upstairs: "What am I thinking?" "What kind of thinking is this?" "What is this that I'm experiencing and where did it come from?" These are but a few of the questions we ask ourselves, trying to understand ourselves.

Yet understanding your own mind is not the easiest thing to understand. With the large number of factors involved, it's often hard to know precisely what you are feeling or thinking or how to interpret what you are experiencing. To figure that out, you need some landmarks of the mind—landmarks that can help define the *inner landscape of your mind.* These are not brain anatomy landmarks. Generally knowing about brain anatomy tells you very, very little about what you are thinking, or why, or what effect it will have. Knowing the *mind* requires a whole different set of landmarks.

As I've been working to identify *the meta place,* I've been thinking of the *mind as a space* with certain processes. To know this enables us to sort out and separate the different processes of the mind-body system. And while I'm using a solid and stable metaphor (landmark) it is actually a *dynamic* landscape, not of solid 'things,' but of *dynamic processes* which are always moving and changing. Learning to see this landscape in action enables you to *see your mind in action*—how it does what it does as it creates your inner experiences. And, of course, what happens there then transfers to the outside. That's why winning the inner game makes winning the outer game a walk in the park. After all, your outer world experiences are functions of your inner world experiences.

Seeing this dynamic landscape in action equips you in systemic thinking. Now you can see the system in action. And when you can do that, you will be able to know where in the system to intervene to create systemic change and transformation. Then what will seem magical or impossible to others, will be regular and normal to you. You will be able to *get to the heart of things* in a few minutes, not hours, days, or months.

Begin with learning and knowing the landscape features—the ten basic processes (state, stimulus –response, thinking patterns, representations, beliefs, reflexivity funnel, background knowledge, imagination, ecology, and feedback loops). Then learn to recognize them in action, as mind processes something. Once you do that, you'll begin to see the dynamic functions in real time and be able to intervene in real time.

While I can now do that, I'm not the only one, others in Neuro-Semantics can do it as well, and before long, there will be a great many more who can do that. Now if you know how to *see* and how to *work* in the *meta* place, then whenever you hear even a small slice of a conversation, you

will be able to identify where a person is in his or her *meta* place and how to open it up for them so that they can gain a perspective of the whole. And to do that is actually quite a gift. The following is the beginning of a conversation as an example of *opening up a meta place.*

> "Yes, I'm stressed about this project, but it just comes with the territory, because I need to do my very best."

Landmarks	Conversation [Read from the bottom up]	Feedback: Questions to open up the *meta* place.
Reaction from back-ground knowledge	"Me? You are blaming me for feeling stress?"	I'm actually assuming that you are responsible for your thinking, believing, and intentions. Because if not you, who?
	"Well, yes."	Okay, so I now understand how you are stressing yourself out.
Intention	"Yes, I want to do my very best."	The first time out? With no build up or development or feedback? [introducing missing pieces.]
Belief⁵	"No, I mean everyone, shouldn't everyone do his best?"	So is that your intention, to do your best?
Belief⁴	"Well, shouldn't you do your very best every day?	Who me? Are you talking about me?
Feed-forward	"No, it just sounds weird." "It sounds funny when you say it like that?"	What's weird about it? So you are seeing the humor in it?
Belief³ *fear*	"I will be sloppy and careless and unprofessional."	So your thinking pattern is that it is either excellence and your best or being sloppy, careless, and unprofessional. [Either/or thinking]
Rules	"It means eliminating mistakes, carefully going over things again and again."	Or what?
Belief²	"That's what is required for excellence."	Excellence, the best mean what?
Belief¹ *Primary state*	"I *need* to do my very best." Stress, a project.	Why? [Thinking pattern: necessity]

To open up the *meta* place —
> 1) Identify the landmark in the *meta* place that the person is indicating.
> 2) Explore that landmark with questions.
> 3) Look for what's above it, beside it, and below it. Find all of its connections and associations.
> 4) Identify the feedback loops. The person is responding to what? He is responding how? When his responses come back, they come back how?