

Six Steps to Transforming
Performance at Work

Quiet LEADERSHIP

Help People Think Better—
Don't Tell Them What to Do!

DAVID ROCK

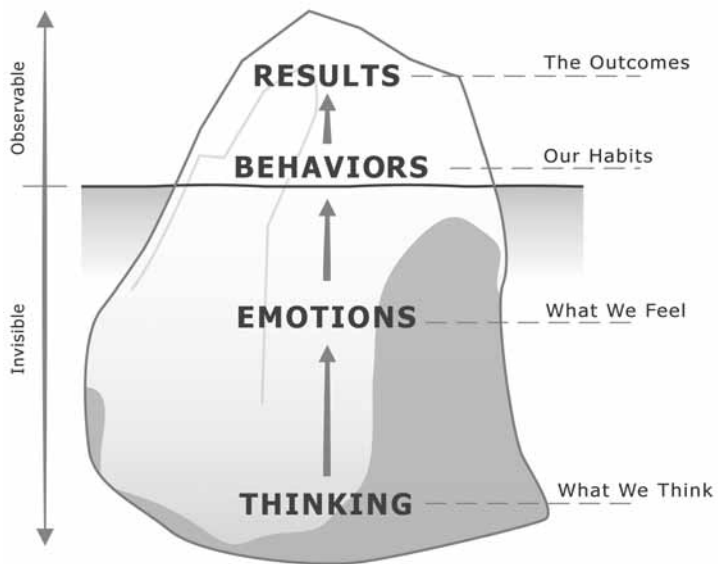


Figure 1, The Iceberg Model



Figure 2, Directions Conversations Can Go



Figure 3, The Shortest Route from A to B

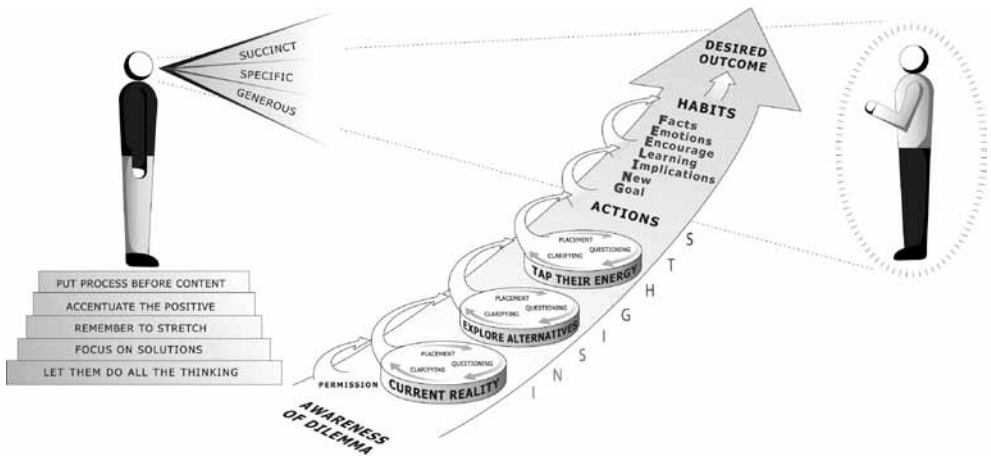


Figure 4, The Six Steps to Transforming Performance



Figure 5, Think About Thinking

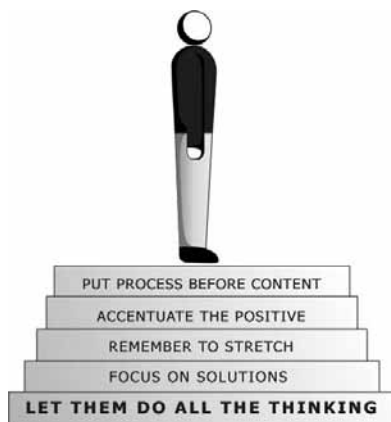


Figure 6, Let Them Do All the Thinking



Figure 7, Positive to Negative Continuum

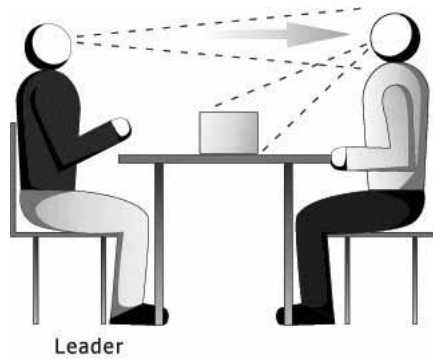


Figure 8, Focus on Their Thinking, Not the Issue on the Table

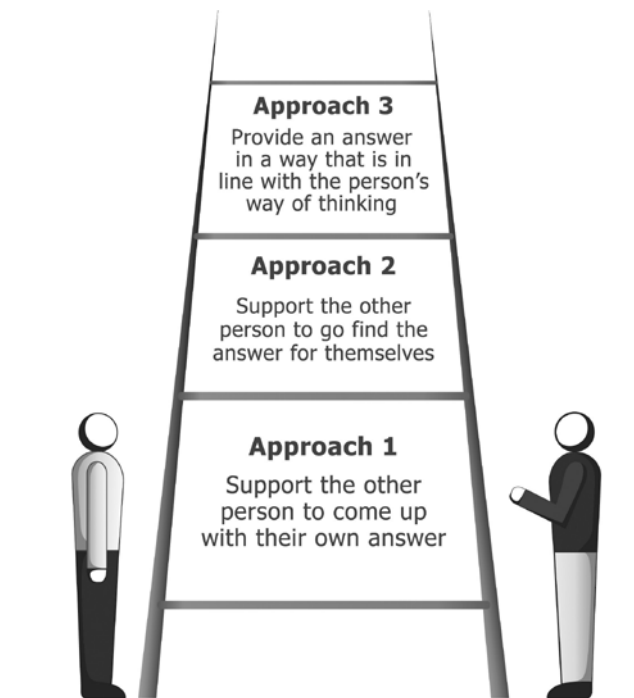


Figure 9, A Ladder of Approaches to Self-Directed Learning

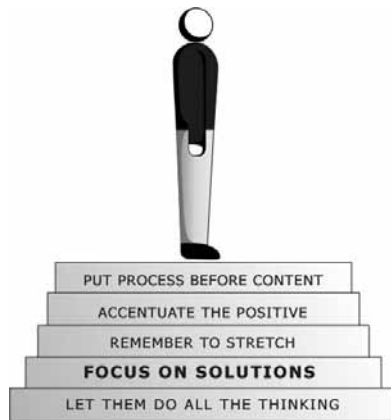


Figure 10, Focus on Solutions

| PROBLEM FOCUS | | SOLUTIONS FOCUS |
|---|-----|---|
| Why didn't you hit your targets? | vs. | What do you need to do next time to hit your targets? |
| Why did this happen? | vs. | What do you want to achieve here? |
| Where did it all start to go wrong? | vs. | What do you need to do to move this forward? |
| Why do you think you're not good at this? | vs. | How can you develop strength in this area? |
| What's wrong with your team? | vs. | What does your team need to do to win? |
| Why did you do that? | vs. | What do you want to do next? |
| Who is responsible for this? | vs. | Who can achieve this? |
| Why isn't this working? | vs. | What do we need to do to make this work? |

Figure 10a

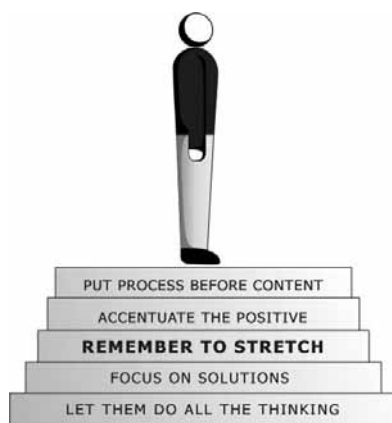


Figure 11, Remember to Stretch

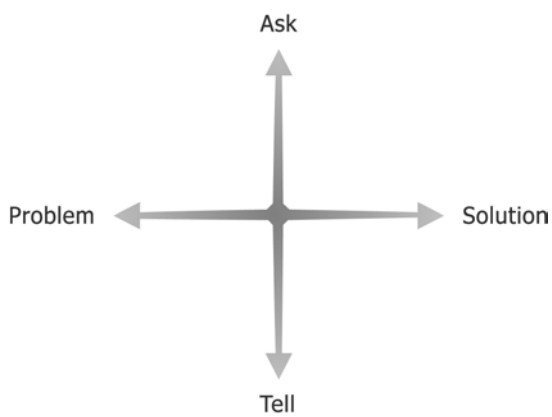


Figure 12, Ask-Tell Quadrants

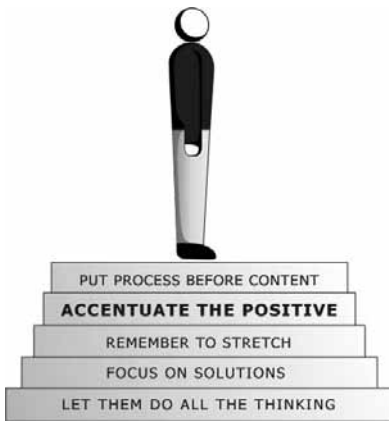


Figure 13, Accentuate the Positive



Figure 14, Put Process Before Content



Figure 15, Choose Your Focus

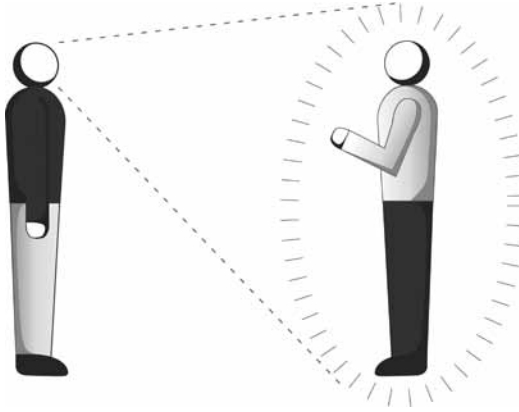


Figure 16, Listen for Potential

- ☐ Listening for opportunities to sound intelligent
- ☐ Listening for a chance to seem funny
- ☐ Listening for how you can sound important
- ☐ Listening to get information you want
- ☐ Listening to external distractions such as other noises, music, etc.
- ☐ Listening for what's going on with the other person
- ☐ Listening to your own thoughts, and not listening at all
- ☐ Listening to see how you can help
- ☐ Listening to understand the problem
- ☐ Listening for how you can benefit

Figure 16a

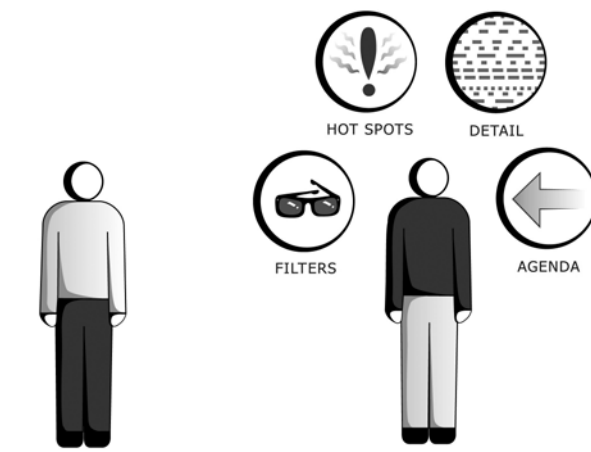


Figure 17, The Clarity of Distance

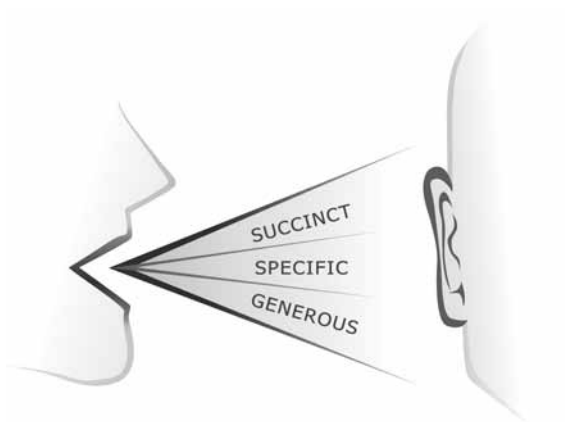


Figure 18, Speak with Intent

THE FOUR FACES OF INSIGHT

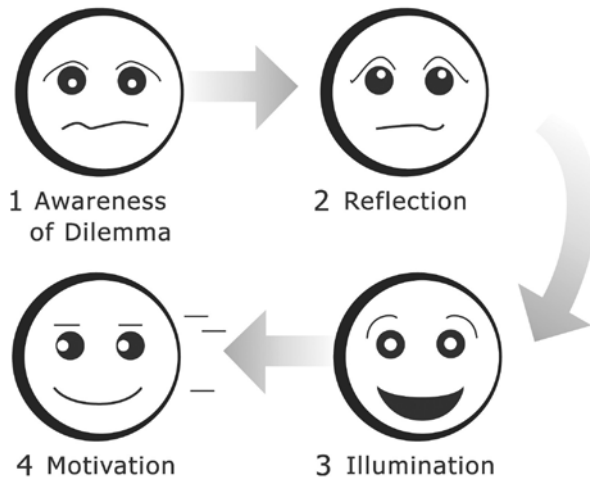


Figure 19, The Four Faces of Insight

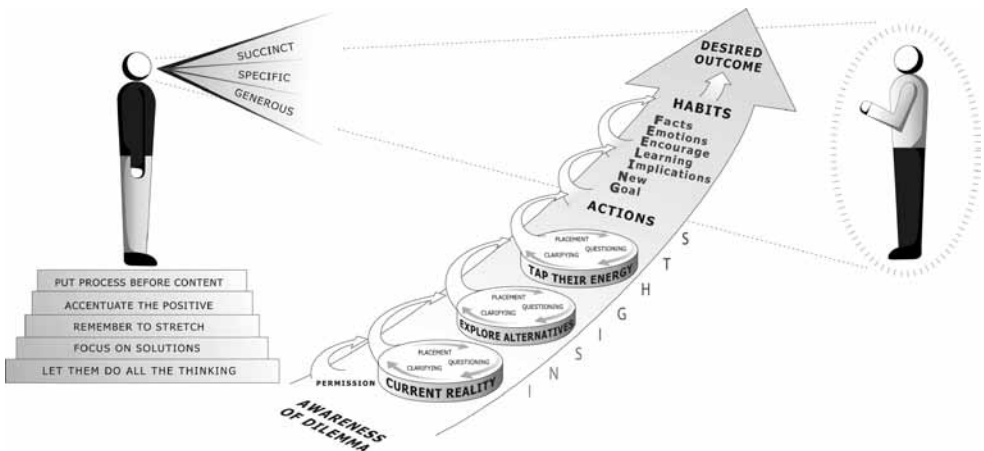


Figure 20, The Six Steps to Transforming Performance

THE DANCE OF INSIGHT

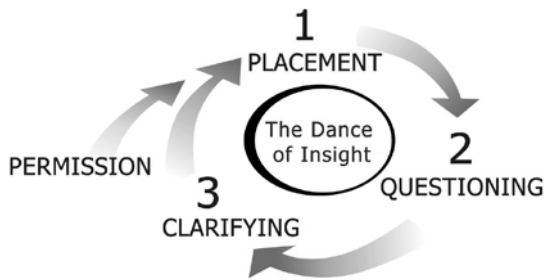


Figure 21, The Dance of Insight

PERMISSION

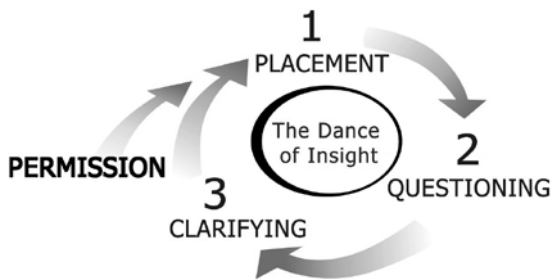


Figure 22, The Dance of Insight

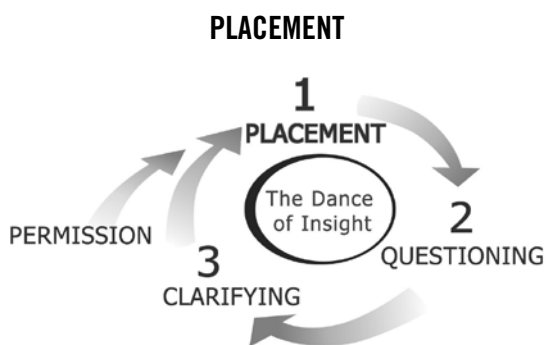


Figure 23, The Dance of Insight



Figure 24, The Dance of Insight

| FOCUS OF YOUR QUESTION | EXAMPLE |
|------------------------|---|
| Thinking: | How long have you been thinking about this? |
| Vision: | What do you want to achieve here? |
| Planning: | What's your plan for achieving these targets? |
| Detail: | Tell me about what you've done so far. |
| Problem: | What's in the way of hitting your targets? |
| Drama: | Tell me what will go wrong if you don't hit your targets. |

Figure 24a

PUTTING PERMISSION, PLACEMENT, AND QUESTIONING TOGETHER

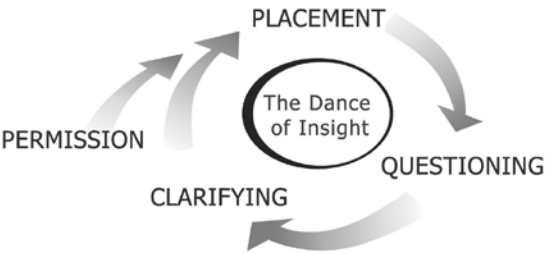


Figure 25, The Dance of Insight

CLARIFYING

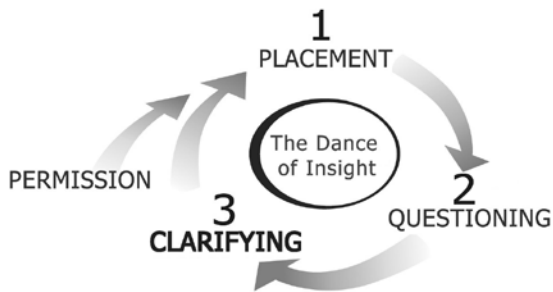


Figure 26, The Dance of Insight

PUTTING THE DANCE TOGETHER

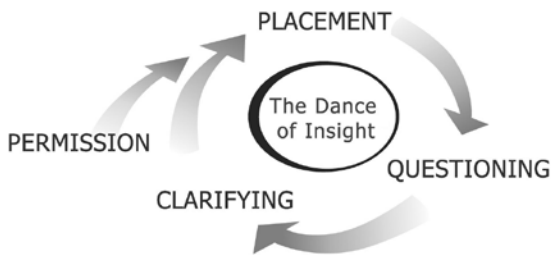


Figure 27, The Dance of Insight

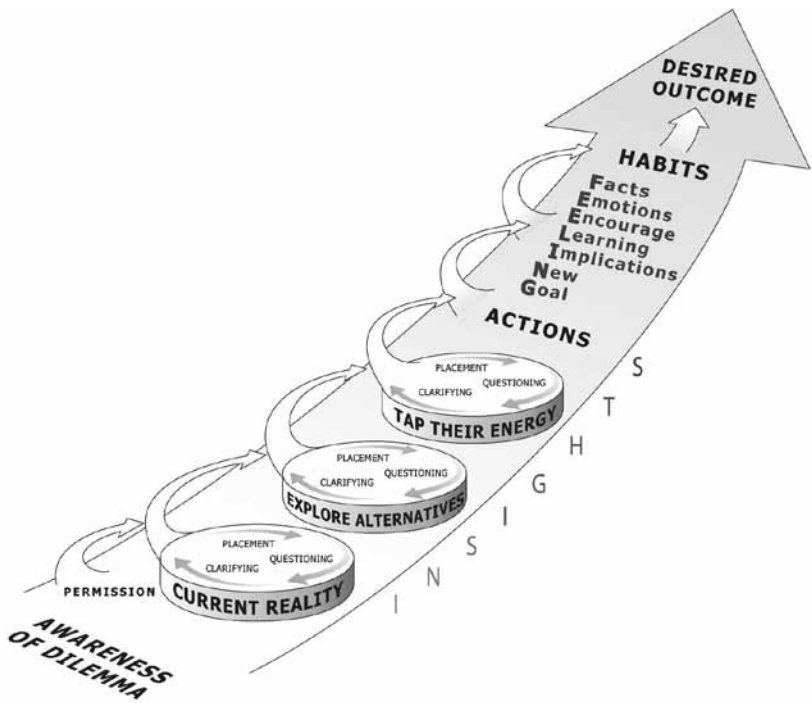


Figure 28, The CREATE Model

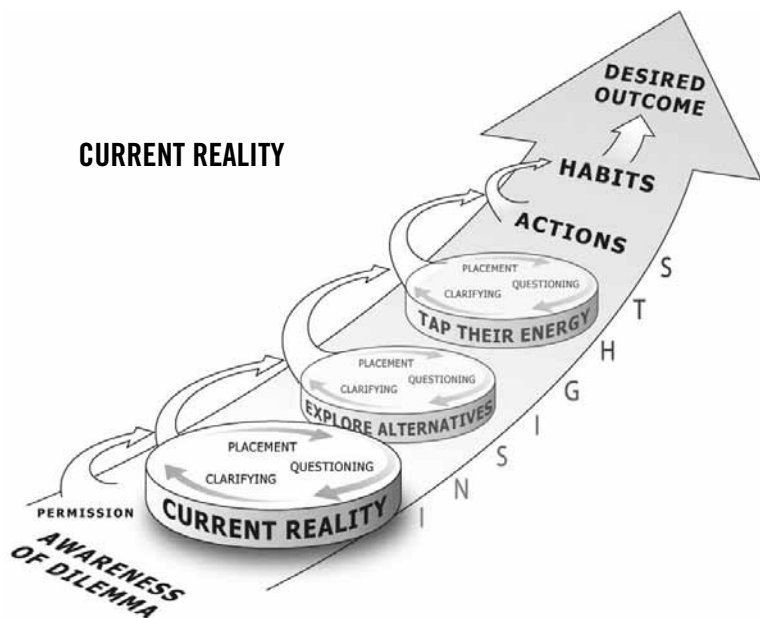


Figure 29, Current Reality

EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES

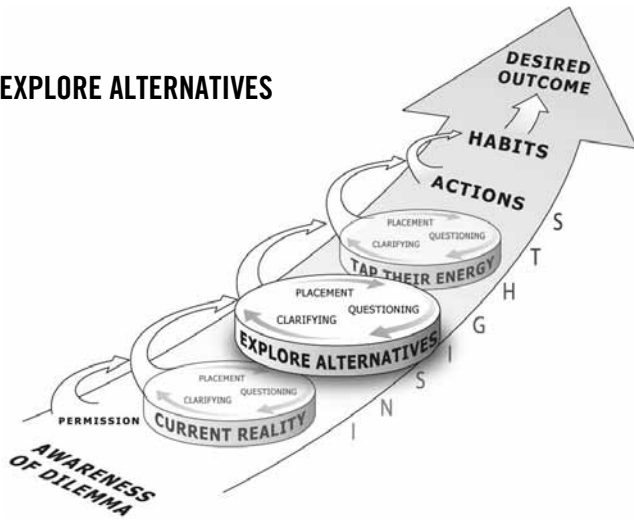


Figure 30, Explore Alternatives

TAP THEIR ENERGY

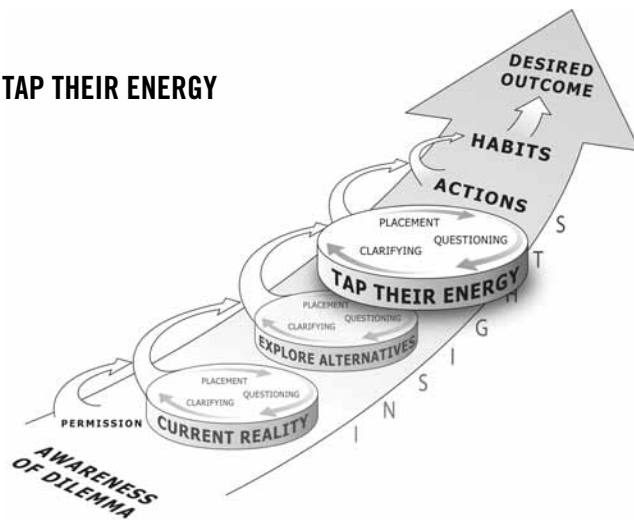


Figure 31, Tap Their Energy

PUTTING THE MODEL TOGETHER

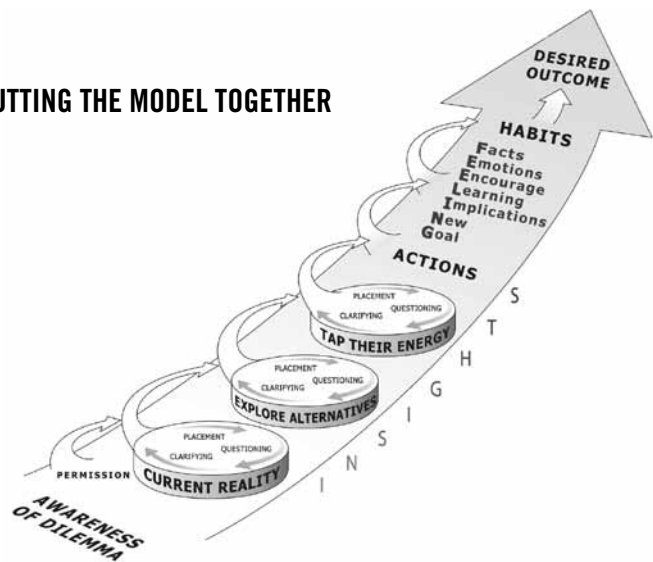


Figure 32, The CREATE Model



Figure 33, The FEELING Model



Figure 34, The FEELING model

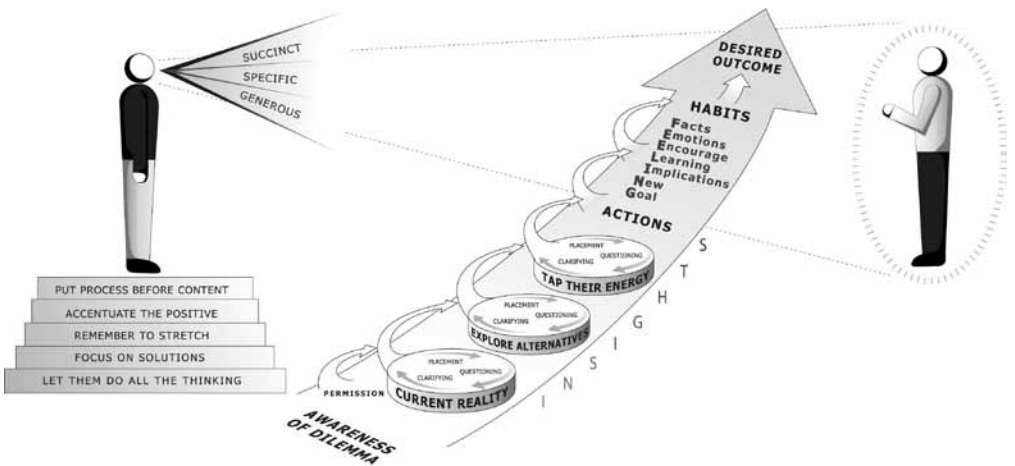


Figure 35, The Six Steps to Transforming Performance

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

I have summarized the key concepts discussed in this book for easy reference, in three categories: the central models and ideas I developed, such as “placement”; two-part distinctions I used throughout the book, for example, “interesting versus useful”; and the main scientific terms. You will also find other resources at www.quietleadership.com.

CENTRAL MODELS AND IDEAS

I have categorized these by chapter for easy reference.

About the Six Steps

Path of least resistance: A term coined by Robert Fritz, which I have applied to having conversations with others. It means the shortest distance (in time and effort) to get from point A (wanting to have a positive impact on someone) to point B (having a positive impact on someone).

STEP 1: Think About Thinking

Let them do all the thinking: One of the central principles in this book. The best way to improve performance is by helping people think better; doing this requires letting other people think, then helping them think in more efficient ways, instead of telling people what to do.

Focus on solutions: Being solution-focused means focusing only on the way ahead. Looking into the problem reinforces the brain circuits associated with the problem. Focusing on solutions is a step toward creating new mental maps.

Remember to stretch: Any time we try a new activity, behavior, or way of thinking, we are literally forging a new pathway in our brain, creating circuits that don't currently exist. Doing this takes energy and focus, and requires intensive use of our conscious mind. Leaders can help bring about change and make change long lasting by stretching people, and normalizing the emotions they may feel along the way.

Glossary of Terms

Accentuate the positive: We're all our own worst critics. What we need more of is positive feedback, especially when we are learning a new behavior or habit. Positive feedback helps embed new mental maps.

Put process before content: Having a clear structure for a conversation helps move the conversation forward smoothly. We start by asking permission and agreeing to a context for the conversation. Then we follow the Dance of Insight model (placement → ask thinking questions → clarifying).

Choose your focus: This model helps us with all of step one. It helps us think about thinking, and focus on solutions, and stretch, and have good process. The Choose Your Focus model describes five mental frames we can approach any situation from: vision; planning; detail; problem; and drama. Having a simple, easy-to-remember model helps us see our mode of thinking quickly, and then choose a more useful way of thinking. This model has wide application in the workplace.

STEP 2: Listen for Potential

Listening for potential: This means listening generously with the certainty that the person speaking can and will solve their own dilemmas, because the answers are within them. It means listening for people's own insights, energy, possibilities, passion, and future.

The clarity of distance: Leaders can be more helpful if they stay out of the details and interact with their people at a high level, looking for patterns and qualities in activities that can't be seen when we are too close. We get too close when we have too much detail, see things through our own filters, have an agenda, or get engaged by strong emotions.

STEP 3: Speak with Intent

Succinct: Quiet Leaders are succinct when they speak. They are able to communicate their ideas using very few words.

Specific: Quiet Leaders are specific when they speak. They are able to figure out and communicate the core of the idea they want to transmit.

Generous: Quiet Leaders are generous when they speak. They speak so that the listener can immediately understand and relate to the concepts they want to communicate.

STEP 4: Dance Toward Insight

The four faces of insight: This describes what goes on when you look at people's faces, before, while, and after they have an insight. There are specific mental functions occurring in the brain during insights that give off energy, which you can see if you look for them. The four steps are: awareness of a dilemma; reflection; illumination; and motivation.

Glossary of Terms

Awareness of a dilemma: A dilemma is defined as being between two opposing desires and not knowing which way to turn. This book posits that dilemmas are mental maps in conflict, and the leader's job is to help people create new ways of reconnecting their thinking through the moment of illumination.

Reflection: This occurs when we ask questions that make people think deeply. People need time to reflect to be able to make new connections. The brain gives off alpha-band waves when we reflect.

Illumination: This is the moment when a new map is created. Gamma-band waves are seen in the brain at this moment.

Motivation: This is the moment immediately following an illumination. We are energized by a new insight, and have neurotransmitters coursing through our brain, inspiring us to want to do something. However, the effects of these chemicals pass quickly.

The Dance of Insight: This is the structure of the conversation we follow in order to elicit insights from others. It's composed of: permission; placement; thinking questions; and clarifying.

Permission: We ask permission before going into a deeper, more personal layer of a conversation. Every time there may be an emotional response to what we are going to say, we ask permission first. Permission lets people feel safer, builds trust, and allows you to ask hard questions.

Placement: When we are having a conversation, it's very useful to make sure that both parties are coming from the "same place." Placement is like a combination of setting the scene plus full disclosure plus a statement of intent. Placement gets the other person to start thinking.

Repeated placement: We keep placing people in conversations every question or so, to remind both parties about where they are and where they're trying to get to. This helps both people stay more on track.

Thinking questions: These are questions designed to elicit insight: They bring about re-flection, which creates more self-awareness, generating a greater sense of responsibility. Thinking questions are not "why" questions; they are "how" questions.

Clarifying: This is being able to extract the essence of what someone says, focused at a very high level, and feed it back to them in a couple of words. Clarifying is about identifying learning and emotions. We give people mini insights when we clarify well.

STEP 5: CREATE New Thinking

CREATE model: This describes the different phases in a conversation to improve people's thinking, following the path of least resistance. It stands for Current Reality, Explore Alternatives, and Tap Their Energy.

Glossary of Terms

Desired outcome: This is the collection of ideas, thoughts, facts, and emotions that you'd expect to have if you accomplished something that's important to you.

Current reality: The first element in the CREATE model. Here we focus on identifying the landscape of people's thinking, to identify qualities of their thinking to help them reflect and bring about an illumination.

Explore alternatives: The second element in the CREATE model. This is when we open up lots of possibilities in a conversation, exploring many ways forward.

Tap their energy: The third element in the CREATE model. The energy that is released after having an insight needs to be put into action immediately, so we tap this energy while it's there, getting people to flesh out their ideas while they are fresh and commit to taking specific actions.

STEP 6: Follow Up

FEELING model: This is a way of following up on actions people set for themselves, to bring about the creation of new circuits. It stands for **F**acts, **E**motions, **E**ncourage, **L**earning, **I**mplications, and **N**ew **G**oal.

Using the Six Steps to Give Feedback

Giving feedback for great performance: Give extensive positive feedback, being very specific about what they did well and what impact this has. This is also an excellent opportunity to use the Six Steps to dig down further and identify new habits people are developing, to help them grow and develop further.

Giving feedback for below-par performance: Defuse any emotional tension, then use the Six Steps to help people identify for themselves what they have learned, and what new habits they can create moving forward.

Giving feedback for poor performance: Emotional tension needs to be carefully defused, then again use the Six Steps to help people identify their learning and the new habits they need moving forward.

TWO-PART DISTINCTIONS USED THROUGHOUT THE BOOK

Process versus Content: When a leader is having a conversation to help someone think something through, it's important that the leader focus on the process rather than the content of the conversation.

Explicit versus Implicit: In order for something to be made explicit, it needs to be said aloud, with words (for example, during placement). Making things explicit frees up everyone's neurons to focus on central issues, because we are less distracted by uncertainties.

Glossary of Terms

Interesting versus Useful: Discussing problems is interesting. Discussing solutions is useful. When something is interesting, we don't put much energy into memorizing it. But when something is useful, we consciously make the effort to learn it so that we can apply the learning elsewhere.

Deconstruct versus Reconstruct: Deconstructing hard wiring in the brain is very difficult (when we try to eliminate ingrained habits). It's much easier to create (reconstruct) new wiring, and create new habits.

Why versus Learning: There are two types of questions you can ask of others. Those with the word "why" in them usually don't lead to learning; they lead to reasons and justifications. Learning questions help people make new connections, by bringing about new insight.

Intent versus Impact: Sometimes the intent that we have in a conversation is not achieved and the conversation has an undesired impact on the other person.

Thinking versus Thinking About Thinking: Thinking about an issue a person has means we come up with ideas for others. Thinking about thinking means thinking to figure out what questions to ask that will help the person come up with their own insights. The leader is focused on the person, not the issue on the table.

KEY SCIENTIFIC TERMS

Neuron: The neuron is the primary cell for the human nervous system. There are more than 100 billion neurons in the brain itself, with more than 100 trillion connections (synapses) linking them.

Synapse: The synapse is the juncture, or main connection point, between our neurons. Neurons form connections (circuits) based on the electrical and chemical signals across synapses.

Maps: Gerald Edelman coined the term. A map is a description of how our neurons are connected. We have maps of neurons, then maps of these maps, and maps of these maps, and so on. The word "map" can be replaced by neural circuitry, neural pathway, circuit, wiring, or connection.

Working memory: This refers to our ability to hold information in our conscious mind. Our working memory is relatively tiny, holding small groups of about seven ideas at one time. Grouping ideas helps us remember more. Working memory tends to disappear after a short time; we don't remember a phone number we dial once, for example, although we remember the number while dialing it.

Hard wiring: Hard wiring refers to thoughts, skills, or memories that remain with us for some time. The scientific term for this is long-term poten-

Glossary of Terms

tiation (LTP). LTP is a form of neuroplasticity. It occurs when two or more neurons are active at the same time, which strengthens their connections. Long-term can mean anything from minutes to hours, days, weeks—right up to a lifetime.

Neuroplasticity: The ability of the brain to rewire itself based on where we focus attention. Genes dictate the overall architecture of the brain, but within that structure the system is highly flexible.

Neural Darwinism: Gerald Edelman came up with this concept in his 1987 book, *Neural Darwinism: The Theory of Neuronal Group Selection*. It refers to the fact that synapses that are used the most are kept, while those used least are destroyed or pruned. This on-going process determines our neural pathways.

Attention: Where we choose to focus our attention increases the connections in this part of the brain.

fMRI: Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging. A machine that measures changes in the blood flow through any part of our body, using strong magnets. Significant breakthrough research has been done on the brain since the introduction of fMRI technologies.

Ambient neural activity: This refers to the way our neurons are always carrying some electrical activity due to internal events. These internal signals sometimes become too strong and don't allow external signals to be processed. Neurons have a cap on the level of impulses they can process, and can be easily overloaded.

Alpha-band waves: A specific frequency given off by the brain. Some of the best leaders exhibit a lot of alpha waves. Alpha waves occur when we are relaxed and centered, and just before we have an insight.

Gamma-band waves: These occur during the moment of illumination. Gamma-band waves can signify parts of the brain connecting up.

Reframing: When we look at a situation from another perspective, we are reframing.

Phases of change: A model that illustrates how we feel when we try a new activity, the different emotions we experience. Knowing these phases helps to normalize the experience. The model consists of unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, and unconscious competence.

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy: A structured psychotherapeutic method used to modify undesired attitudes and behaviors by identifying and replacing negative thoughts and changing the rewards for behaviors.

Solutions-Focused Therapy: A therapeutic method that assumes the client is the expert and has strengths and capacities that can be accessed to make her or his life more satisfactory. The therapist magnifies client strengths, resources, and past successes, which leads to the construction of solutions.

Glossary of Terms

Behavioral Science: A scientific discipline such as sociology, anthropology, or psychology, in which the actions and reactions of humans and animals are studied through observational and experimental methods.

Positive Psychology: The study of the mind based on researching happiness and well-being instead of sickness. An emerging new field in psychology.

Flow: Coined by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi for the zone of peak performance that occurs between boredom and too much stress.

RESOURCES

BOOKS

If you would like to do any related reading, I have selected below a few of the most relevant and important books, in addition to a full list of references coming up. The books are roughly in the order of how relevant they are to this book itself.

The brain

John J. Ratey, A User's Guide to the Brain: Perception, Attention, and the Four Theaters of the Brain (New York: Vintage Books, 2002)

Jeffrey M. Schwartz and Sharon Begley, The Mind & The Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Regan Books, 2002)

Leslie Brothers, M.D., Friday's Footprint: How Society Shapes the Human Mind (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)

Gerald M. Edelman, Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: On the Matter of the Mind (New York: Basic Books, 1992)

Jeff Hawkins with Sandra Blakeslee, On Intelligence (New York: Times Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2004)

Joseph Ledoux, Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are (New York: Viking Penguin, 2002)

Thomas B. Czermer, What Makes You Tick: The Brain in Plain English (Hoboken: Wiley, 2002)

Leadership development

Ram Charan, Stephen Drotter, and James Noel, The Leadership Pipeline: How to Build the Leadership-Powered Company (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001)

Louis Carter, David Ulrich, and Marshall Goldsmith, Best Practices in Leadership Development and Organization Change: How the Best Companies Ensure Meaningful Change and Sustainable Leadership (Hoboken: Wiley, 2005)

Resources

Bill George, Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003)

Stephen R. Covey, The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness (New York: Free Press, 2004)

Coaching

David Rock, Personal Best: Step by Step Coaching for Creating the Life You Want (Australia: Simon & Schuster, 2001)

Dianna Anderson and Merrill Anderson, Coaching that Counts: Harness the Power of Leadership Coaching to Deliver Strategic Value (Hoboken: Wiley, 2005)

W. Timothy Gallwey, The Inner Game of Tennis (New York: Random House, 1974)

The science of coaching

David Rock, Foundations to Coaching (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, forthcoming)

Bruce Peltier, The Psychology of Executive Coaching (Ann Arbor: Sheridan Books, 2001).

Positive psychology

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990)

Martin Seligman, Learned Optimism (New York: Free Press, 1998)

Philosophy

Theodore Zeldin, An Intimate History of Humanity (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Harper Perennial, 1996)

Theodore Zeldin, Conversation: How Talk Can Change Our Lives (New York: Hidden Spring, 2000)

JOURNALS AND WEB SITES

www.quietleadership.com

International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring, www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/education/ijebcm

International Journal of Coaching in Organizations, www.ijco.info

RESULTS COACHING SYSTEMS

Corporate programs: www.workplacecoaching.com

Public programs: www.resultscoaches.com