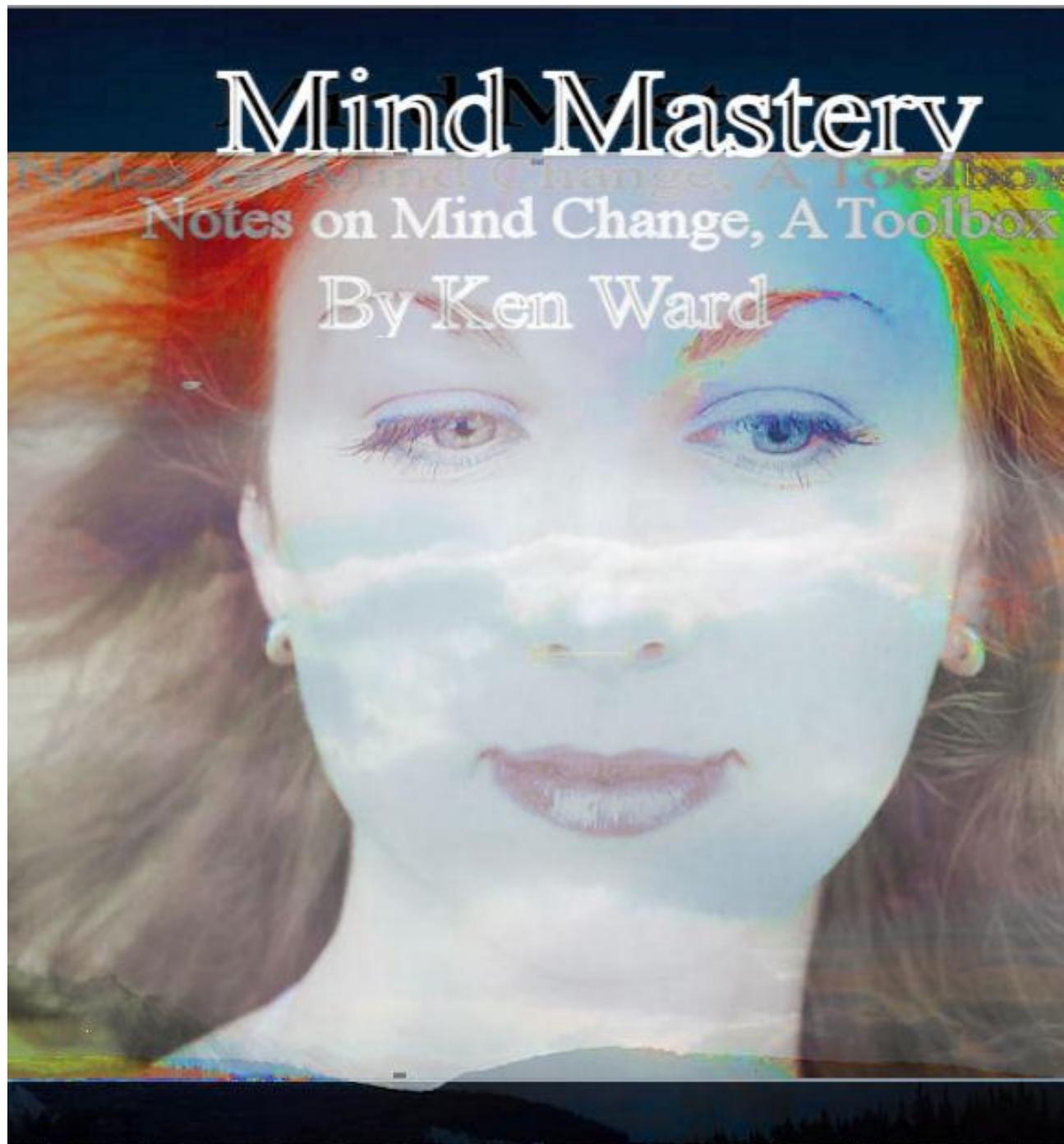


Mind Mastery by Ken Ward



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Mind Mastery 7 An Owner's Manual

By Ken Ward

Website:

http://www.trans4mind.com/personal_development/SelfDevContents.htm

<http://www.trans4mind.com>

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Mind Mastery 2

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Acknowledgements and Credits

Unless otherwise stated, the procedures and patterns in NLP were developed by Richard Bandler and/or John Grinder. In some cases, the originator is unknown or the idea originated from various sources.

What is NLP?

NLP is often called the study of excellence. We learn about excellence mainly by studying experts, rather than, like psychiatrists, studying only those who have problems. That is we study those who can rather than those who can't. By learning how some can, we learn how we and others can acquire their skills. These skills can be how to negotiate, how to play tennis, or how to feel happy.

Study What Experts do — not just what they say they do!

In the early days of this work, Richard Bandler and John Grinder studied effective therapists, such as Virginia Satir. They used video cameras to record her therapy sessions so they could study her *actually* working with her clients so they could see and hear what she actually did to get her excellent results. In their study, they did not merely *ask* Virginia what she did, but they also observed what she actually did. By the use of video cameras, they could hear what she said and how she said it, and see her body language when she said it. They could replay the video to study in detail how she helped her clients. This modelling of excellence led to the first NLP model: the Meta Model, or Being Specific Model.

Experts are not just famous people — but may be regular people who can do our task expertly

We need to remember that an expert may be just an ordinary person who can do something—even a small thing—well. If we overlook this, we may miss something valuable. For instance, many people have problems in life—they lose their jobs and their self respect—because they cannot get up in the morning. In order to help such people, we would study those who can do this task excellently. Such people do not have to be famous: they simply need to be able to do the required task expertly. So when we speak of experts, we do not mean just those who have distinguished themselves in the world, but also mean anyone who can do the task. And when we consider excellence, we do not limit ourselves to ‘Earth shattering’ achievements, but include normal abilities which we might wish to acquire (Such as getting up in the morning.)

Experts may not know how they achieve excellence

In order to learn how experts perform, we need to observe what they actually do, not what they say they do. We know, such people can perform excellently, and we know that they know how to achieve results, but we also know that they often cannot say what they do in order to be successful. (After all, who can really say how they ride a bicycle or swim?). For instance, at the height of their fame, an expert may be asked to write a book promising to teach us how to develop their skill. We read such a book hoping to gain this wondrous skill, but find it is much like the others books. It seems as if the expert has read the other books and put together a version of them in their book. I stress that these people are genuinely experts, but it seems they cannot say how they do it. For this reason, in order to study excellence, we need to actually observe what the expert actually does and says in the situation where they are demonstrating their excellence. Also, we ask them detailed questions. Of course, we learn these models from those who have modelled experts. For instance, from some of the material presented here.

Modelling The Conscious and Unconscious Minds

After developing their first model, Bandler and Grinder learned of another expert therapist who seemed to do the opposite of what they had learned in their [first model](#). While this model addressed the conscious mind, or dominant brain hemisphere and emphasised clarity and specificity, this new model, the Milton Model addressed the unconscious mind, or non-dominant brain hemisphere, and emphasised apparent vagueness and suggestion. This new study of the therapist, Milton Erikson, gave rise to the second model in NLP, called the [Milton Model](#). Milton Erikson in his own teaching did not use theories or principles, but generally told stories. Bandler and Grinder modelled him and wrote a book explaining their model. When Milton Erikson read Bandler and Grinders book he commented that he learned a lot about how he actually did therapy, which he had not realised before! (Our expert might not know how they achieve excellence.) This clearly illustrates that in the study of excellence, we need to actually observe and model the expert in order to learn what they actually do and say, because they often cannot say precisely how they achieve their excellence.

The marriage of the two models gave rise to the knowledge and skills of NLP, addressing both the conscious and unconscious aspects of mind.

NLP studies excellence by observing what experts do when they manifest their skill. It is based on modelling experts so that patterns, models and strategies of excellence are developed so they can be taught to others.

You create your personal universe!

You are the master of your world and you have made it what it is. Whatever happens to you – anything – is what you have created. Whatever you have created – notice now the wonder of achievement – whether you view your life as good, bad or so-so, you have made it how it is. You don't, for example, catch 'a lack of confidence', you make it! You do this by how you think, by what you believe and by what you do and feel.

What makes you react as you do – however you do - is the mental image you created? Imagine biting into a bitter-tasting lemon. You may be aware that your face changes and you might even grunt, as you think of the bitter taste. Now what causes you to react to the imagined bitterness? Not a lemon. There isn't one! It is the *mental* image. In other words, in these seconds of thinking you have created your world and experience.

Story: Attaining the unobtainable

A certain man told his fellows how he had become the student of the great teacher, Nasrudin. He told them that Nasrudin once sat down beneath a tree, stretched out his hand and grasped from thin air a plate with chicken, wonderfully cooked. After eating this, he stretched out his hand again and took a doughnut from thin air. He did this three times. Finally, he stretched out his hand and took a goblet of fine wine and drank his fill.

They thought on this for a second. This would be a wonderful skill to have.

"Did you see this yourself," one asked.

"Not exactly," said the man, "but Nasrudin told me."

They all laughed. "Nonsense, Nasrudin is a madman and all he knows about is donkeys."

The man continued his story. "I promised Nasrudin I would do whatever he asked, if only he would teach me this skill. He said I must accomplish a task and asked if I preferred the easy one or the hard one. I chose the hard one. He told me that if I could accomplish this task, I could perform any magic."

"Very ambitious," they said drily, "Choosing the hard one. What was this task?"

"Nasrudin told me:

Now, go home and make a hole in your fence large enough for your chickens to get into your neighbour's garden and peck his crops, but not large enough to let your neighbours chickens through and peck your crops."

They fell on the floor almost splitting their sides with laughter. "You are just as mad as he is!" said one.

The man considered that the common people were unready for such spiritual tasks. He studied the problem for a long time.

Finally he returned to Nasrudin. "I have failed in the task," he said. And further after telling my story, everyone thinks I'm mad."

"Excellent," said Nasrudin, "You have made good progress and will soon find a good teacher."

Our mental images—visual, auditory and kinaesthetic—cause our states and behaviour. Consider how people create 'a lack of confidence'. How could they create a state of lacking confidence? What mental images (of being rejected, of failing), what facial expressions (of sadness, despair, and fear), and what body positions could they assume to make themselves lack confidence?

And, for the opposite, what pictures, feelings, and sounds do they create to make themselves full of confidence? What body positions (standing upright and shoulders back) and facial expressions (a look of confidence) do they assume?

Whether they lack self confidence or have it in abundance - they have created the mental pictures, sounds and feelings that make them what they are. And, similarly, you can create whichever states you desire through the mental images you create. So, if you wish your life were different, you can change it—by changing your mental images (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic), body positions and facial expressions.

These pages are about how you can make these changes easily and quickly in a way you have never realised before. They are not about mere inspiration, but tell you how you can understand your mind so that you can create what you know you can attain—even though you may not yet have noticed how you can use the same skills you used to make your world the way it is, to make it different now and in the future. I wonder if, when you have read this work—now or later—you will look back and realise—with pleasant surprise—the changes that have occurred since you began. I hope so.

The qualities you need to achieve what you want (and later you will learn how to develop these qualities)

The qualities for success in ANYTHING you undertake are:

1. Emoting
2. Believing
3. Self direction
4. Clarification of Values
5. Energising
6. Relating
7. Mastering Communication

Emoting

You need to desire with extreme passion what you want in life. No half hearted Perhaps-I-will type approaches here. You MUST **emote** your goals with power. If this idea seems daunting, then remember how you can use the skills you are currently using to make yourself feel daunted, to feel enveloped in uncompromising desire. There are various articles related to motivation below including [anchors](#), [How to Change Submodalities](#), and [How to Change Submodalities](#). Also [Vivifying a Memory to make it Stronger](#)

Believing

If you do not **believe** the above, then you can be confident that you can use the skills you use to disbelieve, to believe absolutely that you will attain whatever you desire. You may have talent and intelligence (or not) and whatever skills you have, you attain your desires through the effective use of these skills and resources. See [Changing Beliefs](#)

Self Direction

The skill of strategically planning your path to your goal is one you will learn to develop or discover if you are not already an effective user of your skills. You must **direct** your resources to attain whatever you want.

Clarification of Values

What exactly is important to you? What do you value? The **clarification of these very basic beliefs** is extremely important on your path to attaining that which you desire. See [Criteria or values](#)

Energising

If your goal is a great goal, it may require great **energy** from you to create. The free flowing vast abundant energy is something you need to attain your goal. Fortunately, you have abundant energy for this task, you just need to notice how you can release your physical, mental and spiritual energy to attain your desires. See [Ecology Check \(Is what you are doing or intend something you really want?\)](#)

Relating

All successful people have developed the skills of forming **relationships**, perhaps, with millions of others, but certainly with significant people who can aid them on their path. See [Pacing and Leading—How to get into rapport](#)

Mastering Communication

We live in the information age and your ability to succeed is directly related to your mastery of the skills of communication. Success now is the **ability to communicate** masterfully. See [Being Specific Model](#)

Eight Successful Qualities

These successful qualities are based on the paramitas, although they are an inspiration rather than a literal base.

Story: The House with only a Third Story

A man commissioned a carpenter to build him a house.

When the carpenter began to build the walls for the first and second levels, the man objected.

He said he didn't want the first and second levels, only the third.

The carpenter pointed out that he could not build just the third level, but needed to build the other levels first. He could build the higher levels only after he had established the lower ones.

The qualities are:

1. Good-heartedness: Charity and Love,
2. Honesty,
3. Congruity: Harmony in word and act,
4. Freedom: Patience, Indifference to pleasure and pain,
5. Dauntless energy,
6. Rationality and Intelligence and
7. Wisdom: Creativity
8. Equanimity, Serenity

1 Good-heartedness: Charity and Love

Story: Loving kindness

A woman in China had fed and housed a monk for over 20 years. She wondered if she had got anything for her money.

She asked a certain girl who was rich in desire to go to the monk, embrace and kiss him, and say, "What comes next, big boy?"

The girl did as she was told and asked the question.

The monk said, almost poetically, "An empty seed lands on a cold rock in winter. Nothing comes next."

When the girl told the woman what happened, she was furious.

"He has learned nothing" she said.

"I did not expect him to satisfy your desire," she said, "but he could have shown some loving kindness—at least he could have shown some understanding or even given you help with your condition."

The woman drove out the monk, and burned down his hut.

The deep meaning of being human is goodness. And truly successful people seek the benefit of all people and not just their own. To achieve, we need the help of others, so we need the support of those who trust and like us. Only if we are charitable and loving, can we become part of a group who admire and respect us.

We do what we do for the sake of all. It is easy for us to take our own point of view and even try to impose it on others. But to develop true understanding we need to understand from the points of view of others. See [Perceptual Positions](#)

2 Honesty

Honesty is the key to the development of many mental skills, especially those related to peace of mind and tranquillity. Where there is conflict, there is often a departure from truth. See [Truth and the Fight-Flight Aspect of the Unconscious Mind](#), and various other techniques, such as [Handling Concerns Honestly](#), and [The Honesty Blowout](#).

3 Congruity: Harmony in word and act

<p>Story: The Blind Man</p> <p>In ancient Japan, a certain blind man, who lived near a temple, told his friend about a recently deceased teacher.</p> <p>He said, "Often, when I hear someone congratulating another, I hear tones of envy in their voice. And when they console another who has suffered misfortune, I hear tones of pleasure about the other's misfortune.</p> <p>"But when I heard the master speak in happiness, I heard only happiness.</p> <p>"And when I heard him speak in sadness, I heard only sadness."</p>	<p>If we are in two minds over something, we are less powerful and less convincing than when we are united within ourselves. Because we are basically good, we cannot be harmonious when our actions or intentions are bad, because the bad is in conflict with our basically good nature.</p> <p>Therefore, the successful person does not do things because of outside reasons, pleasure, pain and indifference, but because his or her very essence embodies all these qualities. He avoids harming, not because it is a rule, but because it is part of his or her very nature.</p> <p>To be powerful and convincing we need to be at one with our basic nature, and for our actions and intentions to be non-harming.</p> <p>Several ways to achieve this are mentioned in this book. For instance, Ecology Check and Visual Squash. But many other patterns in this book also deal with inner conflict, such as Six-step Reframing.</p>
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4 Freedom: Patience, Non-reacting to pleasure and pain

This principle does not mean we do not laugh when happy and cry when sad. It relates to acting like the proverbial donkey: chasing the carrot and avoiding the stick. That is, making important decisions based on immediate results.

Usually in life we act or do not act for four reasons:

- a. We act because it is painful not to act
- b. We act because it is pleasurable to act
- c. We do not act because it is pleasurable not to act
- d. We do not act because it is painful to act

When we dance through life seeking pleasure and avoiding pain then we remain in a "comfort zone" from which we never escape and never achieve anything, and never achieve freedom.

There is a third aspect, however. In addition to not reacting to pleasure and pain, there is avoiding "indifference". Sometimes indifference is not caring about sentient beings. Sometimes it is indifference to different ways of acting, when they differ significantly in how effective they are or how they lead us on our road to success. That is, while we should avoid doing things just because they are immediately pleasurable. And we should not avoid things because they are immediately unpleasant. Sometimes, doing what is immediately pleasurable and avoiding what is immediately uncomfortable might be the best thing to do. While pain and pleasure are easier to identify, indifference can be a subtle enemy.

Similarly when we act without thinking, we act out of habit or because we feel a certain emotion that is produced by the environment and controls our actions. We act rashly or unkindly.

The successful person does not react to the environment and does not act thoughtlessly. He or she always "counts to ten" and then reviews the situation. The successful person becomes free because they are not trapped in the "comfort zone" so they are not deterred by pain or led by pleasure. See also, [The Buddhist View of Persistence](#)

5 Dauntless energy

<p><i>The Self-Assembly Bookcase</i></p> <p>A certain writer, who wishes not to be named, collects many books for his research.</p> <p>When the books began to exceed the shelf space, he ordered a self-assembly bookcase.</p> <p>Over the months, the books continued to pile up on the floor and in various places. The self-assembly pack itself also took up space.</p> <p>He noticed that the self-assembly bookcase, in spite of its name, showed no signs of assembling itself.</p> <p>So eventually, he spent about three minutes assembling it himself, and a few more minutes putting the books in it.</p> <p>The writer's name is kept confidential, but next time, I will do the task in a timelier manner.</p>	<p>This principle means diligence, energy, courage and enthusiasm, etc. The successful person has to "work hard" to attain the distant shore. The principle means a willingness to act rather than to do nothing, when action is required. It also concerns procrastination.</p> <p>We can avoid putting things off till later by being aware of what we are doing, and thinking that we will feel better after the work is completed.</p> <p>We can also study Submodalities, and Six-step Reframing. Also dealing with the previous quality also prepares us to develop this one: by not being deterred by negative feelings, such as boredom, we can develop dauntless energy.</p>
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6 Rationality and Intelligence

This is meditation, mental development or education in the fullest sense of the word. The meaning includes thinking rationally, remembering, solving problems in a logical manner and growing in understanding. The [Being Specific Model](#) helps us identify different kinds of thoughts and communications and to distinguish between the rational and the irrational.

This is related to the Yang and to the right-hemisphere of the brain.

7 Wisdom: Creativity

Story: Your treasure house

A man consulted a teacher.

“What do you seek?” asked the teacher.

“Enlightenment” said the man.

“Why do you seek outside yourself when you have your treasure house within?” asked the teacher.

“Where is my treasure house?”

“What you are asking is your treasure house”, said the teacher.

Wisdom is sometimes thought most important. The wisdom comes not from outside but from the inside. It is sometimes based on hunches and intuition. It is not knowledge, but the right use of knowledge, and the right interpretation of it.

At a lower level, this quality is creativity. It is associated with right-brain hemisphere functions.

8 Equanimity and Serenity

Story: the sweating monk.

A teacher of Zen who had a large number of students was asked to officiate at a ceremony with many important people present.

As he began the ceremony, he started to sweat.

He realised that, because of this, he was not truly enlightened, and he was not competent to teach so he gave up teaching and studied under master.

Ten years later, he returned to his temple and continued his teaching as an enlightened person.

Equanimity or serenity is the natural state of existence, when we are free of thoughts and irrational feelings.

It can also be described as ‘being yourself’.

Serenity is not something to seek or acquire: it is our natural state when we have freed ourselves of irrational thoughts. In our world, we have often lost this quality and need to regain it. We attempt to do this by proceeding through the preceding stages.

However, this state does not follow from the previous states as a gradual process—it is a sudden awareness — which is more likely to occur when we have succeeded with the previous stages.

We are more likely to attain this state (and certainly a state of serenity) by developing the previous qualities and following the advice given in these pages, and elsewhere.

Note on the paramitas

The paramitas are often named and described as:

1. Dana paramita: Generosity
2. Sila paramita: Morality
3. Shanti paramita: Patience
4. Virya paramita: Energy
5. Dhyana paramita: Meditation and Contemplation
6. Prajna: Transcendental Wisdom

How long does it take?

Story: how long does it take?

The Buddha was once asked how long it takes to become enlightened.

He said, "Enlightenment might take countless eons.

"Sometimes, however, it can be accomplished in thousands or even hundreds of lifetimes.

"With some, it might be accomplished in only two or three lifetimes.

With yet others, they might become enlightened in a single lifetime.

"And for others, they might accomplish it in only ten years.

"And others might accomplish it in a year or two.

"Still, some might accomplish enlightenment in months or days.

"And some might accomplish it in hours, minutes or even seconds."

Many of the techniques work extremely fast. You can change some modalities and their submodalities in seconds. For instance, you can imagine a cow and change the image to a cat in seconds or moments. You can say one thing to yourself and say another directly afterwards. So in changing some issues you can make changes very quickly.

For instance, there is a technique known as [Swish Pattern](#) which works very fast—seconds, because it deals with visual submodalities (which can be changed quickly). Similarly, [the Phobia Cure](#), works in minutes.

The kinaesthetic modality, feeling, does not change in quite the same way as the visual and the auditory modalities, so the [Kinaesthetic Swish](#) works more slowly than its visual brother, and after doing it, it might take days to show any change.

Also, even quick changes, such as an increase in confidence, might involve a number of days or weeks while you get used to the new abilities. Put another way, an enhanced ability to study may be learned quickly, and you could study and learn much faster than you could otherwise, yet to master your chosen subject would still take some time, perhaps years.

That is some techniques work quickly, while others take more time. And sometimes you know instantly that your mental goal has been achieved, whereas with other techniques it might take a while for the results to manifest. In either case, it might be necessary to operate in the world for some time, perhaps many years, before the goals are attained.

Jeet Kune Do Therapy/Thinking

Originator: Bruce Lee (Reported by Kerin Webb)

An ‘expert’ develops an outstanding system, and we want to learn it. For instance, David Groves develops [Clean Language](#). In order to learn this, we learn exactly what he does and we hope for, and get, the results he gets (or good results). Normally, at best, we can hope to get the results the teacher gets, but often we do not quite do as well, because it is their system.

Outstanding therapists and performers, such as Milton Erikson, David Groves and the founders of NLP learned and practiced what was known in their art (before they developed their own techniques). Bruce Lee learned Wing Chun Kung Fu, doing the moves just like his teacher and following its rules. And Milton Erikson studied Freud and the other psychologists, doing just what they did.

After learning the skills we do them without thinking, the rules are dissolved, so that from the previous knowledge, which we have practised and mentally digested, a new system develops — our system. So, after learning existing psychology, Milton Erikson developed his own system—one that is quite different from that of his teachers.

However, students copy and obey their masters to learn, and in this way the system becomes fossilized in rules. Sometimes, in the process, what results is something quite unlike that of the master, or a pale shadow of it. That is the students do much worse than the teacher, following imaginary rules and not results. They may look upon their teacher as one who has attained the acme of the art, and their poor copy is often something that they never change. They elevate their teacher to godhood, and use their poor work as a tribute to their teacher.

The fact is, good teachers, themselves, continue to learn and improve. For instance, David Groves developed a new technique, [Clean Space](#)—a development of his earlier system, [Clean Language](#). No doubt, if Milton Erikson were still alive, then he would practice somewhat differently from how he did, say 20 years ago. It is more than likely, that if he were still alive and practising, Erikson would do something quite different from what we call Eriksonian psychology! Creators of new techniques first learn what is available, and carefully observes and analyses the effects of the technique. They may find doing things differently produces better results, and therefore develop new techniques. However, the process continues and even better techniques are discovered, replacing the earlier innovations.

Bruce Lee learned Wing Chun Kung Fu, and followed its teachings exactly—learning its rules and forms. But then he forgot all he had learned—he allowed the rules to dissolve and allowed a new form to develop through him—and he developed Jeet Kune Do. In a way, if we exactly follow rules we become robots and lose the purpose and vitality of the originator—we need to allow what we know to develop.

**Poor is the pupil who does
not surpass his master.—**

Leonardo da Vinci

**It is a poor teacher who is
not surpassed by his
pupils.**

To be creative—vibrant and effective—you must first learn the rules and forms, precisely and carefully. And as you gain more experience and practice, you let the rules dissolve and let a new form develop through you—in a personal and individual way.

Three doors to the mind

1. The belief system
2. Mental syntax
3. Physiology

The belief system

Our beliefs determine how we think and feel and what we do in life. Our beliefs are mental pictures—visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, etc, including self talk (auditory digital).

Mental syntax

It is not simply that we have beliefs, but that we think in a certain order that determines the results we get. Just as, in the physical world, we fill the kettle and *then* boil it (not boil it and add the water), in the mental world we think in a certain order in order to achieve certain results.

Physiology (Behaviour)

Our behaviour - our facial expressions, body stance, and movements affect the way we think about things. We can observe how others move to determine their belief systems. For instance, we often feel more confident when we stand upright and pull our shoulders back.

NLP Presuppositions

The following are basic assumptions or principles of NLP. They are principles, rather than laws of science or facts. For this reason they are neither true nor false, and they cannot be proved or disproved. They are a convenient map of the mind and behaviour.

1. The Map is not the Territory

We tend to react to world in terms of our beliefs, rather than to the reality. We all have different maps, although all our maps have some basic agreement. For instance, a follower of a political party would notice and remember examples of their party's policies succeeding, and not notice or forget examples of their party's policies failing. Similarly, they notice examples of other party's policies failing and remember them, but ignore examples of the other party's policies succeeding. In this way, they map the world, the territory according to their map that their political party is always best. Of course, this is not the real world, the territory.

We can identify dysfunctional maps by noticing counter-examples (and actively searching for them) and remembering them or writing them down. See [The Map is not the territory](#)

2. All Human Behaviour is Purposeful

However strange beliefs and behaviour might appear to others, we assume they exist for a reason. For instance, a person might be overweight because they over-eat. We assume they over-eat for a purpose, for instance to feel good. In order to change this behaviour, we can look for other, better, techniques to feel good other than over-eating. By assuming there is a purpose to over-eating, we can concentrate on the purpose and seek other ways of attaining that purpose. Therefore finding options for change.

3. People always do the best they can, or we are always right

Looking back on our lives and recalling something unresourceful we acknowledge that we did the best we could—we do not do things we believe are unresourceful. This principle tells us we should not be critical of ourselves (or others) because, however unresourceful the behaviours, they do or did, the best they could.

Generally, anything, for instance behaviour, persists because it is perceived to satisfy some purpose, however irrational or false the purpose might be.

Also, every behaviour is assumed to have a survival value. Sometimes we find that circumstances and conditions change, but we persist with our old behaviour (perhaps without thinking) and find it no longer serves us well. Sometimes our behaviour and thinking is rooted in childhood — when we had fewer resources and therefore made inappropriate choices. However, we did the best we could at the time.

When we act, we always do what we believe or believed was right. It seems that we usually do something because we believe it's helpful.

When we wish to help someone who is having problems, that person might not listen to us, but persists in their self-defeating behaviour. Using this principle we understand that they are doing the best they can. We do not need to feel upset or angry with them.

4. Every behaviour has a positive intention

We, or our unconscious mind seek to bring about good results. In [Six-step Reframing](#) we use this principle.

5. We process information through the senses

Our minds work like the real world. In the real world we know something because we see, hear, feel, smell or taste it. In NLP they are called modalities. We know things in the mind in the same way. For this reason, we might ask ‘What colour is that thought’, seeking to understand it as we understand physical things. See, for example, [Modalities - How to read a person's mind from their words](#)

6. People are perfect

Depending our mental maps, we exhibit a certain kinds of behaviour. This is how it should be. Otherwise, there would be no possibility for change. There would be no cause and effect. In other words, the results follow from our mental maps. If we want to change the results, we need to change our maps.

7. Modelling successful behaviour leads to excellence

Continuing from presupposition 6, the results we obtain depend upon our mental maps. By changing these through modelling, we can obtain different results. Our mental syntax is sometimes called a strategy. See [Discovering Someone's Strategy](#)

8. The Person with the most choices controls the system — Law of Requisite Variety

If there were only one option available to us, we would have to take that option. We would be fully predictable and robotic. We would have no choice, and no freedom. If we have more than one option, then we have choice and freedom to choose. We are therefore more able to operate within a system where we have several choices. The more options we have the more flexibility we have within that system.

9. There is no Failure, only Feedback

This relates to the idea that life is a learning experience. By avoiding negative evaluations, such as failure, we can go beyond the experience and move forward to a better future.

This is the scientific approach. The scientist has an idea and tests the idea in an experiment. The results show the effects of the technique. For instance, a scientist tests a technique which claims to make people feel better. The results show the technique does not make people feel better. This is not a failure. The scientist has succeeded in determining the technique does not work. The scientist can now be more confident and knowledgeable.

In the same way, when we act or think we produce certain results in our minds or in the world. The results are information, feedback. By attending to the results we learn about what causes produce what effects.

Of course, we often want to produce certain effects. The scientist might want to find a technique to help people. However, to do this he must carry out various experiments and record the results. Similarly, if we wish to obtain certain results, we may need to perform various behaviours and observe the results. These aren't failures, but feedback. And by learning what doesn't produce the results we desire, we may eventually find what does.

This principle leads to the next one, If what you do does not work, try something different.

10. If what you do does not work, try something different

This opposes the belief: "If at first you don't succeed, then try, try and try again." English and Scottish children are often told the story of King Robert the Bruce of Scotland, who after being defeated by the English, and at his lowest ebb, hiding in a cave, watched a spider try to spin a web. The spider failed several times, but persisted and finally made the web. This inspired King Robert to go back and fight the English and, although outnumbered, he defeated them.

It is possible, however, that King Robert did not actually continue doing specifically what he had done before, but changed his methods in order to get the unchanged purpose he had in mind—to claim the throne of Scotland. He persisted in his goal, but changed his technique.

In making a choice, we can:

Do nothing

Do something else

Continuing what we are doing.

Depending on the circumstances, any of these could be the best choice (Our principles are not laws cast in stone! Sometimes continuing what we have been doing is the answer!).

The principle is sometimes expressed as:

If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you always got.

This is true while the circumstances, both your beliefs and your behaviour remain unchanged. Often someone has a problem because they do not attain the results they want. But they do not change and continue to believe and act in the same way.

In general, our circumstances do not change that much, and if we continue to have problems, then we need to change our beliefs or behaviour to get something different. This might not mean we "succeed", but leads us to the previous principle, "There is no failure, only feedback". We might need to make a lot of changes in order to succeed.

11. The Meaning of Your Communication is the Response you get

When we communicate, we should test the response of the other person to determine how they understood us, rather than studying the dictionary meaning of our words and our grammar. However 'right' we might be, if the other person didn't get it, then we did not communicate what we intended to.

A longer version is that the meaning of a communication to an individual is what that individual takes it to mean. They might misunderstand the words or mishear them. Whatever. We should be conscious of how the other person responds (perhaps nonverbally) to our communications, and when it is important to do so, we should check, by asking questions that the other shares our understanding.

12. People have all the resources they need.

This principle suggests we do not need additional resources to attain what we want. We need to use the conscious and unconscious resources we already have (which are sufficient for any purpose). Of course, this refers to beliefs and behaviours—we might need additional specific training. But to solve our problems we have everything within us.

13. Mind and Body are part of the Same System

This means that the mind and the body affect each other. The mind can be changed by changing the body—behaviour, position, etc. And the body can be changed by changing the mind—beliefs, etc.

14. Behaviour speaks louder than words

If we remain silent we may have no influence (even though silence can be an effective strategy sometimes). If we speak, others might hear. But if we act we take charge of our world and make changes directly. In human development, if we act in a certain way, then our thoughts and beliefs tend to follow. For instance, if we are nervous doing something, and we do it repeatedly we become less nervous as the behaviour becomes more established. Our thoughts and feelings follow our actions and change to be consistent.

15. Distinguish behaviour from self

A person is not his behaviour, his profession, his position in life. When we make a mistake, we do not say ‘I am stupid’, but ‘This is an error, I had better fix it.’ We are not our behaviour, so we avoid associating ourselves with it. Similarly, if we do something well, this does not mean we are brilliant. We are not our behaviour.

The Map is not the territory

Originator: This principle is due to Alfred Korzybski.

This is an analogy between the mind and the body and between a map and the territory it represents. The map is a metaphor for thinking and feeling, and the territory is a metaphor for the physical world.

The Map is not the Territory

By looking at a real map, we can find our way around the territory. Just as a street map guides us around the town, the maps in our minds guide us consciously or unconsciously in our behaviour and thinking towards the world.

However, a map is not a picture of territory it represents. Parts of the map do not look like parts of the territory. On the map, a church may be represented by a cross, and a farm could be represented by an animal. The church does not look like the cross, nor does the farm look like an animal. Nonetheless, the symbols do tell us the location of the church and the farm. And the map enables us to find our way around in an unfamiliar place.

Our mental maps affect how we think, feel and behave more than actual physical things. If we meet a friend, Jo, we might experience a warm feeling. This warm feeling is not part of our friend, but part of our mental map of Jo. In fact, if this feeling were caused by Jo, then everyone would react to Jo in exactly the same way—with that same feeling. Of course, they do not. The feeling we have when we see Jo is due to our mental map.

Real maps may look different in terms of colour, size, symbols used, etc, but if they are accurate maps, they all represent the territory in the same way, so we could use any of them to guide us. Like real maps, everyone's mental map agrees on certain points about Jo—height, size, clothes.

Everyone's mental map of the physical world is similar to everyone else's. But they all differ depending on each person's experience with Jo, or with a similar person.

In general, then, everyone has a similar mental map of the physical world, but everyone's mental map differs—in beliefs, preferences, values, experiences, etc.

We all have Different Maps

If we assume that everyone has a different map, we do not assume what someone is going to think, and we do not impose our thoughts upon them. We adopt this principle very strongly in [Symbolic Modelling](#), but we sometimes break it in other approaches. Even so, we should always remember that we all have different maps. In strict NLP, we should follow this principle, and [model](#) someone to discover their map, rather than assume we know. But sometimes we take short-cuts. For most people, an image that is big, bright and close-up is more influential than one that is small, dull and distant. We can often use this fact when time is limited, when dealing with a group, or when the other person isn't present (as when writing a book). At the back of our minds, we should always remember that 'We all have different maps'!

Our maps can distort our territory

Although we can be sure that different people will perceive the physical world reasonably accurately—if there is a book on the table everyone (who can see) can see it—but we all distort the territory—a little or a lot—according to our mental maps.

For instance, a group of nursing students were asked to estimate the height of various people, including their director. They estimated the people of higher status as being slightly taller than they really were and they estimated people of low status as being slightly shorter than they really were. Their maps seemed to distort the territory, so a ‘big’ person in their mental maps (one of high status) was seen as taller than they really were, and a ‘little’ person in their mental maps (one of low status) was seen as shorter than they really were.

In a famous experiment by Jerome Bruner and Cecile Goodman, poor children estimated a silver dollar as being bigger than rich children estimated it. Because a dollar was thought of as more valuable in their maps, they actually distorted the territory by ‘seeing’ the dollars as (slightly) bigger than the richer children saw these dollars.

Mistaking the Map for the Territory

Sometimes we react to a physical object, the territory, in a completely inappropriate way because of our mental maps. Some people have a phobia of flying things, including moths. Of course, the territory—the moth—is not harmful or dangerous. But for people with a phobia, their mental maps of the moth contain the quality fearful and it is their mental maps that cause a fear reaction.

An even stronger example is the common spider phobia. People may respond fearfully towards a spider, but not be afraid of a fly. The fly is actually dangerous because it walks in filth and then tries to walk on our food. Spiders, in contrast, never do this. In addition, they kill flies, making our lives safer. Yet because of our mental maps we respond with greater hatred and revulsion to the spider than we do to the fly.

Many people consider themselves shy, but to other people they do not appear shy at all. These people have a mental map, or part of a map that ‘maps’ them as being shy, so they see themselves in that way. In the territory, or the real world, they aren’t shy at all. They mistake their mental map with the territory.

Very often our reactions to things are not dependent on the thing itself, but are dependent on our individual mental maps.

NLP Addresses the Map rather than the Territory

In NLP, we deal with the need to get better by addressing the mental map rather than the territory. With someone who wished to excel in communication, we would be mainly concerned about changing how they map themselves and their world, rather than sending them off to do a course in public speaking, etc. Of course, we need resources to attain our goals, and doing the course in public speaking may be one of them. But when someone has a problem with communication, we address their mental maps rather than reality.

Research indicates that a vast proportion of the population see themselves as shy—when others do not see them as shy. While doing a course to overcome shyness may help, because they are not, in reality shy, the issue to be addressed is their mental map of themselves.

The Solution is to change the Map, not the Territory

This is a subtle point, and when you read the examples below, you might disagree.

A man was concerned about being threatened, attacked or burgled. He learned Kung Fu, Karate, Judo and other martial arts. In NLP, the issue is not learning self defence, etc, but how he represented his world—his mental maps.

In another example, a woman was anxious about driving because she feared she might see an accident and not know what to do. She thought she should learn First Aid. Once again, the issue, according to NLP, was not her knowledge of emergency medicine, but how she represented her world (specifically driving).

At first, we might experience some disagreement here. Mainly, I think, because learning self defence or First Aid are useful skills. But consider this. The woman might think that she should learn First Aid. She studies it, but still representing the world in the same way, she might think she has to deal with more advanced cases. So she studies nursing. And again, because of more difficult cases, she takes an MD? All this to feel easy driving! By extension, if this were necessary, perhaps all frequent road users, such as truck drivers, patrolmen, salespeople, etc, should also have MDs. Even though this might help, it is clearly ridiculous.

In order to achieve our goals and follow our interests there are many resources that we might seek, including learning skills and gaining knowledge. Sometimes this changes how we represent our world, our mental maps. But in general, in NLP, we change the map rather than the territory. And we do courses of study and learn skills because we need to (to achieve our goals) or simply want to.

Finding the Meaning of Words in a Dictionary

We often read the words in a text but can't define them. If someone asks us what a given word means we might not be able to. Even so, we may partially understand the text—perhaps we can even apply it. But when we cannot define the words they act as unconscious anchors and affect us hypnotically. On the other hand, if we can define the words—that is, use our conscious minds—we respond to the text in a rational and logical manner, because we are using the dominant hemisphere of our brains—which thinks logically and rationally.

Misunderstood Words—near miss in Meaning

Misunderstood words are words we do not precisely understand. They are words we cannot correctly define. Because we think we understand them, they are the worst kind of misunderstanding. True, we may partially understand them and our understanding seems reasonable, but it is a bit wrong. But not wrong enough for alarm bells to sound! For instance:

They carried out an **exhaustive** study.

Some people do not know what ‘exhaustive’ means, so they relate it to a word they do understand: **exhausting**. In general, some people will try to understand an unfamiliar word by associating it with a similar *sounding* word. Sometimes this works, but in our example (taken from life), they misunderstand the sentence and think it means the study was exhausting (tiring). In this case, alarm bells do not sound as they appear to understand the sentence.

They reason that if the study was exhausting, then the researchers obviously did a lot of work, worked all hours of the day and night, so it seems they made a comprehensive study (which is the correct meaning)—even though the reader has a misunderstood word, *exhaustive*. In this example, the misunderstanding can continue without anyone being aware. For instance, the person misunderstanding might say to the researchers:

“You must have needed a holiday after that.”

And the researchers may feel flattered that the reader thinks they have done a lot of work. On the other hand, they might think the reader is being ironical, when they are not. The reader has misunderstood the word, and has responded to ‘the study was tiring’.

When we have misunderstood words we may:

- Find the material hard to understand (because we need to make a lot of mental effort to make sense of the material)
- Feel tired (The effort to stretch the mind to make sense of the material makes us bored and sleepy)
- Our minds wander.
- Our eyes go glassy.
- Feel annoyed with the author (Because we misunderstand, slightly or a lot, what the author is really saying, we might think wrongly that the author is saying something else—something illogical or even offensive.)
- In general, we feel strong emotions—positive or negative.
- We want to stop reading the text, and might even want to stop studying the subject.

If we experience any of the above when reading, we should check carefully whether we have understood all the words. Of course, the material itself might be faulty, but we should check for misunderstanding first.

New Words

Words that are new to us need to be defined and understood. If we do not define them, then we may, subconsciously, take the new word to mean what a similar word means (exhaustive and exhausting). Our minds wander, we get tired and want to do something else. New words can have the same effect as misunderstood ones.

Some Words You Either Know or You Don't

A good dictionary defines words in terms of more familiar words, but eventually it reaches basic words—ones that refer to common experiences—which it cannot define. Therefore, if you delve into the dictionary seeking certainty in your understanding, and you check the definitions of the words used, you will eventually reach a point where either the definitions are ones you know or you don't. For instance, if you do not know what bitter almond smells like, then you cannot discover this from the dictionary—you must go and smell some.

Similarly, there are some basic concepts that we understand from experience. For instance, cause, time, space, etc. While we might look in the dictionary to get a definition for ‘push’, we would do this to expand our range of expressions (learn the definition). It is unlikely we could understand ‘push’ from the dictionary if we had no idea what it was. However, we know its meaning because we all experience weight and gravity. The dictionary helps us to define the word in a different but circular way. So we might learn an alternative way to express push—‘force away’—but because we understand ‘force’ in terms of ‘push, pull and twist’ the definition is circular. By learning ‘push’ means ‘force away’ we learn an alternative expression, not the meaning of the word.

While we can use a dictionary to define words in terms of more basic words, and therefore learn their meaning, there is a limit in using the dictionary: it depends on basic experiences we all share (such as force and time), and on other basic experiences which we might not have had (such as the smell of bitter almond).

Early Experience and Word Meaning

As very young children, we experience concepts through our own bodies and through our interactions with the world. These basic concepts are known to all of us.

We begin to learn thousands of names of things, such as items of food and drink and objects in our environment. We also learn words and concepts which have a relationship meaning.

For instance, we learn relationship words like **in** and **out** by noticing that we breathe air in and breathe it out. Or we note that when we drink or eat anything, it goes in our bodies and when we excrete, it comes out. This also gives us the idea of a container—the body. Similarly, we learn other relationship words such as near and far; above and below; and on. We also learn about causation and time.

A child might say:

She hit me and I fell over (causation).

Similarly, we learn about time by waiting for things and noting that memories are things in the past and expectations are things in the future. For instance, ‘Yesterday we went to the zoo.’ And ‘Tomorrow we are going to the castle.’

Therefore, time appears as a series of events on a line, with the ever-moving present between the past and the future.

Gradually, we become familiar with time and causation, but we still need to learn to express these ideas in words. We learn the dictionary meanings to clarify our understanding so we can communicate rationally about them.

The meaning of words is related to our early experiences and to the structure of our brains. For instance, the word ‘admire’ means ‘to look up to’. This might appear to be a figurative meaning, but it seems it is a literal meaning, as indicated by the following experiment. People presented with a number of words and asked to indicate whether a given word is positive or negative. They find the task easier when the positive words are presented above the line of vision (they look up to them) and the negative words are presented below their line of vision (they look down on them) than vice versa. It seems, therefore, that ‘to look up to’ is not merely an expression but represents the way we react when we admire someone or something. There is growing evidence of this kind to indicate that our understanding of words is based on basic interactions with the world, such as looking up, down and bringing closer and taking away, many of which we learn in early childhood.

Word Meanings derive from Basic Concepts

We understand words from understanding the relationships between basic concepts which we humans share. When we understand a word we have a concept for that word, or in linguistics a frame. The concept may contain sense impressions, feelings and words—including a definition of the word (unless it is a misunderstood word). For instance, the word rough may fit into a concept or frame which contains the feeling of something rough, such as sandpaper. Either we know this sensation or we don’t. The dictionary won’t tell us what rough feels like—we need to feel some things to understand ‘rough’—something we all have done in childhood. As we grow older, we add to our frame for ‘rough’, including ideas of good or bad, definitions, examples and images (in this case kinaesthetic images).

To give another example, I heard the expression ‘ice head’ from some surfers in England (where the sea can be very cold). I understood the word when they said it is similar to the headache you get when you eat ice cream too fast. I knew what that was and so I understood their expression. If you have never experienced the ice cream headache, then you might still be able to understand ‘ice head’ if you understand headache (know what it feels like). If you didn’t understand ‘headache’ then everyone understands ‘pain’ so you would understand ‘ice head’ to mean ‘a pain in the head from cold’—which is also a good basic definition.

Understanding Words from their Origins

The word origin sometimes gives a concrete meaning. For example, **mean** comes from a word meaning ‘mean, say, tell’. The fact the word ‘mean’ is repeated in the word origin suggests ‘mean’ has a basic meaning (which everyone knows). The other meanings include ‘tell’ and ‘say’. Clearly, if we ask what a word means, we expect to be told, perhaps in words of one syllable, what it means. We all understand the word ‘tell’ (and the word ‘say’) from our early experience. And we can say that the word ‘mean’ means ‘tell or say the same thing in other words’.

Let us take ‘understand’ as another example. The word **understand** comes from two bits: **under**, meaning ‘between, among’ (not under!), and **stand** meaning ‘stand’—which metaphorically can be ‘to be’.

If we stand, or **are**, among (the parts) of something, we can see the makeup of the thing—its parts, qualities, functions, relationships and how it works.

There is also the meaning from the origin of ‘taking apart and putting together’. This is illustrated in:

He understands cars.

This may mean he can take them to bits (not too hard), but also put them together again (more difficult!) By using a metaphor, we can say ‘understand’ as in ‘understand people’ means we know their qualities, desires, hopes, etc—their parts—and how these parts relate to each other and also to other people and the world. Knowing the origin of ‘understand’ makes a modern definition, ‘thoroughly familiar with’, much clearer. So we know that a person who ‘understands physics’, say, ‘understands mechanics’, would know the parts—forces, masses, velocities, accelerations—and also how they relate to each other (the formulae).

Simulation and Word Meaning

Sometimes we find a piece of writing hard to understand and we need to make the meaning clear. An example from commerce is car insurance people. That is, those who read the reports of accidents and have to figure out liability. While nowadays they probably use computer simulation, at one time they would use toy cars (or even pieces of wood) and drawings of the roads. They would move the toy cars (or other objects representing the cars) and note the damage that would occur according to the reports from the drivers making claims. In this case the simulation makes the written material more understandable by presenting it in a visual way. It also reveals any inconsistencies in the reports.

A simulation does not have to be an exact copy; it needs to be analogous. So, to study an insurance claim, we don't need to use real cars, and we don't have to use toy cars. In fact, we can use any lump of material (perhaps even paper clips) to simulate what the driver is claiming and to check its basic reasonableness. And to use simulation to study a word or text, we can use any convenient objects to represent the ideas.

Simulations are useful in:

- study
- testing
- experimenting

They enable us to make words and concepts more real. We can create simulations using:

- drawings
- diagrams
- models
- computer programs
- bits and bobs

The last is most important. We can represent ideas using bits and bobs (paperclips, etc) so we can understand the word or text in a concrete manner, because we put our attention on things in the outside world, as opposed to putting our attention inside our minds.

We also use simulations when we think things through.

The Unutterable Word

Of course, words are units of language, so there are no unutterable words (it's a contradiction). However there are concepts which might be represented in some way by words, which are indefinable. A common example is the word truth. In a way, we all know what it means, but it defies any simple definition, and has confounded philosophers for thousands of years. Another example is justice, about which Plato wrote a large book attempting to define it. It may not be possible to define basic concepts such as force, time and space.

What the point here is, is that we cannot assume we understand another person (because we can't wholly do so) and we cannot wholly understand ourselves. Or, at least, we cannot verbalize in an articulate manner exactly how we feel, visualise, or hear mental images in our minds. Words and descriptions can indicate, and often indicate very well, what we do in our minds, but they cannot do so exactly. In NLP, we say, '[The map is not the territory](#)'. Even an accurate map does not look like the terrain it 'maps'. And great artists say they cannot exactly portray the images they have in their minds.

Cognitive linguists have a word, hypocognition, which refers to the absence of concepts, or more generally of frames, that enable an individual or a community to understand and handle certain ideas. Very often we use personal ways of understanding, perhaps [metaphors](#), in order to understand our world.

What this means is that we should not be arrogant with ourselves and others but to accept that sometimes our ideas about another's needs and wants might not fit their frame of reference. For instance, if someone says they cannot understand something, we might ask:

What's stopping you?

This assumes that there is something stopping them, and often they will answer the question giving us information that can be used to help them. The point here is that it is not always true.

A simple answer to this problem is that we should listen carefully to our minds and the words and actions of others—in this way we have the openness to learn and to be more effective.

See [Clean Language](#)

Undefined Word Strategy

When studying a new subject, we are almost certain to encounter words we have never seen before or familiar words used in a technical sense.

Required: a good dictionary, one that contains all the words you might need (a big dictionary), and one that defines words in phrases or sentences rather than gives synonyms.

1. Identify a word you do not understand, or one you think you know, but cannot define.
2. Look the word up in a good dictionary. Read and understand the definition. Read also the origin of the word, because it may use even simpler ideas to define it. Read any examples given.
3. Create a simulation of the word, using a drawing, diagram, paperclips, etc.
4. Look away from the dictionary and define the word in your own words.
5. Check your definition with that in the dictionary.
6. Use the word in three sentences.
7. If you do not understand one or more words in the definition, write down the word from step 1 and all the words you do not understand. Repeat these steps for each word.

Example: Analogy

Analogy: ‘a comparison of the similarities between two things otherwise unlike’. The origin is from the Greek: ana- ‘according to, on’, and logos ‘thought or speech’. An example is ‘the analogy between a pump and the heart.’ Clearly a pump isn’t a heart because it isn’t a living thing (‘the two things are otherwise unlike’). But we can compare the similarities:

- A pump pushes liquids; the heart pushes blood.
- A pump uses pipes; the heart uses arteries.
- A pump may have valves; the heart also has valves.

While pipes and arteries are quite different, they function in a similar way, and so have a similarity in thought. ‘According to thought’, they are therefore similar. Again, while the heart has valves, and a pump may have them too, the valves are similar in language (and thought) but are quite different in appearance and construction. The origin of the word says ‘according to speech or thought’.

3. We can simulate the example using a table:

Pump	Heart
Pumps fluids	Pumps blood
Uses pipes.	Uses blood vessels
Has valves	Has valves

We could also think what we could do if a pump in a system was raising the pressure too high. We could:

- Slow the pump down
- Increase the bore of the pipes
- Let some fluid out

All these methods are used, analogically, to reduce blood pressure in humans.

4, 5 and 6: Define analogy in your own words and check with the dictionary: ‘A comparison between two things otherwise different.’ Use the word in 3 sentences:

There is an analogy between the atom and the solar system.

There is an analogy between day and night and birth and death.

A pressure cooker overheating could be an analogy for losing one’s temper.

Note: There are more meanings of analogy, for instance, as a form of argument.

Pacing and Leading—How to get into rapport

Originator: Richard Bandler and John Grinder

In NLP, the word **pace** means 'to follow'. For instance, if we pace someone who talks fast, we talk fast. They speak in their normal way, and we follow by speaking at the same rate. On the other hand, if they talk slowly, then so do we.

We also pace body position. So if they slouch so do we. If they sit upright and tense, then so do we. Whatever they do, when we are pacing them, we do the same. Another way of saying this is that when we pace another person we duplicate their behaviour, speaking, thinking, etc.

The opposite of pacing is leading. When we **lead**, it is we who set the pace and the other person follows.

To go into rapport with another person, we first pace them. That is, we do what they are doing in the way they are doing it. For instance, if another person is angry, then we pace their body position, their loudness, their facial expressions, and their words. After a while, we begin to change our body position, way of speaking, etc to a more calm state and check whether the other follows us and calms down. That is, we lead them. If they do not follow our lead, we do some more pacing and try again later to lead them into a calmer state.

So, in NLP, we get into rapport with another person by pacing them. We explain this in more detail in the next article.

Building Rapport by Pacing Words

Story: the stupid lord

A teacher was introduced to a rich and powerful Japanese lord.

"This man is a great and wise lord," he was told.

"No he isn't," said the teacher, "he is a fool and knows no Zen. Why do you flatter him so?"

The Japanese lord, impressed by the teacher's frankness, built a temple for him, and became his student.

One way to pace another person is to use language to pace what they are saying, doing, thinking, etc. We make statements that the other person will agree with. We can use their own language to do this, or we can make statements that have a high degree of agreement. For instance, a hypnotist might say:

You are sitting in the chair. (Obvious!)

You are sitting in a relaxed way. (She sees he is so sitting.)

You are wondering what will happen next. (Everyone would be!)

You have just taken a deep breath—just relax (a lead).

Your blood pressure has comfortably lowered. (He is in no position to judge this, but it is probably true.)

We can pace words even when we aren't with the other person, as when writing. However, we pace the other person by saying obvious truths. We get them saying or thinking 'yes' until we are ready to move into the lead and give them our beliefs.

For instance, the following statements are probably true of you:

You are looking at a computer screen.

Of course, you might have printed this document out and be reading. But this is certainly true:

You are reading or listening to this document.

If we assume that most people are reading this on a computer then:

You are looking at the screen.

You can hear the sound of the computer.

You can feel the chair.

You are forming certain opinions.

You wonder whether this document will help you.

Even though I cannot see you, I know that certain things will be true for most people, even though I cannot really see what they are doing.

We can get even more agreement by using more vague language:

At this very moment, you are reading the words on the computer screen.

I wonder if you noticed the sound of the computer, or whether it is silent.

You may be aware of the pressure of the chair, or if you are standing, the pressure on your feet.

Did you notice certain thoughts passing through your mind?

And certain feelings of enthusiasm about becoming a master of these techniques. Have you noticed them yet, or are you the kind of person who likes to take their time, before they are filled with energy to really make a difference.

The statements might make it appear I am reading your mind. I have got under your skin. Yet they are so vague and meaningless that almost everyone would find them true and have to agree (or at least not disagree).

For this type of pacing, you say several things which are almost certainly true and lead them with something you want your reader to believe. We talk about this next.

Building Rapport: Pacing Patterns

The most important skill in interpersonal communication is the building of rapport. It is also the most important skill in persuasion or influence. Previously, we discussed pacing words. Here we look at the patterns of pacing in more detail.

If we wished to influence another then we would follow this pattern:

Pace - Pace - Pace - Pace - Lead
Pace - Pace - Pace - Lead
Pace - Pace - Lead
Pace - Lead (Alternating)

That is, to begin with all our efforts would be aimed at being agreeable. We would produce three or four behaviours that would be 100% agreeable to the person listening. That is: pace-pace-pace-pace. Then we lead with our own statement, which we wish the other to accept. At first we try to lead in small ways, waiting till we have built rapport before we try to bring about larger changes.

For example, (Hypnosis):

Now you are sitting in the hypnotizing chair. You can hear my voice. Perhaps you are wondering what is going to happen next. And you may be feeling drowsy and your eyes may begin to close.

(Car salesman)

This car is red. It has leather upholstery. It is ready to drive off. And it could be a good purchase for you.

(Therapist)

You are in hospital. You are in bed. You are talking to your doctor. And you are feeling a little apprehensive. Yet have you considered that there could be some good in all this?

In building rapport by pacing, we make several statements that are agreeable to the listener and then add one of our own. We may do this very carefully at first. We would lead the listener to our way of thinking. As rapport develops we do not have to make so many agreeable statements and we can begin to influence our listener.

If our statement causes the listener to disagree we would revert to making a number of statements that are 100% agreeable to our listener. That is, if rapport is lost, we would go back and rebuild it, through more pacing.

Some claim that the words we use have much less effect than the way we say things: loudness, intonation, etc. We deal with these later.

Pacing Breathing

Two people who are in agreement tend to breathe in the same way, at the same rate and to the same depth. When they are in sync, they seem to breathe as one. Normally we do this unconsciously, but we can learn to be aware of the others breathing and pace it. In pacing another who is upset, we assume a similar breathing rate and a similar breathing depth. We also pace their body language and words. As well as pacing their breathing rate and depth, we might also pace a cough or a sniff. Of course, we do not do this immediately, but wait 15 seconds before we pace it. However, in pacing breathing, we do not need to wait 15 seconds, as we do with something obvious, such as a cough. We pace breathing in real time, as it happens.

Sometimes another's breathing is not something we want to pace directly, say if their breathing is too fast and too shallow, when they are upset. If we paced this, we might become breathless or hyperventilate.

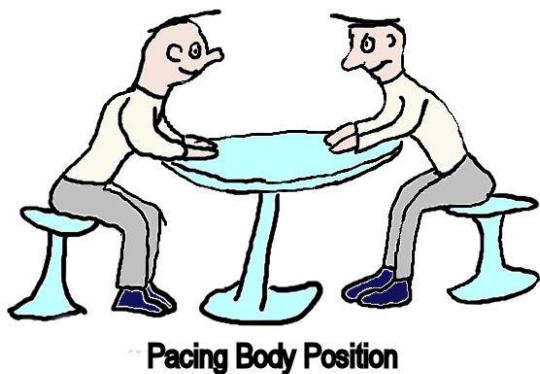
Cross Modality Pacing

In any kind of pacing, we might choose to pace in a different way. So we can pace a person's breathing by tapping gently with a pencil. This can (and should be) done subtly. We do not make it obvious because that would put the person's awareness on what we are doing, and it is more effective to make it almost unnoticeable.

There are other ways we can use cross modality pacing with breathing. For instance, moving our head in rhythm with the other's breathing.

Body Rapport Pacing Body Language

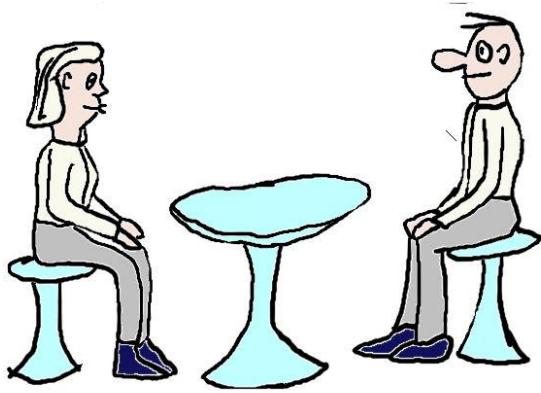
Previously, we said that to build verbal rapport we need to make several statement which the listener will agree with. Here, we describe how to build rapport by using our bodies.



Pacing Body Position

Have you ever seen films of people talking together when they are in complete agreement? Or people in a coffee shop. Sometimes it can be quite amusing to see how closely they adopt the same position or copy the same actions. They look like mirror images of each other. They do this without thinking about it. When we are in rapport with another, we pace them exactly, even though we are unaware we are doing it. If we learn to do this consciously, and be more effective in our communications.

To influence another using behaviour, we duplicate the behaviour of the person we wish to influence. We do not do this immediately, but wait about 15 seconds before we repeat their behaviour.



Pacing Body Position

For example, if the other person leans back in their chair, then, a few seconds later, we would lean back in ours.

If they scratch their chin, then 15 seconds later, we would scratch ours.

In this way by following the movements of the other we establish rapport. Strangely, this might happen when the other isn't apparently aware of you. You can sometimes do this with a person at a distance. This can be quite uncanny. We would pace the other person for a while, then we might scratch our nose, for example, and see if they follow us by scratching theirs.

Story: The Blinking King

(This little story is probably some thousands of years old)

A man was to visit the king and asked how he might please him.

They suggested he should imitate him.

The man was before the king and noticed that he tended to blink his eye, so the man imitated him.

The king asked, "Do you have an eye problem, or is it on account of the wind?"

From the 100 Parables Sutra

You can combine this body pacing with other kinds of pacing, such as pacing words.

For example,

(Client rubs chin) I don't know if I can do it.

(A few seconds later, the therapist rubs her chin) Mm! I don't know, but perhaps you will surprise yourself. You don't know until you try do you.

So we can build rapport by making 100% true statements and by using our body to build rapport with the other. But there is another way to build rapport which is to pace the intonation patterns of the other. We deal with this next.

Using Voice Patterns to build rapport

So we can build rapport and influence others by making 100% true statements and by pacing the others' body language and stance. We can also build rapport by pacing **intonation** and **voice quality**.

Intonation is the musical quality of the other's voice. The rising and falling of their voice tone. Some people sound very uncertain. Others have a deep booming voice. In building rapport we would move our voice quality closer to that of the other. For example, if the other sounded confident about something, we would change our voice pattern so we too sounded confident.

Of course, we cannot pace exactly the voice quality of another. Their voice is unique to them. We can, however, make our voice a bit more like theirs. If they have a squeaky voice, we can make our voice a bit more like theirs, but, of course, we don't sound exactly like them, nor need we. If they speak fast, then so do we. If they have a rising intonation pattern, then we do the same. If their voice is deep, we make our voice deeper.

We would do this along with building verbal and physical rapport. In practice, you might find it useful to pay attention to the patterns in the other's voice, so you become more aware of them. Just be aware, to begin with, how the person is communicating using voice patterns. You can do this by studying films and news interviews on television. Newsreaders use intonation patterns extensively, and they are worth studying. One thing you might notice is that the power to influence can be more a matter of voice quality than what is actually said.

See also [Every Written English Sentence can be spoken in a Range of Meanings](#)

Perceptual Positions

When reviewing an experience involving others, or when future pacing a communication, we can experience it through different points of view, or perceptual positions.

1. Self
2. Other
3. Non-involved
4. Group
5. Source

It is often believed that we take the self position when dealing with communications, but some people take the position of the other (sympathy) more often. We can get more insights into a communication by taking a third viewpoint—the position of an independent observer (judge). Beyond these positions, there is the position of the group, and beyond that, the position of source, or the God position.

Self

In the self position we are there seeing through our own eyes, hearing through our own ears and feeling what we feel.

Other

In the position of other, we see through their eyes, hear through their ears, and feel what they feel. We think what they think. Sometimes we try to get under the skin of the other by mimicking their body position, mannerisms, speech pattern etc.

Non-involved

In this position, we perceive the situation from the viewpoint of another, non-involved person. Perhaps we choose a wise person from a story or from real life. Or just an imaginary sage. In this position we could interview the people involved (including self) and gain a new perspective.

Sometimes it is helpful to take the viewpoint of someone from outer space, someone who has no knowledge of Earth ways and humans. This can give some interesting insights.

Group

This is the group position. In a company, it would be the company as a whole. The spirit of the company. In this viewpoint, we would use ‘we’ instead of ‘I’. The group could be the family, club members or school, etc.

In a communication between two people, the group viewpoint would be based on both the self and the other. It is concerned with the wellbeing of both.

Source

This is the viewpoint of the source or creator of everything.

Ladders of Thought

The way we think and behave when we are in certain states is reminiscent of the way that children behave. It seems that under stress, we regress to states that were formed in childhood when certain higher levels of thinking were not available. In dealing with these states we might be more effective by dealing with them in much the same way we might deal with a child in that level of thinking. These levels of thinking were discovered by the Swiss Psychologist Jean Piaget from extensive observations of young children. By considering these levels, particularly nominal thinking, we can understand certain states better, and also understand which techniques are appropriate. The four stages are:

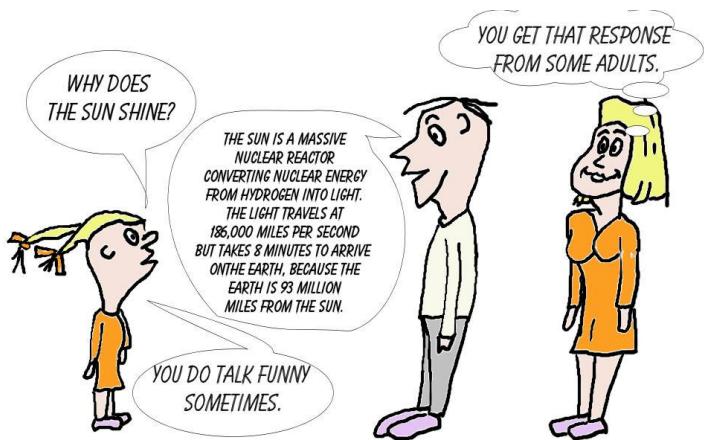
1. Nominal Thinking
2. Ordinal Thinking
3. Interval Thinking
4. Ratio Thinking

The words used are to some extent an analogy between our development of the concept of number through our history, and the child's development of the concept of number, which they parallel.

For instance, there is always some concept of causality. To take a non-stressful example, a young child might be in a room when the dog walks in and barks. At that very moment, the power goes off, plunging the house into darkness. The child might believe the dog caused the power to go off. We might challenge this thinking of the Being Specific Model: (imaginary illustrative conversation)

Adult: How did the dog turn the power off?

Child: By magic.



From a child, this answer is perfectly acceptable, and we might laugh and give up. (After all, they might go on to ask us, for instance, "Why doesn't the dog talk?", or "Why does the sun shine?", and stump us further.) When we, or others, are in certain states, we respond at the mental level of that state. Just as it is absurd to speak to children at an adult level, we need to handle concerns at the level they are being experienced.

Much of this material in the mind is left over from early childhood and has not yet been handled. Sometimes a state of mind can hijack us into this early thinking.

To handle states we need handle them using the appropriate levels of understanding. Sometimes, the questions seem too simple. And the speed with which conditions might resolve seems rather strange. What happens is the mind frees itself from the hijack by the upset and immediately cleans up the problem.

Nominal Thinking

Very young children can, for instance, use numbers, but the numbers are just names (nominals) and they lack any comparison or order. A person who is depressed, and in a state employing Nominal Thinking may be stuck in the idea that there is nothing else, but depression — he can think only of depressed thoughts. The depression is not compared with anything else, or rated as to the degree of depression.

Many of our concerns exist at this level. An irrational belief, for instance, might be something we ‘know’ is not true (intellectually), but unless we deal with it at its level, by asking inside, ‘Is it true’ and listening for the answer the concern might continue to exist. For instance, a person might know the belief, ‘I always fail’ is false, but continue to believe it anyway. We need to deal with issues at their level, using appropriate questions and techniques.

Confusion Between Imagination and Reality

In nominal thinking, there is sometimes confusion between reality and fantasy. Little children can sometimes take statements such as, “If you eat all that you will explode” literally! As adults, we might think of biting into a lemon, and note that our mouth waters — confusing the map with the territory! When we say the unconscious mind cannot distinguish between reality and imagination, we are referring to the part of this mind that uses nominal thinking.

Of course, this is a useful thing when done consciously, and is part of many patterns mentioned here. In nominal thinking it tends to occur without awareness and without control.

Either/or Thinking

A slightly more advanced kind of nominal thinking is either/or thinking. For instance, someone who says they are always unlucky can conceive of two states: lucky or unlucky, be not shades of luck. This is ‘either or’ thinking where there is no middle ground and no degree. A person is depressed or not. Happy or Unhappy. In fact, if someone is depressed, they may conceive of nothing other than the depression. It has no degrees and no comparisons. When we are in such a state, the best we can do is to respond to yes/no questions (not complicated questions). For instance, of a state of panic, we can ask, for instance:

1. Could I release this feeling?
2. Could I welcome this feeling?
3. Could I let it go?

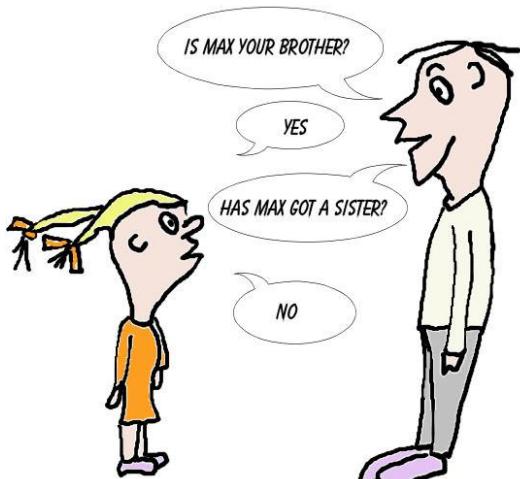
That is questions that require a simple response — yes or no. But questions and actions appropriate to higher levels of thinking may not work (unless the mind turns on its higher levels.) So in a state of nominal thinking we are more likely to respond to questions which ask for a yes or no answer (either/or).

Some people, including therapists, think these questions are too simple. The fact is that they must be simple to be effective in stuck states, just as when talking to young children, one needs to be simple.

Nominal thinking is appropriate when taking action, but not when making decisions or choosing options. When, for instance, posting a letter, we can either post it or not (there is no middle ground).

Absolutes

In Nominal Thinking there are absolutes. Something is safe or not. There are no degrees of safety. Lying is absolutely wrong—there are no white lies. A person is either good or bad—there are no degrees of goodness or badness at this level.



Egocentricity

Everything at this level relates to the viewpoint of the self. We may feel responsible for things that we have not caused. While in a state governed by Nominal Thinking, we might not be able to process patterns requiring us to adopt the viewpoint of another, or an objective viewpoint.

In childhood, we may not be able to see things from another's point of view. When we understand that the child has not yet learned to take different viewpoints we are able to be more understanding. Similarly, when an adult has entered a state functioning at a childhood level, we are better able to understand them.

Overgeneralization

For children, when any association is made with one example, then all examples are considered the same. If one dog is scary, then all dogs are considered scary. If their daddy is young or old, then all daddies are expected to fit the pattern.

Causality

One thing causes another if it precedes it (the fallacy: post hoc per propter hoc, in Latin.) We can consider that one thing caused the given state because it preceded it. This also relates to the tendency to overgeneralize.

Nominal Thinking ignores the negative

Children and many mammals can understand the word ‘No’, particularly when it means stop. But the concept of the negative is something that is not fully understood until the level of Interval Thinking. We can, however, understand questions that require a yes/no answer (Is it truly bad?), and we can understand statements such as ‘This is not bad’, meaning, at this level, it is good (either/or)

Nominal thinking, however, tends to ignore the concept ‘no’. For instance, labels such as nontoxic tend to make people think of the substance being toxic. Advertisements for air travel that mention it is safe compared with road transport tend to fail because people think of air crashes (ignoring the implied ‘not’ in the word **safe** —not dangerous.) This kind of thinking refers to adults, so nominal thinking still persists into adulthood. It is at the level of Interval Thinking where negatives are understood.

The Point

When we experience strong emotions and stuck states we respond to simple yes/no questions. More complex questions may not work. Similarly, simple questions can work at other levels (when we are not in a stuck state experiencing strong emotions), but they might not — we need to ask more appropriate (simple) questions. See also Handling Strong Emotions.

Ordinal Thinking

In Ordinal Thinking, we do not ask simply whether we won (a race) or lost it (Nominal Thinking), we ask in what position we were in the race — first, second, third. This introduces the idea of relative position and comparison. When we find ourselves stuck in a kind of thinking where there seems little choice, nominal thinking, as a fit of anger, we can put this in order by making comparisons.

The questions we ask here are:

Compared with what?

More or less?

Most issues are handleable at this level.

Whilst in nominal thinking we have good (and the only opposite bad), in Ordinal Thinking we might have:

- The best
- Better
- Good
- Fair
- Passable

That is, we have some comparisons using labels (nominals) but they are more primitive than the consideration of quantity in Interval Thinking. Nonetheless, they are sufficient to bring that part of us using nominal thinking into more enlightened thinking. Similarly, instead of just horrible or not we might have:

- Horrible
- Worse
- Bad
- A bit bad
- Not so bad

The meaning of the above words is individual—we might all produce different lists. Similarly, it is possible to rank words and their opposites (some aspects are only possible at a higher level of reasoning):

Positive	Opposite
Wonderful	Horrible
Good	Bad
Pleasing	Annoying
Encouraging	Concerning

The child has not learned to understand things from the viewpoint of another. And has not learned that two different descriptions can refer to the same thing. In history, we once believed the Morning Star and the Evening Star were different but now we believe they are the same—they are the planet Venus. If we thought of the child as being like an adult, we might think she is being awkward or making a joke. Similarly, by understanding that sometimes we are in a state that thinks like a child, we know we need to use simple ideas until our more mature parts get active again.

Interestingly, the physiological states for the above tend to be the same; that is, horrible and wonderful could have the same physiology, just different interpretations (interval or ratio thinking). At this level, however, it is inconceivable that the only difference between two states is how we think about them. Or that two states are physiologically identical except for our thoughts about them.

Sometimes we can apply these questions to nominal thinking and sometimes not.

We experience ordinal thinking when we are disturbed by certain beliefs. We tend to be stuck in a state where the emotions aren't that strong, but nonetheless disturbing.

For instance, I am terrified of giving that speech because I might forget my words and make a fool of myself. We could ask:

Is that the worst thing that could happen?

No. My trousers might fall down. [Laughs, hence changes state, a bit.]

Is that worse than forgetting your speech?

Yes.

Is that the worst possible thing that could happen?

No. The audience could lynch me. [Laughs.]

So, he is at least in ordinal thinking — there are a number of things that could happen in some order. And this might lead us to consider other things that are better, such as receiving a standing ovation, etc.

We might ask about how likely the outcomes are, perhaps rating them using the [suds scale](#).

The Monkey Story, or How Ordinal Thinking Is Not Always Enough

In some countries they trap monkeys by making a box with a nut inside. The box has a hole in it through which the monkey can put its hand, but the hole is too small for the monkey to pull out the nut. The monkey becomes trapped when it grabs the nut. All it has to do is to let go of the nut and remove its hand. But it cannot because it has in mind the idea of getting the nut, and the zero option, of letting it go does not exist in Ordinal Thinking.

We might feel sad, and be able to think of degrees of sadness, and degrees of happiness, but we do not consider simply not feeling anything particular about the issue. Similarly, we might think about a problem and consider many aspects and solutions, but we are not likely to consider the option of doing completely different. This is like following the belief, 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try and try again.' (ordinal thinking.) The more productive interval belief is: 'If you have given it your best, but you haven't succeeded, then do something else.' (Interval Thinking).

The Crashing Passenger Plane

A Korean passenger aircraft was losing height rapidly. The flight engineer went through his procedures to find the problem. He failed. He **repeated** the checks (ordinal thinking) and this time found the problem and the plane landed safely. The moral is that we should give our best shot before we do something different.

Absolutes

With Ordinal Thinking we can begin to avoid absolutist thinking and consider varying degrees or shades of a concept.

The Concept of the Negative in Ordinal Thinking

In Ordinal Thinking, we think of the word **nontoxic** to mean more or less toxic, instead of **safe to eat**. The negative seems to be ignored.

The Point

At the nominal level, we need to use simple yes/no questions. At this ordinal level, we can encourage thinking about comparisons. See [Handling Strong Emotions](#).

Interval Thinking

Here we consider not only the position we came in the race, but how close or how distant we were to other runners in the race. Parts of the mind that think at this level do not produce the same problems that occur at lower levels. Cleaning up the remnants of childhood thinking is much easier from this perspective, but hijacking is still possible, but less likely!



The above conversation, quite normal in childhood can be perplexing when we are in a lower state of thinking. We might think another is just trying to be awkward, when really they are dramatising a lower level of thinking.

The argument goes:

All ducks are birds.

All birds are killed.

(All ducks are birds)

So all ducks are killed.

Therefore, there are no more ducks.

At the Interval level we can cope with this easily.

In order to develop this kind of thinking as children, we need to understand with greater precision, similarities and differences. For instance, the number five is like all the other numbers, but unlike them in that it is the only one that comes between four and six.

Relevant questions:

What is this an example of?

What is another example?

How is it similar to other examples?

How is it different from other examples?

For instance, feeling a bit anxious is an example of feeling an emotion (or holding certain beliefs, etc). It is similar to feeling concerned, feeling afraid, jumping (in surprise) and even feeling terrified. Perhaps it's like curiosity. We can explore the other examples, and this often makes us feel better.

Lower levels of thinking show more egocentricity, where we think everything relates to us. And we also tend to form false causal relations. In interval thinking, we are more able to take other perspectives and points of view, and are more careful about accepting causal relationships.

Relevant questions are:

Who else was affected?

Are these the only ones who are (quality)?

How specifically does A cause B? (false causation.)

We can ask these questions at Ordinal Thinking, but they can be answered with greater understanding at this level. Causality is better understood here.

The option of doing nothing (or doing something completely different) becomes more obvious (the appearance of zero in mathematics.)

Negative concepts, such as No and Not become available (negative numbers.) It becomes possible to compare ideas such as happiness and sadness, by thinking of the latter as negative happiness.

It is not really important or sometimes not possible to clearly distinguish between parts of ordinal thinking and interval thinking (or other stages). Once we get out of nominal thinking and our minds begin to think with more options, then the whole raft of our more advanced adult abilities may suddenly become available, and we make progress — which is, after all, what is important (ratio thinking ☺).

The further questions (mainly to clear up left over childhood business) are:

How much, exactly? (quantity)

How many, exactly? (quantity)

To what degree? (quantity)

Suppose you didn't feel that way, how would you feel? (negatives and change viewpoint)

According to what criteria?

What is the significance of the measure?

What is B an example of? (degrees of abstraction)

How does B differ from other examples? (similarity and difference)

How is A like B, and how is it different? (similarity and difference)

How, specifically, does A cause B? (false causality)

Who (What) else was affected? (egocentricity)

When we are thinking at this level, most of the techniques of mind change become available.

Absolutes

In Interval Thinking we are able to think more clearly about absolutes, and we adopt Korzybski's principle: there are no absolutes (only shades and degrees.)

Problems with Interval Thinking

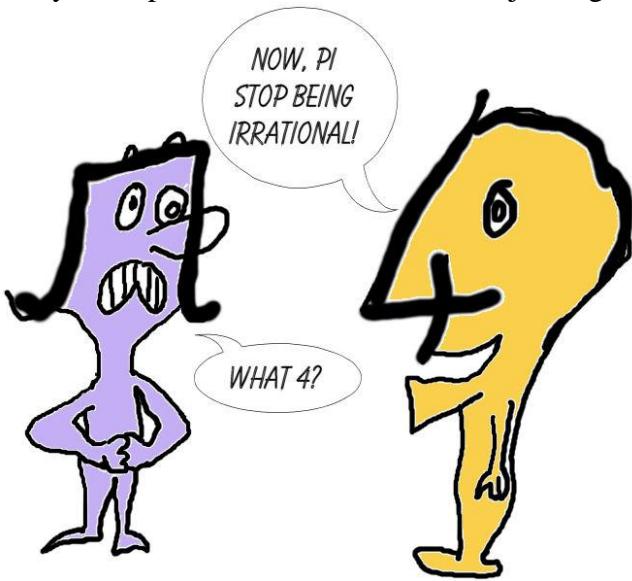
With Interval Thinking we have an ordered universe, where everything has its place in relation to other things and its purpose or function. There is no magic, because everything has a cause. There is a tendency to force some things into intervals (little boxes or labels), even when they do not really fit. At this level, the system will work most of the time.

The Concept of the Negative at Interval Thinking

At the level of Interval Thinking we can understand the word nontoxic better. We understand scales (as we did somewhat at Ordinal Thinking) and understand the zero. Therefore, we can understand nontoxic to mean zero toxicity. We can understand a scale— toxic to healthy— with degrees of healthiness. So nontoxic becomes something on the healthy scale from zero to good for you.

Ratio Thinking

At this level any concerns are quite different from those at earlier levels, although part of the mind may still operate at lower levels, but hijacking is much less likely.



The idea of a ratio scale embraces all the other types of thinking, or their questions. In addition, the thinker can question the very assumptions of the situation. The analogy involves the irrational numbers such as pi and the square root of 2. These are numbers that we cannot place accurately on a scale (or accurately express as a fraction or **ratio**—hence **irrational**). In Interval Thinking, we cannot truly represent them. We can express them to whatever accuracy we choose, but never with complete accuracy. Numbers such as infinity are more difficult, because although we can understand them, we cannot even give them a value—but we can consider them numbers. That is, we can think out of the box.

The idea, then, is that there are some ideas that we cannot give a simple label, or place accurately on a scale. They have a special nature. For Korzybski, this is non-identity, where we consider that nothing on Earth is really identical to anything else. Of course, differences are clearly understood at other levels: it is understanding similarity that causes problems for those below Interval Thinking. The difference here is that the thinker can think in terms of similarity, but is not trapped in it, and can consider that some things cannot be simply classified. So in Ratio Thinking there is similarity and extreme closeness, even though we know that similar things could be classified in a different way. That is, we can tolerate non-perfection. We can also speak of uniqueness, even though we know everything is unique. And we can speak of sameness, even though nothing is really identical to anything else.



For instance, we can say, pi is a bit more than 3. (Although we may have a value for pi that goes to billions of places, a value of 40 decimal places is quite good enough for us to calculate the periphery of the universe, to an accuracy of better than the radius of a proton, and sometimes saying pi is about 3 is good enough.) The point is that we can escape being trapped in ideas—in particular, details—and step outside to view things in various perspectives and from various points of view. This type of thinking can involve a paradigm shift, or a quantum leap (as opposed to a gradual change) and thus an insight or even enlightenment.

Some questions are:

- Are these criteria of measurement valid?**
- Should I be doing this, anyway?**
- How else could I think about this?**
- What are my fundamental assumptions?**
- What if they aren't true? Where would this lead us?**

Many great discoveries arise because the thinker disbelieves what everybody else knows is true!
For instance, Einstein disbelieved that mass was constant.

History of Knowledge

There are some stages of knowledge that seem to parallel the historical development of the physical and other sciences. The stages are:

1. Stories and Metaphors
2. Principles
3. Algorithms
4. Meta-algorithms

Here we describe four ideas. Although they appeared in human history in this order, the new ones did not wholly replace the previous ones. In fact, the last one does not teach us how to do anything except how to manage the earlier ones.

Stories and Metaphors

When we think of a metaphor as explaining something using words that strictly refer to something else, then ‘teaching’ stories can be thought of as metaphors. For instance, a story about a rabbit may be interpreted by the listener as being about them.

Story: When I say something, I stand by it

One day someone asked Nasrudin how old he was.

“Forty”, he answered.

The listener got angry. “But, Nasrudin, when we asked you 20 years ago you gave that same answer!”

Nasrudin was indignant. “When I say something, I stand by it. I don’t keep changing my mind!”

In ancient times, knowledge was communicated using stories and metaphors. These enabled us to understand the world we live in, learn about ethics, teach us how to think, etc. For instance, to select a story at random— told on the left is one about Nasrudin, the mad Mullah.

The story may be amusing even to children. But to adults it may mock a tendency for us to stick to old beliefs, even against reason. And mock those politicians who maintain they stick to their guns and policies (whatever?)—claiming this reluctance to change is a good thing. We are reminded of those who explain an action by saying ‘we have always done it this way.’

Some stories produce an appropriate state of mind. Of course, a funny story produces a little happiness, which is a desirable state of mind.

Stories that guide us in life

Especially in the field of self development, stories can teach us how to do things. For instance, Milton Erikson was an outstanding therapist, but had almost no theory. He did not particularly rely on principles. For instance, in dealing with patient or client resistance (or self resistance) he told the following story.

How to overcome resistance

Milton Erikson told a story about when he was a boy on the farm. His father was struggling to pull a calf into a barn.

“Come and help me, Milton!” he called.

Erikson ran up to the calf and pulled its tail in the opposite direction to the direction his father was pulling.

The calf, facing two forces, resisted the lesser and pulled against Erikson and with his father and pulled itself into the barn.

The moral or principle of the story is that when facing resistance which we cannot overcome, then join in the resisting!

You can't hypnotise me!

No, I can't hypnotise you, yet.

Such teaching stories are more than just illustrations of principles or theories. They are clearly based in fact, experience or belief. There is much less deletion in a story than in a principle.

Some stories stop mind chatter

Some stories have a mind-stopping effect—they stop the mind rambling and produce a clarity. Such stories cause us to stop and think or evaluate, and for a moment we enjoy a state of pure beingness.

Stories make the abstract concrete

Sometimes stories help us to understand something abstract in a concrete way. For instance:

Story: Give me nothing, or else!

A man was trying to pull a cart up a hill, but it wouldn't budge. He called over to some men. "Give me a hand!"

The men did not move. "What will you give us?" they asked.

"Nothing!" said the carter.

The men helped pull the cart up the hill.

"Now give us what you promised!" one said.

"I said I'd give you nothing", the carter said.

"Yes, you did" said the man, "so now we want it! Give it to what as you promised!"

100 Parables Sutra

Abstract words, such as [Nominalizations](#), are hard to grasp (☺—because they are intangible!). The above story illustrates a word, **nothing**, that has no referent. The story might lead us to think of other abstract and highly general words that we might mistake as things.

Stories often use wise fools and animals

To make a point easily, stories may involve a fool or an animal. This might cause us to miss the point—thinking it is just fun—and perhaps laugh at the antics of the clowns without realizing how it applies to us. In the Nasrudin story, using Nasrudin as a clown-like character means we can use an obviously absurd belief (giving the same answer for our age year after year is not showing firmness). An example with intelligent people might not be as effective because it is much more difficult to create the same effect with a more sophisticated, but absurd belief, because many would believe it. For instance, to say:

Whilst altruism reduces the survival of an individual, it increases the survival of the species and therefore persists in those species that show altruism.

—Is to make an absurd statement, but the absurdity is not sufficiently obvious to illustrate a point in a story. So the advantage of a ‘silly’ or childish story is that the point is clear.

Real Stories

Of course, stories are not always fictional: we learn about the world by reading news stories. In medicine a case history is a story of a patient with a given disease. In law stories are used to illustrate points and are called cases.

The nice thing about some stories is that they entertain everyone—children and adults—but have a message for those who can discern it (consciously or unconsciously). The message is the principle.

It is said that subjects, such as law, depend on stories to bring about understanding (legal precedents.)

Stories tend to be richer than principles and tell us more. Principles are often clearer and more specific. But principles are not more important than the stories, or vice versa.

Principles

From the previous story, we might deduce a principle, ‘you ought not to stick to beliefs, practices, facts, etc, when the evidence is clearly against them’. (We could deduce other principles from the story, of course).

One way in which a principle differs from a story is that stories take place at some time. But principles tend to be considered apart from time. For instance, $2+2=4$ is considered to be true in all times.

In the early days of arithmetic, those who could compute had to learn a large body of data (as to some extent we need to do today). So they would learn things like:

$2+2=4$, $100/3=33\frac{1}{3}$

That is, they would have to remember all the arithmetic principles, rather than using an [algorithm](#).

In another area of human knowledge, the way to behave is often expressed as a list of moral and ethical principles. Sometimes we might also need to know how we might follow these principles. We could learn further principles, but algorithms tell us specifically how to do something.

Algorithms—doing it step by step

An algorithm is a step by step way to solve a problem, whether in mathematics or elsewhere. For instance, in the case of a phobic memory, we might say, using principles, you need to avoid thinking about it. In NLP, we might use the [phobia cure](#), which is a step by step procedure—it tells you exactly what to do. With algorithms we state how to do something in a clear step by step manner. As children, we learn arithmetic by learning the tables. Later we learn algorithms to work out the arithmetic with long division and long multiplication. We are given step by step procedures, or algorithms.

While algorithms are clearer than principles, sometimes they tend to involve us in unnecessary detail and we prefer to follow the principle in our own way. On the other hand, when it is hard for us to do something we are glad of a detailed step-by-step to lead us to the solution.

A great deal of the progress in self-development work is the result of using algorithms—step by step procedures—to deal with our concerns in ways that more of us can understand, because we are told precisely what to do.

Meta-algorithms—which algorithm, principle or story?

In the case of phobias we might know a number of procedures to deal with them. The meta-algorithm tells us which one to use for which therapist, for which client, for which kind of phobia, etc. (There are few such meta-algorithms in existence in this area, though).

The absence of such meta-algorithms shouldn't be surprising. In physics, there is quantum theory for the micro-realm, Newton for the middle realm, and Einstein for the macro realm. There is, therefore, a meta-algorithm to tell us which theory to use. But physics does not teach us a meta-algorithm to decide where one realm ends and another begins. (Or what we should do at the change points.)

The ‘goto’ jump in computing is a meta-algorithm. For instance, we might wish to send users to different pages according to their age range. A person over 60 would be sent to one page, a person 40-60 to another, etc.

In almost all the procedures in this book there is a point where the user decides whether the issue has been dealt with, in which case they ‘go to’ one step (usually finish off), or if the condition hasn’t, when other advice is given (usually go through the steps again). These are (simple) meta-algorithms.

The manager of a company is like a meta-algorithm, who directs the factors in the company, although she might not be able to perform any of the tasks in the company—not being an engineer, sales person or production engineer.

A meta-algorithm could be a story, a principle or an algorithm. When deciding which procedure should be used, we might have to think of a story. Perhaps there are principles we can use to guide us. And if we are lucky, we might find an algorithm to guide us.

All these stages are important

Principles are quite bare without the stories. The stories are always richer and more accessible to everyone whatever their age or intelligence. Stories are also better teachers because they are more memorable and entertaining. Stories also serve as a source of principles and algorithms.

Of course, we might not get the point or moral of the story, and need the principle stated clearly.

Principles are often easy to follow. So ‘Avoid harming’ is normally quite straightforward. But we might need stories to clarify the principle, and algorithms to teach us how to manage our anger.

Meta-algorithms can sometimes give us advice without any means of using or applying that advice, and they require at least one of stories, principles and algorithms to be useful.

Handling Strong Emotions

Originator: Lester Levenson

When we are in the grip of strong emotions such as grief, fear and anger, we do not think like normal adults. Our minds are operating at the level of a very young child. That is nominal thinking. Because we are apparently trapped in a stuck feeling of magnitude, any approach to deal with it needs to be simple. The questions need to be simple yes/no questions. The questions are addressed to the unconscious mind, and the answers aren't important.

Story: The bottom falls out the bucket

The nun Chiyono tells of a day when she was collecting a pail of water. The bamboo holding the bucket together was strained and she carried the heavy bucket as best she could, willing it to hold together. Suddenly the bamboo snapped and the bottom fell out of the bucket—the water gushed out. At once, the heavy burden had gone and she was free. And at that moment of realisation she attained enlightenment.

The basic question is:

Could I release this feeling?

The question is asked of the unconscious mind and the answer listened for. The answer does not matter. The question can be repeated, or similar questions asked:

- Could I release this feeling?
- Could I free this feeling?
- Could I give this feeling its freedom?
- Must I continue to hold on to this feeling?

You may wonder why asking these simple questions could work, but if you haven't forgotten it already—you may feel quite pleased when you look back at it.

Buddhist Approach

These are based on the Buddhist idea that we should not desire things, nor be averse to them, nor to be indifferent to them. Again, yes/no questions:

- Could I love this feeling? (desire)
- Could I hate this feeling? (aversion)
- Could I ignore this feeling? (indifference)

Again, ask inside and listen for the answer. You may be curious how quickly the condition will resolve, but when you look back you might be pleasantly surprised.

Alternative Handling

These conditions can often be resolved using the energy [medicine technique](#).

Where the condition is due to mental images, you might use the [Phobia Cure](#).

Language

We deal in greater detail about this topic [later](#).

You may have heard that language can be, at one extreme, vague and general and, at the other, clear and specific. Language is the best way we have to communicate, but it is often extremely limited. All words tend to be general because they leave out some information. This has been known for thousands of years. The ancient Greeks were aware that words tell us only part of the story. For instance, the word, 'horse' refers to a certain group of animals. For the word to work, it has to leave out information. For instance, it leaves out colour and size. It leaves out age. It leaves out health and sickness. Even a more specific phrase, such as 'American Quarter Horse', which tells us more about the kind of horse we are talking about, is still less detailed than standing in front of such a particular horse and pointing to it and noting its qualities, such as it is old, it is friendly, etc. There is always more to say about the thing, than we have said – even the number of hairs, their size, colour and exact shape, information that is usually uninteresting, but information omitted nonetheless. Because there is always more they could have said, whenever someone says something to us, or writes something, they always omit some information. In the best case, they leave out unimportant information, but sometimes, they leave out details that are important. Even though language is limited, you can get a great deal more from it by understanding its limitations and using the right procedures to make it clear. One way to do this is to consider language as deleting, generalizing and distorting.

Deletions, Generalizations and Distortions

The difference between these categories is not always clear, and we concentrate on learning the details rather than bothering too much with the major categories.

Deletions

All words involve deletions, that is, they leave out some information, at best, unimportant information. In this model, we consider deletions to be statements with actual words omitted, or incomplete statements. As:

He told me.

What did he tell you? (to recover the left out information from this Simple Deletion.)

This is better.

Compared with what? (Comparative deletion.)

Generalizations

Some words are highly general so they tell us little about the idea being expressed. For instance, the word **animal** is very general, and it could refer to any living creature that isn't a plant. The word **lion** is more specific and while it refers to many different animals, they all have the basic qualities of lions. The expressions **lioness** and **lion cub** are more specific. The expression, **the old toothless ex-circus lion, Leo** is even more specific and may refer to a single example of lions. The word **lioness** is more specific than the word **lion** because **lion** refers to more examples than **lioness** does. And **the old, toothless, ex-circus lion, Leo** is more specific because it refers to only one lion. Of course, generalisations are also deletions: the word **lion** omits a lot of details, which we call deletions.

It is also worth noting that abstract words are slightly different. They do not refer to anything that can be perceived by the senses. So we cannot point out a hope, but we can give examples (tell stories). The word hope is abstract. Other abstract words include: love, weather, education, worry, memory. As abstract words are often generalizations, we can often treat them in the same way as generalizations.

Distortions

When we distort language, we twist it in some way. A common distortion is false cause and effect. For instance:

The letter upset me.

Of course, a letter cannot upset anyone (unless it is sprayed with poison or something). It is their thoughts about it that upset them:

How, specifically, did it upset you? (As an attempt to show the false causation, and perhaps to retrieve the irrational thoughts that caused the upset.)

We deal with deletions, generalisations and distortion later in the [Being Specific Mode](#), see the following:

[Presuppositions](#)

Handling Deletions

[Simple Deletions](#)

[Lack of Referential Index](#)

[Unspecified Nouns](#)

[Nominalizations](#)

[Comparatives](#)

Handling Generalizations

[Unspecified Verbs](#)

[Universal Quantifiers](#)

Handling Distortions

[Modal Operators](#)

[Mind Reading](#)

[Lost Performatives](#)

[Cause and Effect](#)

[Complex Equivalence](#)

[Restriction Violations](#)

Logical Levels

The following are the logical levels of NLP:

1. Spirit
2. Identity
3. Values and Beliefs
4. Capabilities
5. Behaviour
6. Environment

We can illustrate the levels in the following way.

The following (with specifics to be filled in) is a fairly complete description of an event:

In a given situation, I, in a certain state, alone or with others, under certain circumstances, do something in a certain manner for a certain reason or to achieve a certain purpose.

Sentence	Logical Level	Example
In a given situation	Environment	Yesterday in town
I	Spiritual	I
in a certain state	Identity	keen to get a book
alone or with others	Environment	alone
under certain circumstances	Environment	in the pouring rain
do something	Behaviour	went to the bookshop
in a certain manner	Capabilities	on foot
for a certain reason or to achieve a certain purpose	Beliefs and values	to buy a book, to learn physics
	Beliefs and values	because I value learning

The level of **spirit** (almost wrote spirit level!) is what we are, and what living, the universe and all that are about. It can be religious, or secular. Naturally, it isn't something you can prove with science. It includes ethics.

For instance, we assume, here, that you and everyone is a self that cannot be limited by description. So saying, 'I am a failure' or 'I am a success' are irrational, because a person, according to Albert Ellis, is too complicated to sum up with one or two adjectives. So, at the level of spirit, we simply are.

Of course, we need **identities**. So we use words like '**I am...**', or '**you are...**' to speak of the identity level. Of course, to bake a cake we need to be a cook, so when baking a cake, one might say, "I am the cook", but this is just an identity we assume for the purpose of baking the cake. I may consider myself a reader of certain books, which is an identity.

To create identities, we also need **values and beliefs**. So 'I am a reader of certain books' is a belief, or a fact. The words we use at this level usually include '**why**', or other words, related to reason and purpose. Perhaps I want to go to the town to buy a book, because I am a reader of such books and I value knowledge.

To go to town, I need some **capabilities**, which could simply be the ability to walk there, or to drive there. Or persuade someone to take me there. Capabilities are the **how**.

So far, though I have done nothing, and it is time for some **behaviour** to appear. The behaviour or behaviours in the example would be going to town and buying books. Behaviour also includes mental activity and thinking.

All this take place within an **environment**. We talk about the environment by using the words:

- Where
- When
- With whom
- Under what circumstances

In this case we are more concerned with what is going on around us (and where we are).

Example

The following is a casual example to illustrate logical levels. Of course, when we are very upset and thinking at lower levels, then we could not do this. So the issue should be something concerning, but not too concerning.

Suppose we think, 'I am nervous about this meeting' (**identity**). Asking:

Are you the nervousness?

We decide we aren't. So we think:

I have a feeling of nervousness about this meeting.

Of course, here we have lots of options, such as dealing with submodalities, or the phobia cure, if we have unwanted images. Six step reframing might be appropriate. We can always use Handling Concerns Honestly, or The Honesty Blowout. But we want to continue with logical levels. So we have:

I have a feeling of nervousness about this meeting.

This is a **belief**. It is better to have a belief rather than consider (without examination) that 'I am 'nervous', which is ridiculous, because we aren't our feelings. A belief is something we can have or hold, or let go or change.

The next on the levels is **capabilities**. We clearly have the capability to feel nervous. By using (unconsciously) various submodalities, we can create a feeling of nervousness. We could study how we do this (modelling) to make the process conscious, and do something else. We can also ask what capabilities and skills we have or need to deal with the problem. We could think:

I need to learn how to deal with nervousness

This is a much more resourceful way of thinking.

The next level is **behaviour**. We can explore just what we do when we are nervous, for instance:

Sit or stand in a certain way

Tense certain muscles

Think certain thoughts

Breath in a certain way

Etc.

We can consider what happens if we try to change some of these behaviours. It seems changing body position and breathing is easier. Does it change the way we feel. Relaxing or learning to relax might be next on the easy scale. It might be possible to simply think of something else. Although changing the physical states (body position, etc) is probably easier to do, it is something we might forget about, and not realise our head is down and our back is curved (or whatever). Also there are other things under the heading of capability that we could do. A number of patterns have already been mentioned.

The next and last level is environment. Clearly, we feel nervous about the meeting (if we still do) but we are feeling nervous when we aren't in the meeting. What is going on when we are feeling nervous. Perhaps we do this when we have nothing to do.

We can also ask, 'What else is going on in our lives?' This is a useful question because we might not be nervous about the meeting so much as about something else. For instance, this holiday of a lifetime we are going on might be causing us some unconscious concern.

Using the ideas of logical levels can sometimes reveal important things about ourselves and give us insights in new abilities or new requirement.

How to set goals

Knowing your goals makes it much more likely you will attain them. After all, if you **don't know what you want, how can know that you have attained it?**

Experts tell us that those who set goals do so much better than those who don't. Yet many of us become confused when asked to state our goals. Our minds go blank. And all this talk of goal setting and goal getting just seems so tedious. Well - at last - we can take another approach. Now, let's get going and set some goals by using one or more of the following techniques:

What don't you want in your life? At work? At home? If you take the opposite of what you don't want, then you have got a list of goals.

Instead of saying goals, say results. What results do you want from your life? Does changing "goals" to "results" make a difference? Can you think of another word more suited to you? For some of us it makes a big difference! Make a list of the results you want!

Suppose you had all your concerns met. Imagine this now. What would you do in **your life different from what you do now? Write these down as your list of goals, or results.**

If you could do anything you wanted to do – if there were no barriers at all, then what would you do? As usual, make a list.

Think of areas of your life you might consider. For example:

- Health,
- Wealth,
- Love,
- Relationships,
- Work,
- Education,
- Spiritual, etc.

Use all the above techniques (1 to 4) in these areas and write down your list.

Here is another way: **Write your epitaph!**

Have you got a list of goals now?

Goals – The seven easy steps to ensure that you get what you want!

You know what you want, or you know what you don't want, so you have [a list of goals](#). Now how are you going to attain them?

There are various ways you could use to view yourself in the attainment of your goals. You could view the process from the present. The method suggested here asks you to image it is the future when you have attained your goal and the questions ask you to remember how you did it, etc. Another technique could be to look, say, 5 years after you have attained your goal and ask yourself the questions. You might, in that case, ask what you wish you had done early on before you attained your goal (that is what you wish you had done different, now, today).

This technique helps you deal with the future as if it were the present and to use your (future) memory to access what you need to know. This makes the difficult matter of looking into the future easy, by pretending it's the past.

One approach is to relax, be quiet, breathe slowly and deeply and close your eyes. Imagine you are **now at a time in the future when you have attained your goals. Ask yourself the following questions.**

Imagine that, now, in the future, you have attained your goal.

When you ask the questions, allow your mind, or your unconscious mind to supply you with the answers. Be gentle. If you don't get your answers now, then you can put the questions on the back boiler and try the exercise later. When you have explored the future and looked back at the past (which is your present, now) you can easily bring your attention back to the present and make notes on your goal.

1. **Be specific about your goal. What exactly are you now, as you imagine you are in the future?**
 - a. Or what are you doing now that you didn't do in the past, now?
 - b. Or what do you have, now, or what relationships do you have now, which you didn't have in the past, that is, prior to attaining your goal in the future?
2. **How did you know you had attained it? What signs did you see that indicated you had attained your goal?** For example, if you want to be self-confidence, how do you know, now, in your imagination, in this future time, that you have now achieved self-confidence?
What do you see, hear, or feel ... that tells you for sure you have attained that goal?
If you want a million pounds, did you have to have a million or did you say you'd attained your goal when you had 900,000, or did it have to be 1,100,000, just to be sure? How did you know you had attained your goal?
3. How did you attain your goal? What specifically did you do? Let the answer come easily and naturally.
4. How did you overcome any barriers to attaining your goal? Perhaps you had to overcome procrastination, the opposition of other people, or whatever.
5. How long did it take you to attain your goal?

6. **How does your goal fit in with your life? Is it what you really wanted? What are the reactions of others? What do they say? How do they react?**
7. **What action did you take in the past, that is, now, that was the first step in attaining your goal?**

Our Brilliant Unconscious Minds (The Unconscious Problem Solver)

The unconscious mind is a concept, of course fictional, which refers to those aspects of our minds, thinking and behaviour that appear to be under the control of something other than our conscious minds.

As you read this, your unconscious is building new cells in your body, fighting germs, controlling your breathing and heart rate — doing innumerable things that are essential and which we are totally unaware of, or at least unaware **how** the it does these things.

We also know that the unconscious works on problems while we are thinking of something else, or even asleep. Perhaps a word eludes us, only to appear in our minds unexpectedly somewhat later. The unconscious mind usually mulls over things, and presents the results to the conscious mind when it has determined the answer. It may present the information as a vision, a few words from a song, as a dream — often it produces the information complete and whole in one go.

The Unlimited Unconscious Mind

The conscious mind seems to have a limited memory span of 5 to 9 items (in adults) and similar limitations apply to other cognitive abilities. The depth of understanding of the conscious mind is about 3 items (or perhaps 4). The conscious mind appears to forget.

The unconscious mind, however, appears to have no such limitations. Because the unconscious mind can ‘understand’ things which the conscious mind cannot grasp, it speaks to the conscious mind in metaphors and symbols. The unconscious mind does not appear to forget anything.

The Unconscious Mind in Art

Very often writers, for instance, have a run of ideas and write a lot, and on other occasions find writing hard. They do not know how the ideas appear in their minds, or where their stories come from, but clearly the stories do come from somewhere.

Famous writers such as Tolkien and JK Rawlings speak of stories coming to them in a very short period of time, or almost telling themselves—as opposed to being consciously created. The authors did not create the stories so much as they discovered them, or the stories were revealed to them.

While interesting, the stories of artistic creation could be considered a mere juxtaposing of images, sounds, feelings, etc. But the production of mathematical knowledge by the unconscious mind is something that indicates this mind is actually producing real information and not fiction. Such discoveries can be objectively verified as being novel and unknown previously in the world. See also [Your treasure house](#)

Mathematical Knowledge

The Indian mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujan (1887-1920), claimed that the Hindu Goddess Namagiri whispered his famous formulae to him. The formulae came to him complete. He was, however, left with the task of proving them. Some of his equations were wrong. Others were already known. But the vast majority were amazing and innovative. While we might say that he received his intuitions from the unconscious mind, it is astonishing how this could be. It is astonishing because it means the unconscious mind has worked on problems in some highly intelligent way, without our awareness and produced equations previously unknown in the world. Yet it clearly does so. In 1665, the young Isaac Newton wrote down the binomial formula (he is credited with its discovery) — but he left no indication how he discovered it! It was centuries before mathematicians were able to prove the theorem in all its aspects, even though its truth and value was immediately apparent.

The unconscious mind, the muses of Greek mythology can be considered amazing, as when the child Mozart hears music and writes it down, and it can be considered incredible when mathematicians, like Ramanujan, receive complete formula, seemingly from nowhere, which are, previously quite unknown. Here, we can imagine that the unconscious mind works and computes these ideas in the background. But what can we say when the unconscious mind reveals knowledge about the physical universe that was previously unknown. Such is the case with our next example.

Scientific Knowledge

In 1865, the chemist Frederick August Kekulé was struggling to understand how the atoms in the molecule benzene were arranged. Having fallen asleep he had a dream of a snake biting its own tail and conceived the benzene ring. This innovative discovery revolutionised organic chemistry, enabling chemists to write out their formulae. Kekulé believed that his idea was merely a convenient fiction, yet after the electron microscope was invented, chemists could view the molecules of benzene and see that they were exactly as Kekulé had imagined. The unconscious mind had not merely invented something new, it had given a revelation about reality, which could not be verified for decades.

The examples above are merely a few of the many examples illustrating how the unconscious mind can deliver works of beauty, innovation and even discovery — complete and fully formed — as an action of revelation or intuition.

The Eureka Experience

The most famous example of intuition, sudden insight or revelation is that of the Ancient Greek Archimedes who was taking a bath and pondering on the problem of how to check whether the king's gold had been diluted with lead. He had a sudden insight of the answer, and, leapt out of the bath and (oblivious to his nakedness) ran through the streets of Syracuse, crying "Eureka!" The insight giving rise to the expression, 'The Eureka Experience'.

The above examples indicate that the unconscious mind is not only creative, but does produce realistic solutions (usually fully formed) even to problems (questions) about the nature of reality.

Reverse Psychology: What you resist, persists

Whatever you resist, persists — Emile Coue



This became the Law of Reversed Effect. In the classic example, we ask, 'Don't think of a pink elephant'. Because we need to create the image in order to 'not think' about it, we often think of the pink elephant —the very thing we are trying 'not to think about'. This is really nominal thinking where people who are told that something is 'completely nontoxic' think of it as toxic —apparently ignoring the negative.

Where we have problems of long duration, we often try everything we can to resist them, which, paradoxically, keeps them in existence.

This principle is used widely in self-help work and therapy, sometimes overtly, sometimes covertly.

For instance, with an unwanted feeling, we could ask:

Could you welcome this feeling? (Reversing the thinking from resisting to non-resisting or even trying to create the unwanted feeling.)

The following examples are from hypnosis:

Now your inner self will make this happen in the best way for you. And if you want to prove to yourself how wonderfully powerful this is — you can even try to resist thinking about the changes —and you'll find that you think about them anyway.

Now these changes will occur. Even if you try to stop yourself experiencing these wonderful feelings and amazing new insights, you will find they occur anyway — your mind will be flooded with wonderful changes. Which is what you really want, isn't it?

Truth and the Fight-Flight Aspect of the Unconscious Mind

Duke: When remedies are past, the griefs are ended
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
What cannot be preserved when fortune takes
Patience her injury a mockery makes.
The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.—*Shakespeare, Othello Act 1, Scene 3*

We are here thinking of extreme reactions of fight or flight or passivity in a life or death environment, such as some thousands of years ago. In such an environment, the threat of being eaten by predators was always present and extreme fear with bowel and bladder evacuation (to reduce weight, and therefore increase running speed) and the adrenaline to provide extra power were all essential to survival.

Yet, although the threat was ever-present, the reaction of fear or anger or apathy occurred only when there was a **real threat in the here and now**. Animals can show extreme fear and flight behaviour one minute, and the next they are calmly eating or grazing. When the danger is past so is the fear reaction. In a modern society such fear-reactions are no longer survival enhancing, and appear mainly as irrational responses. Experiencing the fear after the imagined danger is further non-survival behaviour in modern society. As Shakespeare has the Duke tell us, “The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief”. Most readily agree with the above, but there still remains the questions ‘Why do we react like this sometimes?’, and ‘How can we behave more rationally?’

The unconscious mind thinks in present-time and confuses thoughts and mental images with real things

The unconscious mind cannot tell the difference between the real thing and something in our imagination or from our memory. The unconscious mind reacts to these as if they were true now. (Unless we tell it different.) **This is the fundamental reason why we react inappropriately to events and why we suffer from them (whether real or imaged) in the future.**

What this means is we need to evaluate memories, beliefs and thoughts as true or not to the fight-flight aspect of the unconscious mind. That is, they are true if they are present and real. Otherwise they are false (from the perspective of the unconscious).

The Duke of Venice tells us that to upset ourselves with past and finished matters is to make things worse and never better.

When we ask whether a thought or belief is true, we ask whether it is present now, or whether it is real. If it is not real now or not present now, it is false. The unconscious mind thinks in the present, and interprets thoughts, such as “I might get mugged” as “I am being mugged”—that is in the here and now—the present. This produces feeling similar to those we might have in that situation. So, it may make us, at least, feel nervous or anxious. To take a minor example, suppose we are travelling by bus to an appointment, and we keep looking at our watch, and think:

“This bus is slow”

And we feel concerned we might be late. At the time we were travelling, the statement is true if the bus is slow compared with normal or false if the bus isn't slow. But later, after our journey, the statement, "This bus is slow" is not true (We are sitting at home watching the TV, so we aren't even on a bus!) From the ever-in-present-time unconscious mind, the statement "The bus **was** slow" is also false—because to the ever-in-present-time unconscious mind, the thought becomes "The bus **is** slow".

In more detail, the statement, 'The bus is slow' when travelling on the bus is actually false to the unconscious mind. While you might say the bus is slow compared with another, fast bus, the fact is you are sitting on this bus, and it is false that you are sitting on a fast bus (that's just a dream). You are sitting on this bus, now, enjoying the feeling of the seat and observing the scenery or other passengers. You might notice the air as you breathe in and as you breathe out. You can relax. There is no survival value in upsetting yourself with false dreams of being on a faster vehicle.

This means that memories, thoughts, etc are really false to the fight-flight aspect of the unconscious mind. For example:

Upsetting memory.
Is it true?
No. (Because it is in the past —it's not a threat).

Self Talk: This is horrible, awful, too hard to bear, etc.

Is it true?
No (Because horrible, etc are words not things. Only things can be a threat. You can bump your head on a low doorway, but not on a concept or word!)

It is rational, from the point of the unconscious, to react with anger, fear or apathy when attacked by a wild animal. The burst of adrenaline makes you hear beat faster, making you more powerful, your body sweats, making you slippery to hold, etc. But it does not enhance your survival in response to something that is not a present danger at this moment, or in response to words or concepts (which aren't tangible.)

The next section, [Handling Concerns Honestly](#), deals with handling thoughts that are upsetting using the ideas of this section that something requires a fight-or-flight unconscious reaction of extreme emotion only when there is a threat, here and now. Essentially, we explain to the ever-in-present-time unconscious that, for it, they are not true.

Handling Concerns Honestly

Originator: Ken Ward

As explained in the previous section, one way to deal with concerns is to show the ever-in-present-time unconscious mind that these concerns are not in present time, so, from its perspective, they are false.

The following pattern can be used to deal with concerns.

1. Collect Relevant Information
2. Determine the truth: Ask:
 - a. Is it true?
 - b. Is it really true?
3. Having determined the issue isn't true, ask: Suppose you didn't believe that, how would your life be different?
4. Test
5. Exit. Stop thinking about the incident and do something pleasant.

Take an example to practice this technique where you have some concern, but not too much. When you have practised this pattern, you can use it with more challenging concerns. So take a minor problem. For instance:

My friend was funny with me last time we met and I don't know why. This makes me feel bad.

Of course, at most, we might feel concern at the time of the incident, but to **feel** concern after the incident is to multiply suffering unnecessarily. (Of course we can analyse past experience, but **feeling** bad is not survival.)

1. Collect Relevant Information

Perhaps using the Being Specific Model, explore the incident and get more information about it. One reason for doing this is to acknowledge the existing situation and tell the unconscious mind you are aware of the seriousness of the concern.

- **How exactly** was she funny?
- **When you say** she was funny, **what, specifically did she do?**
- **How** was she the time **before that?**
- **How does the fact** that she was 'funny' **make** you feel bad?
- **When you say** you feel bad, **what, exactly, do you mean?**

2. Is it true?

Here we bring close awareness to the concern. To experience it closely so we know whether it is true or not. When we are upset by an incident —in other words, we claim the incident (or person in the incident) caused us to be upset. Usually, it isn't the incident, but our thoughts about it that upset us. So claims that an incident upset us are false.

Ask:

- **Is it true this incident makes** you feel bad?
- **How exactly does it do it?**
- **Does it do that? Truly?**
- **Are you sure?**

These questions get us to sense the experience more closely and from a dissociated viewpoint. We are challenging the idea that one mental event **causes** another. We are inspecting it like a surgeon dealing with an operation from a dissociated non-involved viewpoint. Often people answer the first question in the affirmative, but as they consider the other questions they become less confident about its truth. Keep in mind this is ‘truth’ for the ever-in-present-time unconscious mind.

Is it really true?

More of the same, instilling more doubt. **A** does not really cause **B**. Physical events do not cause mental reactions. Mental reactions are caused by our thoughts about the incident and the significance we give the experience and our thoughts about it. By experiencing more closely and clearly, we realize the truth. We are actually becoming more dissociated, like a surgeon looking more closely and with greater detail at an injury to calmly collect the facts. Just as if we ride through the countryside, we see a distant tower which looks round. Yet as we approach it, see it more closely, we see it more clearly, we realize it isn't round, but square. From the distance it appears to be one thing, but in reality it is another. So when we experience an incident more closely, we see it more clearly and more accurately. Perhaps, like the apparently round tower, on moving closer, we see it differently.

When we look closely at the concern, do we experience it the same as before? Can we be 100% certain that this incident **makes** us feel bad?

- Is it **really true?** One hundred percent **without any doubt**?
- Is it a fact?
- When you experience the incident and how you feel about it, can you **really know** how the one **causes** the other?
- Are you **really sure**?

Even the slightest doubt weakens the belief considerably. And then we can look at the good reasons to give it up. If you (when dealing with your own mind) or a client realizes the falsity of the belief at any stage, then you can move on to the next stage.

3. Suppose you didn't believe that. How would your Life be different?

Ask the question above:

- **Suppose you didn't believe that. How would your life be different?**
- **How else would your life be different?**

Sometimes we get a long list of positive benefits, and we feel good.

4. Test

It is a good idea to test whether the concern has changed.

- When you think about the concern now, is it different?
- What's the concern like now?
- How does this incident seem to you now?

If more work is required we can repeat the questions or explore the concern a bit more and look at other cause and effects.

5. Exit

Generally, do something else. Count down from 10. Wash the dishes while experiencing the feel, sights and sounds. Watch a film. But whatever, move on.

Always learn and practice techniques with something minor first.

Example

The shop assistant was rude to me and I feel bad.

1. Collect Relevant Information

Our real purpose is to get some handle on the problem and to show we are interested in the concern and we are not being slick or snazzy. In the example, we used the Being Specific Model a bit, but we do not really need more than a handle on the problem.

How exactly was she rude?

Well she was a bit offhand.

[We could ask: To whom was she offhand? The obvious answer is 'to the client'. But it could be 'to everyone', which might make the client realize they needn't take it so personally!]

When you say she was offhand, **what, specifically did she do?**

She wasn't very helpful.

How does the fact that she was 'offhand' **make** you feel bad?

Well it does. [We could have asked: does what, specifically? But as we want merely to acknowledge the hurt, and then get on with the process, we do not challenge all Being Specific Model violations.]

When you say you feel bad, what, exactly, do you mean?

I feel I wasn't treated with respect.

Now we get to the important part of our model.

2. Is it true?

Is it true this incident makes you feel bad?

Yes, obviously.

How exactly does it do it?

[Deep release of breath] I suppose it doesn't. [This is a sudden change of mind as a result of thinking about the question.]

Because the feeling is released, we do not need to ask the other questions. We can go to the next part, omitting the last two questions in the model—questions which are reproduced below for completeness.

Does it do that? Truly?

Are you sure?

We now ask the third question in the pattern.

3. Suppose you didn't believe that. How would your Life be different?

Suppose you didn't believe that. How would your life be different?

Well, if I think of it, I laugh, so I no longer feel bad.

How else would your life be different?

Well, I feel more confident.

I don't feel so negative towards her.

Etc.

4. Test

We can test the concern by asking one of the following:

- When you think about the concern now, is it different?
- What's the concern like now?
- How does this incident seem to you now?

How does this incident seem to you now?

(Laughs) It seems funny.

5. Exit

Move on and answer those emails.

If the incident wasn't resolved, then we can repeat the questions or explore more. For instance, we might take up **the incident makes you feel you aren't respected:**

Is it true this incident makes you feel you aren't respected?

The Honesty Blowout

Originator: Ken Ward

Positive thinking has had its share of successes. The honesty blowout uses some ideas of positive thinking, but demands scrupulous honesty. Keep in mind we are concerned with the ever-in-present-time unconscious mind, and truth relates to its here and now thinking.

1. Acknowledge the truth
2. Be precise and accurate
3. Deal with false ideas
4. Use true suggestions

Acknowledge the truth

Some years ago I went into a supermarket and suddenly thought:

I my god, I feel horrible. I can't do this shopping.

I had a slight attack of flu. It seemed to me that I need to acknowledge the truth of the situation. I felt awful, and there was no point in me thinking, 'I feel fine'. So I embraced the statement, 'I feel horrible.'

I accepted the truth, 'I feel horrible'.

And qualified it:

at this precise moment in this precise space. (Here and now).

So I'd got flue, suddenly felt so bad I couldn't complete my tasks, and thinks a negative thought and acknowledges it fully, with full agreement. But qualifies it to be super-accurate and super-honest. Be aware that the truth is at this very moment in time. We do not know how we will feel in the next weeks, days, hours, minutes or even seconds. Perhaps the next second we will feel different. And the truth relates to this exact position in space. I do not know how I would feel miles away, or even a few yards. I might feel different one step away. (In new positions in space and time, I need to re-evaluate the feeling).

This may be enough to cause the problem to disappear. By fully acknowledging the situation the problem may disappear.

Be precise and accurate

Of course, by acknowledging with full agreement:

I feel horrible at this precise moment and in this precise space.

I have started to be more precise.

I could have asked for more detail, such as precisely how I felt. Which body parts felt unwell and which did not.

Deal with false ideas

The primary false idea is that, while something might be true at a given instant or in the past, there is no reason why it should be true later, or even in the next instant. (In fact, in science, this is called the Fallacy of Induction.)

I continue:

But I could feel a lot better in the future.

This is a true statement. No one knows the future. Even highly incredible events can occur. We can never be absolutely sure.... This statement clarifies that while it seems true here and now that I feel horrible; I might not feel the same later (and almost certainly won't, in the case of flu, it does get better!)

The point of the previous statement and the following is to make absolutely clear that what you feel at the moment does not mean you will feel the same in the next moment. In fact, it is highly unlikely that you will feel exactly the same.

I could feel better in a few hours, minutes, or even seconds .. I could even feel a bit better now. (This is a new now, of course)

That is, in seeking super-honesty, we make clear that a feeling in the present moment will almost certainly change in the next moment.

Use true suggestions

Now it is possible to use positive true suggestions to enhance well being:

I may begin to notice feeling better and much more energetic and happy ...

Of course, many things could or might happen, although many are unlikely. It is nonetheless true that they might or could happen. We can use this truth to give ourselves true positive suggestions.

In the example, it worked like a dream, and I forgot about feeling really ill, and finished my shopping and got on with my life.

Byron Katie—the Work

Originator Byron Katie

This technique is probably one of the most power techniques in personal development. See the [Truth and the Fight-Flight Aspect of the Unconscious Mind](#) for clarification on what ‘true’ means here.

The four questions from Byron Katie can be used to handle a belief:

- 1. Is it true? Can I absolutely know it is true?*
- 2. How do I react when I think that thought?*
- 3. Who would I be without that thought?*

The questions are asked of the unconscious mind and the operator listens to the answers. She takes truth to be in accord with reality. So the following, for instance, aren’t true:

- Dreams
- Imagination
- Memories. These aren’t true because they do not accord with reality (although they represent a now gone and nonexistent past).

Dreams and Imagination are invented mental images and experiences. They do not involve actual tangible things, so they are false. Although memories might be accurate representations of some past incident, they refer to the past and are not happening now. From the viewpoint of the unconscious mind, they are therefore false.

Reversal

The belief is then reversed. The logical opposite is found, and also the ‘opposite’ of the ‘you’ parts. Obviously you would choose helpful reversals.

For instance, with ‘You cheated me’ we have:

I cheated you.
I cheated myself.
You cheated yourself.

We can also reverse the verb, cheated:

You were honest with me.

Some combinations are not helpful. We should be wary of using ‘you’ when it implies another caused your feelings, or you caused another feelings because, strictly, only the person themselves can cause their own feelings and thoughts.

Three reasons

Find three stress-free reasons to hold one or more of the reversals.

Release Technique

Originator: Lester Levenson.

In the case of a panic attack, the sufferer can ask, without resisting:

1. **Could** I release this (feeling)?
2. **Would** I release it?
3. **When**?

These questions are asked of the unconscious mind and an answer is not essential, but should be sought. That is the questions are asked sincerely with the openness of a child.

Other questions can be used, such as the [Buddhist ones](#), and/or the [variations](#).

The Buddhist View of Persistence

Originator: Prince Gautama.

Things persist because:

1. We desire them
2. We are averse to them
3. We are indifferent to them

Self evidently, if we pursue something (or someone) with desire to the exclusion of other things, such as reason, this results in misery. In the same way, if we express hatred or fear of things beyond reason, we are similarly leading a life of misery. Yet, in following these principles, we need to avoid the trap of being indifferent.

An Application of the Buddhist View

Of an unwanted feeling, emotion, picture, etc (while experiencing the issue) ask:

1. Could I delight in (this feeling)?
2. Could I hate it?
3. Could I give up (this feeling)?

The answers are not important. Just ask the questions, listen and experience. That is, we do not desire a given response, nor are we averse to a given response. Also we are not indifferent. We seek the responses, whatever they are, but we do not go to extremes.

Variations

1. Could I draw in (this feeling)?
2. Could I shoo it away?
3. Could I give (this feeling) its freedom?

Again, the answers are not important, just ask the questions and listen to the answers.

Controlled Breathing

Controlled breathing is widely recommended as a means of dealing with strong emotion. In the case of a panic attack or similar state, the sufferer can take deep breaths to the count of four. When using deep breathing, avoid any stress such as holding the breath too long, or taking too deep a breath.

Do it, nice and easy and with control.

Take a deep breath to a count of four (or comfortable count) and concentrate on the air moving into the body (and moving out). This The counting activates the dominant hemisphere of the brain and also acts as distraction.

Breathing in this fashion brings some control and avoids hyperventilation.

There is a world of difference between breathing to control an emotion and simply breathing.

Deep breathing is physiologically an effective way to control strong unwanted emotions. However, many people think it is ineffective. When practising deep breathing you should be in the here and now experiencing what is happening at the moment. There is a world of difference between doing this and doing deep breathing when you are thinking about your problem or hoping your problem will disappear.

When doing deep breathing, you should concentrate on your breath, and nothing else.

What are States of Mind

Everyone tends to move in and out of various states of mind throughout the day. The changes may be slight, but we sometimes feel happy, and other times we feel sad. We feel energetic. We feel tired. We take information in quickly, and at other times we take it in slowly. We feel confident. We feel nervous. Our state of mind varies, and it is often outside our control. In this and other chapters we learn more about states of mind and how we can take control of them.

A state of mind is:

1. Particular pictures
2. Particular sounds, and
3. Particular feelings

For instance, when going off on holiday you might enter a state where you see happy pictures – the sandy beach, the blue sea, people sunbathing, where you hear happy sounds – of the waves lapping, people laughing, and you experience happy feelings – laughter, excitement and anticipation. That is, in this state you experience mental pictures, sounds and feelings.

Another way of defining a state is:

A state is a thought or thoughts with particular feelings or emotions.

At times you might experience sad states and at other times happy states etc. States are sometimes referred to as moods, as when you are in the mood for some task or not in the mood for another. If you are a writer, you may notice that in some states writing is effortless and the words come easily. In other states it is a painful chore and words seem to fail you.

Many of the things we want in life are states, or are attained through the appropriate state. For example, self confidence is a state. Sometimes you want actual physical things, such as wealth – and **being wealthy** is a state.

We desire States, not things

Apparently, we do not desire physical things as such but mental states. Some people apparently desire money. Perhaps someone is short of money and wishes to acquire some to pay their debts. When they have done so they are in a state of being solvent, and it is this state they enjoy, not the actual money (which they have used to pay their debts). When they have achieved their goal, they stop and no longer seek money.

Other people seek to be wealthy, but they do not actually seek the money so much as they seek the state of being wealthy – the thoughts and feelings they have of knowing they are rich (the money itself just sits in the bank). Other rich people (as has been known since ancient times) continually seek wealth (even when they are extremely rich). If we think it is the wealth they desire, and they already have great wealth, it seems odd that they continually seek more. But if we think of this in terms of states, then it becomes clearer. What they are doing is enjoying the state of money creation, and this is what motivates them. Perhaps this state gives them power, importance and admiration.

Similarly, there are those who seek to be wealthy, only to lose it. They go on to become wealthy again, and lose it again. They continue in this fashion. Because it is unusual for someone to become wealthy in the first place, it is puzzling what these clearly talented people are doing. Perhaps they enjoy the state of rising from poverty to wealth, and when they succeed they must lose their wealth in order to continue their game. It seems, then, that we do not seek physical things, but we enjoy or seek certain states of mind.

You can become conscious of your States and change them

Instead of being the effect of our states, we can be their master. Actually, we are always the master of our states, but some people create the belief in themselves that they can do nothing about them (which is a state). By learning more about states of mind, we can begin to recognize them and change them if we want. States of mind are the product of mental events:

- What you see in your mind
- What you say and hear in your mind
- What you feel in your mind

They are also the product of:

- physical actions:
- Posture
- Facial Expressions
- Breathing

Your states affect your behaviour:

- What you say
- How you behave
- Heart Beat
- Biochemistry
- Your skin colour (reddening, etc)

Where do States of Mind come from?

Our state of mind can be determined by:

1. The environment
2. Incidents
3. Knowledge
4. Past life
5. Self created worlds in your mind

Environment

If you live in an **environment** where people are successful, then this is likely to rub off on you and you will develop the states of mind for success. If you live in a poor environment then you may develop the states of mind for this too. One successful person would eat in an expensive restaurant (although he could only afford soup). He did this to get himself in a wealthy environment, and this began to rub off on him. This was one of the things he did in order to become rich.

Incidents

Life **incidents** can have a significant effect on your states of mind. If something powerful happens then your belief in yourself is increased. A traumatic incident can colour the rest of your life. Of course, it isn't what happens to us that changes us, but what we think about what happens to us. Some people become empowered by traumatic incidents, and others become weakened by positive ones. Many a person has got up after being knocked down, only to determine to succeed. And many a lottery winner has been led to ruin.

Knowledge

Through reading and watching some books, television and films, you can develop of model for yourself that can empower you, or if you read and watch other television and films, then you may be **disempowered**. **Knowledge** of other people can influence your states of mind. We can learn about the mind through reading and use this information to change us. We can also read stories and emulate powerful characters in them, using them as models.

Past Life

Your **past life** can influence your states of mind whatever your environment. If your parents brought you up in a way that was empowering, then you will have a head start in life. Of course, it is how we handle any experiences and those with a poor background can be spurred on to overcome it, and those with an easy background can sometimes be left unmotivated. While we cannot change our background in reality, we can change it mentally. In particular, Milton Erickson used hypnosis to recreate poor backgrounds and to help people to become better and happier. Also we can change our states of mind produced by our background, if we wish to become different.

Self Created Worlds in Your Mind

Finally, you can create a new environment in your mind where you attain whatever you wish to attain and step into this image and begin to live it in reality. You can **create or recreate** your world in your mind and actualise it. Some people are apparently unaffected by their environment. It is their internal world that affects them most.

Your mental states determine how you create your world.

You create your mental states by the way you represent things to yourself.

Imagine you are going to make a public speech. This may put you in a fearful state, or in an empowered state where you can do this with confidence.

We often think that how we feel depends on such things as hereditary, or on the way we are. But our feelings are not a matter of chance. They depend on our states of mind. And the good news is that you can enter resourceful states at will. The key is how you picture things to yourself.

So if you picture the world as a place where you can attain whatever you wish, and behave consistently with this picture, then you will get different results from picturing the world as a place that is unfair, difficult and impossible to succeed in.

We represent the external world with our five senses—usually vision, feeling and hearing. These sensory pictures determine (mostly) how we respond to the world. The five senses are the keys to understanding mental states.

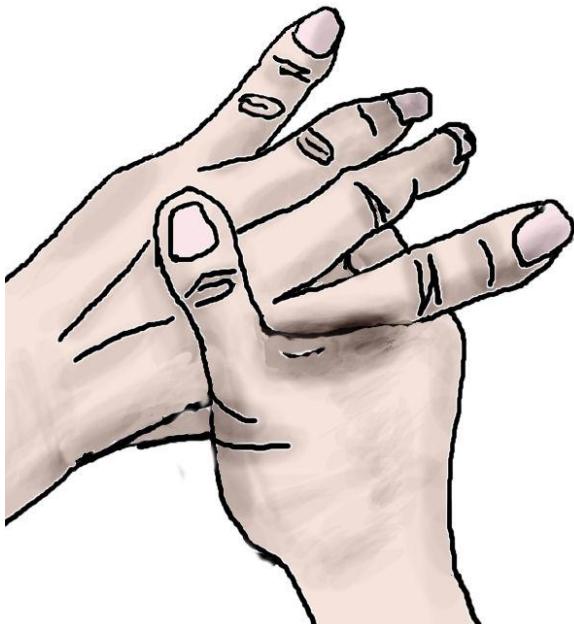
Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm.

Sir Winston Churchill

The key to attaining your outcomes is how you picture it to yourself. Those who attain their outcomes are people who maintain an internal picture of getting their outcome, and act consistently with it. They are not deterred by external problems. Even in the face of hopelessness, they keep making a picture of their success and they take action which is consistent with that picture. They are in a state to achieve their outcome.

Anchoring: Creating States of Mind at Will

Stimuli – sounds, smells, pictures and emotions – that call forth states of mind are called **anchors**. The smell of baking bread may suddenly take you back to a long-forgotten childhood memory – waiting with your grandmother in front of an oven for the loaves to cook. A tune may remind you when you first met a certain person. A touch can bring back memories and the past states. On seeing an old photograph from junior school you might be flooded with memories of being a student there, memories you thought you had forgotten. These anchors work automatically and you may not be aware of the triggers. Their effects might be welcome or not. You can however create your own anchors to put you in the state you want when you want it.



Establishing an anchor means producing the stimuli (the anchor) when you experience the state and, so, associate it with the anchor. For example, pressing the knuckle of the left hand when you recall or imagine a powerful feeling of self-confidence. So — in future — when you press this knuckle in exactly the same way, you experience that self-confidence.

Pressing in that place —activating or firing the anchor—causes the state to appear after it has been conditioned. For example, touching the knuckle of the left hand after the anchor has been made so you immediately feel self-confident.

Automatic Unconscious Anchors

These are anchors that we have acquired accidentally. They cause us to act in ways we do not want to. In fact, most irrational feelings (and behaviour) are the result of anchors, produced at some time in the past, perhaps in childhood without our awareness.

As a result, life pulls our strings, and we dance to its tune. These anchors were created accidentally. For instance, we might feel depressed all of a sudden, but we do not know why. We feel unmotivated to do a task, even though we know we ought to do it. We may form an instant dislike to someone, for no reason at all. In fact, we often think these states of mind happen by chance, whereas they are triggered by unknown anchors – formed in the past through an accidental joining of two events.

Because it is our nature to make some sense of our world, we usually invent a reason for our behaviour when the real reason is unknown.

Designer Anchors

Designer anchors are the opposite of unconscious anchors – they are ones we make them ourselves to empower us. Once we have created them, we can use them to produce the state of mind or mood we need. For instance, you enter an interview calm and relaxed, because you have triggered the appropriate anchor. You control your temper by pressing your hand in a certain way, producing instant calm. Simply by applying an anchor, you can become instantly enthusiastic.

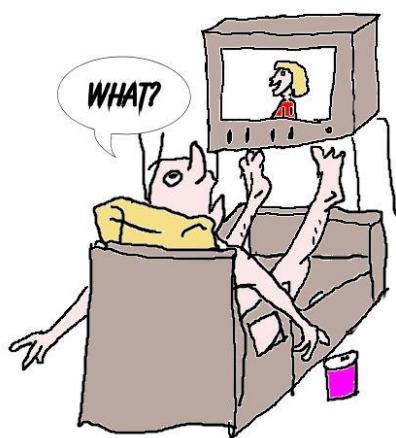
It is easy to anchor desirable states. In the following explanation, we will use 'being calm and relaxed' as an example of a resource state.

The Resource State

A principle of NLP is that you have all the resources you require to achieve whatever goal you want. You have all the resources you need to create the appropriate resource state. You can recall any memories where you have experienced the required state. If you recall them **vividly** and you experience that desired state again.

For instance, you may wish to create an anchor to make you calm and relaxed whenever you wish. To get the resource for your anchor, you can recall any memories of being extremely calm and relaxed. You might, for example, recall times when you were calm and relaxed at work, for example, or a time when you were at home, or when enjoying your leisure time.

Vivifying a Memory to make it Stronger



To vivify the memory use self-instructions as:
'Recall a time when you were calm and relaxed. As you go back to that time now step into your body and you are seeing now what you see in the memory, hearing now what you heard in the memory, and feeling now, what you feel in the memory'.

Notice that you associate into the memory as opposed to disassociating.

Even people who think they have no resourceful memory can find such a memory perhaps in a different context. If you cannot, read the next section. Or the next!

I have never felt that way...

While we have all the resources we need to accomplish whatever we wish to, some people might claim they were never 'calm and relaxed', and so cannot recall such a memory. In this case, they, or you, can use imagination rather than recall, or use a model.

If you cannot recall a situation where you had the resource you want to anchor, you can get the resource by **imagining** yourself in a situation where you had that resource. You can imagine yourself in a situation where you feel 'calm and relaxed'.

Powerful questions to create a resource state for anchoring

We can evoke resources by recalling a memory, or we can use our imagination. Expanding on the use of imagination, we can use the following questions.

Suppose you were relaxed and calm, how would you feel?

What would you see in your mind's eye?

What would you hear?

What would you be telling yourself?

Another question is:

You cannot imagine (that state). But if you could — and I know your unconscious mind can —what would you experience (feel, see, body position, etc)

You have all the resources you need. Everyone has the capacity to empathize with another. When listening to another you may have experienced the emotions and states that they felt when they had the experience — you have empathized with them. At least, you can **know** what their state is, or would be. You can imagine yourself **acting like** that admired person — perhaps someone in your life or a character from a film, book or elsewhere. Ask about that person's state in that situation:

- What kinaesthetics would they experience?
- What images would they see?
- What sounds would they hear?
- What would they say to themselves?

The people whose state you wish for need not be heroes, just very ordinary people who under certain circumstances have that valuable state. For instance, an old lady might show incredible patience. An old man might show dogged determinism, say when trying to fix something or when carving something. A child might express great delight and pleasure. By learning many different states from ordinary people various states, you might enjoy being extraordinary. Actually, the models don't even need to be human! One can anchor the relaxation of a cat. Or the freedom of a bird in flight. Or the tenselessness of a deflated party balloon! (Although you can't ask them about their states. ☺ You can however **imagine** what they might say. And your unconscious mind knows what it is like, for example, to relax like a cat). Different people respond differently. Some images might be effective for some but not for others. Some examples of relaxation:

- Like a log lying by a stream.
- Like a mountain, unperturbed by anything.
- Like a baby sleeping.
- Like a bag of feathers.

Types of Anchors

Anchors can be

- visual,
- auditory or
- kinaesthetic.

Visual Anchors

You can use visual anchors to anchor the resourceful state. You can use external or internal anchors. For example, you could use a figure on a bracelet to anchor being calm and relaxed. You would need to have the bracelet nearby in order to use it. Also, you may find it relaxing and calming to view a certain landscape, but unless you can carry it around with you, it is of limited value. You can always use an internal image of the landscape to anchor your resourceful feeling. Most visual designer anchors are, therefore, internal.

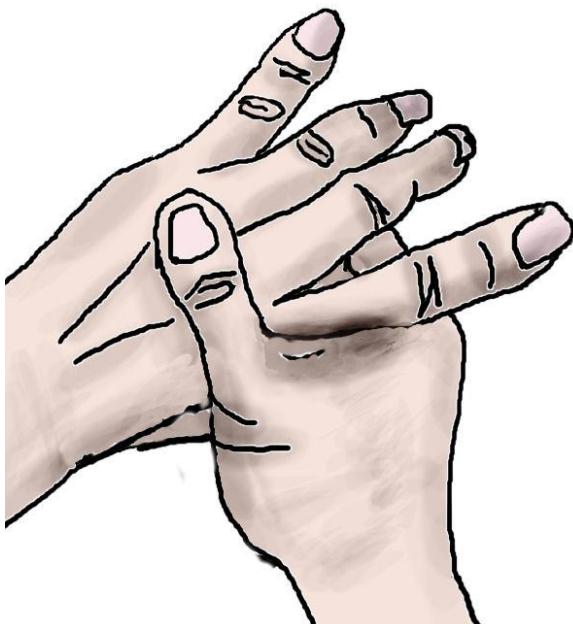
Some examples of visual anchors are:

- Symbols. For example, you could use an imaginary circle as a symbol for being calm and relaxed and anchor this to your state.
- Calling to mind people, such as a trusted friend or mentor ... or even a person from history or current affairs—to produce an anchor.
- Memories of various objects and landscapes can be used as anchors for being calm and relaxed. For example, you could **imagine**:
 - A teddy bear
 - A flower
 - A mountain

Auditory Anchors

You can use a sound as an anchor. Like the visual anchors, sounds can be internal or external. Many people have used whistling as an anchor - they whistle when they feel afraid! You can use an internal voice as an anchor. For example, you could anchor the phrase 'Calm and Relaxed'.

Kinaesthetic Anchors.



Examples of kinaesthetic anchors are:

- Imagining a comforting hand on your shoulder
- Making a circle with the second finger and the thumb
- Touching yourself on the hand or knee (anywhere that is unobtrusive). You can choose a point and treat it like an acupressure point - pressing on it to fire the required state. You can choose any unobtrusive place.

Visual, Kinaesthetic and Auditory Anchors

You can use a combination of anchors such as seeing a certain symbol in your mind's eye. Hearing something said — for example, 'Calm and Relaxed'. And pressing your hand in a definite place. You could also imagine background music. But in general, one anchor is sufficient.

Installing Anchors

1. Decide on the state you want to anchor. For example being calm and relaxed.
2. Choose an anchor (or anchors) that you wish to trigger the resourceful state. For instance, pressing the knuckle of the little finger.
3. Recall a memory, or imagine a situation, where you can experience the state.
4. Activate the anchor or anchors when the experience is vivid and you are in the desired state. For instance, press the knuckle of the little finger. Release the anchors when the experience begins to fade (you don't want to anchor a fading resource!)
5. Do something else – open your eyes ... count down from 10 to break state ... hum a song to distract yourself.
6. Repeat the steps several times, each time making the memory more vivid, or using several memories. You can strengthen the anchor by establishing it at the high point of several resourceful experiences.
7. Test the new anchor.
8. Future pace the situation where you want to experience the desired state. Fire the anchor to check that it creates a sufficiently resourced state.
9. Check the anchor the next day to ensure it is a permanent anchor. If necessary repeat the steps, paying closer detail to the instruction—for instance, press the anchor point when the resource is strongest, and stop pressing when it fades. See Tips below for more information.

Tips

- The anchor (or anchors) should be fired in exactly the same way every time you link them to the resourceful experience. For instance, touch the little-finger knuckle of the left hand in exactly the same way each time.
- Anchor as the resource state is growing and stop at its highest point.
- If you do not experience the state when future pacing and especially if you experience anxiety, then stop applying the anchor. (You don't want to anchor the negative state!) Repeat the steps above to establish the anchor.
- There is a knowingness which makes anchoring work that is established by the unconscious mind.
- You can strengthen the anchor by repeating the above process over several days.
- If you are in a situation where you experience the desired state in reality, then you can re-establish the anchor to that situation.

Modalities

In this book, the word modality refers to any of the 5 senses, whether real or imaginary. Mostly we are concerned with:

1. Visual
2. Auditory
3. Auditory-Digital
4. Kinaesthetic

Tasting and smelling, while powerful modalities are often omitted.

Visual

Obviously related to the sense of sight, but includes seeing things in the mind.

Auditory

Auditory is related to sound, whether internal or external.

Auditory-Digital

Auditory Digital refers to language.

Kinaesthetic

In this book, kinaesthetic refers to various feelings whether internal or external. In psychology, kinaesthetic (or proprioceptive) refers to our knowledge of the position of parts of the body, as where our hands are (when we cannot see them). Here it includes this sense, but also feelings much more generally, including pressure, heat and pain.

Submodalities

We represent our thoughts using the five senses or modalities. When we want to understand how we and others represent the world, it is not enough to know the modalities — for instance, visual or kinaesthetic. For instance, man dealing with a problem expertly, might say that he says something to himself and then forms a picture of something in the mind. We know the modalities, but we need to find the submodalities in order to discover how, specifically, he expertly deals with the problem. We need determine more about the pictures, feelings or sounds he uses to produce behaviour. This greater detail about modalities is called their submodalities (dealt with below). Submodalities are also called qualities.

We can strengthen or weaken representations by changing the subject of the representation – thinking that everything will be fine instead of thinking the worse – or by changing the way we sense the representation. We change the way we represent the mental event by changing its submodalities. This is explained next.

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Changing the Kinaesthetic

Crossing Modalities

Tools to change your life

Visual Submodalities

We might see a picture in our minds when we experience some state. As a first step in changing this state, we can note the qualities of the picture. These qualities are the submodalities. The following is a list of visual submodalities:

- See a movie or a still shot
- See a panorama or a framed picture
- Colour or black and white
- Brightness
- Size of picture
- Associated or Dissociated
- Where the picture is in relation to us — up or down, left or right
- Distance of picture from self — near or far, etc.
- Angle or direction of the picture
- Clear or Fuzzy

The picture can also be associated or dissociated. You view an image from an associated perspective when you view it as if it were happening to you – seeing through your eyes, feeling what you feel, etc. You view an image from a dissociated perspective when you view it as if it were happening to someone else – you see the incident like watching a film from the outsides (where you are a character in the film). You see yourself, not as if you were there (seeing only your hands, etc) but as if you were looking at another person — when you would see the whole body.

Auditory Submodalities

If you hear a sound in your mind it may be:

- Loud or quiet
- Soft or rasping
- High or low pitch (frequency)
- Continual or Continuous
- From a particular source (Where it comes from.)
- Timbre (characteristic sound, such as a voice like Donald Duck)
- From a fixed direction or from a varying direction (Movement of the source) as the varying location of sound as a car goes by.
- Lasting for a long or short time (Duration)
- Quickly or slowly, like a quick paced tune, or long and lugubrious like classical music (Tempo)

Kinaesthetic Submodalities

These include the feeling and the action aspects. A feeling is a sensation, an emotion or touch. Examples of [action submodalities](#) are given below.

Feeling Submodalities

Feelings have the following submodalities:

- Hot or cold, like ice or a hot bath.
- Texture - rough or smooth, like sandpaper or silk.
- Moving or Stationary
- Body Position. Leaning forward, or back. Standing, sitting, lying, etc.
- Pressure, firm or light
- Tight or lose
- Weight, heavy or light
- Location, where it is felt in the body
- Rhythm. Like a rhythmic tapping.
- Steady or intermittent
- Felt shape

Action (touch) Submodalities

These are visual from another's point of view, but we feel the movements from the inside.

- Pointing
- Reaching
- Withdrawing
- Grasping
- Releasing
- Holding
- Letting go
- Grappling
- Hugging
- [Eye positions](#)
- Facial expression
- Body position
- Gestures

Pain Submodalities

Pains which are feelings can be:

- Tingling
- Hot or cold
- Tension
- Sharp dull
- Intensity
- Duration
- Throbbing
- Location

Pains are often described as sharp, dull or throbbing. In the Gate Theory of Pain, temperature, pressure and vibration have precedence over pain. So we rub an aching shoulder to relieve the pain (pressure and touch drive out pain). We might use a hot or cold compress (temperature overrides pain). Or we might use vibration.

Taste and Smell

(Not normally considered)

Submodalities of taste include:

- Bitterness like coffee and beer.
- Saltiness
- Sourness—lemon, grape, orange.
- Sweetness
- Umami —meatiness or savouriness
- Metallicness

The tongue has the ability to detect kinaesthetically, too.

We are able to detect more than 10,000 different odours. In the animal kingdom, dogs have a far greater sense of smell than humans have—scent hounds having a sense of smell millions of times better than humans, with bloodhounds being at least ten million times better. It seems we do not describe smells according to, say, sweetness, but say things like, “It smells like burning rubber.” Or, “It smells like violets.”

While taste and smell are important, they are less easy and less necessary to use than the main three.

Think of a pleasant experience

Remember a pleasant experience.

- Bring the picture closer.
- Make it brighter.
- Make it bigger.

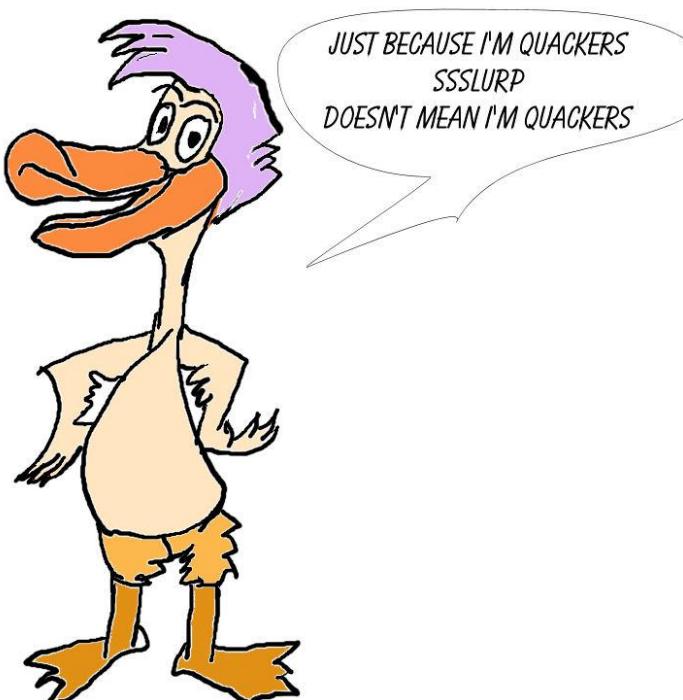
How does the picture change? For many, the picture is made more enjoyable (although you can test for yourself to find out what works for you).

Imagine yourself there in that pleasant picture. See what you saw then. Hear what you heard then. Feel what you felt then.

Now move **out of the picture** and see yourself **in that picture**. Sense what you saw, said, felt, etc.

For most people the picture is more intense when you are inside the picture rather than being outside. But, as usual, what is true for you is true.

Experiment and find your own submodalities.



Changing an internal voice

If you are bothered by an internal voice that limits you in some way, then:

- Turn down the volume
- Make it softer
- Make it appear to come from farther away
- Make it sound silly, like people talking after inhaling helium, or like a (Donald) Duck!

If you wish to make a voice more motivating, make it, for instance, sound sexy and seductive.

Reframing a negative experience

Find a **mildly unpleasant experience**. Just something slightly unpleasant, at first.

1. View the scene as if you weren't in the picture - that is see yourself in the picture (dissociated).
2. Put a frame round the picture
3. Make it a still picture, not a movie.
4. Move the picture away from you
5. Make it black and white or even a cartoon
6. Make it very small.
7. Have the other person speak like Donald Duck (a funny voice, so you laugh)
8. Hang the picture on the wall, somewhere you rarely look.

By using these simple techniques most people find the experience funny rather than slightly upsetting (as it was before you changed the representations).

Changing the Power of Representations

The power to influence of a mental image, feeling, sound, etc, **depends on the submodalities**.

The exact way submodalities influence the feelings, etc engendered by mental representations depends on the individual. Even though the examples given below apply to **many** individuals, they do not apply to everyone. For instance, normally a mental image is less influential when you make it smaller. But, for some, it might be more influential when it is made smaller.

Under some circumstances, you might find moving an image away from you reduces anxiety. Under others, it might increase anxiety. This may be true for 'addictions', where moving the addictive substance away might increase the desire. For instance, moving cigarettes away into the distance might increase craving.

If submodalities work differently for you under some circumstances, then you would do something different from what is suggested below (Try the opposite!) If an image is more influential when it is dull, you would make it duller in order to strengthen it. (Instead of the normal: making it brighter and clearer).

Changing Visual Modalities

Visual submodalities are more powerful for many people when they are brighter, bigger and nearer. They are less powerful when they are dimmer, more distant and smaller. They may change in power if they are moved from one position (location) to another.

Take a mildly unwanted image:

- Make it smaller. Does this make it less or more influential? If it makes it more influential, then make it larger, and feel the change.
- De-focus it so that it is more blurry. Does this make it less or more influential? If it makes it more influential, then make it more focussed, and feel the change.
- And move it away from you. Does this make it less or more influential? If it makes it more influential, then make it closer, and feel the change.
- Change its position in relation to you and feel how it changes. If it is above you, bring it down. If it is to the right, bring it to the left. In each case test how it affects you.

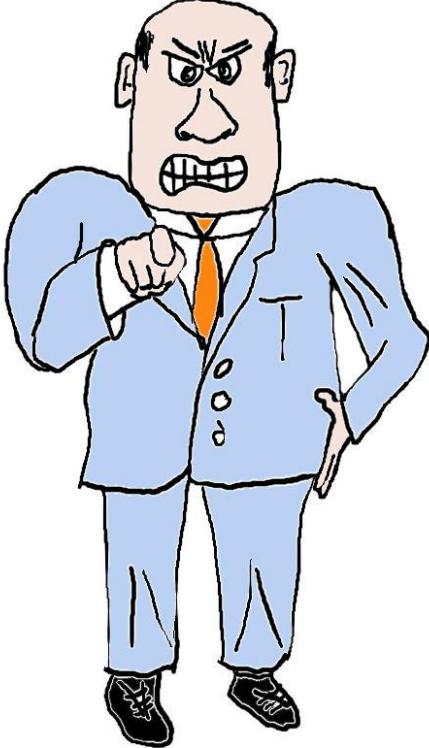
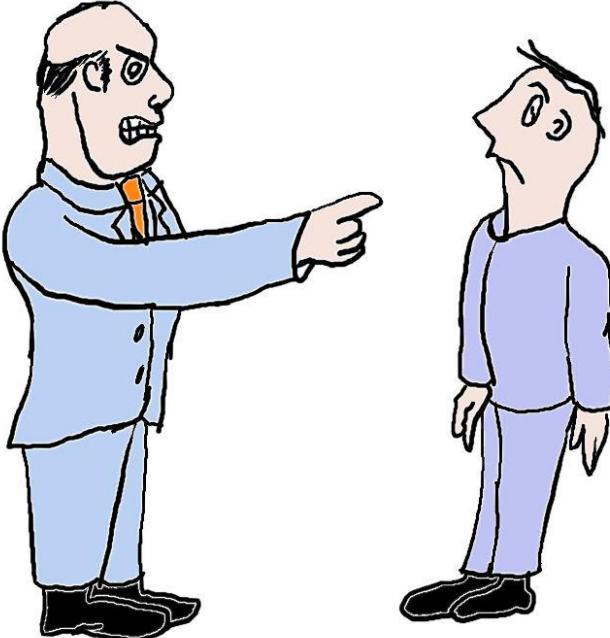
Notice any changes in its emotional effect on you (feeling modality). You can also experiment with other visual submodalities.

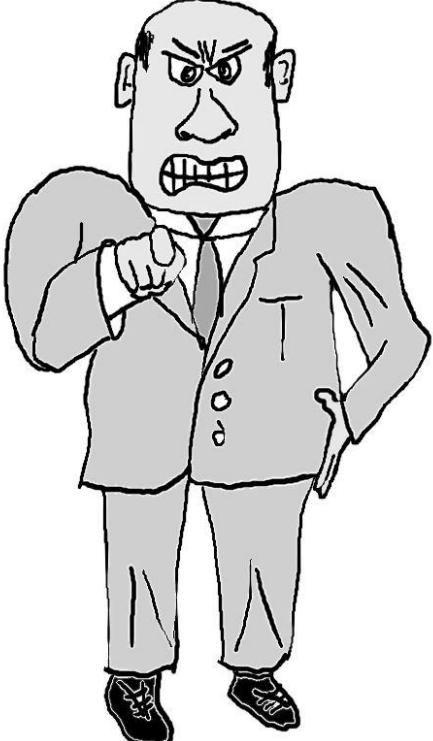
Mind Mastery by Ken Ward

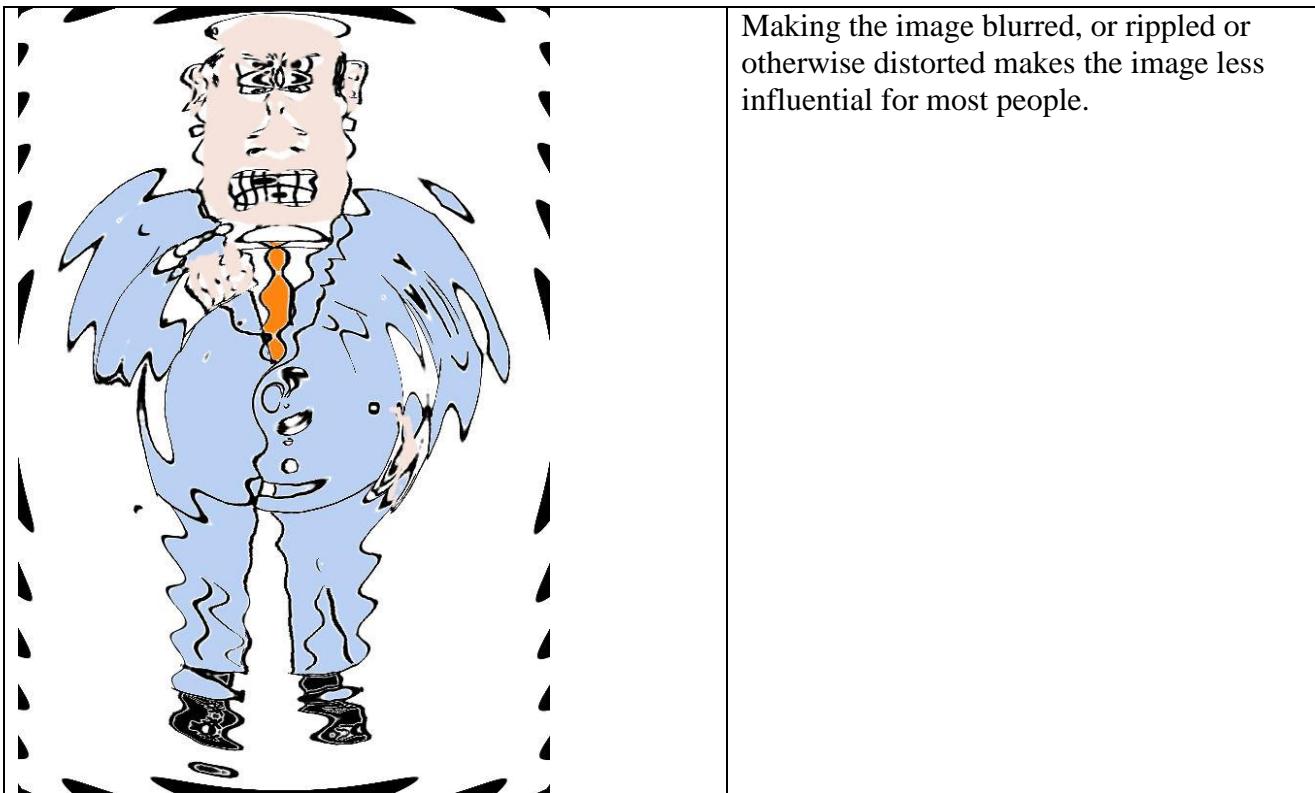
By changing visual images in this way you can change the effect they have on you — unwanted effects can be made less influential and wanted ones can be more powerful.

Changing the effect of images through changing visual sub-modalities

Because you are reading this, it is easier for me to give examples of visual effects than the others, but the principles apply to other modalities to. Consider the following images.

	<p>Even though the image on the left is a cartoon, it can be a bit powerful, or at least illustrate an unpleasant image (without being too unpleasant, of course)</p> <p>The image appears to be associated because the boss appears to be angry with you, the viewer of the image.</p> <p>An image is often less powerful when it is dissociated. See the next picture.</p>
	<p>This image is dissociated (or appears to be) because the boss is angry at someone we can see. The victim might be you or me or someone else. But in either case, the effect is less.</p> <p>By making images dissociated we make unpleasant images less effective (and positive ones too, so we prefer to associate into positive images).</p>

	<p>Continuing the theme of the first image, that is associated. This image, on the left, is in greyscale. For many people, this weakens the effect of the image. So changing a mental image to black and white or greyscale, often makes it less influential.</p>
	<p>Blurring the image in the mind makes it less effective for most people. If it is the opposite for you, then make the image clearer to weaken it.</p>
	<p>By making an image small, we usually make it less influential. The image on the left is much less influential than the first image above.</p>



Making the image blurred, or rippled or otherwise distorted makes the image less influential for most people.

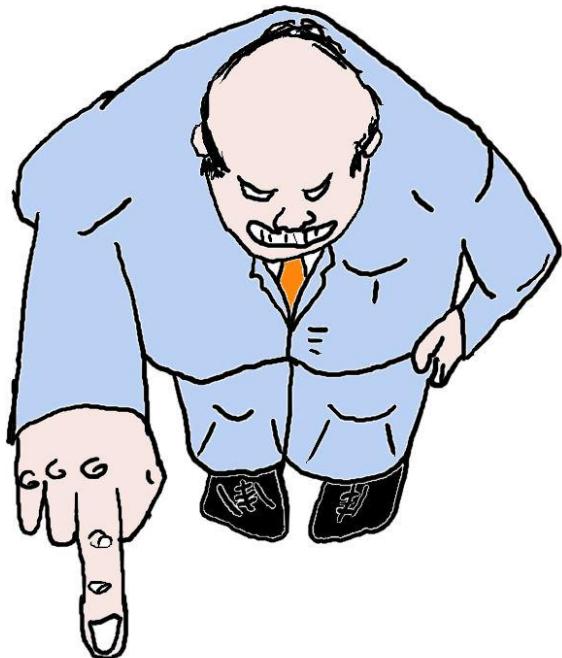
In seeking to change the power of an unwanted image, we can change its submodalities in ways that reduce or eliminate its effect upon us. In the examples above, we have used associated and dissociated, greyscale and various kinds of blurring to weaken an image.



Making an image smaller, often makes it less effective.

Changing the Viewpoint

We can also change our viewpoint in an image, which usually changes the effect of the image.



Changing the viewpoint to one above may change the effect of the image. Sometimes it becomes less emotional.



Similarly, changing the viewpoint to one from below can change the effect of the image. For some it becomes more powerful, for others it becomes less powerful. You can try changing the viewpoint of a modality and observe the effects.

Changing Auditory Modalities

Changing the effects of self talk

If your **self talk** is negative, then try

- Turning down the volume of the voice.
- Make it dull and lethargic – make it boring. Or sound like a duck.
- Change its apparent source: if it comes from the back move it to the front and feel how it changes. Try moving the source position to different points and noticing where it is best for you (in this case less effective).

To make an inner voice more motivating

To make an inner voice more motivating, try

- Turning up the volume and making it full of pep.
- Make it sound sexy, commanding, whispering, etc, to test the difference.
- Try different locations for the origin to see how this affects the power of the voice to influence you.

You can do the same thing to make any sounds more effective or less effective in the way they influence you.

Changing the Kinaesthetic Modality

Making a feeling more wispy often makes it less intense. If it is a hot feeling, try cooling it down to sense the effect. If it is rough try making it smooth or vice versa. If it is heavy, make it lighter.

Crossing Modalities

You can sense the effect of changing other submodalities. For example, if someone had a feeling of depression (kinaesthetic), you might check out its

- weight,
- location and
- texture.
- etc.

However, you might also **check out the colour, size, pitch, loudness, etc (visual and auditory)**. Sometimes other modalities are relevant, such as taste and smell.

Tools to change your life

The above tools can be used to make unpleasant images powerless to affect you and make slightly pleasing events extremely enjoyable. Using submodalities, you can change your mind and the minds of others.

Associated and Dissociated

These are two very important concepts - grasping their meaning significantly helps your ability to benefit from this course.

The difference between an associated and a dissociated viewpoint is largely kinaesthetic (feeling) — that is, from a dissociated viewpoint you cannot feel the body movements and sensations that you would sense if you were associated. When you are associated in an image or experience, then you are **interiorised** into it. When you are dissociated from it, you are **exteriorised** from it.

[I actually prefer the words exteriorised and interiorised, but keep associated and dissociated for easy cross referencing.]

You can sense an image containing yourself, either as if you were actually there, or from a dissociated perspective as if you were an observer of yourself and others, sensing the scene from the outside.

When **associated** in a physical or mental body, you react as if things were happening to you. We say you are **associated** into the image. You react differently to sensing a rock being thrown at you (associated viewpoint) from how you react to a rock being thrown at someone else (dissociated viewpoint).



In the image on the left, the cat is associated (for the sake of our example) because you cannot see yourself in the picture, and the cat appears to be welcoming you. You seem to be involved in the here and now. If you are associated in an image, you tend to see others rather than yourself (except your hands and feet occasionally, but never your face!).

When watching a real film (or movie) on screen and being engrossed in it (associated viewpoint) you react to events in the movie as if they were happening to you. If something threatening happens you jump just as if they were happening to you. If you are not engrossed in the film, you are dissociated from it — and viewing it from a dissociated perspective — then you do not react to events in the film as if they were happening to you (you don't jump!).

The same is true of observing things in the **real world**. If you are associated into the someone, such as when watching a friend or a child, then you will wince when something painful happens to them just as if it were happening to you. In contrast, a doctor treating a patient normally adopts a dissociated viewpoint and does not feel the pain (through sympathy) the patient feels.

In the same way, when experiencing mental images you can view them from an associated viewpoint or from a dissociated one. When you are associated into a character in a mental image then you feel what that character feels as if it were happening to you. Of course, if you are in the image and the image is a memory, then these events were actually happening to you. Even so, if you view the memory from a dissociated viewpoint then the events have less effect on you now, than they did at the time.

It is often better to experience mental images which are unpleasant in a dissociated way, so we do not experience the unpleasantness in present time, and to experience those which are pleasant in an associated way, so we experience the pleasure in present time.

Actor and Observer

We use the word actor to refer to experiencing something from an interior or associated viewpoint and the word observer to refer to experiencing something from an exterior or disassociated viewpoint. It is better to experience unpleasant images as an observer (because you do not feel them) than as an actor (because you feel what is happening), and it is better to experience pleasant images as an actor rather than as an observer.

Sensing Mental Images

When you are sensing mental images, you can sense the action from an **associated viewpoint** or form an associated **viewpoint**. When you sense the action from an associated **viewpoint**, it is as if you were actually in the scene and experiencing what is happening in the scene, as if it were happening to you now. You are associated into the image.

When you sense the action from a dissociated **viewpoint**, then you experience the action as if it was happening to someone else. You are **dissociated**. In conscious life, when you view another person you can see them and hear them. If you are close enough, then you can touch them. However, **you cannot feel what is happening inside them**. If the other person pricks themselves with a pin, you can see them jump and hear them cry out, but you cannot feel their pain. This is a dissociated viewpoint.

When you personally experience something in conscious life, you actually feel what happens inside you, not what happens inside someone else. If you prick yourself with a pin, you hear yourself cry out and you actually feel the pain. You also experience any body movements from the inside. This is an associated viewpoint.

Even in real life, however, you can associate into another person, particularly a friend or relative, and if they suffer an injury while you are watching, you might experience (hallucinate) the pain yourself, as if you were actually suffering the pain. This is an important human quality wherein we sympathise or empathise with others. But, really, we can only experience feelings that we experience. We can imagine or hallucinate them, but not really feel them.

A surgeon, for instance, treating a casualty patient needs to help that person, and needs to avoid associating into the experience, and to avoid feeling every discomfort

Association in Everyday Life

Normally, you are associated in your present body. However, you can, in conscious life, be associated into other people, to some degree. So when you watch another prick themselves with a pin, you might jump and even cry out because you are associated into that person. This is also called sympathy.

Comparison of Associated and Dissociated

	Associated	Dissociated
Vision	You can see your hands, etc, but not your face.	You can see yourself as a whole.
Hearing	You can hear sounds through your own ears. For example, hearing your voice (associated) sounds differently from listening to a recording of your voice (dissociated).	You hear yourself, in the picture, as if you were another person. That is, you hear yourself, in the picture, talking as if they were another person.

Kinaesthetic	You can feel what the characters feel and sense their body position and their movements, as if you were them.	You cannot sense what the self in the picture feels.
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How to associate into another person or thing

By moving in the same way as the other person, and adopting the body position of the other person, you begin to feel what that other person feels. To experience more of what they experience, then you can model the thinking processes of the other person and use them yourself.

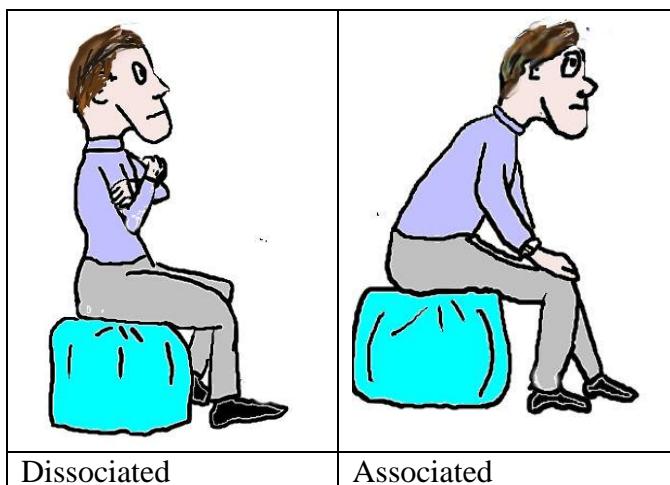
To associate into a mental image:

- Lean forward, as when watching something interesting, bending your back and rounding your shoulders.
- Move into the mental pictures
- Experience directly what you, or a chosen character is experiencing.
- See through their eyes, hear what they hear, and feel what they feel.
- Make the image into a colour movie

How to dissociate from another person or thing

You can dissociate from an image by

- Backing out of the image until you can see the back of your own head.
- Make the image move away from you, so you are viewing it from a distance.
- You can view it from another perspective, for example, from worm's eye view, or from above.
- Make the image into a still photograph in black and white.
- Make it smaller



A straight body position with shoulders back, etc, is more likely to produce a dissociated perspective than a body position with rounded shoulders and head dropped forward. You can sometimes see this by watching a group of people watching a movie. When something challenging appears in the movie, the audience often change their body position to break their association into the film and avoid suffering what the characters in the movie appear to be suffering. Often the audience straighten their backs and stick out their chins.

Modalities - How to read a person's mind from their words

We perceive the world through the 5 senses and these senses are sometimes called modalities. Each person has a preferred modality that they use to think. For example a visual person will, especially when deeply thinking, will use visual words. This page draws your awareness to how we reveal ourselves in our speaking and writing.

Suppose someone says, **You have a bright future**. Just take a minute to think and ask yourself, what exactly does it mean? Whatever we might mean by **future**, are futures ever bright or dull? Yet to a visual thinker this is how they see a good future – one where they are getting what they want. How about if someone says, of a cream cake, **It is crying out to me to eat it**. What does that mean (unless the person thinks cakes talk!) To an auditory person who uses sounds to think, then this is full of meaning. We may be advised, **To grab all the knowledge we can**. But how can you reach out your hand and clench your fist on a bit of physics! But this is the way that the kinaesthetic person thinks about the world and all real meaning involved physical actions or sensations in the body. When you are in certain states of mind, you may have a preferred modality that you use to think and express yourself.

Sometimes we and others talk as if we are looking at something in our minds. When we are looking at a visual image, we tend to use words used to describe visual things. Similarly, when we are listening to something in our minds, we tend to use words that describe sounds. And when we are referring to a feeling, we use kinaesthetic words.

Visual Modality

When you communicate with a person who is operating in visual mode, then that person will tend to use visual words and think in pictures. That person will also tend to understand visual words rather than words associated with other modalities.

A person in a state where they are thinking visually will tend to use words like see, and refer to colours, shapes and sizes. He or she will refer to things being near or far, or in or out of focus.

So a visual person might **inspect** a problem, or look into something. In visual mode, you would see a sparkling future.

Kinaesthetic Modality

A person who is in a state where they are thinking in terms of feelings or physical actions will also tend to use words that reflect this.

So he or she will speak of how rough or smooth something is, how much pressure there is, or will refer to physical actions. The word **feel** may be used often.

A kinaesthetic person might **grapple** with a problem or **grope** around for a solution.

In Kinaesthetic Modality, you would **feel** a future where you eventually get your desires within your **grasp**.

Auditory Modality

In an auditory state, we tend to think in terms of sounds or language and our speech and writing will tend to contain auditory words. In an auditory state, you will use the words hear and listen quite often, and refer to things by their loudness or quietness, their timbre (distinct quality of sound), or by their frequency.

So an auditory person may try to get into **harmony** with the situation and **listen** for any **hints** to the solution. A little bird might **tell** you the answer. Something might **tell** you that you were **playing the right tune** and your future would be great.

When we speak normally, we might use visual, auditory and kinaesthetic words, but in some states, when we are thinking in a certain way, we will use words that represent the Modality we are using for thinking.

Auditory Digital (Self talk)

Of course, auditory people tend to represent their ideas in terms of sounds. However, **auditory digital** people represent their ideas in terms of words. This is a kind of processing that uses sound, but this time it involves not harmony or discord and the like, but internal speech. Auditory digital people tend to prefer words that do not have a clear sensory meaning. So:

- a visualizer might see what you mean,
- a kinaesthetic **grasp** your meaning, and
- an auditory person might **resonate** with what you are saying

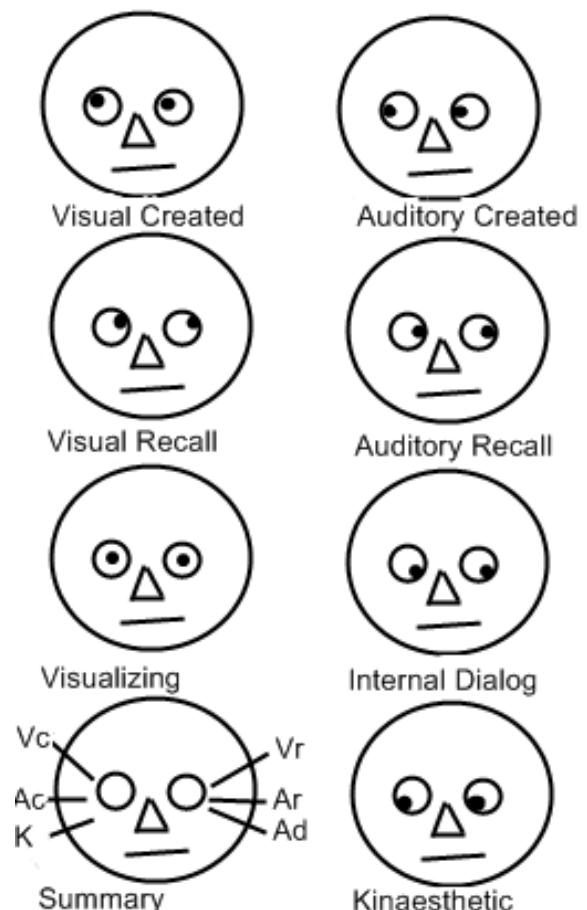
However, an **auditory digital** person might **understand** you. The word **understand** is not obviously a sensory word. It isn't obviously visual, auditory or kinaesthetic. We do not use the word understand to describe something in the real world.

Lists of words for the different states sometimes sound strange and contrived. But when you attend to the words that people are using, especially when they are being very serious or emotional, you will be aware of how they use the Modalities. In deep trance, most people are visualizers, even if they tend not to be visualizers in their normal state. Most of the models and patterns used in NLP are visually based. The auditory mode is the less frequent representational system.

Also, when discussing certain subjects, particular modes are normal. When talking about speech, then auditory words are normal. When talking about pictures, visual words are common. Similarly, when talking about doing things, such as making something, kinaesthetic words are common. This is true whatever the individuals preferred representational system.

Eye positions

When in visual mode, your eyes will tend to be either focussed ahead without actually looking at physical things, or your eyes will move to your upper right or left. When your eyes move to your right then, you are imagining something in visual form. When your eyes move to your upper left, then you are remembering something. (See also [Discovering Strategies](#) for an explanation.) In auditory mode, your eyes move to your left or to your right. If they move to your right, then you are imagining or rehearsing a sound. If to your left, then you are remembering a sound. If you look down to your right, then you are experiencing a feeling. If you look down to your left, then you are experiencing inner dialogue. Noting eye positions along with the language the person is using tell you a lot about what is happening in their minds.



Physical actions

In auditory mode, you will tend to turn your ear to the other person. In visual mode, you will tend to look straight at the other person. In kinaesthetic mode, you will tend to touch the other person.

In visual mode, you may appear to be looking at something as you talk. In kinaesthetic mode you may move your hands a lot as if doing something. And in auditory mode, you might look down and away from the person you are talking to (giving precedence to the ears).

What are Submodalities

The main modalities are visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Submodalities are the qualities. For instance, a picture (visual representation) can be

- coloured or black and white (or greyscale).
- bright or dull.
- flashing or constant.
- framed or panoramic.
- large or small.
- near or far.

These are some of the possible visual submodalities.

Similarly, a mental sound, can be

- loud or soft,
- high pitched or low,
- varied (like music) or constant (like a buzzer)
- like the sound of a piano, a cat, a lion, Donald Duck, etc

Mental feelings can be:

- Rough or smooth
- Hot or cold
- Vibrating or constant
- Dull or sharp
- Continuous or periodic

Finding Submodalities

Continuing the theme of submodalities, this page shows you how to determine your own submodalities for the three representation systems.

Using the [lists below](#), beginning with visual submodalities, you can describe more accurately given submodalities. **You can change the submodalities** and note whether the changes intensify or lessen the experience. For example, an image that is big, bright and close is often more powerful than one that is small, dull and distant. After experimenting with changing the submodalities of experiences, put the submodality back to where it was before, and then examine others. In this way, you can learn how submodalities affect you.

Submodalities tend to affect most people the same way. For example, the nearer something is the more powerful it is. However, a drug addict might be extremely anxious when an image of heroine is moved into the distance. A workaholic company manger might similarly feel anxious when he imagines his work in the distance.

So, there are general rules about submodalities, but for most effectiveness, you can determine how they work for you in particular circumstances. You can use the lists below to do this.

Contents of this Section

[Visual submodality](#)

[Auditory Modality](#)

[Auditory Digital \(Self Talk\)](#)

[Kinaesthetic](#)

Visual submodality

As you look at a mental picture, ask yourself:

1. Is it a movie or a still shot?
2. Colour or black and white?
3. Near to you or far away?
4. To your left, right, or centre?
5. Is it above you, in the middle or downwards?
6. Do you see it from an exterior or an interior viewpoint? (Are you looking through your eyes in the picture, or seeing yourself in the picture?)
7. Is it framed (in a limited area) or is it panoramic (extending throughout your visual field?)
8. Is it bright or dim?
9. Focussed or unfocussed?

Note those submodalities that are more important for you.

Framed, snap-shot, black and white, dull, distant and unfocussed pictures **are less influential for most people than their opposites**. So you would change an unwanted picture to be framed, etc, and a wanted picture to be panoramic, etc.

Location is often important. An image high in the visual field may be more awesome!

Note, visual images cannot be behind you (because you couldn't see them). Auditory and kinaesthetic images can be behind you, however.

Auditory Modality

Now consider any sounds in the representation and ask:

1. Do you hear your own voice or the voices of others?
2. Is there dialogue or a monologue?
3. Where is it located?
 - a. Inside the body or outside?
 - b. Up or down?
 - c. Left, right or centre?
 - d. Behind you or in front?
 - e. Near or far?
 - f. Is the source moving?
4. Are the sounds loud or quiet?
5. Are they expressive or monotones?
6. Fast tempo or slow?
7. Are the sounds continual or continuous with pauses?

Kinaesthetic

When you feel the effects of the image, ask:

1. Is it hard or soft?
2. Warm or cool?
3. Rough or smooth
4. Rigid or flexible
5. Sharp or dull?
6. Pressure?
 - a. Impact or stroking or uniform?
 - b. High or low?
7. Continual (non-stopping) or continuous with pauses?
 - a. Throbbing?
 - b. Uniform?
8. Solid, liquid or gaseous?
9. Where is it located?
 - a. In your body or outside?
 - b. In front or behind?
 - c. Left, right or centre?
 - d. High, low or middle?
 - e. Near or far

The **solid, liquid or gaseous quality** is easily understood with a little thought. A rock is, clearly, solid. We sometimes have the sensation of water flowing (liquid). A gaseous submodality is a wispy quality.

Kinaesthetic representations probably can't be too distant, but for some, you may have to reach out for them! Others may be in contact.

You may find it easier to work with one modality more than with others, at first. You might find the visual modality easier at first. And some submodalities may not seem relevant or influential. You can concentrate on your preferred modality and this may bring about the improvements you require. (Usually it does). But as you become more experienced, you can explore the other modalities and their submodalities.

Changing Submodalities in One Go

Story: Great Waves

In the late 1800s there was a sumo wrestler in Japan called “Great Waves”. He was extremely strong and skilled in wrestling, defeating even his own teacher in private bouts.

But he was extremely bashful in public and lost all his fights for this reason.

He consulted a teacher of Zen who said, “As your name is Great Waves, then I want you to stay in the temple and meditate on being the great waves that sweep everything before them.”

Great Waves imagined himself vividly and powerful as a great wave that swept everything before him.

After that he was never defeated again.

Suppose the image of a deflated party balloon is one that works for you as an image of relaxation. You can change your submodalities by telling yourself:

Relax, like a deflated party balloon, and see the image and feel the relaxation.

An undesirable mental image can be changed to a comical one, by adding props to the image, such as strange cartoon characters, and by adding, say antlers, to an upsetting person so instead of being upsetting, they become something to laugh at. This automatically changes the submodalities.

You can use people who you regard as experts. For instance, Mrs Jones is a very calm and relaxed person, even in difficult situations, which she handles easily. You can tell yourself:

I'll be like Mrs Jones in this situation.

The unconscious mind gets the idea.

By thinking what others might do in a situation, what they say to themselves, how they deal with problems, we take on some of the thinking and abilities of that person. For instance, if Thomas Edison is a hero for you (but the heroes don't need to be well known!) you might ask yourself:

What would Edison do in this situation?

And you change your submodalities automatically, perhaps accessing your ability to try different things and to be persistent until you attain your goal.

Changing Feelings —Kinaesthetics

Suppose your legs felt like they were walking through treacle. You might do something to change the treacle, such as adding warm water and making it thin like water so you can splash through effortlessly.

If you felt your head was being pounded by a hammer, you might imagine you have a crash hat on. Or you might reach over and grab the hammer and throw it away. You might need to do this several times until it has gone.

Similarly, if you feel like there is a great weight pressing down upon you, you could in your imagination call up superman to pull it off and throw it into the sea. Have him do this several times until you are sure it has gone.

Sometimes people experience a pain which is like a knife sticking into them. Reach the knife in your imagination and throw it away. Repeat this until you know it has gone. When the knife is gone, you can't feel the pain it caused, can you?

The pattern

1. Ask what is the feeling like?
2. Take some action that will remove the feeling.
3. Do it two or three times, or as often as necessary so the feeling has gone.
4. Test: Has the feeling gone? If not repeat the pattern.

Example

1. What is it like? I have a pain in the shoulder. It is like a bulldog clip pinching me.
2. Take some action to resolve. Take the bulldog clip off and throw it away. This makes it better.
3. Repeat: Not necessary to repeat.
4. Test: There is another pain now. Repeat the pattern...

Handle New issues that arise.

1. What is it like? It is like a ball bearing rolling down my arm.
2. Take some action to resolve. Take the ball bearing out of the arm and throw it away.
3. Repeat: Not necessary.
4. Test: Seems OK now.

How to Change Submodalities

This page examines an example technique of changing submodalities without making any assumptions about which ones are more powerful.

Comparing two states of mind

For this example, consider something you were motivated to do in the past, but are not motivated to do now (although you would like to be). For instance, you used to be keen on studying and learning, but now are not.

Sense the old representation and determine its submodalities [as explained previously](#). Make sure you sense it in the same way you used to, so that it has the same effect on you as it used to do. Now when you examine the old representation it will have the same effect as it used to have (this means you have located it!).

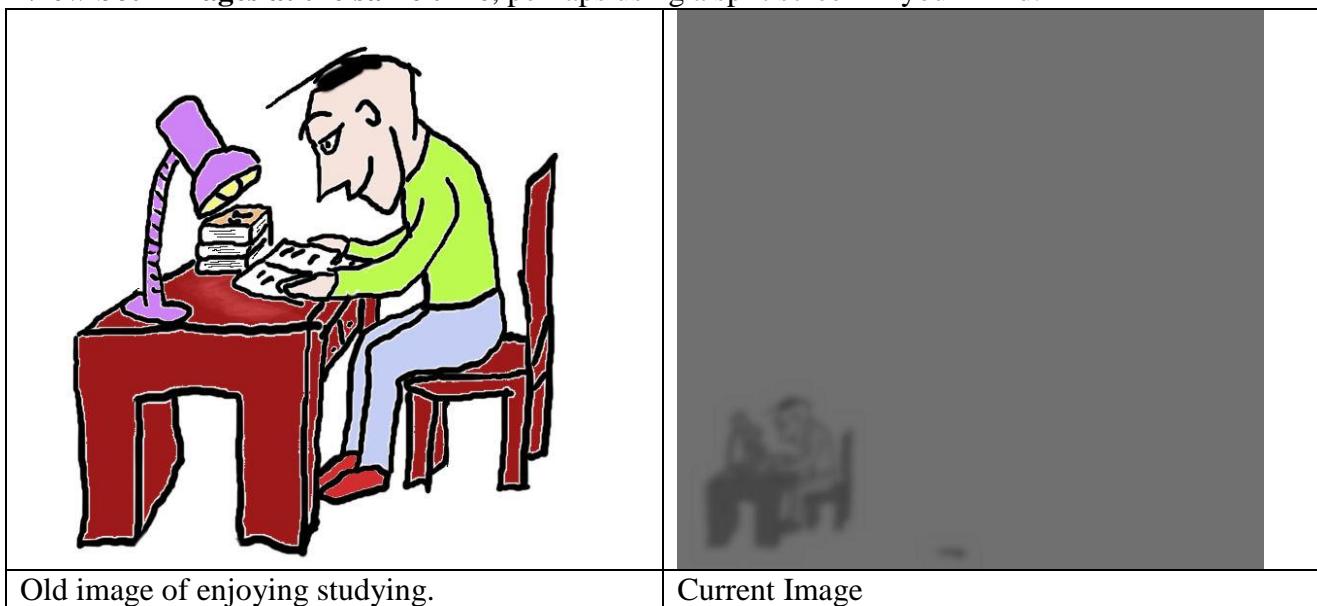


Old image of enjoying studying. Most likely in a real image, you wouldn't see yourself in the picture —it would be associated.

The visual submodality questions are reproduced below:

1. Is it a movie or a still shot?
2. Colour or black and white?
3. Near to you or far away?
4. To your left, right, or centre?
5. Is it above you, in the middle or downwards?
6. Do you see it from an exterior or an interior viewpoint? (Are you looking through your eyes in the picture, or seeing yourself in the picture?)
7. Is it framed (in a limited area) or is it panoramic (extending throughout your visual field?)
8. Is it bright or dim?
9. Focussed or unfocussed?

View both images at the same time, perhaps using a split screen in your mind.



Compare the two pictures and note how they are different.

For instance:

	Old Image	New Image
1. Is it a movie or a still shot?	Still	Still
2. Colour or black and white?	Colour	Black and White
3. Near to you or far away?	Near	Far
4. To your left, right, or centre?	Centre	Left and down
5. Is it above you, in the middle or downwards?	Middle	Down
6. Do you see it from an exterior or an interior viewpoint? (Are you looking through your eyes in the picture, or seeing yourself in the picture?)	Associated	Dissociated.
7. Is it framed (in a limited area) or is it panoramic (extending throughout your visual field?)	Panoramic	Framed
8. Is it bright or dim?	Bright	Dim
9. Focussed or unfocussed?	Focussed	Unfocussed

Use the other questions for the Auditory and Kinaesthetic Modalities, if you need to. Also note any self talk.

Now change the discovered submodalities for the present image so its submodalities are more like those of the old image! For instance, if the present image is dull, make it brighter, and similarly with the other submodalities.

Does this change the way it influences you? How it motivates you? How it sounds to you now? And how you feel about it?

Remember, put **the present image in the same location** (place in the mind) as the old one. Make it as bright and close. Put it in the same submodalities as the old image.

When images are given the same submodalities, they have similar effects. They produce **similar feelings and similar actions**.

This technique enables you to make changes in the right direction **without assuming what is generally true** is actually **true for you**. For example, for most people, under most circumstances, the submodalities big, bright and close are more effective than the opposite. But this isn't true for everyone. You take a model of an image that influences you and change the current image to suit. You take an image that works and make the new image the same in terms of submodalities.

Changing some submodalities may have little effect, whilst others have a dramatic effect.

One woman adored chocolate because its image was **smooth and flowing** but did not like grapes because they were **crunchy and explosive**. By changing their representations she became averse to eating chocolate.

Similarly a young man was not motivated to work on his PhD. Some submodalities did not have any effect. However, when he discovered a **certain voice, speaking in a certain manner, then he felt motivated**. When he felt motivated he felt a tension in his shoulder muscles. But when he felt unmotivated he felt a tension in his stomach. By changing these representations, he was able to motivate himself in his research.

A man could not hear sounds in his head - **his auditory representation was apparently absent**. This was a **belief** on his part that he could not hear sounds in his head (not a fact). He was a good visualiser and put his attention on the mouths of people in his internal image and gradually moved from looking to hearing what they said. That is, by changing submodalities, he changed his ability to perceive auditory representations.

Creative Visualization

This is, of course, changing submodalities, but it uses stories to deal with issues (and consequently change the submodalities.)

The Mind Affects the Body

It has always been believed, at some level, that the mind affects the body, but it is only recently that a clear and intimate connection exists between the central nervous system and the immune system. New sciences have developed to study this.

If you think of biting into a lemon, your saliva might flow, and if someone speaks of yawning, you might yawn. In movie theatres (cinemas) the management have noted that sales of ice cream and soft drinks increase when they show films about being in the desert. If you imagine receiving a massage, say, when you feel tense, you may find you feel relaxed. In dealing with issues of body and mind, we might choose a story or fantasy that suits our belief system and preferences.

It does not matter how bizarre your story might seem to others. (As long as it seems right to you.) Sometimes the story might take on a life of its own, and you may be surprised at what happens or how your condition is handled—what matters is the changes you get.

Supernatural

Suppose you had a condition and believed in angels. You might contact an angel to resolve your condition. The angel might also ask more specialized angels to help.

You could imagine Merlin appearing and waving his magic stick, uttering a spell, or doing whatever you think is appropriate. Your condition could disappear like magic!

Science Fiction/Fantasy

If you had a cold or flu (or anything) you could imagine a team of doctors from the future coming to heal you in a future manner. For instance, they might give you light to inhale, put special massage pads on your body —whatever you imagine would benefit. Also they could give you a future pill to cure your malady. They use whatever techniques seem right to you.

You could imagine a special strange plant transported to you in your imagination which deals with your condition. It might even sing a special song of healing.

In some conditions, you might imagine nanobots dealing with the condition. You could imagine the nanobots going after the naughty cells and gobbling them up. It doesn't have to be conflict, however, and the nanobots could be evangelists for the healthy body and convert the naughty bits to being good, or of such a minor nuisance they cause no problems.

This idea suggests using [parts negotiation](#) to get parts into agreement to bring about change. For instance, in a life-threatening condition, the part must agree that even if it's being selfish, it can survive only so long as its host does. It can therefore be led to believe that it must help to prolong the life of its host.

Regular Fantasy

If you feel tense, you could imagine someone giving you a massage. For instance, if I imagine someone massaging my shoulders, I change my submodalities from tension to relaxation.

You cannot imagine something and not experience the Results

It is impossible to imagine something and not be affected by it. You cannot imagine biting into a lemon and not noticing the effects.

The pattern

1. Identify a condition.
For instance, starting with something not major, you feel tense.
2. Develop a story of how it is helped.
For instance, you feel someone massaging your shoulders
3. Distract: do something else, or think something else.

SUDS (Rating your feelings, etc)

The effectiveness of processes is enhanced by rating degrees of belief or upset on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 indicates the absence, and 10 indicates the highest level. For instance, you could rate your anxiety or anger on a scale of 0 to 10. As you follow a process, you rate the condition again, and note how it has changed. You can also rate your beliefs using a scale of 0 to 10.

When we are in the thralls of strong emotion, we tend to be using the most primitive parts of our thinking, for instance, nominal thinking. By rating our feeling, we begin to move out of the all or nothing state of thinking where our problem persists. We move into a more resourceful state. Using the scale encourages at least ordinal thinking, and, not surprisingly, in statistics, it is called an ordinal scale!

This scale is sometimes called a SUDs scale (Subjective Units of Discomfort), but it can, as mentioned above, be used for rating other states than unresourceful ones, such as confidence. Just using this scale, without doing any other processes can lessen or completely remove the problem.

In the past, when researchers have asked subjects to rate their problems over a period of a week, or so, as a first measure of the problem before testing a therapy, they have ended up with no subjects, because the problem has resolved!

Using this rating scale is therefore highly recommended.

The State Breaker

Sometimes a state seems to persist when we wish to remove it to make room for something more resourceful.

Identify the state and name it. States might not be so definite as depression, fear, anger. But describe it succinctly. Use one or more of the following to break state:

1. Exaggerate a submodality, for instance, one to make it ridiculous. For instance, a voice saying, ‘You’ll never do it!’ might be changed to a slurping duck voice. The sound might change when it comes from another direction — from underneath or above —to the left or the right, etc. A picture can be made larger or smaller.
2. We can break state by doing arithmetic, as counting down from 10; counting in sevens —7, 14, 21, 28... (This activates the dominant hemisphere, which has often submitted to the other one).
3. Humming a tune (no words) or looking at a pleasant picture in the mind activates the non-dominant hemisphere. Whistling when afraid is an age old effective state breaker.
4. Confusion is the star state breaker. For instance, say to yourself:
How can you know that saying No is no way to know. And how can you be sure you can shore up your mind and relax peacefully now by sitting by the shore in your mind your thoughts carefully or reading George Bernard Shaw so you know to say no to, that’s right, isn’t it?

Hypnosis

The word hypnosis is vague and imprecise. It isn't easy to define. Instead, I will list some of the effects of hypnosis, called trance phenomenon. They include:

1. [Age Regression](#)
2. [Age Progression](#)
3. [Dissociation](#)
4. [Association](#)
5. [Amnesia](#)
6. [Negative Hallucination](#)
7. [Positive Hallucination](#)
8. [Time Distortion](#)
9. [Sensory Distortion](#)

Age Regression

This is imaginary travelling to an earlier age, where one exhibits the qualities one had at that age. For instance, a normal adult regressed to younger than 18 months exhibits a particular response, seen only in infants (and brain damaged people), called the Babinski response. It is extremely unlikely the average adult would know this, and would be able to fake it.

We exhibit age regression normally when we become playful, say when playing with children or with animals. Also, when we are upset, we might regress to an earlier age and act in a 'childish' manner.

Some everyday statements involving age regression:

- Let yourself go and have fun! (Become a child!)
- I spent all day playing a computer game.
- I got the giggles

Age Progression

This is imagining the future. For instance, we might imagine having fun on our next holiday, or anticipate a date.

Everyday Statements:

- I was thinking what we would do when we move abroad.
- When I am going to make a speech, I always think about what I'll say and how the audience will react.

Dissociation

Some people dissociate from emotions. They may sound or appear angry, yet deny it.

- It was as if I was in a dream, and this was not happening to me.
- (shouting) No, I'm not angry
- I imagined my arm was made of stone, so I didn't feel the pain.

Association

Whereas dissociation is the 'this is not me' phenomenon, association is the 'this is me'. We often associate into films when we watch them, and experience things as if we were there.

Everyday Statements:

- Ouch, you hit my car. (Do our nerves extend to the car we are driving?—we imagine that we were hit.)
- That was horrible. (scene from a film—we imagine we were there, experiencing the event.)
- (Enjoying watching people on a wonderful holiday.) That is wonderful. (Imagining we were there.)

Amnesia

There are two phenomena here: one, amnesia, where we forget something; and, another, hypermnesia, where we remember everything, or have an enhanced memory. As forgetting is so common, it is a good example of amnesia. Similarly, a traumatic memory might be recalled in precise and accurate detail, perhaps years later (hypermnesia).

Everyday Statements:

- Just forget it.
- It's on the tip of my tongue.
- I can't get that image out of my mind. (Can't stop thinking about it.)
- Sorry! I completely forgot.

Negative Hallucination

The word hallucination is somewhat unfortunate here, as it suggests a serious mental illness, but here it refers to a common experience. It includes false perception and also false deduction. It is a common phenomenon, where we look for something, but can't see it, even though it is right before us!

Everyday Statements:

- Oh, I didn't notice you there!
- Look! Its right in front of you. (looking everywhere for something, only to realise it is right in front of you.)
- How could I have missed it!
- I just didn't see it.

Positive Hallucination

We can look at our garden and imagine how we would like it. This is positive hallucination.

Everyday Statements:

- You think I'm barmy, don't you!
- I know what's on your mind.
- I thought I saw a cat over there.

Time Distortion

Time distortion is a familiar hypnotic phenomenon where we think that time drags, or it flies past. Real time is distorted in some fashion.

Everyday Statements:

- Time's dragging, isn't it.
- The time just flew by.
- It'll soon be over.

Sensory Distortion

This means we feel things differently. When I was up a step ladder screwing a heavy chandelier to the ceiling, I realised my arm was extremely painful. I knew I couldn't let go of the chandelier until I had screwed it to the ceiling. Without thinking of hypnosis, I imagined my arm was made of stone, and left it in place while I quickly screwed in the screws. This was sensory distortion (with some dissociation).

Everyday Statements:

- I just felt numb.
- I couldn't feel a thing.
- I just couldn't feel anything.
- I feel so sensitive, everything hurts.

Discover the model

We create our worlds by using an internal model of our world. We can change it in many ways. Different people sense the world in different ways. For some, it is full of opportunity. For others, it is full of misery. It is the same world, but sensed through different models. To change a model, you need, at first, to discover what model is being used.

How do you do that?

The above question is an excellent one to discover how you or another person creates their world and their feelings.

If another person feels anxious about something (or you feel anxious about something), ask, **How do you do that?**

You can (and should) clarify things by asking the submodality questions. For example:

When you look at that image:

- Is it big or small?
- Does it tower above you or is it below you? Or in the centre of your visual field?
- What colour is it?
- What size is it?

When speaking to another person, you can say :

If I felt anxious about this, as you do:

- What pictures would I see?
- What would I say to myself?
 - How would I say it?
 - What tone would I say it in?
 - Etc
- What would I feel (using the submodality questions).
 - Where would that feeling be?
 - Would it be heavy or light?
 - Etc

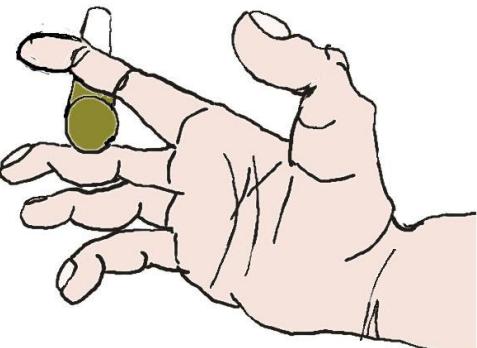
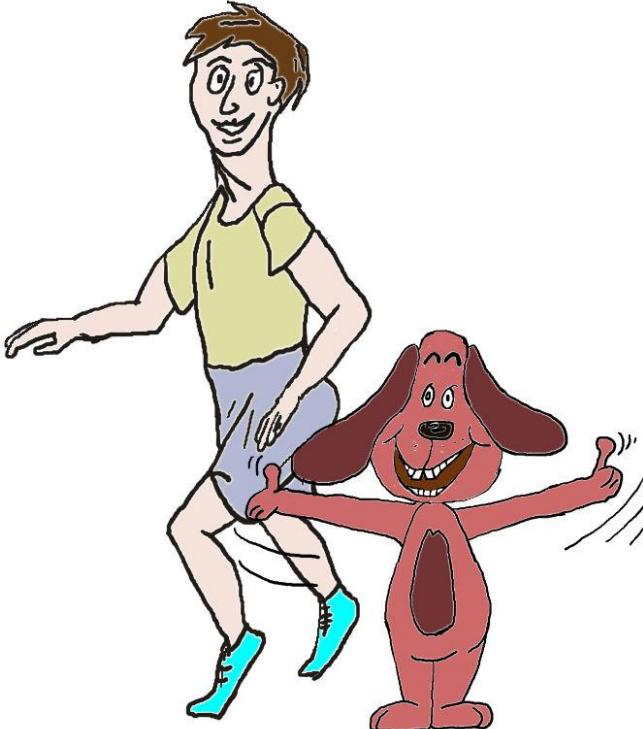
The two sets of questions **are a different way of doing the same thing** – discovering HOW you or the other person creates the feeling that they have. You are discovering the other person's model of the world so that you can make changes if required.

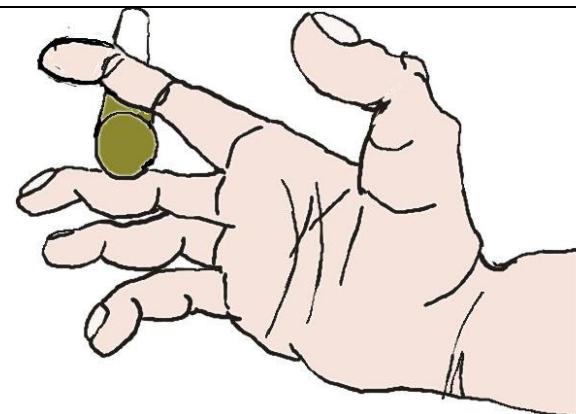
You want to know what model is used to create the specific emotions and physical actions.

Swish Pattern (Strictly, the Visual Swish Pattern)

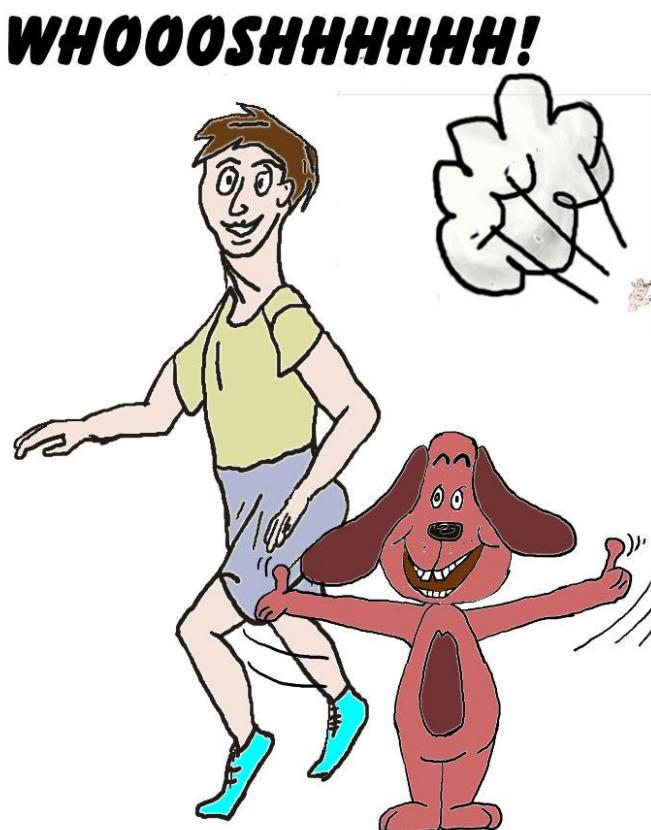
The swish pattern is a procedure that enables you to change submodalities quickly and easily. In the example below, the images are swished in terms of size and position/distance (mainly). The swish can be done with other submodalities. And with practice, you can do it with more than two submodality changes, such as size, position, colour, etc.

Here is the procedure.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Select a behaviour that you wish to change. Close your eyes and see an image of that behaviour. For example, if you wish to stop smoking, then see in your mind's eye your hand with a cigarette moving up to your mouth. Actually be in that image and see what you would normally see. This picture is the cue to smoking.
This is often the last thing you see before you perform the behaviour.	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Next create a picture of how things will be when you have attained your goal. For example, imagine looking at your hand and noting how nice it smells now. You feel yourself taking a deep breath and enjoying the clean air in your lungs. You can make the new picture more motivating by adding a band (Da! Daaa!), flashing lights, etc.
If the new image was being more healthy and fit, then you can enhance it in various ways (see submodalities). One way is to add characters cheering, clapping and otherwise validating the new state.	



Pre-swish picture



The new image whooshes up and the old image flies off into the distance.

- Now make a big, bright motivating picture of the behaviour you want to change and in the bottom right hand corner of the picture a small dark picture of the behaviour that you want.

- Then in one fast reversal have the small dark image grow (or explode) to become big and bright and the old picture is overwhelmed and becomes small and insignificant (or disappears). Whilst you do this say **Whoosh!** (Or **Swish!**) in an enthusiastic manner. Swap the images in the time it takes to say Whooshhhhhhh!

- Open your eyes to break the state, by, for instance, counting down from ten as a distraction.
(This is to prevent swishing back to the previous state!)

Repeat the swishing until it becomes hard to form the old image in an appealing way—if necessary do it a few or as many times as required (say three)—but expect it to work in one go.

The key point is to make the change very fast. The technique usually works in one repetition; however, you can repeat the technique many times, if necessary. You can do the Swish say three times and then test it to see if the old behaviour triggers the new. If not, then ensure the images are created as stated above and the swish is done extremely fast. Swish is an extremely fast and effective technique to change behaviour. Learn it well and use it!

Further Points

The swish pattern is similar to an earlier technique where two images are drawn in the mind on a swivelling mirror. The negative image is on the front and the positive one on the back. The mirror is swivelled so the positive image replaces the negative one.

The swish pattern can work extremely fast and doing it fast is important, but you should do it at the speed that seems most appropriate—in the kinaesthetic swish, the change is allowed to occur more slowly. You can intend the change to occur quickly — and you should so intend—and you allow the changes to occur as quickly as they can. This could, on occasions, mean a longer time.

Kinaesthetic Swish

The Kinaesthetic Swish isn't really different from the Visual Swish, except it sometimes longer than a couple of seconds to make the change. The feels aroused are sometimes more noticeable (as you would expect—it is kinaesthetic!)

Locate a kinaesthetic issue, but only a minor one to begin with.

Follow these steps:

1. Associate into the unresourceful feeling and determine its submodalities.
2. Break State
3. Locate a positive state and define the submodalities of that state and amplify them
4. Break State
5. Swish/Move the unresourceful state into the submodalities of the resourceful one.
6. Test

1. Associate into the unresourceful feeling and determine its Submodalities

From an associated viewpoint, determine the submodalities of the unwanted feeling —temperature, movement, location, etc.

2. Break State

For instance, count down from 10. Think of something else.

3. Locate a positive state and define its submodalities and amplify them

Locate a positive feeling. Define its submodalities —temperature, movement, location, etc. Change these submodalities to make the experience more powerful.

4. Break State

As before, count down from 10.

5. Swish the unresourceful state into the resourceful one.

Associate into the unresourceful state and move it into the location of the resourceful one. Make its submodalities change to those of the resourceful state. Do this as quickly or slowly as required. Kinaesthetics take longer to change than visuals!

6. Test

Does this result in a different experience from before. If necessary repeat the steps. Sometimes the technique might not seem to work fully, and the condition resolves over the next seconds, minutes or days—but you forget the condition and think the technique hasn't worked. The unconscious has taken its time to resolve the condition. Expect the technique to work quickly, but do not be concerned if the unconscious wants more time, and continues working to the resolution over a period.

Example

Locate an issue, but a small one to begin with.

1. Locate the unwanted feeling: I feel tired.

- It seems a heavy feeling is around the eyes.
- My neck and back seem to slump.
- The feeling is static (not moving).
- I'm not smiling.

2. Break State: Count down from 10, if necessary, and break state. I just thought of something else.

3. Locate a good feeling. I get the idea of feeling energetic. The feeling seems to be in the back of the head, is light and has movement (like dancing). My back and neck straighten up, and I smile.

4. Break state.

5. Swish: Associate into the tiredness and move its submodalities:

- Change the location to the back of the head from around the eyes.
- Make it wispy and moving around, vibrating like dancing.
- Straighten the neck and back.
- Smile

6. Test. I don't feel tired.

Changing Beliefs

You can change beliefs in the same way you can change your motivation towards something.

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The submodalities of a belief determine its intensity. So if you give a weak belief the same submodalities of a strong belief, then the weak belief becomes a strong belief or a certainty. First we need to point out that something you don't believe is a belief you are **certain** of. You strongly believe that it isn't so. This is, paradoxically, a strong belief! Different people sort their beliefs in different ways.

For example, they might be sorted in terms of how solid they are – for them, solid beliefs are held more strongly than wispy ones. Alternatively, they might be sorted by brightness. A bright belief might be stronger for that person than a dull one.

If you change the key submodality of a belief then that belief will become stronger or weaker. For example a person who sorts beliefs in terms of brightness, would make a belief less certain by making it more dull and dark. For another with solid beliefs, making a belief less solid might make it less certain. Several submodalities might be used. So Beliefs might be sorted in terms of how certain they are. And sorted on their truth value. So beliefs may be sorted on being more or less solid for certainty and more or less bright on truth. These are individual. On the other hand, you might sort your beliefs by putting the ones you are certain of in a given position and the ones you aren't certain of in another position.

Making beliefs stronger (or weaker)

To make a belief strong, first find something that you are absolutely sure of and compare the sure belief with the belief you want to make stronger. Use a split screen — if you find it helps — and look, listen and feel and touch the two beliefs and use the questions to determine and compare their submodalities. Make the belief you want to make more certain the same as the belief that is certain – that is make it have the same submodalities.

You may discover that you need to make the so-so belief:

- Bigger, brighter and nearer.
- You may need to change its location.
- You may need to make it more solid.

However, find out what works for you and make the changes accordingly. You can strengthen any belief by changing its submodalities. You can do this by comparing the belief you want to change with a belief that you hold strongly. And [by changing its submodalities](#) to match the submodalities of the strong belief. Not only do these changes occur very quickly, they MUST occur quickly, because one thing does not usually change into another gradually, but makes a quantum leap in becoming something different. So expect fast and effective change.

Negative States

When people are in negative states, they think negative things and find it hard to retrieve anything nice. Similarly, when we are in positive states, we find it hard to recall negative things. Our perception is determined by our states and we can change our states, as [explained earlier](#).

Depression

We filter the information we have coming into us. Our mental models determine how we experience life and we can change our model if we want to! No one ever experiences the world as it is. Depressed people, for example, believe strongly that one bad happening, however slight, proves that life is miserable. One slightly unfortunate act proves beyond doubt that they are bad people. Negative thoughts loom over them! They also believe that anything good is pure chance, never to be repeated. And a kind act means nothing because even bad people can do good things. They often hold the negative images of the past very close and make them loud and unpleasant. Whereas the good is pushed away and hidden. The good thoughts are pushed down and made puny. Such conditions can change dramatically and almost instantly — when the person learns to push the negative images away and make them small and dull, which brings in the pleasant images and making them big and bright!

Love

Sometimes in a relationship, the negatives are emphasised and the positives are forgotten. So that a spouse becomes associated with bad things. You can change this behaviour by changing the submodalities. There is nearly always a time when two people looked at each other with love and affection. They can remember these times and adjust their present perceptions to have the submodalities of the previous ones, so that they can re-experience the joy of being together. If negative images continue to pop up and displace the positive ones, you can use the [swish pattern](#) to put things right!

Pain

This is just one example of how you can use the submodalities to handle pain. One procedure with an image of pain is to dissociate yourself from it so you are looking at it and you are not IN it. Check out the size and shape of the pain and put it about 10 feet from you. Change the size, the shape and the distance of the image. Make it massively big and minutely small. Have it explode into an enormous size and shrink to nothing. You can take the image of pain and put it into the sun where it melts into nothingness.

The next chapter is about [strategies](#) that you can learn and use to duplicate the abilities of outstanding people. The essence of strategy is to know the ingredients - which are the five senses – and the order in which you use the ingredients. If you follow these models of excellent performance, then you can duplicate the success of the masters.

Persuasion through enlightenment

In bringing about an enlightenment or a persuasion, our listener needs to be aware that there are certain FACTS in their lives which are a PROBLEM and there are OPTIONS for change.

Suppose we say to someone 'I know of a way to improve your communication skills so you can avoid a lot of unhappiness and attain many more of your goals.'

Now this is something desirable (if true) but our listener says, 'Did you see the match on tv last night?'

They didn't even hear us. They are UNAWARE of any communication problems or any issues related to communication. Another example may be someone coughing their lungs up, and you say 'You've got a rotten cough!' and they say, 'What cough?' They aren't even aware they are coughing.

When we are UNAWARE of the existence of a situation then statements like 'I know of something that will get rid of that cough.' will get absolutely no response at all. After all they aren't aware they have a cough or that it is a problem.

To make any start in persuasive communication we need to get the other to be AWARE OF THE FACTS OF THE SITUATION - the bad cough or the bad communication skills.

'Are you a good communicator?'
'Of course I am Pea Brain!'
(Lack of AWARENESS OF THE FACTS)

'What about what you just said? How do you think people react when you talk to them like that?'

'Well, they know I don't mean it. I get by.'
(AWARENESS OF THE FACTS, but UNAWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM)

'Do you? Or do you have problems you could well do without?'
'I suppose so, but I'm OK.'

Now we have got awareness of the facts that that something is going on and awareness that it is a problem. But, and this isn't immediately obvious, UNAWARENESS OF THE OPTIONS FOR CHANGE.

If you don't like it you've got to put up with it. You have to put a smile on your face and get on with living.

If you've got no option, then you have to endure. But ...

'Suppose there was a way to improve your communication skills so that you got on better with others and attained more of your goals - would you be interested?'
(Famous Frank Betger question!)

If someone is aware that there are certain facts, and that they are a problem, then logically they MUST be interested. If they aren't, then they are UNAWARE of the FACTS or the PROBLEM.

However, this can be very frightening. The person now can dream his or her SECRET dream and feels very uncomfortable because he or she might be able to attain this thing they want. The discomfort is that they might be terribly disappointed. They might have to open up and just be made a fool.

'No I wouldn't be interested because I haven't got the time.'

They are aware of the problem, but not AWARE OF THE OPTIONS. They are also scared.

'If you could improve your communication skills (and I am not saying you CAN), and attain etc... WITHOUT IT TAKING TOO MUCH TIME, would you be interested?'

At some point they have to say Yes.

'Well, of course!' (snappily!)

We do not argue or handle objections at this point. We are creating an AWARENESS OF THE EXISTENCE OF OPTIONS.

So before there is any possibility of change, then there must be an awareness of the existence of certain facts, certain problems and ways to resolve the problem.

But this is just the start (albeit a good one). People can suddenly cognite and go through all the following stages and take action. But on other occasions they need to be carefully lead through the process.

Last time we looked at the basis of persuasion by enlightenment by considering awareness of the existence of certain relevant facts, of problems and of options. This time we will continue with AWARENESS of SIGNIFICANCE.

(Please remember that the dialogues are not models and are meant to illustrate the process only. Try to make your own dialogues and listen for example in life and on tv, etc. The process can take a long or a short time, depending on its nature.)

I can be aware of the existence of certain facts, for example, I have a cough, but unaware that this is important, or that it means anything.

Similarly, I may be aware that there is a problem - if my communication skills are bad then I won't be able to get on so well with people and I won't be able to attain my goals, But I can think, 'So what?'

And I can be aware that there are OPTIONS but believe they won't work.

If I don't believe that certain FACTS mean anything, then I won't believe that there is an important PROBLEM I may know I lose out, but I don't care.

And even if I believe there are OPTIONS, and I don't believe they will work, then I am unlikely to take ACTION.

And even if I believe that the run-ins with the boss are IMPORTANT, and I could lose my job (which I don't want to do) if I don't believe that the OPTIONS will work, then I won't be taking any action.

(Using example of arguments with family)

'That big argument you mentioned, was quite significant, wasn't it?'

'Sure was!'

And you could have a lot of PROBLEMS at home?'

'I suppose so.'

'And this is IMPORTANT to you!'

'Well I'll get by.'

'But if you could do something about it, then your life would be better?'

'There's nothing I can do.'

'But what about the

Become-a-Communication-expert-in-Only-Seven-Days-Only-\$50,000 course?'

'It wouldn't work.'

Now we have got to an awareness of the SIGNIFICANCE of OPTIONS. They exist but they don't work. He or she is aware that there are unwanted facts, problems, and options, and that these are IMPORTANT. But we get a stumbling block on the belief that the OPTIONS are workable. They exist, and they are desirable (if they work) but he or she believes they don't work. So no ACTION.

We have looked at the need to be aware of certain facts in a situation, to know there is a problem and that there are options to resolve the problem.

And at the need to be aware of the IMPORTANCE, SIGNIFICANCE, or CONSEQUENCES of these.

We got to a stage in the persuasion process where the individual accepted that there were problems, etc, and that they were important. But although OPTIONS existed, they weren't SIGNIFICANT. They wouldn't work.

(Please remember that the dialogues are not models and are meant to illustrate the process only. Try to make your own dialogues and listen for example in life and on tv, etc. The process can take a long or a short time, depending on its nature.)

Now we have got to POSSIBILITIES. Our subject admits there are relevant facts, such as a cough. That there is a problem, 'Smoking can lead to illness', and that there are OPTIONS to resolve the issue.

Or there are difficult communication situations in the person's life, and they need to learn more about communication. Help is available, but he or she believes that if they were to take up the help, it wouldn't work. Not surprisingly, they aren't keen on taking ACTION.

'Do you think it is POSSIBLE to have better relationships at home?'

'I could behave differently, and this might ease the problem, but it's IMPOSSIBLE to change the way you are.'

Here the hold up is not that there aren't any OPTIONS or that they don't work, but that it isn't possible for me

With some objections, we might need to go back to earlier stages, and deal with the UNAWARENESS in these.

Here we are looking at POSSIBILITY for change.

Not likelihood. Not that change can or will occur, but only that it COULD occur. It's like saying it's POSSIBLE that human beings might go to the planet Pluto, even if it seems unlikely at the moment. Nonetheless, it is POSSIBLE, at least in theory.

If our subject does not believe that it is possible to change, they will not believe that anyone is ABLE to change.

'Do you know of anyone who has been able to resolve their financial problems and become independent?'

(If they do they MUST admit that change is POSSIBLE.)

'Yes, but they are ruthless and think only of money.'

Our listener has admitted that change is possible (although possibly not for them).

'If you knew of someone just like you who made these changes, would you be willing to try them?'

If our listener has agreed with all the previous, and they know there is a PROBLEM, there are OPTIONS which would work for them and they are IMPORTANT then our listener is much more likely to take action.

In this series we have learned that there is no point telling someone how to solve their PROBLEM if they don't know they have one! If they know they have a problem, but do not think it is IMPORTANT, SIGNIFICANT, or does not have any CONSEQUENCES then they won't take action.

Again, the POSSIBILITY of change is necessary for our subject to take ACTION. And finally, they need to believe that THEY can make the change.

Left and Right Brain Hemispheres

When using the right hemisphere of the brain, a right-handed person tends to flick their eyes to the left. When using the left hemisphere, they tend to flick their eyes to the right. Left-handed people may not follow a clear pattern. See [eye movements](#).

Left and right brain functions	
Left brain functions	Right brain functions
sequential	simultaneous
analytical	Holistic
verbal	Images
logical	intuitive
Linear — step by step	Holistic — all in one
Perception of counting and measurement (arithmetic, algebra)	Perception of shapes and motion (geometry)
present and past	present and future
language: grammar/words, pattern perception, literal	language: intonation/emphasis, rhythm, context

A person counting tends to use the left hemisphere, and may gaze to the right. A person humming a tune (without words), tends to use the right hemisphere, and may gaze to the left.

Strategy

A strategy is a way to do something. We have strategies for everything we do. We have a strategy for getting out of bed, choosing food, making decisions, solving problems, etc.

We can learn strategies from experts — an expert isn't necessarily someone special—it might be a guy who can get out of bed and be in a good mood and be ready to carry out his waking activities. He has a good getting-out-of-bed strategy.

A strategy is a sequence of actions (in the mind or in the world) in some order. This order is sometimes called the syntax. For example, to start a car, you put the key in a certain keyhole and turn the key in a certain direction. You need to do these procedures in a particular order to achieve the result you seek. For instance, you need to turn the key in a certain direction, or the strategy won't work. This strategy has certain steps which must be performed in the correct order. So strategies have one or more procedures in some particular order. In learning a strategy we need to learn both the procedures and their specific order, to get the outcome you desire.

Representing the Code

Suppose an expert does their strategy by

1. noticing something,
2. saying something in their mind and
3. seeing a picture.

We say that the first part - noticing something – is visual and external. Hearing a voice in the mind is Auditory and Internal. Auditory can be sounds (tonal) or word meanings (digital).

We can represent a strategy using this code. So the person notices something (V_e - visual external) and hears a voice in their head (A_{id} - Auditory, internal digital). They then have a picture in their mind (V_i). We can represent the strategy as:

$V_e \rightarrow A_{id} \rightarrow V_i$

The shorthand tells us that the person notices something, has internal dialogue and sees a picture in their mind.

We can go further. Internal visual modalities can be constructed or remembered. So if the person makes an image up their minds, then we can represent this as V_{ic} . If they remembered something, then it would be Vir .

How to model

In order to teach an expert strategy, you need to find experts who can model a suitable strategy for you—these may be regular people, who aren't particularly heroes, except they can do this thing you want to learn. You need to analyse the strategy using the five senses and find out precisely what the experts do to attain their results.

Having learned the strategy, you compare it with the current strategy of novices and change the strategy of the novices in the direction of the experts. If the novice does just what the expert does, then the novice will get exactly the results that the experts get.

You may notice how this process is similar to [comparing two states](#) of mind!

Super Spelling Strategy

Originator: Robert Dilts

If you wish to remember the spelling of a word, you wouldn't do well if you tried to get the feel of it, because spelling does not really have a feel. And saying the letters again and again is not optimum because it is the visual representation that is important. Using the sound of a word to determine its spelling does not work well in English. For instance, *succeed* has two sounds. The second sound is almost always spelt **-cede**, except for three words, in English —one of which is succeed! (Other languages are more phonetic, such as German and Spanish—spelling is less of a problem in these forms.)

If you put the word to be remembered up and to the left of your visual field, then you have put it in the place for remembering. Similarly, if you make the word clear and bright, you are more likely to remember it. The spelling procedure is described below.

The Procedure

It is better to learn things in chunks of between five and nine pieces - better to go for less than five. So something more complex is better broken down into sizes that are about five letters long.

1. Take the word Mississippi and break the word up in chunks:

Mis/sis/sip/pi

The above is one way of doing this.



2. Now, write Mis in your mind and put it up and to your left ([visual recall area](#)). Put up this first chunk and check whether it is there or not. (Teachers would write, or hold a spelling card up to their right, so the students see it at their top left.)
3. Then add the next chunks, one at a time.
4. Finally check the whole word is still there, up and to your left.

You may be able to look at the word (visualised at the top left of your visual field) and spell it backwards! When you can spell it backwards, then you have learned the word!

The above model has been explained in detail to show how useful it is. Because the task is an easy one, it is a good example of the useful application of modelling.

Discovering Someone's Strategy

We may want to discover someone's strategy because we want to learn how they do something resourcefully.

We might also do this to discover what someone does to create problems for themselves, so we can guide them in changing their current unresourceful strategy to something more resourceful.

The eye position chart below gives you an idea about the Modality being used by the person when they are processing information. This pattern is followed by most right-handed people and many left-handed people.

In some cases the left and right positions are reversed.

In general, people look to the right when performing an imaginative, creative task and to the left when performing an analytical task.

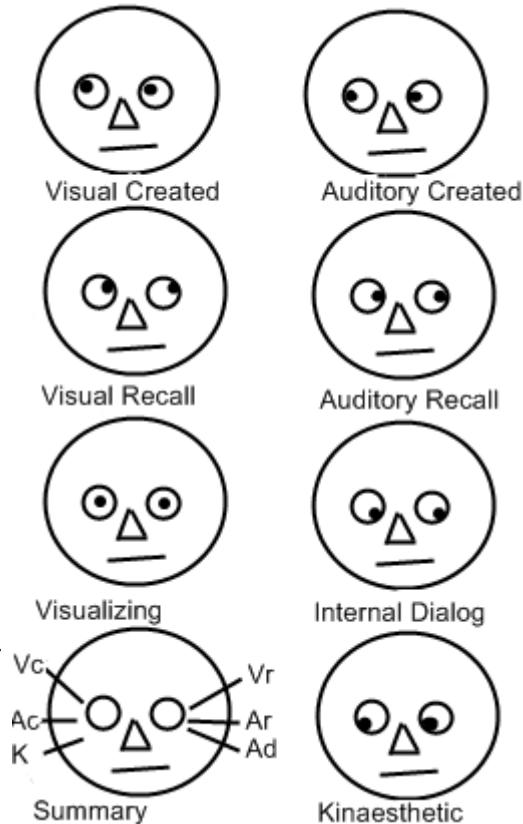
Eye Positions and Preferred Modality

The pictures on the right illustrate the eye positions and the preferred modality. When **constructing** visual images in the mind, you will notice that most people tend to look **up** and to their **right** (or stare straight ahead). When **constructing** sounds, they look **directly** to their **right**. When experiencing Kinaesthetic representations they look **down** and to their **right**. These activities often involve the **right-hand side** of the brain.

When **recalling** visual images, people tend to look **up** and to their **left**. When recalling **auditory** images they look **directly** to their **left**. When experiencing internal dialogue they look **down** and to their **left**. These activities often involve the **left-hand side** of the brain.

People visualizing may look **straight ahead** as if gazing at something that isn't there.

See also [left and right hemispheres of the brain](#).



When modelling another person, you should note their eye positions as they explain things to you.

The first rule of eliciting a strategy is to get the person inside the state. You can do this by asking the person to recall a time when they were extremely motivated. You do, of course, have to check they are really there and being motivated. You note this by seeing how they behave and speak. If they do so in a motivated way, then they are in that state now.

You ask them **what was the very first thing that got them motivated**. Was it something they saw, heard or felt? Internal or external?

Watch the eye movements to check what they say.

Then ask for the very next thing they did.

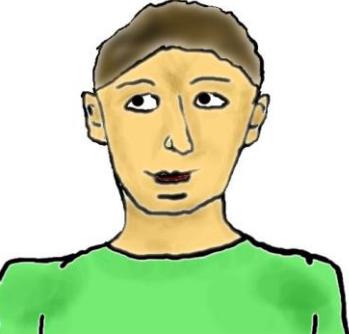
You can get the person's strategy and then test it out. You may need to go through the procedure several times to get it right, especially with a complex strategy.

How to motivate yourself and fix on your goal within 24 seconds (Strategy)!

The following is a strategy to become motivated.

You may want a goal, but do you have the motivation or enthusiasm to attain it? Are you prepared to do what it takes to get it? If not, or if you need a supercharge, then you can use this simple technique to motivate yourself to attain your goal. Try it, and, after you have spent a second or two learning it, notice how quickly it works. Be sure to follow these instructions EXACTLY!

1. Decide what you want.

2. Look down to your left (auditory recall) - move your head and eyes - and ask, 'If I could already attain my goal, what would I look like?'	
3. Move your eyes and head up to your right(Visual Created) and picture yourself actually achieving your goal as if you are watching yourself in a movie, or on TV (That is you can see yourself). 4. Make that picture bigger, closer, brighter and more colourful until it really makes a powerful impact on you	
5. Move your eyes and head down and to your right (Kinaesthetic) and step into the picture and feel what it is like to actually achieve that wonderful goal	

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For an explanation of the eye positions, see [Eye Positions](#)

Find the other's secret place and instantly influence them! (Strategy)

When we think about something, we see certain colours, hear certain sounds, experience certain feelings about it, and place it somewhere. You often see people staring at some invisible object when they are talking to you about something in their mind (Especially when they are associated into the experience).

We have learned that we can change our response to something in the mind by changing its position in the mind. When we think about something, we see it in our minds eye in a certain direction. We may actually move our eyes in that direction when we think of it.

Anything in that place (direction) takes on the qualities of that place. For instance, if we think of someone we respect, this may be located in a certain place and direction in our minds, and anything in that place acquires some respect. So if we stand in that general direction, or place something there, we or it will acquire some respect. Similarly, of course, with other states, such as fear, love, anger, etc.

The strategy is simple:

1. Identify a place in the other's mind where they have the particular state—one you wish to utilise.
2. Put yourself or an object in the general position and direction of that place.

1. Identify a place in the other's mind where they have the particular state.

Another person watching us might note this. They notice where our magic space is in the external or shared mind.

If you were a salesperson, you might ask:

You have made a really excellent decision before, haven't you?

Notice where they look, in the space between the two of you. To influence them, present your object "in that secret place" or stand in that secret place yourself. If that secret place is upwards, you might ask the person to sit, while you stand, so you can get in the general direction of that secret place, and put or hold an object there.

Ask the person to recall an experience that occurred in the past. For example, you have bought things you really liked before, haven't you?

Watch where the person looks when they tell you about something they really like, etc.

2. Put yourself or an object in the general position and direction of that place.

You can multiply your influence on that person by standing in that place, or putting the item you are trying to influence them with in that place. (If you can't get to that place where they are gazing (if they look at the roof of a nearby building, for example), you can place the object or yourself in that general direction)



Either, you are, or the item is in the secret place, and when you get them to talk again about that pleasant thing, they will look at you in their secret place, and the pleasure of that place will rub off onto you!

Similarly, an aversion response to something can be produced by putting that object (or person) in the secret place (for aversive objects).

Reframing

Juliet: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet." —*Romeo and Juliet (II, ii, 1-2)*

Reframing, however, is not just renaming. Juliet is right in a pure sense. Pure names do not affect things. For instance, whether by chance, someone was named Mr Smith or Mr Jones, does not in general affect him, or our reaction to him (Because Smith and Jones do not have a meaning in this context). In contrast, when we apply a meaningful word to a person or thing our reaction to them changes. Such words do affect how we think and act towards things.

For instance, we may say, our men are brave; but say the enemy are foolhardy (when both do the same thing). Similarly, we confiscated the property; they stole it. We are spirited; they are rowdy. Even one-word reframes change the way we think, feel and act to exactly the same sensory image.

Words can change our reactions to objects and events. A meaningful word activates an unconscious mental structure—called a frame by linguists, or a concept by psychologists—that determines how we perceive and react to things so described. For instance, if something were described as a poison, we would refuse to take it, but if it were described as a powerful medicine, we may do—even though both phrases may apply to the same thing. We react differently according to which frame is applied, because the medicine frame produces a different reaction from a poison frame. Similarly, we react and think differently towards a group depending on how they are described. We react differently towards a group described as ‘spirited’ from one described as ‘rowdy’. We do this because ‘spirited’ and ‘rowdy’ have two different frames in our minds.

The dictionary tells us that reframe means ‘To redescribe from a different perspective, to relabel.’ Reframe also means ‘express in different words’. Reframing also includes representing ideas with different symbols and changing their submodalities. That is, when we reframe an event, we may change the words, ideas and the approach we have to it. This also changes the submodalities.

Pictures in the mind can be three dimensions, so we can also reframe them by viewing them from different angles—changing viewpoint.

See [Words: Emotional and Personal Meanings](#)

One word reframes

We can describe identical, or very similar, experiences using different words to change what we think, feel and do in relation to them. Here are a few examples, mainly to illustrate the idea.

Brave	Foolhardy
Confiscate	Steal
Punish	Brutalise
Excitement	Panic
Sweet	Sickly
Outraged	Angry
Thoughtful	Depressed
Imaginative	Worrying/Fearful/Cowardly
Prudent/Cautious	Fearful/Nervous
Planning	Worrying
Creating an aspirational image	Elitist

We can rethink an experience in a more resourceful way by using words that produce more options, choices, better feeling, etc. By doing this, we are also sticking to the truth, because a reframe is just saying the same thing in a different way.

Put it in a Picture Frame and hang it on the Wall—Simple reframe of a Negative Experience

Consider something that is mildly upsetting. Just a minor concern for practice.

1. Change the picture from colour to black and white. Turn down the contrast to make it fuzzy.
2. Make any sounds into something like the sound of a film or tape rewinding (squeaky sounds). Make any upsetting voices sound comical, such as like Donald Duck. Or have them sound like you do when you pinch your nose and try to talk.
3. Make the picture into a comic cartoon.
4. Put it into a picture frame (and make it a still picture).
5. Hang it on the wall (in your mind), somewhere you never look, but if you do, you laugh at the comic.

Reframing Ideas

A frame is a mental reaction to things which may contain pictures, feelings, sound, words, etc. A frame often contains a positive or negative reaction, and examples. In NLP there are various ways we can reframe ideas. This can be illustrated by an oft told tale in NLP, that of the farmer who always says, 'Perhaps'. Actually, he seems to refuse to frame the events in any way.

Situation: His mare runs away.

Neighbours: Bad luck.

Farmer: Perhaps

Situation: Mare returns with three stallions.

Neighbours: Good luck.

Farmer: Perhaps

Situation: Farmer's son breaks his leg trying to train one of the stallions.

Neighbours: Bad luck.

Farmer: Perhaps

Situation: Army recruiter arrives and takes all young men who are fit and able. But leave the farmer's son because he has a broken leg.

Neighbours: Good luck.

Farmer: Perhaps

In the story, incidents are good or bad depending on the time. In terms of a time reframe, they are good or bad. In the short-run, the mare running off is bad luck, but in the longer term, it is good luck, because she returns followed by three wild stallions. But in an even longer time frame, the incident is bad luck because the son breaks his leg. And as time goes on the good and the bad reverse, with what at one time was bad is now good, and what at another time was good, is now bad. In response to all these, the wise farmer says, 'Perhaps'.

Reframing is not particularly intended to change the real world, but our attitude towards it; that is what we do or say in relation to events. Reframing is used in other techniques, such as [six-step reframing](#) and the [phobia cure](#), which change our responses and behaviour in the world through changing our attitude to it. So fearful things, such as spiders, go on as before, but we now react differently to them. There are many kinds of reframe including:

1. [Viewpoint Reframes](#)
2. [Time Reframes](#)
3. [Context Reframes](#)
4. [Meaning Reframes](#)
5. [Consequence Reframes](#)
6. [Comparative Reframes](#)
7. [Symbolic Reframes](#)

Viewpoint Reframes

We can view a picture in the mind from various viewpoints. For instance, a worm's-eye view or a fly-on-the-wall view. By changing the angle, we change the effect the picture has.

We can also reframe by taking other's viewpoints. For instance, an argument can be reframed from our viewpoint, the other's viewpoint and from the viewpoint of someone who is not involved. See also [Perceptual Positions](#)

Reframing Interpersonal Conflict

Consider a scene where you are in slight disagreement with another.

1. Watch the film (mental pictures) of the interaction.
2. Float into the other and see what they see, feel what they feel and think what they think. See their point of view from inside them.
3. Run the film from this viewpoint, seeing, thinking and feeling what the other does.
4. Now take a neutral observer. Someone you know and admire, or a character in a film, or from history.
5. Float into that neutral person and experience what they experience as they watch the film from a neutral viewpoint.
6. Now consider the film again with this new knowledge.

Time Reframes

Our thoughts and feelings about a situation vary when we consider it in the short term, the medium term or the long term. For instance, we might not wish to go to the dentist, but if we look at in terms of the medium term, or even from the viewpoint of tomorrow, we might feel glad we went. In the long-term, without toothache, we would have forgotten all about the discomfort. Should we remember it, then we would glad we went to the dentist in the past for the benefit of ourselves in the future.

Consider a problem you wish to solve.

1. Close your eyes
2. Imagine that you float into the future to a time when your problem has been solved.
Standing before you is another you, one who has solved that problem.
3. Float into that other. You see what they see, and feel what they feel. Experience what it is like to have solved your problem. Know you have that ability.
4. Now, keeping these resources float back to the present, knowing you can solve your problem.
5. Open your eyes.
6. Do something else to distract yourself, such as counting down from 10.

Quick Reframe

Ask: Suppose you had you already solved (that problem). What did you do?

Or:

Suppose you had you already solved (that problem). How do you feel about it? How do you think about it?

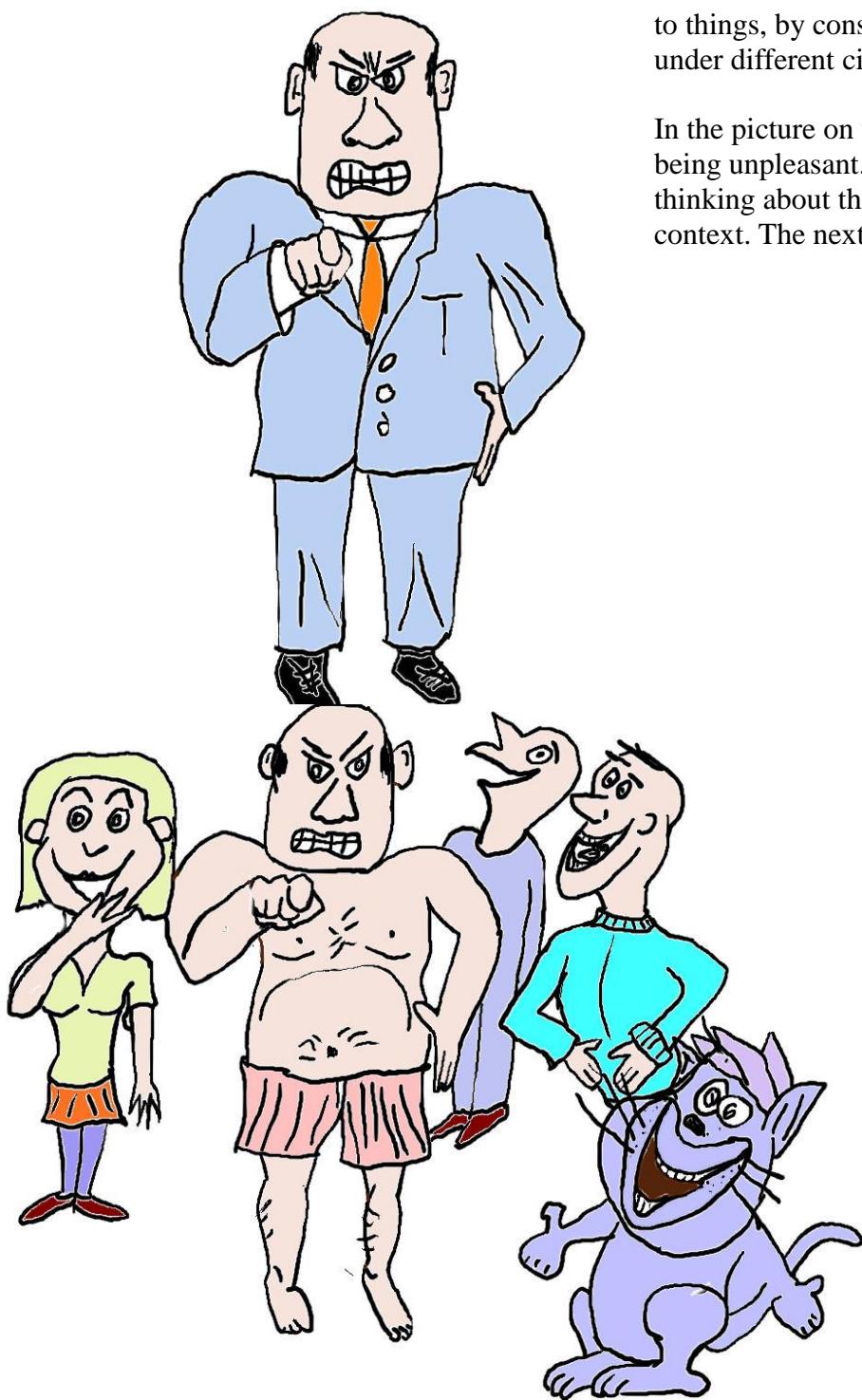
Context Reframes (Situational Reframes)

We may approve someone's behaviour in one context, but disapprove of this same behaviour in another context. For instance, we might approve of a financial manager who was a nitpicker—a stickler for detail. But disapprove of a counsellor who behaved in the same way. Similarly, we might approve of a nurse who was kind and forgiving, but disapprove of a police officer behaving in the same way.

We may respond differently to our own behaviour in different contexts. Someone might like to smoke, but refuse to do so in, for instance, an explosives store or if there was a gas leak. Similarly, someone might like to drink alcohol, but not when caring for children or before driving. We can utilise these ideas in dealing with habits, when we consider contexts where we would not indulge in the habit.

We use context reframes when we change our reactions to things, by considering them in different situations, under different circumstances or in different states.

In the picture on the left, the boss is angry with us. He is being unpleasant. We can change our reaction and thinking about the image, by putting it in a different context. The next image illustrates this.



The picture on the left shows the angry boss reframed in a new situation (without his trousers) and with everyone, including the office cat, laughing their socks off.

Mind Mastery by Ken Ward

To some, he no longer looks so fierce!

Naturally, we are as free as our imagination to create new situations, in this case, where the image is enjoyable and laughable, rather than intimidating.

Meaning Reframes

We find some experiences non-resourceful because of how we think about them. Actually, most of the times when we interpret something in a non-resourceful way, we are wrong, and have made the wrong interpretation. We are happier in life when we attribute positive intentions or positive meanings to experiences.

Events and incidents do not have meanings, except those we or others give them. For instance, we are upset because a friend does not acknowledge us. We think they no longer like us for some reason. We can ask, 'What other meaning could this have?'. Of course, the friend might not have noticed us, or have been distracted, and did not realize we would be so upset. In any event, we give the incident a meaning; it does not have one of its own.

The Glad Game

"When you look for the bad in mankind expecting to find it, you surely will." – Abraham Lincoln (Inscription on Pollyanna's brooch, a gift from her father). (Also, actually a quote by David Swift, Director of the film *Pollyanna*, not Lincoln.)

One use of meaning reframes is to have a cheery, optimistic attitude and maintaining a generous attitude towards the motives of others. In the story of *Pollyanna*, an orphan who had been taught the glad game, she would seek something to be glad about in every situation. The word *pollyannish* refers to this attitude and also the negative – a derogatory term referring to the naïve optimist. We can maintain a charitable view of the motives of others without being naïve and without failing to understand the motives of people in the real world.

When *Pollyanna* hoped to find a doll in a missionary barrel but found some crutches, she was at first challenged to find something to be glad about. Then she decided she could be glad because she didn't need them! And when she faced her challenge of losing the use of her legs, she eventually found something to be glad about: having had legs.

Consider the meanings we could give to this:

I hate you.

We could think:

- She is a horrible person
- She is hateful.
- She is evil.
- She has been honest. She has truly told me what she feels. I can be glad she told me this.
- She is upset
- She is a human being and subject to all the pressures we all are.

Now, which is true? We do not know. They all could be true. But which meaning is going to empower us and make us feel better? Deciding on one or all of the last two meanings does not make us naïve and credulous. In fact, we can be glad about them all:

- She is a horrible person, and I glad she revealed this.
- She is hateful, and I glad she revealed this.
- She is evil, and I glad she revealed this.
- She has been honest. She has truly told me what she feels. I can be glad she told me this.
- She is upset, and I am glad she told me.
- She is a human being and subject to all the pressures we all are, and I am glad she validated this.

Mind Mastery by Ken Ward

If she has truly become our enemy (unlikely) we can be glad she told us up front rather than to keep quiet and wait for her chance to stab us in the back. By finding something to be glad about we can acknowledge the situation and move on, without holding on to too much emotional baggage.

Consequence Reframes

When we do a consequence reframe, we consider the possible consequences of behaviour or belief. For instance:

Because of this divorce, my life is over.

The idea is that the divorce will cause ‘your life to be over.’ That is, this is what the consequence will be. The suitable reframe is a change in the perception of this consequence. We could use the [Being Specific Model](#) to try to bring about a consequence reframe.

- **How does the fact that you are divorced mean your life is over?**
- **Is this true for everyone?**
- **How are you different from them?**
- **Suppose you took a positive view, what would you think? Say to yourself? What images would you see? How would you feel?**

Comparative Reframes (Half full or half empty?)

One option may not appeal at all, but if there is a forced choice between this and something worse, then the first option can seem very attractive.

‘I cried because I had no shoes, until I saw a man who had no feet.’

In the Being Specific Model, we deal with comparatives, such as ‘This is better’, by asking, ‘Better than what?’ That is, we find the basis of comparison. In comparative reframes, we change our reactions by changing the basis of comparison. For instance:

A: I had an awful day at work. It was terrible.
B: The word terrible implies the worst thing happened.
A: Is there nothing worse that could have happened?
B: Well... I suppose I could have been fired.
A: And compared with that, how was your day?
B: I suppose it wasn’t that bad a day after all.

Compared with a peaceful day, then the day was bad. But compared with other kinds of days, it wasn’t that bad after all.

B: I feel really miserable. My girlfriend can’t come on our date.
A: Is there nothing worse that could have happened?
B: Well I guess we could have broken up.
A: And compared with that?
B: Well, I suppose it isn’t that bad.

Comparative reframes put experiences into perspective, and by comparing experiencing with something worse, they can seem much less upsetting.

Comparative reframes work better than other reframes when we are upset. See [Ordinal Thinking](#).

Symbolic Reframes

There is a story from Buddhism where a certain monk could learn nothing. It was, I think, the Buddha who is credited with giving him the task of sweeping out the temple. As he swept, he was to say, ‘Out dirt! Out dirt! Out dirt!’ It is said he eventually realised what this meant and attained his enlightenment.

Cleaning

We can use the same idea to help us when we are doing our tasks in life. It may not be interesting to clean our rooms, but we can reframe the task in some way. For instance, ‘I clear the rubbish from my mind.’ You will, of course, think of your own example.

You get the idea.

You might prefer to think, ‘**As I** clean this table (of dust), **so I** clear my mind’. ‘I wipe away this dust, **and** my mind becomes clearer.’

Dusting the room might not seem motivating, but ‘Clearing my mind of unwanted thoughts and emotions’ may be motivating. And your symbolic reframe will be motivating to you.

Shopping

When shopping for food, you might think, ‘I collect the resources I need to attain my goals.’

Waiting

(Waiting for a train) **Just as** I expect the train to arrive in the course of time, I expect good things to come into my life in the course of time.’

(In a queue) **Because** through patience I will eventually be served, so by patience I will eventually attain my goals.

Labelling and Relabeling

In the old medical trade there was (and perhaps still is) the saying, ‘Give it a name!’ The name for an unknown condition might have been given as a Latin (or Greek) description. It seems that patients feel better when their condition has been given a label or name.

Story: The Unknown Animal

Nasrudin moved into a house in England. One night he saw a strange animal that made an alien sound.

He told the neighbours the next day.

“What was like?” they asked.

“It looked like no animal I had ever seen before and it made a sound like no Earthly creature.”

The neighbours were concerned about their pets, children and themselves, and, of course, about Nasrudin too. What could it be?

The next night the neighbours lay in wait with Nasrudin for the animal.

At a certain time they saw a movement.

“There it is!” shrieked Nasrudin.

They all laughed out of relief.
“That’s just a hedgehog they said.
It is quite harmless. Just leave it some food.”

[This story is fiction, but a similar story occurred in the newspapers some years ago.]

We tend to think that English is a rich and expressive language, but there are concepts that we cannot express easily.

For instance, in German, there is a word ‘Fachidiot’, which refers to someone who is extremely knowledgeable in one area of knowledge, but ignorant outside that area.

For instance, chemists inventing DDT were aware of the toxicity for mosquitoes, but unaware of the toxicity for people, and the natural enemies of mosquitoes. Also unaware that some mosquitoes would become resistant and —because DDT had killed their natural predators— would proliferate uncontrollably—making DDT the cause of a worse ecological problem. We do not have a name for this concept in English.

When there are no names for certain experiences, there can be unwanted consequences.

Apparently, in Tahiti they have no concept or word for grief. They experience it but it is not regarded as a normal emotion. The number of suicides in Tahiti is surprisingly high. According to the anthropologist, Bob Levy, the reason is, in part, because they have no grief rituals, no grief counselling, and no word for grief.

Simply giving something a name is the first step in understanding.

If we can find a name for something, then we feel better about it.

Everything has a positive intention.

How do I know that? Actually I don't. I do know, however, that no one knows their true motivation. The reasons we give for what we do are usually made up afterwards. They are usually uttered because they are socially acceptable. Even the worst criminal believes that what they are doing is right, or good in some way. Otherwise they wouldn't do it. Was it Baby Face Malone who, as he lay dying with multiple bullet wounds after committing many crimes, muttered, 'I only wanted to help people.'

As a guide it helps to think that everybody thinks they are doing right. If we think others do bad things because they have evil intentions then we give up trying to influence them, and we may become afraid of them. So assume that everyone has a good intention – however bad they behave to you or to others!

If you want to influence, then assume a good intention. They probably have a good intention, or at least you can persuade them they have! When we reframe intentions positively, we are using a meaning reframe.

See [Finding Positive Intentions.](#)

See also [the glad game \(meaning reframes.\)](#)

How can we use this information?

We use this by reframing or reinterpreting the meaning of something. These are examples and you probably wouldn't actually say all of them to the speaker.

The following quick examples illustrate this point. Some might need you to develop more rapport with yourself or the other. They are examples of the principle in the raw!

Harry died.

Perhaps it was a blessing. He suffered so much.

Of course, we wouldn't actually say that, but we might lead the other to say it.

When my mother died, I consoled myself in part, by saying it was good she died rather than for her to suffer more pain.

I got sacked.

Now you've really got an opportunity to discover your real abilities.

There was a massacre on the television news.

It teaches us how lucky we are.

I hate you.

Thank you for being honest with me. I appreciate that. Not everyone would show their real feelings.

Actually, if someone says how they feel about us, we should rejoice. It is so much better to know our enemies than to think they are friends.

You made the stupidest mistake I have ever seen!

Thank you for that feedback. You must care a lot about what I do.

Okay, so sometimes we are ironic. This is better than saying nasty things, and the other might rethink.

That dress you are wearing is awful.

You must care about how I look, otherwise you wouldn't have told me that.

Thank you for being honest.

I don't want to speak to you ever again.

You are a sincere person. When you are upset with someone you don't want to pretend to get on with them. I admire your sincerity.

I feel awful.

You are very aware of your emotions. It's good to get in touch with your feelings, isn't it?

This is hopeless.

You have tried very hard, haven't you. And you care deeply about the outcome.

I'll never succeed.

You care about success don't you?

Do you get the idea? There is a silver lining, we are told, in every cloud. When you pick out the silver lining then the other person is less likely to disagree with you. There are many types of reframing, and reframing intentions as positive is one type.

Do you think these are bad examples, or not very good ones?

You must be interested, otherwise you wouldn't have thought about this, would you?

And you must have an idea what good examples are – how else could you know these were not so good!

Also we could have used the [Being specific model](#) on these.

Let's try a conversation:

I'm not going to help you any more.

Thank you for being honest with me. I appreciate that.

You always get yourself into trouble, and need help.

You must care about me, otherwise you wouldn't be so angry.

I don't care about you at all!

You are very forthright! That's a good quality.

You are trying to weasel your way round me!

You are very strong minded. I don't think I could weasel my way round you if I wanted, do you?

Probably. What was that help you wanted?

We do not know why we do things, so if someone claims that we are doing something for some reason and this is a good reason we are inclined to believe it. If we are angry or negative with another person, and that person responds with positive reframing, then we are likely to get confused. Here we are trying to be obnoxious and the other person is saying lots of nice things we like to hear!

Remember, here we are learning about reframing positive intentions. In real conversations we would use all the skills we have, not just reframing, and not just one kind of reframing.

More examples:

No I won't do it.

You are very confident.

Your product is just too expensive.

You are concerned about good value, aren't you?

Your ideas don't work.

You have a clear idea of what does and what doesn't work, and you are determined to discover effective ideas, aren't you. That's good.

I once heard a talk where the speaker said the difference between how men and women behave can be illustrated by how they deal with an angry dog. A man would, the speaker claimed, say, 'Good dog! Good dog!' while he looked around for a big stick. A woman, on the other hand would say, 'Good dog! Good Dog!', until it actually believed it was a good dog! I don't believe that this represents a sex difference. It's just good psychology. When you reframe you are telling them what a good doggy they are until they believe it! And it works. It works because at heart, that's what we all are. No matter how foolish our behaviour, our intentions are always good.

Other Reframes

There are a great variety of ways to reframe and the different examples of types of reframes are meant to clarify the idea of reframing, and not to be in any way exclusive.

Six-step Reframing

Originator: John Grinder

Six step reframing is **not normally used** with behaviour that has a strong negative response (such as a phobia). The reason for this is that the signal chosen by the part is sometimes the phobic response. Someone with a horror of flying things might find the signal is that horror. You *can* use six-step reframing anyhow, but using the [phobia cure](#) or the [swish pattern](#) may be much easier (and cause much less discomfort!).

Contents of this Section

1. [Identify the behaviour or response to be changed](#)
2. [Establish communication with the part which is responsible for the behaviour](#)
3. [Separate the positive intention from the behaviour](#)
4. [Ask your creative part to generate new ways that will accomplish the same purpose](#)
5. [Ask the part if it will agree to use the new choices over the next few weeks, rather than the old behaviour.](#)
6. [Ecological Check](#)
7. [Quick Reframe](#)

1. Identify the behaviour or response to be changed.

You need to identify the behaviour that you need to change. This is usually,

'**I want to do** something, but **something stops** me.'

Or:



'**I do not want to do** something, but **I seem to end up doing it just the same**.'

When working with another, it is **not** necessary to know what the behaviour actually is: they need to know what it is, but they can keep it secret from you, if they like. The advantage is that if it is something a bit embarrassing, they don't have to reveal it when working with another.

For example, you loaf about when you think you ought to be more active.

2. Establish communication with the part which is responsible for the behaviour



Go inside and **ask the part if it is willing to communicate with you in consciousness?**

Notice the feelings inside of you. This is an unconscious response, so ask yourself: can you reproduce that signal consciously? If you can this it isn't the response you require!

Example, the cartoon of the rising finger is a **symbol** for the feeling you don't want. Often it is an internal feeling, not a body movement.

The signal should be unconscious because if the response were conscious, then it would be easy to turn it off. You could just decide not to do it. For example, when you hear that another has got the job you really longed for, and you want to be decent and congratulate them, but when you do so you feel that sense of discomfort. Can you

turn that sense of discomfort off? Can you stop feeling that sense of discomfort, even though you don't want to feel it?

That feeling is the unconscious signal. Establish a communication system. Ask the part to increase the signal for 'Yes' and decrease it for 'No'. Get it to do this several times so you get a 'Yes' and a 'No' signal that are quite clear. Thank the part for co-operating.

Note: the signal is often the unwanted feeling, which is why we use the Phobia Cure for phobias, and not this six-step reframing.

3. Separate the positive intention from the behaviour

Now you need to find the positive intention behind the behaviour. Ask the part this question:

'Will the part which is responsible for the behaviour let me know the **positive intention** for what it is trying to do?'



It will give you a clear positive intention of what it is trying to do. This may be a surprise to your conscious mind. Should you get a 'No' signal to the request for the positive intention, you can just assume there is one and continue to the next step. Or you could ask under what circumstances it **would** let you know.

Ask the part,
'If you were **given** ways to accomplish this positive intention, at least as well, if not better than the present way, would you be willing to try them out?'

If you get a 'No', your signals are scrambled - no part would turn down an offer like this!

The cartoon is **symbol** for the positive intention.

Note: All parts have positive intentions.

4. Ask your creative part to generate new ways of behaving that will accomplish the same purpose.



There is a part in all of us that is extremely creative. Ask your creative part to generate as many solutions as it can - you do not need to know what these are consciously. Ask the part being negotiated with to select at least three of these for it to try. These are ways that the part can use to satisfy its positive intention just as well as the former behaviour, if not better. Ask it to give you a signal each time it has selected a new behaviour. Take as long as you need on this part of the process. Thank your creative part when you have finished.

5. Ask the part if it will agree to use the new choices over the next few weeks, rather than the old behaviour.



This is future rehearsing the new behaviour. There is no reason why the part should not agree to do this. If you get a 'No', then tell it, it can still use the old behaviour – only use the new behaviour first. If you still get a 'No', then reframe the objecting part (By going back to step 1, and addressing the objecting part).

6. Ecological Check

	<p>Go inside and ask, 'Does any part of me object to the new choices?' If there are objections then check them out by asking the part to intensify the signal. You can future pace the solutions, experiencing yourself doing the new behaviour and checking for objecting feelings/parts. If there are objections then you can reframe the part or ask it to get together with the creative part to find more solutions. In any case, ensure that there are no objecting parts, otherwise they may try to sabotage the new behaviour. Example: While thinking about one solution—walking more—we check for any objecting parts.</p>
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Summary

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
- Identify a problem.
Identify the part producing the problem, and get different signals for 'Yes' and 'No'. Thank the part for cooperating.
Get the part's positive intention: ask it 'If you were given ways of achieving this intention just as well or even better than now, would you be willing to try them out for a week or so?'
Ask your creative part to generate many possible solutions (it does not have to find only good ones!) while the part in question gives a 'Yes' signal when there is a solution it thinks it might use. Get at least three. Thank the parts.



5. Ask the part if it will agree to try these in the next few weeks.

6. Check that there aren't any objecting parts. If so, reframe them.
See also [Energy Medicine Approach to Healing](#) and [Handling Strong Emotions](#)

Quick (Six-step reframing in one step) Reframes

Ask:

What would you be doing if you weren't (unwanted behaviour)?

For example:

What would you be doing if you weren't worrying all the time?

What would you be doing if you weren't procrastinating?

You could also ask:

Suppose you no longer had that problem, what would you see, hear, feel, say to yourself, etc?

In order to answer these questions, the listener has to move into the resourceful state.

Finding Positive Intentions

Every behaviour, even unwanted behaviour, has or had a positive intention (purpose) behind it, and was perceived as the right or best thing to do under the given circumstances of its creation. After its establishment in a specific situation, it could, of course, have been widely over-generalised. Because it becomes automatic and unconscious, it occurs even when inappropriate, or when better means are possible.

The Principle that Every Behaviour has a Positive Intention (Purpose)

The statement ‘Every behaviour has a positive intention’ is a principle. That is, it is not a law of science. Like the principle, every event has a cause (which is not a law of science, but a fundamental principle), the positive-intention principle cannot be proved or disproved.

It is an analogy with biology where those organisms which survive are those whose behaviour and capabilities are such that they give the organism an advantage over those organisms that do not have these behaviours and capabilities.

Even very negative behaviours, such as self immolation, have a positive purpose, perhaps to increase the well-being of the organism and reduce suffering (perhaps irrationally to gain love). The kind of thinking might originate in some way from childhood and might not have been well-thought out. That is, the positive intention—to increase well being and reduce suffering or gain love—can be achieved in various ways, and better ways might be found, with the benefit of adult thinking.

For instance, nail biting might have arisen to deal with covert anger, say towards a parent. An outburst of anger or violence might have helped in an actual dangerous situation. These can become automatic and generalised so they arise when they are no longer appropriate, such as an outburst of anger when confronted by the boss, when more effective and appropriate social skills are available. Yet the part may not get updated without knowledgeable handling, such as [six-step reframing](#).

Follow these three step:

1. Identify the Problem
2. Get into Communication with the Part
3. Reveal the Underlying Motive
4. Discover the Core Motive

Identify the Problem

Determine the problem. For instance:

1. Nail biting
2. Procrastination
3. Jealousy
4. Pain

However, you may wish to be more specific:

1. Biting my nails when watching television.
2. Putting off doing important jobs, such as food shopping
3. Imagining my partner is doing things with other men (women)
4. A shooting pain in the shoulder

But you might prefer to have a label for the behaviour, that you understand in a specific way. So, you understand ‘procrastination’ in the particular problem and use it as a label.

Get into Communication with the Part

There are various parts or unconscious machines of the mind, that do various jobs for us. On the biological level, they ensure we breathe as necessary, without having to think of it. We do not normally know how these parts work or how to control them (they are unconscious and automatic).

Look inside and get into communication with the part controlling the behaviour (or just assume it is there to communicate).

Assume the part has your best interests at heart (which it has)—that is, it has a positive intention or purpose—and that it wishes to help you, even if it is misguided in the behaviour it chooses to help you.

Reveal the Underlying Motive

Ask it:

What do you intend for me (us, all the body and mind parts) **by doing** (this behaviour)?

1. What do you intend for me (us, all the body and mind parts) by Nail biting
2. What do you intend for me (us, all the body and mind parts) by Procrastination
3. What do you intend for me (us, all the body and mind parts) by Jealousy
4. What do you intend for me (us, all the body and mind parts) by producing pain?

Alternative questions are:

What positive purpose do you have for me (us, all the body and mind parts) **by doing** (this behaviour)?

What does doing (X) do for me?

For instance, the part might say:

1. To punish you (Nail biting)
2. To reduce stress (Procrastination)
3. To stop you getting upset by preparing you for the worst. (Jealousy)
4. To inform you of a need for attention and prevent you using the shoulder.

Discover the Core Motive

You can clarify by asking various questions until you get a positive intention. Ask, repetitively if necessary:

What would this do for me?

For instance:

1. What would (punishing me—negative intention) do for me?
Make you a better person (positive intention)
2. What would reducing stress do for me?
Make you happier.

3. What would stopping me getting upset do for me?
Make you happier.
4. What would producing this information do for me?
Make you healthy

Core motives are one or more of a small number of higher level motives and may be

- happiness,
- enlightenment,
- safety,
- knowledge,
- health, etc.

Sometimes, all we need to discover is a positive intention (That's all we ask for in six-step reframing), and it isn't necessary to go up the hierarchy to find the core motive.

Next Steps

This pattern is used as part of other patterns. The next steps would usually involve finding positive and effective alternative behaviours and getting the part to choose one or more of them.

Comment

This pattern is used as part of other patterns, such as six-step reframing.

Ecology Check (Is what you are doing or intend something you really want?)

Story: Was it worth it?

A man had lent half a silver piece, but the debtor had not repaid him.

Although he hated travelling he decided to get his money.

He paid 2 silver pieces to cross the river and after a day's journey, ten silver pieces for a room at an inn.

When he reached the debtor's house, the debtor was not there.

The man returned home, travelling all day and paying the 2 silver pieces to the ferry man to cross the river to his home.

He said to himself, 'I have not achieved my intention and have lost more than I would have gained, in money, time and odious travelling.'

And he also thought, 'What if I had got what I wanted, would I have been better off than doing something else?'

100 Parables Sutra

The ecology check is used to check whether the goal you are seeking, or any other change, or what you are doing now is what is aligned with yourself and your present and future wants and needs.

1. Be objective
2. Move in time
3. Ask good questions
4. Give the unconscious time
5. Evaluate

Be objective

Adopt the viewpoint of a third party observer who is not involved, but acts like a wise judge. If you are in this state, you will notice advantages and disadvantages. If you cannot discover any disadvantages, you are not thinking clearly, and using wishful thinking. If you cannot find any advantages, then you are adopting an extremely pessimistic viewpoint. Change your viewpoint to be more objective. Also see [nominal thinking](#). And [Perceptual Positions](#)

Move in time

In the case of a goal or future, move into that future. Ask yourself, suppose you had attained this new state in the future now, and you review how things are for you now in the future, looking back from the new present.

For the present situation, review the facts from the now.

Ask good questions

From your perspective in the present or future time, ask:

1. What are the benefits of this for me, and those I care about?
2. What are the disadvantages for me and those I care about? (If you cannot find any disadvantages, you must try harder. It means you are not thinking objectively. Everything has advantages and disadvantages.)
3. Am I completely sure this is what I want?
4. What are the specific immediate effects of this change (or present situation)
5. What are the medium and long term effects?

Give the unconscious time

Sometimes you just do an ecology check and ask the questions and listen inside for the answers. Other times, you might continue the process for some days, allowing the answers to come, as dreams, songs, ideas, etc as the unconscious works on the matter.

Evaluate

Make a decision what to do: whether to continue with things as they are to pursue the changes.

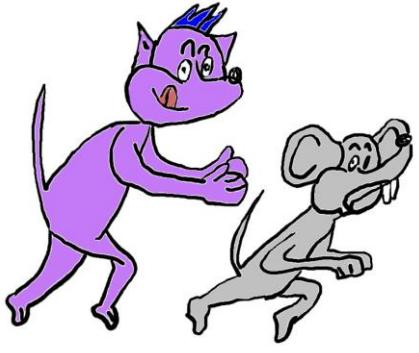
The Phobia Cure

Originator: Richard Bandler/John Grinder

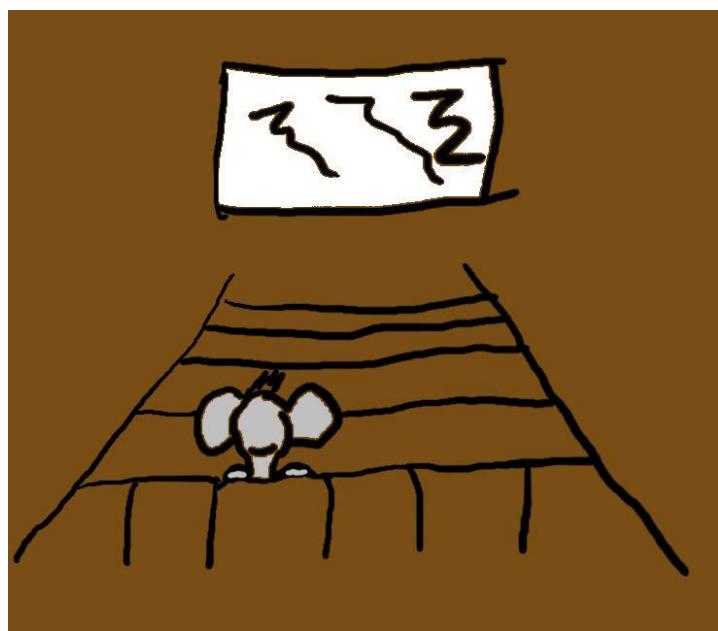
You can use the phobia cure to deal with unpleasant memories or experiences and handle them quickly. Remember that most of this stuff is individual and you might want to change things when you have learned the basic pattern. As a note, this technique has been used to deal with very strong phobias and even PTSD. The advantage is that when the user has been taught the technique they can go away and apply it to their phobias and so the teacher is freed from the danger of developing phobias themselves (which they can cure in a few minutes with this technique!)

Just a point here — read all the steps before you start for real, and then choose an experience which is a little upsetting, but not too bad. Ensure you know this process (the phobia cure) extremely well before trying it on any real phobias! Practice with an easy example first.

Since there is no point in making the instruction material traumatic, the example taken is of a mouse being chased by a cat.

		
This is the point of safety just before the incident happens. The mouse is happily eating some cheese, before the cat appears.	This is (part of) the phobic incident.	This is a time after the incident (when the mouse has escaped into his hole) when he was sure he was safe.

Here are the steps of the phobia cure.



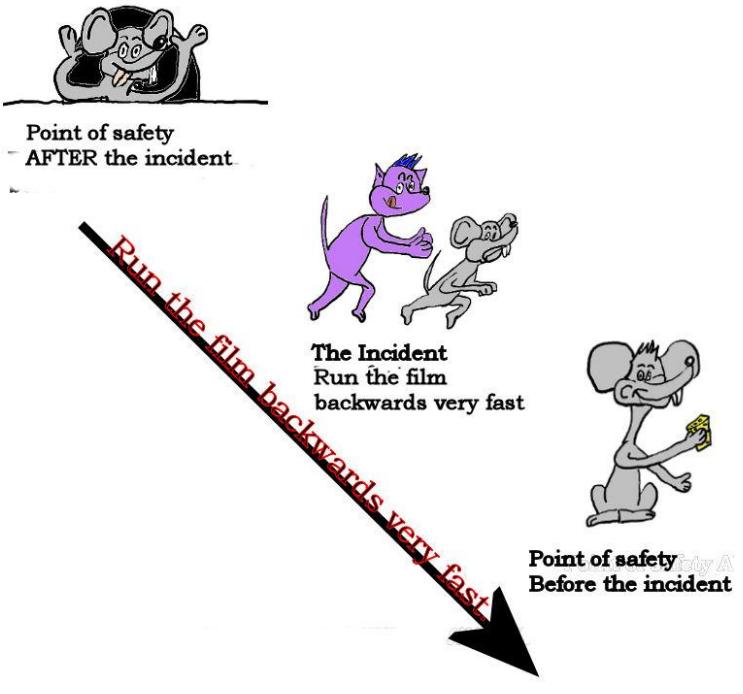
1) Disassociate

Imagine that you are sitting in the cinema watching the screen. The film hasn't started yet, so you look at the white screen. As you sit there in your imagination, imagine that you float out of your body and up to the projection booth. From there you look down at yourself in the cinema watching the blank screen. You can watch the film with others or alone.

2) Run the movie in black and white



Now run the movie of the experience in black and white. From the safety of the projection booth, you can watch your other self sitting in the movie theatre, watching the film until it reaches a point where you know you are safe. The danger has gone. **You do not have to watch the film yourself.** Your other self (sitting in the cinema or movie theatre) does that, and you simply *know* the trauma is running.

	<p>3) Freeze the film at this safe point</p> <p>You freeze the film at this point where you are safe (after the trauma has ended).</p>
	<p>4) Float down into the film</p> <p>Then you float from the projection booth down into the self in the film and then, in full colour run the film backwards to a point before the danger existed and where you were safe. This should take a couple of seconds. Everyone and everything moves backwards and very fast, like a fast rewind. The speech has that funny, squeaky sound when it runs backwards. You run the film backwards really fast and when it has finished, you jump out of the experience back into your body. Often this will make you laugh!</p>

Repeat

You should repeat this process until the phobia is cured. Most likely this will occur after two or three runs or at most five. But saying that, do it as few or as many times as it is needed.

Theory

What you do is to disassociate yourself from the experience. Instead of being inside it, you pull yourself out of it so you see it in a different way.

Variations

When you view an unpleasant incident from a different position, you view it differently, because all experiences look (and more importantly, feel) different from a different angle. This is called a viewpoint reframe. You could view an experience from the viewpoint of a fly on the ceiling looking down, or from the viewpoint of a worm on the ground looking up.

Energy Medicine Approach to Healing

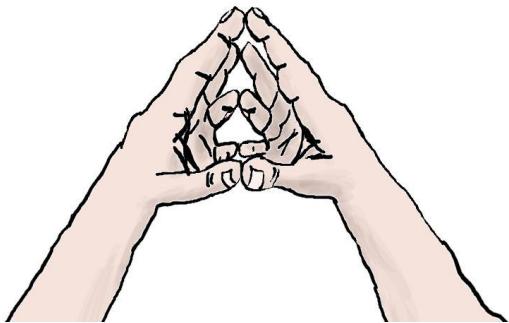
There are various approaches to healing, including emotional healing. In particular, Gary Craig's [Emotional Freedom Technique](#) and the Serge King's Dynamind Technique.

Try the following pattern, which consists of the following:

1. Hand Positions
2. Statement
3. Breathing
4. Tapping
5. Evaluate

Hand Positions

Join the fingers in front of you as if you were holding a globe:



Statement

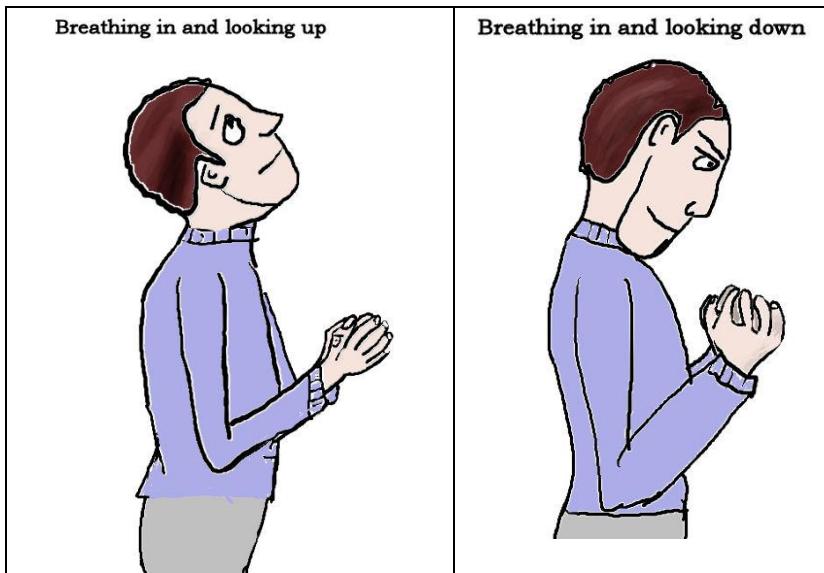
Make a statement about the problem. Be specific. You can simply describe the problem if you wish. For instance,

I have a pain in my shoulder, and I wish to release it.

I am feeling nervous, and I wish to release it.

Breathing

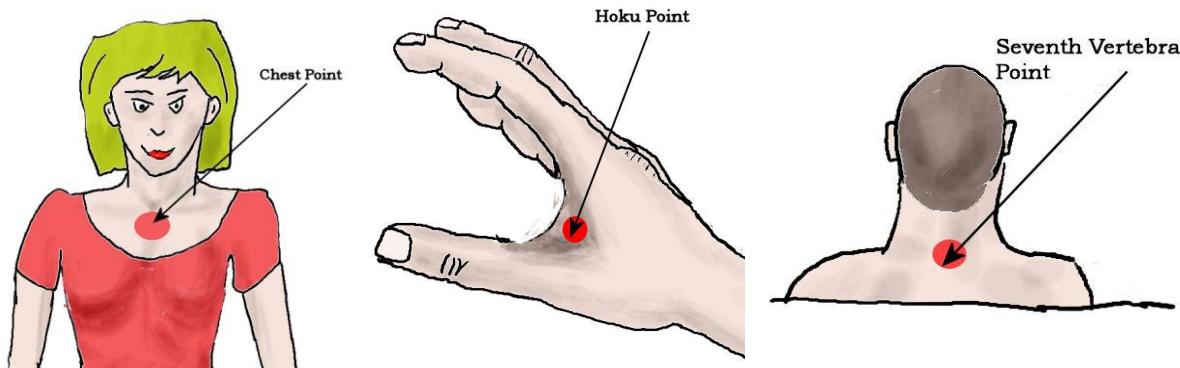
Keep the problem in mind while you breathe in slowly and deeply (to a count of about 4) while looking up to the sky (in your imagination, if you prefer), and then breathe out slowly (to a count of about 4) while looking down towards your feet (or the earth). You think of the sky when you breathe in, and think of, say, your feet, when you breathe out.



This is a Kahuna practice, and involves making contact with the high and the low to provide the curing energy. It is found in many places, certainly in Christianity too. However, this pattern is presented as a practical workable system, not a religious or mystical one.

Tapping

There are three tapping points: the chest, the fleshy part of the hand between the thumb and index finger (Chinese Hoku point) and the bump on the back of the neck (Seventh Vertebra). You can gently massage, press or tap these points.



It isn't necessary to be ever so accurate with the locations of these points. Tapping gently activates the surrounding points anyway. Instead of the spine point, if you cannot reach it, you can tap the chest point again.

If necessary, you can do all the steps in your imagination!

Evaluate

After one round, determine whether the unwanted condition has changed, remained the same or gone. Repeat the procedure a number of times if the condition persists. If the condition changes, then change the statement, and continue.

Additional Visualization

You can imagine that when you look up you contact a source of energy which, when you breathe out flows throughout your body. Also you can concentrate on the part that requires healing when you breathe out, imagining the healing energy flows to it.

Emotional Freedom Technique

Originator: Gary Craig

The Setup

The setup is the most important part of the procedure. It deals with possible subconscious objection to making the whole procedure work. Sometimes the whole procedure is much less effective when the setup is omitted.

You do not have to be too concerned about the exact location of the points because tapping will vibrate all the points in the area, so the main point is stimulated.

The complete procedure involves:

1. [The Setup](#)
2. [The Sequence](#)
3. [The 9 Gamut Procedure](#)
4. The Sequence (again, using the same links as above)

Determine which problem you are going to handle

If there are more than one, handle each problem one at a time. Describe the problem in a few words, such as "headache", "this depression", etc.

Rate the problem

Rate the problem on a scale of 0 to 10.

The Reminder Phrase

The setup deals with self-sabotage. Before doing the procedure, you do three or more repetitions of the phrase:

Even though I (have this problem), I deeply and completely accept myself.

For instance:

Even though I feel depressed, I deeply and completely accept myself.

You repeat this phrase while either rubbing the sore spot or tapping firmly but not too hard the Karate Chop Point (both explained below). Unless you have a special reason not to rub the Sore Spot, then you should use this point. That is, the Sore Spot is the preferred point in the setup. If you cannot rub the Sore Spot (for instance, you have a chest problem), you can use the Karate Chop Point with about the same effectiveness.

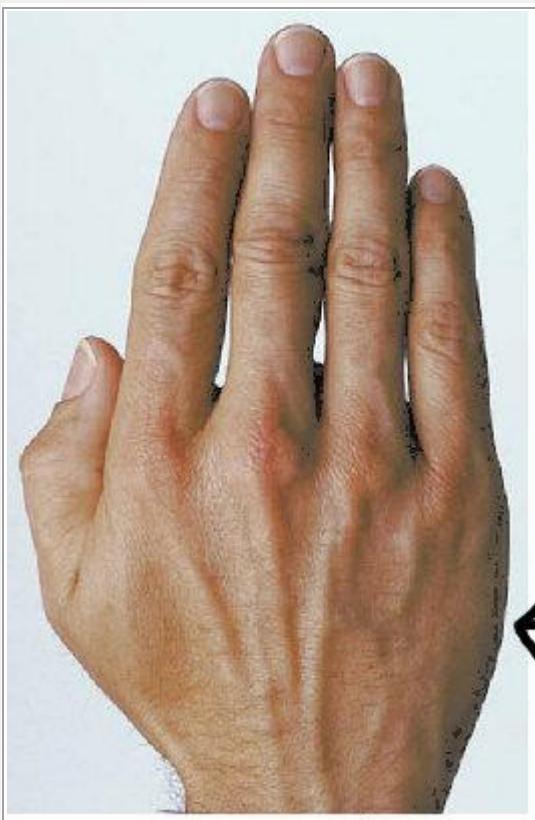
Sore Spot



The sore spot is about 3 inches down from the notch in the middle of the collar bones, and about 2 inches to the side. (There is one on each side). Within a two inch area, you will find a sore spot. The sore spot is rubbed. It is the only point that isn't tapped. When doing the setup, rub the Sore Spot in an area of about 2 or 3 inches. The point feels sore to begin with, but later may no longer be sore.

You can use the sore spot or the Karate Point in the setup, but the Sore Spot is recommended.

Karate Chop Point



The Karate Chop Point is in the fleshy part of the little-finger side of the hand. It is at the end of the palm crease which you see when the fist is lightly clenched. The Karate Chop Point is tapped vigorously, but not too hard, with the fingers of the opposite hand.

Either rubbing the Sore Spot or tapping the Karate Chop Point, you chant 3 times:
Even though I (have this problem), I deeply and completely accept myself.

When you have done this you can move on to the [sequence](#).

The Sequence

While repeating the [reminder phrase](#):

Even though I (have this problem), I deeply and completely accept myself.

Tap about 7 times on each of the points explained below.

If this is your second time through the points on the same issues, you would repeat, instead of the above:

Even though I still (have some of this problem), I deeply and completely accept myself.

The subconscious mind is very literal at times, and acknowledging the problem has reduced somewhat makes the procedure more effective.

The complete procedure involves:

1. [The Setup](#)
2. [The Sequence](#)
3. [The 9 Gamut Procedure](#)
4. The sequence (again)

How to Tap

The sequence relates to acupressure points. These can be rubbed, pressed firmly, or tapped. Tapping has an advantage that by tapping in an area the points are stimulated by vibration even if you aren't tapping in exactly the right place. So the kind of accuracy required by acupuncture is not necessary. Sometimes using one finger might be appropriate, such as when tapping beneath the nose, or the chin point. But you can use several fingers even though only one will be near the point.

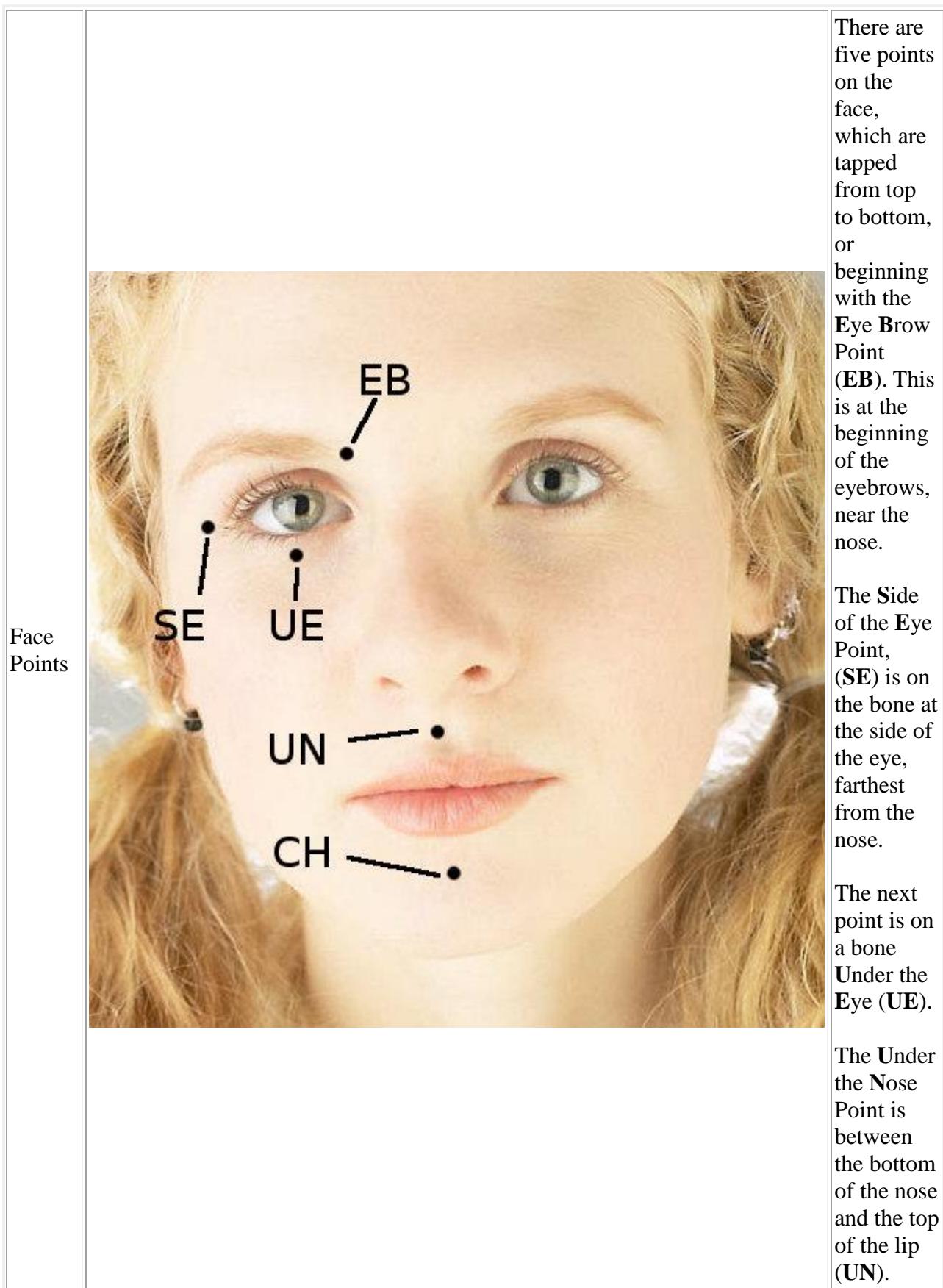
In many cases, you might use the whole hand to pat firmly in the area. For the collar bone points, using the whole hand and patting the area makes getting the right acupressure points (by applying pressure and by vibration) easier. Even with the finger points, patting the area with the whole hand is effective.

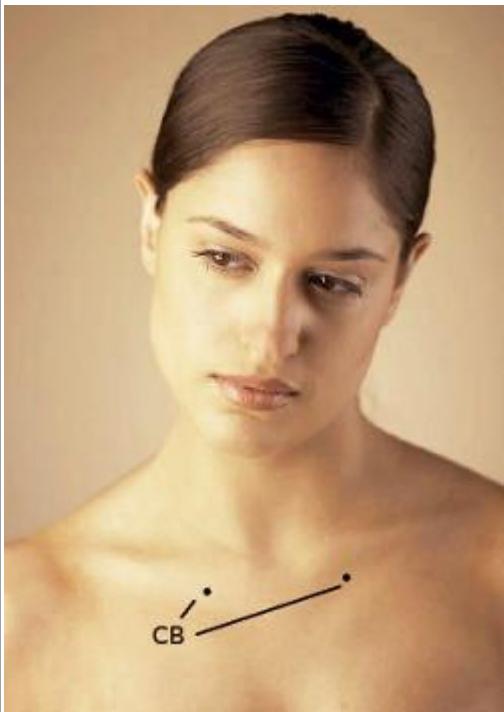
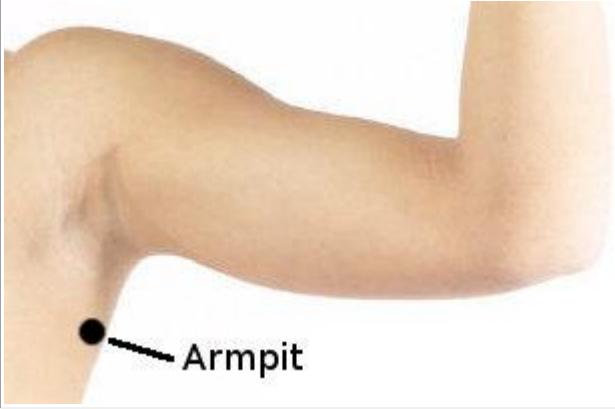
The emphasis here is that by tapping in the general area of the required point you will effectively stimulate it. So seek accuracy, but be assured that tapping in the right general area will be effective.

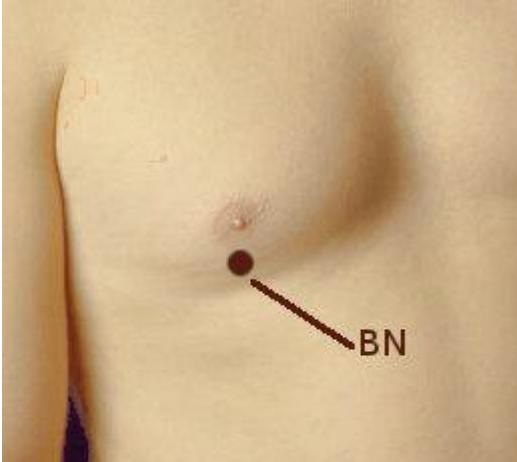
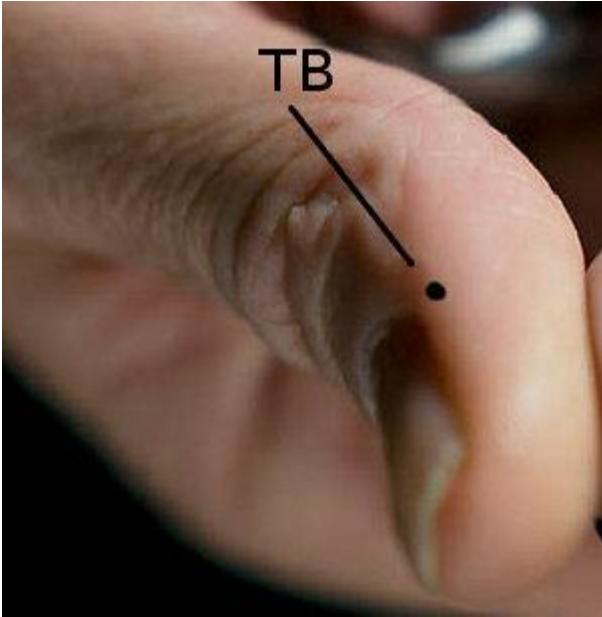
The Points

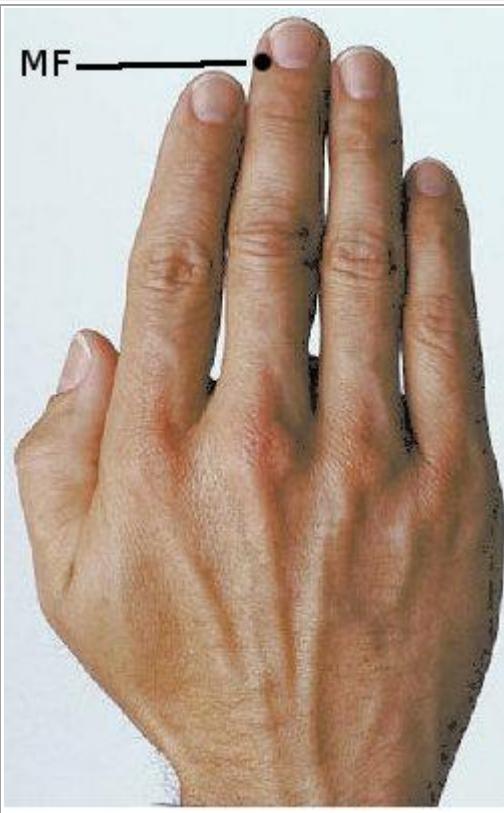
For convenience when referring to the points, the abbreviations below are used to refer to them.

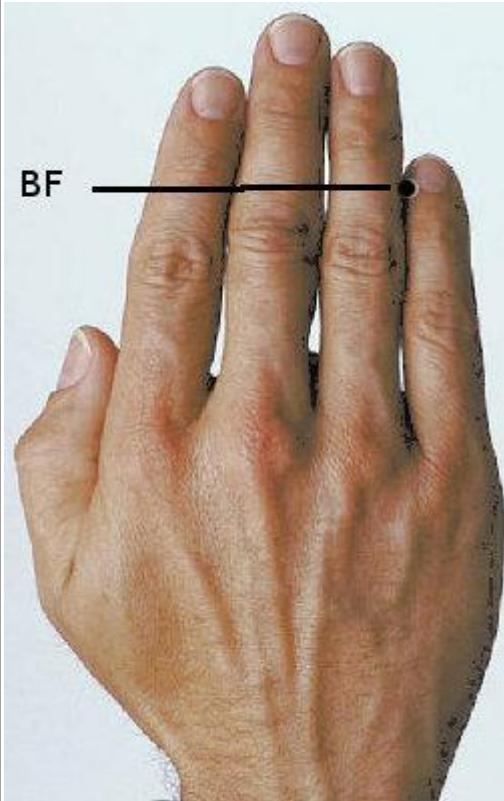
Also common English descriptions are used instead of the Chinese names and points. All of these points are tapped about 7 times while repeating the [reminder phrase](#).



		<p>From the notch in the middle of the Collar Bones (CB), go down 1 inch and sideways 1 inch to locate this point.</p> <p>By tapping the Collar Bone Point with all four fingers, you will get the right place.</p> <p>The collar bone point is not actually on the collar bone but is the start of the collar bone.</p>
Armpit		<p>The Armpit Point is about 4 inches below the armpit.</p>

Below Nipple		The Below Nipple Point is just below the male nipple. It is on the crease where the female breast meets the body.
Thumb		This point is located at the base of the thumb (TB) nail.

Index Finger	 A photograph of a person's hand with fingers spread. A black dot marks the 'Middle Finger' point on the thumb side of the middle finger, near its base. A horizontal line labeled 'MF' points to this dot.	<p>The Index Finger point is near the base of the nail of the index finger, on the thumb side.</p>	
Middle Finger		<p>The Middle Finger Point is near the nail bed on the thumb side of the finger.</p>	

Baby Finger	 A photograph of a person's hand with fingers spread. A horizontal line with a dot at its right end marks the 'Baby Finger Point' on the thumb side of the index finger, near the nail bed.	<p>The Baby Finger Point is near the nail bed of the baby finger, on the thumb side</p>
Karate Chop Point	 A photograph of a person's hand with fingers spread. A black arrow points to the 'Karate Chop Point' on the thumb side of the little finger, at the end of the palm crease. The text 'Karate Chop' is written below the hand.	<p>The Karate Chop Point is in the fleshy part of the little-finger side of the hand. It is at the end of the palm crease which you see when the fist is lightly clenched. The Karate Chop Point is tapped vigorously, but not too hard, with the fingers of the</p>

		opposite hand.
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Reminder Phrase

You tap on each of the points below, while repeating the phrase:

Even though I (have this problem), I deeply and completely accept myself.

If you have already been through the process, and the problem is less, you would use the modified reminder phrase:

Even though I (have some of this problem), I deeply and completely accept myself.

The Sequence

The exact order of the sequence is not essential and you can tap points in a different order. Also, when there is a choice of two points (one on each side of the body) if you wish, you can mix and match as you tap.

1. Eyebrow (EB)
2. Side of Eye (SE)
3. Under the Eye (UE)
4. Under the Nose (UN)
5. Chin (CH)
6. Collar Bone (CB)
7. Armpit
8. Under the Nipple (UN)
9. Thumb (TH)
10. Index Finger (IF)
11. Middle Finger (MF)
12. Baby Finger (BF)
13. Karate Chop Point (KC)

Because you tap on each of the points about 7 times with two or more fingers, accuracy is not that important because one of the fingers will find the point.

You often have the choice of tapping on either side, for instance, using the left hand or the right hand. You can change sides as you wish. It is still as effective.

It is quite easy to remember the points and you should remember them rather than looking at the illustrations because you can then use the technique whenever you like.

When you have tapped through these points you will do the [9 Gamut Procedure](#). After that you repeat this sequence.

Rate the problem (SUDs Subjective Units of Distress)

After you have been through this procedure a second time for the problem, rate the problem again on a scale of 0 to 10 (Named a SUDs Scale). If the problem isn't zero or sufficiently low, then repeat the whole procedure:

1. sequence
2. 9 gamut
3. repeat sequence.

If the problem has lessened, change the reminder phrase to:

Even though I still (have some of this problem), I deeply and completely accept myself.

The 9-Gamut Procedure

After you have been through the [sequence](#) once, you do the 9 Gamut Procedure. You do this procedure while tapping the Gamut Point, explained below.

The complete procedure involves:

1. [The Setup](#)
2. [The Sequence](#)
3. [The 9 Gamut Procedure](#)
4. The Sequence (again, using the same link as above)

Reminder Phrase

You do the 9-Gamut Procedure while repeating the reminder phrase:

Even though I (have this problem), I deeply and completely accept myself.

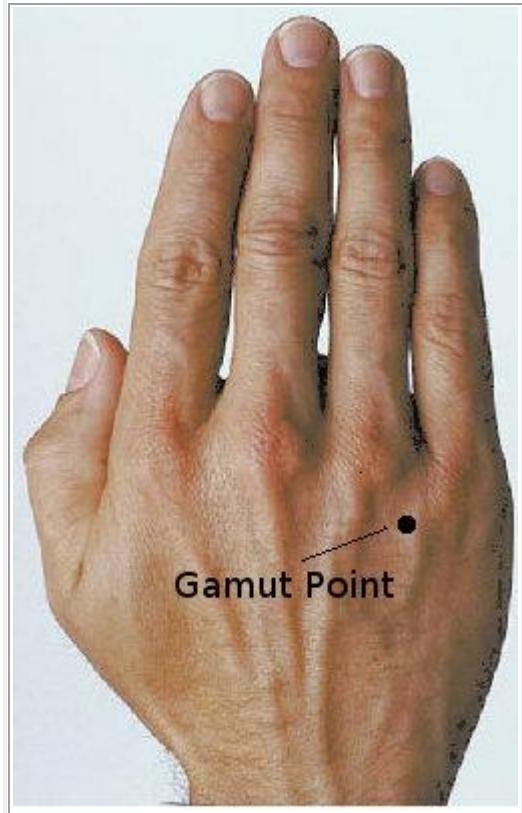
Tap about 7 times on each of the points explained below.

If this is your second time through the points on the same issues, you would repeat, instead of the above:

Even though I still (have some of this problem), I deeply and completely accept myself.

The subconscious mind is very literal at times, and acknowledging the problem has reduced somewhat makes the procedure more effective.

The Gamut Point



The Gamut Point is located between the bones of the ring finger and the baby finger, about an inch down from the knuckles. You tap this point with two (or more fingers). You do so vigorously, but not too hard. All the time you repeat the reminder phrase (See above).

9 Gamut Procedure

While tapping on the Gamut Point, and repeating the reminder phrase, you do the 9-Gamut Procedure, explained below:

1. Close your eyes.
2. Open your eyes.
3. Look hard down to the right.
4. Look hard down to the left.

5. Move your eyes clockwise a full circle.
6. Move your eyes anticlockwise in a full circle.
7. Hum a few notes of a song.
8. Count rapidly from 1 to 5.
9. Hum about 2 seconds of a song again.

You would now repeat the [sequence](#).

Summary

Keep the problem in mind during the whole procedure. The choice of a [reminder phrase](#) helps you do this. After you have learned the parts of the procedure on these pages:

1. [The Setup](#)
2. [The Sequence](#)
3. [The 9 Gamut Procedure](#)

You can use this page as a quick reminder.

The Setup

First determine what problem you are going to deal with. If there are more than one, do one at a time.

Rate on a scale of 0 to 10 the intensity of the problem.

The [setup](#) is an important part of the procedure. The setup deals with self-sabotage. Before doing the procedure, you do three or more repetitions of the reminder phrase:

Even though I (have this problem), I deeply and completely accept myself.

For instance:

Even though I feel depressed, I deeply and completely accept myself.

The Sequence

If this is your first run through the procedure, you tap the points while repeating the reminder phrase:

Even though I (have this problem), I deeply and completely accept myself.

Tap about 7 times on each of the points explained below.

If this is your second time through the points on the same issues and the problem has lessened, you would repeat, instead of the above:

Even though I still (have some of this problem), I deeply and completely accept myself.

The subconscious mind is very literal at times, and acknowledging the problem has reduced somewhat makes the procedure more effective. The [Sequence](#) is briefly explained below. While repeating the reminder phrase tap about 7 times on the following points:

- Eyebrow (EB)
- Side of Eye (SE)
- Under the Eye (UE)
- Under the Nose (UN)
- Chin (CH)
- Collar Bone (CB)
- Armpit
- Under the Nipple (UN)
- Thumb (TH)
- Index Finger (IF)
- Middle Finger (MF)
- Baby Finger (BF)

Karate Chop Point (KC)

The 9 Gamut Procedure

While tapping on the Gamut Point, and repeating the reminder phrase, you do the 9 Gamut Procedure, explained below:

1. Close your eyes.
2. Open your eyes.
3. Look hard down to the right.
4. Look hard down to the left.
5. Move your eyes clockwise a full circle.
6. Move your eyes anticlockwise in a full circle.
7. Hum a few notes of a song.
8. Count rapidly from 1 to 5.
9. Hum about 2 seconds of a song again.

You would now repeat the sequence.

Rate the intensity again on a scale of 0 to 10. If the intensity is not what you desire, then repeat the procedure.

Short Cut

The Short Form of the sequence is:

1. EB: Beginning of eyebrow
2. SE: Side of eye
3. UE: Under eye
4. UN: Under nose
5. Ch: Chin
6. CB: Collarbone
7. UA: Under the Arm
8. TH: Top of Head
9. Wrist Point

In doing the short form or short cut, do:

1. The Setup, including rating
2. Do the sequence above once
3. Rate the problem

That is, you omit the 9 Gamut Procedure and the repeat sequence.

In doing the shortcut, you can use both hands to tap both sides where a point exists on either side. The wrist point is tapped by tapping both Wrist Points together.

Visual Squash

Where there are different ways for us to represent things in our minds, then we may experience conflict because we may alternately use one representation and then another. The visual squash is used when we want (or think we ought to) do one thing, but seem to do something else.

1. First of all, identify the conflicting parts. **You have a part responsible for X, do you not?**
Notice the internal representation for each part.
2. Allow each part to flow out through you to rest in one hand. One part goes to the right hand and the other to the left.
3. Ask **how each part could help you and be valuable to you.**
4. Ask each part what they agree with about the other part. Ask each part **how it could be even more effective and powerful, if it had the resources of the other part?**
5. If one or other of the parts doesn't agree in step 4 that the valuable thing about the other part is valuable to it, then repeat this step 3. See [Everything has a positive intention](#).
6. Allow the resources to pass from one part to the other and notice how they begin to look more and more like each other.
7. Notice how the hands begin to come together as the parts move more and more into agreement—just as quickly as the parts move into agreement.
8. When the hands come together and the parts are united bring them into your body and let them unite with you. You may notice powerful thoughts and emotions when the parts come together. Just allow these to flow and unite.
9. Check how this process has changed you and your thinking.
10. If necessary, locate other objecting parts and repeat the procedure.

Example

Suppose that you think you ought to do more exercise, but never seem to get around to doing it.

1. Ask, **you have a part that is responsible for** (wanting to get more exercise), **do you not?**
2. Allow this part to move through the body and into one hand, perhaps the right hand.
And **there is a part that is** (preventing you doing more exercise), **is there not?** Ask this part to move through the body into the opposite hand, say the left hand.
3. Ask the part that wants you to do more exercise what it does for you? In the example, the answer was 'health'.
Ask the part that stops you getting more exercise, how it helps you. In this example, it gives you more time.
4. Ask the part that doesn't want to do exercise, whether it agrees that health is important. It says yes. This is a resource it could use from the other part.
Now, ask the part that wants to do more exercise if it considers having more time is important. The part agrees it is. The parts immediately began to look similar and the hands began to move closer together.
5. If the part didn't agree that health was important to it, then we would go to the other part, and (step 3) ask 'What does health do for you?' For instance, 'makes me full of life.'
Repeating the question to get higher order values if necessary.
6. Follow the other steps; that is, 6-10

In this example, the parts very quickly united and did not take much negotiation. This often happens.

Effective People

Effective people:

1. Believe there is no such thing as perfection.
2. Believe the basic intention of life, the universe, people, etc, is relatively good.
Everyone always believe that they are right and that are doing good, from their own perspective.
3. Seek only obtaining a result, a decision, a change, not to win or lose.
4. Believe there is no failure or success, only feedback, knowledge.
5. Act with integrity and honesty.
6. Do something else, or stop doing nothing, if things are not to their preference.
7. View ideas and thoughts from various viewpoints.
8. Have a clear idea of objectives.
9. Believe mind and Body are part of the same system.

Believe there is no such thing as perfection

Actually this is a self evident truth. There is nothing in the world which is perfect. Those who believe in perfection cause misery for themselves and others. They believe, at one extreme, that there is nothing else for them to do because things are perfect already. Alternatively, other people who believe in perfection believe that nothing is good enough and is never ready, because it is not perfect.

Effective people know there is always something else which can be done to improve things, and that they will never actually make something perfect, so the solution is acceptable when it is optimum. There are optimum solutions, not perfect ones.

I recall advice given to painters. A painting is done when you think it is nearly done. Artists strive for perfection and many continue to work on a painting only to make—what would have been good, excellent or even a masterpiece—to make a spoilt work.

When we believe in perfection, we tend to use words like 'must' and 'should.' For example, 'People ought to do that.' When we say this, we often mean 'People don't do this' (otherwise it would be silly to say they ought to do it), and 'I want them to do it', and 'I am not going to do anything to get them to do it, except moan!'.

Believe the basic intention of life, the universe, people, etc, is relatively good

People always believe that they are right and are doing good, from their own perspective. Even the most evil person from our perspective believes he or she is doing right. Otherwise, they wouldn't be doing what they are doing! No one holds a false belief. No one says, 'I believe this', and add, 'but I know it is false.' They always believe they are right. Even a person who says they are evil, believes this is right and good. If we believe that people are evil, we may become frightened of them and react to them unpleasantly, and they in turn will behave worse to us.

Likewise, if we believe that people or things are absolutely good, then we treat them as Gods or angels and, clearly we do not react to them as they really are because no one is a god or an angel.

When we believe that things are basically good, then we begin to understand them better. If we think someone is evil, we will imagine that we cannot influence them or we will try to influence from our belief-value that they are bad. This will never be effective, because they believe they are good, and doing what is right, so they will never relate to our belief that they are bad. They will simply believe that we are bad!

By believing they do, even bad things, from a good intention we can better understand them and begin to influence them, because we take the trouble to understand them and *how* they think, rather than to fight them head on in terms of the values of good and bad.

See also [Finding Positive Intentions](#)

Seek only obtaining a result, a decision, a change, not to win or lose.

When we seek to win, we become anxious about the result. We may procrastinate and do nothing to win because we might lose. The effective person, because they can happily win or lose, and because they seek a result, they do not fear asking for what they want or doing what they think will lead to their goal. This does not mean that the effective person doesn't want to win, or wants lose. It means that they know that without getting a decision, taking action or non-action, that they are losing already.

Losing is the normal state. Therefore, it cannot be good or bad, it's where we start. So by taking action or non-action or getting the decision they have nothing to lose, and can only gain, if not on this occasion, then in the future.

For example, if we want the afternoon off from work, we do not have the afternoon off from work (Otherwise we wouldn't want it, but would have it!). When we ask, we might get a 'No', but that is where we are now. That isn't a loss: it is the gain of useful information. And taking action—for instance, by asking—is the only way we can succeed.

Here we have an irony, that by seeking to win, we increase our likelihood of losing.

Believe there is no failure or success, only feedback, knowledge

This belief links to the previous one. The effective person does not fear failure, because he or she does not believe in failure or success. They obtain feedback. This does not mean that the effective person doesn't want to succeed. It means that they will succeed because they seek feedback. This leads to the next belief.

Act with integrity and honesty.

One of the great secrets of a successful and happy life if to act with integrity and honesty. When we were little children we were told we should be honest, and we were told this meant telling the truth.

We were given this simple meaning because we were too young and inexperienced to fully understand the success technique of honesty and integrity. Of course, telling the truth got us into a lot of trouble. Even adults will say, "Well, I was telling the truth. It was right."

Of course, telling the truth is **important** and is a **big** part of integrity and honesty. But it clearly means more than this, and telling the truth is not an **essential** part. Moral qualities, that is, ways of living our life successfully, are good. And sometimes telling the truth is bad, as when this causes great upset in the other person for no good reason. This is not acting with honesty and integrity! Although it is better to tell the truth, it is not always better to tell it! Some people are verbally incontinent and will tell you everything, even personal things, and this is not behaving with integrity and honesty.

Although no one can properly define these concepts, we all know what they mean. By putting aside our childish definitions, we can understand and live these concepts and reap all the benefits.

Do something else, or stop doing nothing, if things are not to their preference.

<p>Story: Throwing stones at a his head</p> <p>A man began throwing stones at the head of another. The other just remained where he was. His head became bruised and cut.</p> <p>"Why don't you run, or something" some people said.</p> <p>"That man is a fool. He believes my head is a tuft of grass."</p> <p>"No", they said, "you are the fool for doing nothing and remaining where you are and suffering injury."</p> <p><i>100 Parables Sutra</i></p>	<p>When the feedback or knowledge that the Effective person gains is not to his or her preference, then they do something else. They do something, if they are doing nothing, or they change what they were doing, or do nothing. They know, 'If you always do what you have always done, then you will always get what you always got.'</p> <p>They do not believe that things will turn out right in the end. They realise that they need to change to get a different result. 'If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you always got!' To believe differently, is crazy.</p>
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View ideas and thoughts from various viewpoints.

We all know that we are supposed to view things from the other's point of view as well as our own. But how many of us do it? As children we are limited to our own viewpoint and we cannot see the viewpoints of others. And when we grow up, we often do not realise that we have progressed far enough to think about things from various viewpoints. While it is unresourceful to see everything from our own viewpoint, it is equally unresourceful to see everything from the viewpoint of others.

If we learn this skill, our ability to influence others and to avoid upsets will have increased manifold.

See [Perceptual Positions](#)

Have a clear idea of objectives

The effective person thinks out what he or she wants. They have a clear idea of what they want to achieve. They do not seek to gain what they want in one fell swoop. They know they will get feedback, and they act or not act in order to produce a result. They repeat these actions until they attain their goal or objective. 'If they didn't know where they were going, they'd usually end up somewhere else!'

Believe mind and Body are part of the same system

This might sound metaphysical, but many people, if not all of us, are to some degree not closely in touch with our bodies and our minds. To feel better mentally, we might look to improving the body. When improving the body, we might take care to care for our minds. Over indulgence in one or the other will not help either.

We assume that there is a correspondence between what we call mind and what we call body. So when there are certain things occurring in the mind, there are corresponding events occurring in the body; and when there are certain events occurring in the body there are corresponding ones occurring in the mind.

We need to clarify the above. It is not only a scientific statement. It is not saying only that when we think there are certain physical-chemical events occurring in the brain at the same time. It is, rather, also a personal development statement. So when we are worried about something, it is not just that we are having certain thoughts, but that we are having certain feelings in the body, which, should we bother to do so, we can experience. For example, if we are concerned about what we should do about something we have certain thoughts which we may or may not be able to articulate, and we have certain feelings in our bodies, which we may or may not be aware of at the time. Put simply, successful personal development occurs when both bodily and mental experiences are dealt with. We have in mind here such techniques as focussing and six-step reframing.

The ideas mentioned in this page are important in:

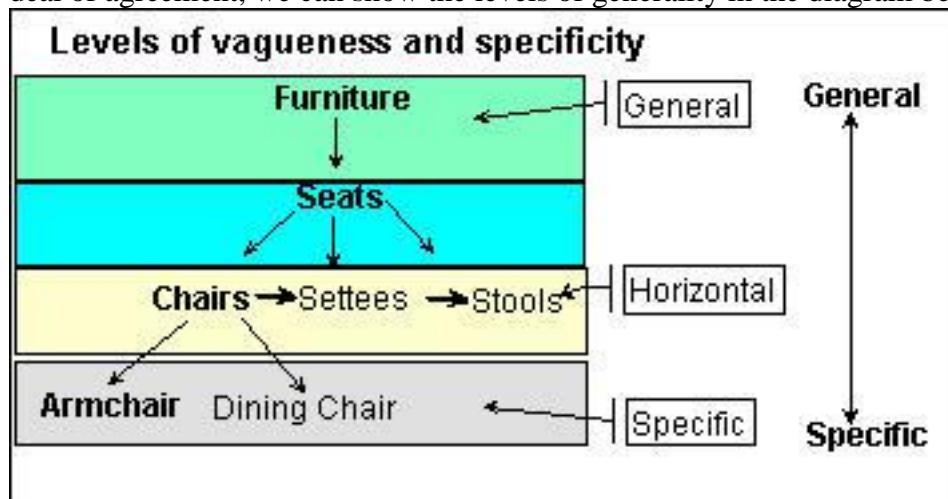
- Clarifying meaning - helping you to understand
- Negotiation - negotiators use these ideas

Hierarchy of Ideas

Between the general and the vague, and the detailed and specific, there are a number of gradations expressing things more less generally or specifically. Consider the statement, 'Bob is **intelligent**'. You can wonder just what this means because when you turn to the dictionary you are referred to *intelligence*, where you find words like *understanding* and *comprehension*. By following *understanding* you find yourself back at *intelligence*!

Big words have a hypnotic effect because they cause us to search around in our minds trying to find some meaning, which is often difficult or impossible.

To start with it is better to take an example of a word such as *furniture*. With a great deal of agreement, we can show the levels of generality in the diagram below.



The word furniture is a general word (see the diagram above). An armchair is also a general word, but it is more specific than furniture. On this continuum from general to specific, there are seats and chairs which come in the middle - they are more specific than furniture and more general than armchair.

Under seats we have chairs, settees and stools as examples of seats. These items are on the same level and additional examples of seats. Also, under chairs we have armchair and dining chair which are examples of chairs and are on the same level of general - specific.

Big Chunks and Small Chunks

General Ideas are Big Chunks

We can take in information in chunks (often 5 to 9 chunks). A general idea is a big chunk because it refers to many kinds of things. For instance, furniture refers to tables, chairs, stools, settees, curtains, carpets etc. General words also contain less information. If someone says:

I moved some of your furniture.

We know they do not mean walls and ceilings, but we do not know exactly what kinds of things they moved – Chairs? Tables? Curtains? – all of these or none of them.

Specific Words are Smaller Chunks

And a more specific word is a smaller chunk because it refers to fewer items. For instance, chair refers to items of furniture that you would normally sit on and excludes stools, settees, etc. We can visualize chair more easily than we can visualize furniture.

Specific words contain more information. If someone says:

I moved some of your chairs.

We know they did not move curtains, tables, settees, stools etc.

Chunking up to become more general, and chunking down to be more specific

When we chunk up we become more general. When we chunk down we become more specific. And when we chunk across, we keep at the same level of generality. So from a chair, we can chunk up to a more general idea, for example, a seat. And from a chair we can chunk down to a more specific idea, such as armchairs. We can chunk across to another example of the same kind, for example, chunking across from a chair to a stool.

Chunking up

We can chunk up by asking:

What is a chair an example of?

[Furniture, seat, etc]

Or

What sort of thing is (a chair)?

[A seat, etc]

What kind of thing is (a chair)?

[A seat. An item of furniture, etc]

Chunking down

We can chunk down by asking:

What is an example of (a chair)?

For instance?

[an armchair]

Chunking across

We can chunk across by asking:

What's another example of this kind of thing?

If we have armchair as an example of a chair, we can chunk across by asking:

What's another example of [a chair]?

What's another example of (bigger chunk)?

Possible examples are dining room chairs, folding seats, ...

Illustrative conversation—Chunking up to get agreement

She What shall we do tonight?

He: What about going to the cinema? (This is an example of doing things, **chunking down**)

She: I'd rather go to the opera. (This is another example of doing things, **chunking across**)

He: You prefer something arty? (**Chunks up to arty**, which is one example of something more general than opera).

She: Yes.

He: What about the ballet? (**Chunks down** from arty to ballet, which is an example of **arty**).

Hierarchies depend on the Individual

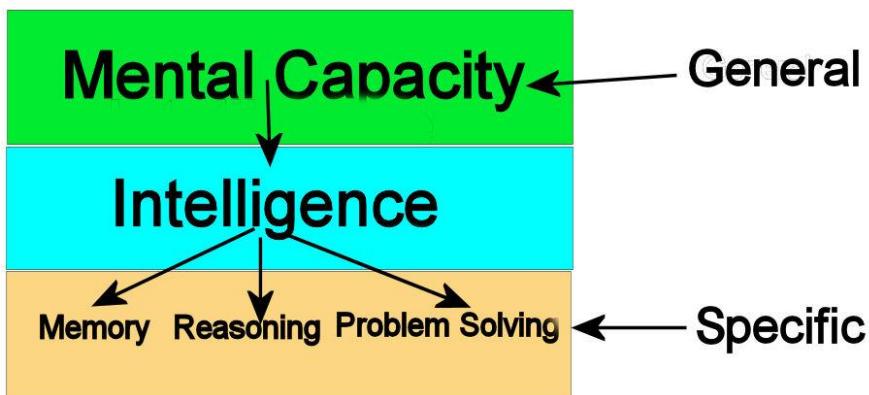
You have read above about our saying that intelligent is an abstract word and very hard to experience. We then moved to examine the word furniture, because we claimed it was easier to understand. Having explained the ideas of chunking up, down and across, we now return to intelligence.

In our normal lives, we use the word intelligent, but its specific meaning depends on the speaker. Unlike the word furniture, we cannot give it a hierarchy that has a high degree of agreement.

In the diagram, we claim that intelligence is a type of Mental Capacity. Its parts include memory, thinking and understanding. And the parts of thinking include problem solving and reasoning.

By chunking down, we might interpret the statement **Bob is intelligent** to mean that, among other things, **Bob has a good memory** and **Bob is good at reasoning**.

However, we are still at a high degree of generality, even at the bottom of this diagram, so we could search for more specific examples. To understand what the speaker really means by Bob is intelligent, we would need to ask the speaker to supply us with some of the speaker's examples.



Association

Two or more ideas are associated when they are linked together in the mind. Two ideas are linked when they are similar, different, or have been associated together by being experienced close together in space or time.

You can explore ideas by examining how they are similar to other ideas, different from other ideas, and what other ideas tend to be found with the idea, either nearness in space, such as a horse and carriage, or occurring before or after, such as striking a match and the occurrence of fire.

Similarity

What idea is similar to (this idea).

What is (this) like?

What is this apple similar to (apple on the table)?

A golf ball.

In what way are they similar?

They are both round (Shape).

What is this apple similar to (apple on the table)?

That house on the hill.

In what way are they similar?

They are both alone (Circumstances).

What is this apple similar to (apple on the table)?

A pear.

In what way are they similar?

They are both fruit (Substance).

Difference

What idea is different from (this idea).

What is (this) unlike?

What is this apple different from (apple on the table)?

A golf ball.

In what way are they different?

You can eat one, but not the other (Substance).

What is this apple different from (apple on the table)?

That house on the hill.

In what way are they different?

One is large, and the other is small (Size).

What is this apple different from (apple on the table)?

A pear.

In what way are they similar?

They taste different (Substance, or function).

Space and Time

What is often found along with (a house)?

(A family... a garden.... a garage...)

Bases of Comparison

When you note similarities and differences, you often use a basis, such as:

- Substance
- Shape
- Form
- Function
- Situation
- Space
- Time
- State
- Circumstances
- Source

Uptime and Downtime

Sometimes we are concentrating on the external world, and sometimes we are reflecting and thinking about something. **Uptime** is what we call the state when we are attending to things in our environment, and **downtime** is when we are looking within and thinking.

We are continually changing from uptime to downtime and back again as we take information from our surroundings and reflect upon it.

When we considered submodalities and especially when we considered modelling, we noted that we could, for example, view something in the external world (**Ve**) or view something internally (**Vi**). The Vi refers to **downtime** and the Ve refers to **uptime**.

Sensory Language

Sensory language is language that uses words from the 5 senses. We can say that the opposite of sensory language is digital language - language that uses generalities far removed from the senses. For example, **Bob is very intelligent** is digital language. There is nothing specific to imagine or experience in the sentence. We might think that he could help us with our writing, but discover that isn't his thing. He creates wonderful new inventions. Saying someone is intelligent actually tells us very little if we don't know the context.

Contrast this with:

We had been up all night with computer doing some calculations. Bob came in and we gave him the figures for the initial problem. He looked down (mumbling to himself) for a few seconds and then looked up at us and gave us the answer. He had calculated in his head in a few seconds what had taken the computer all night!

This is more meaningful than the sentence **Bob is intelligent**. One reason is that we can imagine the scene. We know that Bob is good at advanced maths.

See also: [submodalities](#) for more information on sensory language.

The internal mind follows similar rules to the rules of the external mind. The differences between them enables us to change our reactions to both. This page largely gives a map or rationale which explains why the techniques mentioned in this course work.

A Picture of the Mind

This is not a theory or a scientific account of mind, it is a map which may be useful to understand many things in this course.

Internal and External

This section explains the terms internal and external mind, so we can use them later to explain further ideas. The mind has an **internal aspect** and an **external one**. The internal mind is that private area where we think, imagine, dream, etc. The external mind is that mind which concerns reality or the shared mind of existence.

When you look at a tree in the external world, then other people will normally see something similar. When you recite something in your internal mind, then only you can hear it. If something feels rough to you, then when others feel it, they too experience it as rough. You might think of the external world as **objective** and the internal world as **subjective**.

The **external, real world**, is referred to here as the **external mind** because although we all sense something similar in the external world, we do not sense things in **exactly** the same way. When several people gaze at a mountain, no two people experience exactly the same thing. For example, you can't be sure that when we both refer to something as having the colour **blue**, that we both experience the same thing. Here we consider the internal and external as aspects of mind.

The map of the mind

We know the external mind through our 5 senses. **We know the internal mind in exactly the same way.** That is, we know the internal mind through mental vision, hearing, touch and feeling, taste and smell. The map of the internal mind is largely similar to the map of the external mind.

The internal mind is a magical world

You can experience things in the internal mind that you cannot currently experience in the external mind. The internal mind is a world of magic. This means we can change the internal mind much easier than we can change the external mind. Changing the internal mind is a much more effective way of changing the external mind. In fact, it is the only way!

In this section we mention some of the differences between the internal and external minds:

- For example, you can see a friend in your internal mind who is not currently visible in your external mind. (The friend is elsewhere).
- **You can go back in time** and view your classroom when you were a child, however, you cannot (at present) do this in the external mind.
- **You can make up** pictures and stories in the internal mind that you have never experienced in the external mind.
- **You can imagine things as being different** from things you have experienced in the external mind.
- You can make up things in your internal mind that are **composed of parts of things you have experienced**. For example, a horse with a horn (unicorn). Or a lizard with wings and fiery breath (a dragon).

- In the internal mind, **one thing can represent one or many other things**. So that a collection of sounds, images and feelings can be recalled through the use of another picture, sound or image.

This is called anchoring.

There are a number of ways in which the external mind and the internal mind differ, but they share the same map of experience, which we consider in the next section.

The Common Map of Experience

The way in which you react to things in the external mind is broadly the same as the way you react to things in your internal mind.

You react differently to things in the external mind according to certain submodalities.

So you react differently to a **small ant** to how you react to a **giant ant!** You react differently to someone who is shouting to how you react to someone who is speaking in a sexy voice. You react differently to being touched **roughly** to how you react to being touched **gently**.

A very tall person **who speaks in an angry voice** creates a different effect from one **who speaks like Donald Duck!** Your experience to a person speaking in a **loud voice** is different depending on **how close** they are to you and **who else is present**.

Watching something on the **television** has a different effect from actually **being present in the scene**. You react differently to a **photograph** of a monster from how you would react to an actual monster!

You react to things in the internal mind using exactly the same processes you use to react to things in the external mind. The intensity, however, is usually different. A picture in the mind has a different effect when it is represented differently.

- For example, a big person shouting at you in your internal mind has a different effect from a small person speaking to you in a sexy voice.
- A flat image in the mind has a different effect from a 3D video!
- A scene where you are internalised is responded to differently from one where you are externalised.

The significance of this is that you can change the images in your mind. And you can therefore change their effect on you.

The internal-external link

Although most of us experience common things about external objects, there is **an area where the perception of the external object or person is different**.

In phobic situations, one person might see a spider as frightening. Another person might have no reaction. Both agree, roughly, that **they perceive the same thing, but they perceive aspects of it differently**.

A person with a phobia, might actually perceive the spider as larger than a person without a phobia perceives it.

Different people perceive the same thing differently in the external world because they perceive it differently in their internal minds. This means you can change your reactions to the external world by changing your reactions to your internal world. This is why these techniques work.

The key is **meaning**.

Meaning

You may react differently to some things in the external world from how others react. Because you are interested in some things and not others, you will react with interest to some things while others might react with indifference.

What is meaning?

Your personal meaning of something is **the response you make to it, both in your internal mind and in your external mind.**

At first, your response is external, but afterwards the response becomes internal.

For example, you might first encounter the concept intelligence when a teacher says that another pupil is intelligent. You notice that the other people does their sums easily and quickly (and, of course accurately.) The other pupil is praised.

Abstract words are really concrete - after all!

Let us look at an example of meaning that might be thought to be difficult to relate to these ideas. Because *intelligence* is an abstract word, it appears to be unrelated to the world of experience.

However, your meaning of intelligence may include the pictures and sounds related to the other student, such as doing arithmetic well and being praised. This may produce an internal meaning of intelligence as something good.

When other people refer to intelligence, you respond internally with the pictures and sounds related to intelligence. You may also have a feeling associated with intelligence. It could be that you felt intense anger and envy towards the other pupil giving intelligence a negative meaning.

As you gain more experience with the word intelligence, then you **add** other pictures and sounds to the concept and you **refine** its meaning and **generalise** it to new situations (such as being good at writing).

The sensory representations becomes automatic and unconscious — as we gain experience

As you grow older, you usually do not look at the pictures and sounds associated with intelligence. You respond to the word, but you are no longer aware of the pictures, sounds and feelings associated with intelligence. It works automatically and unconsciously. **This means that** the word intelligence has become an **anchor** for the experiences related to the word, and the word recalls the resulting **pictures, sounds and feelings** associated with the word. When you see or hear the word, you respond without thinking. In the same way, our **resulting internal responses** to a spider – if we have a spider phobia – **are produced when we sense the insect**. We do not experience everything we have experienced with respect to the picture of the insect in the external mind. We produce the resulting response.

Filthy Lucre

If we grow up thinking of money as filthy lucre and feeling envious of those who have money, then we may have a negative reaction to money. We may not be aware of our internal representation, but it affects how we view the external mind and how we react to money. People have problems with money when they have negative internal representations.

Internalising Meaning

The meaning we have of a concept is our internal representations of it. And this, as we have noted, is considered to be the pictures, sounds and feeling we have when we think of the concept. At first, the meaning is external. Later it is internalised and made automatic.

Money

Money is basically a symbol. It is something that can be exchanged for other things. Originally people bartered. That is, they exchanged goods for other goods. Money became a symbol for this exchange and so instead of exchanging five chickens for a pig, five chickens and the pig were given a money value. With money you could buy one chicken, even if all you had to barter were pigs! In the same way, you can buy a chocolate bar even if all you have is a 20 dollar bill. (You can get change!)

Fair exchange is no robbery.

But what is fair exchange? This depends on the parties concerned. Gold has great value, but sandwiches are comparatively of lower value. Why do we value gold above bread? The reason is that gold is **rare** and **permanent**. To some extent it is because many people will value gold above bread, but only when they have plenty of bread. When people regard the future, they value gold above bread, but when they are starving they will value bread above gold because they can think only of the present need for life and release from starvation. Gold is satisfying when you think you can wait for a time to receive that satisfaction. Gold is not satisfying in itself, but only in the future. Suppose you were starving and you had the choice of a gold coin which you could use to buy much food in the future or a sandwich now ... you might choose the sandwich now if you couldn't wait. In other words, you would pay a high price for a sandwich, if you were desperate for it.

Wealth

You grow rich when you can afford to wait and hold gold or money. You also grow rich by exchanging with others what has less value to you than gold others will pay you, but has more value to others than their gold. In this way others exchange their gold for goods or services and you gain greater buying power with the gold you have.

Your goods or services are more valuable to others than their gold because they perceive your goods or services to be rarer (and more permanent) than their gold.

When there is a pressing present need, then a greater satisfaction in the future is less value than what will give satisfaction now.

Exchange occurs because one party believes that the goods are more valuable than gold. But different parts do this for different reasons. One person may pay gold for a pig because that pig will feed their family. Another might pay gold for a pig because that pig will produce other pigs that can be exchanged for gold. Some exchange gold because the goods will satisfy their needs or because they can gain more gold by satisfying the immediate needs of others.

Something for nothing

People will not usually give or pay for nothing at all, except when they perceive that getting rid of something is more valuable than keeping it and keeping their gold. So people may pay you to take away their rubbish even though you may make even more gold from the rubbish. They do this because owning the thing is less valuable than getting rid of it.

What is gold in the mind?

Gold (money) is a symbol for exchange. That is something is passed between parties in exchange for gold.

Money Processes

In relation to money you could:

- Increase your motivation
- Establish wealth on your future time track

These processes use the ideas of [submodalities](#)

Increase Your Motivation

1. Get the idea of something you really want. Use what you have learned about submodalities to determine its properties - position, colour, sounds and words, etc.
2. Take a symbol of money. For example, you could take a real bill and study it for a while. Close your eyes if you wish and then put this image of money where something you really desire is placed in your mind. Give the money symbol the submodalities of this desired thing.
You might make the money symbol bigger, closer and brighter. Make any voices sexy and alluring ... but determine what works for you if these examples are not exactly right
3. Open your eyes and [break state](#) by counting from 10 down to 1, or distracting yourself in your preferred manner.
4. Test your new motivation. For example, when you think of money do you really desire it?
You can repeat this process as often as you wish, but once may be enough.

Establish Wealth on your Future Time Track

1. Find something that is yours. Some thing you can say definitely belongs to you.
2. Find its submodalities - position, colour, size, etc.
3. Put your images of being rich in this place.

See yourself with the trappings of wealth - these could be sensing something you really want. Look around in this space and enjoy seeing yourself with those things that show you are wealthy. You may see a bank statement with a balance that shows a million dollars.

4. Give it the same submodalities that the definitely owned thing has. Often a money image that is big, close and bright is more powerful.
5. You might hear a voice, such as, 'It's mine!'. Have this voice in submodalities that suit you. Sometimes an excited or sexy voice is powerful.
6. [Break state](#) by opening your eyes and counting from 10 down to 1.
7. Test your new future by imagining it!

Double Standards

Using double standards is applying a rule to one person, thing or process, but not applying it to another.

Special pleading, of which double standards is an example, is basic to our thinking and occurs universally!

For example, the rich woman tells her badly paid employees that money brings unhappiness and they are better off without it. She steps into her big car and drives back to her mansion after spending a lot of money in the shops, just because she felt like it.

Clearly, she is using one rule for herself and another for her employees.

She is using a double standard.

Here is another example:

Jo sees a friend but the friend ignores Jo. Jo says that the friend must be upset with him. Jo must have done something to upset the friend.

We can ask Jo to tell the story from the point of view of Jo not speaking to his friend (reversing the roles). See [Story: Debating in Silence](#)

That is:

Jo's friend sees Jo, but Jo ignores the friend.

We ask Jo to give us some possible reasons why he has ignored his friend. In the first case, Jo is convinced that the friend has fallen out with him, but when Jo assumes another role in the story, he realizes there are many reasons why the friend might have ignored him.

Double standards are widely used. If we see another fall over, we think they are clumsy. If we fall over, we say we slipped. If another gets angry we say they are nasty. If we get angry we say we were provoked.

Handling Double Standards

By taking the role of other people in a scene, we very often notice that we feel differently about the scene. One reason is that we use double standards because we experience the scene from our own perspective only, ignoring that of the other parties involved.

Changing our perspective is an example of changing [submodalities](#). See [Perceptual Positions](#)

The Part has the Same Qualities as the Whole (Fallacy)

Here is an example of this pattern:

America is a rich country.

Tom is an American.

So Tom is rich.

Although America is a rich country, this does not mean that every American is rich —Tom may even be a homeless person.

You handle this technique by asking:

Can you imagine a poor American?

If you can, the logic is faulty.

Compare this:

Only scientists can be members of the Scientists Club

Mary is a member of the Scientists Club

So Mary must be a scientist.

Can you imagine a member of the Scientist's club who is not a scientist? Well, no you can't, because only scientists are members!

The difference between the two examples is that being a member of the Scientists Club entails being a scientist, but being American does not entail being rich!

So we can detect this pattern by asking if you can imagine an exception. If you can, then the argument may not be true.

What are Criteria?

A criterion is a standard, test or comparison—or an ideal—that we use to value or judge something, such as a course of action. For instance, we may use the principle:

Other things being equal, choose the more active option.

The criterion here is activity. The ideal might be ‘the active’. Criteria are often nominalizations. For instance, given the choice between lounging in front of the tv and going for a walk, we might choose going for a walk, because it more active.

A criterion can be the end point of a goal. So we might say we want:

- To be free
- To be happy
- To have a challenge

And the criteria would therefore be the end point of the goals:

- Freedom (State of being free)
- Happiness (State of being happy)
- Challenge (Condition of being challenged)

We would select options that:

- Make us more free
- Make us happier
- Are more challenging

Criteria or values

Story: The moon is more important than the sun

Nasrudin claimed the moon was more important than the sun.

“Why is that?” they asked?

“The moon gives us light at night when we need it most”, answered Nasrudin.

How to Elicit Criteria

Take a neutral things, something you could do, but you aren't going to do. Say you could go to the bookshop and have a look around, but you aren't going to do so.

Ask, **what does** (not going to the bookshop) **do for you**?

[Or

What is important to you about (not going to the bookshop)?]

For instance, it saves you the bother of driving to town. It saves time and trouble.

Now ask, **even though it causes you** time and trouble, **what would get you** to go to the bookshop?

For example, if there was a particular book I wanted.

Now **what would this do for you**? Satisfy a desire.

Now, suppose that even though it would satisfy a desire, you didn't go to the bookshop. **What would have to happen?** If I had an important meeting.

Now **what would that do for you**? Duty.

Now even though going to the bookshop made you miss an important meeting, what would have to happen for you to go to the bookshop anyhow? If I couldn't go later.

What would that do for you? Uniqueness ... Life Changing Event..

Now, even though it violated your criterion for uniqueness, what would stop you going to the bookshop? Nothing else.

We have this hierarchy:

1. Uniqueness
2. Duty
3. Satisfy a desire
4. Save time and trouble

The key principle here is that we start on something relatively trivial, that you could do, but you don't do. If something really dramatic were chosen, such as parachute jumping then we might jump straight away to a high order criterion such as personal safety. So we try to choose something rather neutral so we can elicit criteria.

Having got our starting situation or context, we try to find a context when we would do what we aren't doing. In the example, if there were a book that I particularly wanted.

Now we try to find a situation where even though the bookshop had a book I wanted, and I could satisfy my desire for it, what would have to happen for me not to go to the bookshop? What would stop me going? The situation was an important meeting and the criteria was duty.

In eliciting criteria or values, you alternate between

- what would lead you to do something and
- what would stop you.

In this way you work up the ladder of values until you get to a major value - for which no other value is more important. Such values may be

- life preservation,
- enlightenment,
- supreme happiness, etc.

These exist at the top of the ladder.

In summary, we try to elicit a low-level value and find the values that would override it. We therefore form a ladder of values. All the values are important, but some are more important and override the others.

Criteria - another method

The previous method of eliciting criteria started with something of small importance. This method starts at the other end and takes something that is important. The main question is:

What's important to you about (item)?

Normally, you will get three or four criteria. You can ask again and the next ones will often come in a group of three or four. You need to elicit about eight criteria.

Q: What is important to you about (life)?

To be free

To be happy

To be important.

No. These are goals. What we want are criteria... (We can just nominalize the goals!)

1. Freedom
2. Happiness
3. Challenge
4. Change

Q: What else is important about life?

5. Learning
6. Discovery
7. Making a better world

OK. We have got seven. Let's put them in order:

Q: Which is most important to you?

A: Happiness.

Q: Is happiness more important than freedom?

A: If I were free but unhappy, I don't think it would be good.

Q: If you were happy but there was no challenge, would that be OK?

A: Yes

.....

Q: What is the second most important thing after happiness?

A: Freedom.

Q: Is freedom more important than having a challenge?

A: Yes!

.....

Q: Is freedom more important than making a better world?

A: No.

Q: OK. Is making a better world the second item?

Yes.

Restart on the second item.

Q: Is making a better world more important than a challenge?

A: Yes.

.....

Q: What is the next most important thing after happiness, making a better world?

A: Freedom?

Here is the list so far:

1. Happiness
2. Making a better world
3. Freedom
4. Learning
5. Challenge
6. Change

7. Discovery

Q: Is freedom more important than having a learning?

Well, that's a hard one because learning is important to me. But learning and not being free would not be OK because if I were free I could find or choose some learning.

(Higher order values tend to include the lower ones.)

Q: If you were free, but there was no challenge would it be OK?

A: Yes.

.....

Here is the list so far:

1. Happiness

2. Making a better world

3. Freedom

4. Learning

5. Challenge

6. Change

7. Discovery

Q: What is next in importance after being free?

A: Learning

(Check by comparing with other items as above!)

Final list in order:

1. Happiness

2. Making a better world

3. Freedom

4. Learning

5. Challenge

6. Discovery

7. Change

The above is the list in the order of importance. Interesting the subject expressed concerns about **money**, but money is not on the list! In order to put money on the list, we need to first [elicit the submodalities](#) for the top item.

Eliciting submodalities for criteria

In the previous page, we elicited criteria. In this page we are going to elicit the submodalities for the top criteria. When we have done this we can go on to change the criteria, if they need to be changed.

The criteria elicited were (in order):

1. Happiness

2. Making a better world

3. Freedom

4. Learning

5. Challenge

6. Discovery

7. Change

To elicit the submodalities, ask the [submodality](#) questions:

Q: When you think about being happy ... is it a picture?

A: Yes.

Q: Is it black and white or coloured?

A: Coloured.

Q: Is it bright or dim?

A: Bright.

Q: Does it have a location?

- A: Yes. It's to the left and above.
Q: Does it have a border around it?
A: Yes.
Q: What is the colour of the border?
A: It's black.
Q: Is it a snapshot or a movie?
A: A snapshot.
Q: Focussed or defocused?
A: Focussed.

We have now elicited the submodalities for the highest criteria.

Comparing a new criteria with an old one and installing the new criteria

In the [previous lesson](#), we elicited the Sub-modalities of the top criterion and here we are going to compare it with a wanted criteria and install the new criteria.

Comparing the submodalities. of money with happiness

We continue with the example, naturally your answers may be quite different.

Q: Now think about money. How does it compare with the previous picture?

A: It's grey and dim and it's way down below happiness. It has a white border. It is associated, whereas happiness is dissociated.

Installing the money value

Q: Now what happens when you move money to the same position as happiness? Make it dissociated like happiness.

A: I notice something changing. It is dissociated and like happiness.
Here is the previous list of criteria.

1. Happiness
2. Making a better world
3. Freedom
4. Learning
5. Challenge
6. Discovery
7. Change

Comparing money as a value with the other values

Begin to compare money with the other values (below happiness).

Q: Is money more important than making a better world?

A: Yes. Eh! You can't make a better world without money.

Q: Is money more important than freedom?

A: Yes. If you have money you can be free.

Q: Is money more important than learning?

A: Yes. It enables learning.

.....

Q: How has money changed?

A: It has become something that facilitates many of the other values.

Being Specific Model

There are three models in NLP:

1. The Being Specific Model
2. The Milton Model
3. Clean Language (Symbolic Modelling)

The Being Specific Model is due to Bandler and Grinder, who called it the meta-model. It is a communications model for gathering information, clarifying and challenging incomplete or poorly structured information. In order to use the Being Specific Model, we need to recognize certain language words and use the right questions to make them clearer, more specific and more accurate. Although the metamodel has been linked to Leom Chomsky's Transformational Grammar, now no longer in fashion, any student of English language (or other language) may find that much of the Being Specific Model is familiar to them from 'freshman composition'. And the Being Specific Model is not much different from what teachers of writing tell us. I have retained the words used by Bandler and Grinder (which are unnecessarily complex) for the sake of cross-referencing, and some new items have been added.

The Being Specific Model is used for:

1. Identifying irrationality and gaps in information.
2. Studying—thoughtfully and critically
3. Communication—clarifying communications, and
4. Self help and therapy—identifying issues

John Grinder told the story that after he had taught his students the meta-model and sent them off to practice it, when they returned almost all of them reported upsetting most of the people they tried it on. The Being Specific Model needs to be used with full counselling skills to prevent giving someone the third degree. The classification below should not be taken too seriously, as different authors classify the Being Specific Model violations differently. Some of the topics occur in a different order. Presuppositions occur first, because they are basic to all the others.

Many (all?) of the Being Specific Model violations actually harp back to the kind of thinking found in early childhood. In some states of upset, some of these questions may not work—especially when working alone.

The most important thing about the Being Specific Model is identifying irrationality, lack of clarity and gaps in our thinking, writing and speech. The questions to ask are meant to illustrate the problem and guide us to its solution. They are not always the most appropriate and polite ways to ask something. For instance:

This is the best!

Says who?

The question is one we can use with ourselves and our own thinking, but it wouldn't be appropriate in all interpersonal situations, where it might appear aggressive or rude.

The following is the contents of this Being Specific Section.

Presuppositions

Handling Deletions

Simple Deletions

Lack of Referential Index

Unspecified Nouns

Nominalizations

Comparatives

Handling Generalizations

Unspecified Verbs

Universal Quantifiers

Handling Distortions

Modal Operators

Mind Reading

Lost Performatives

Cause and Effect

Complex Equivalence

Restriction Violations

Every Written English Sentence can be spoken in a Range of Meanings

One form of deletion occurs whenever we write language. When speech is written down, it loses a lot of its meaning. In writing we try to make our words mean what we intend, but a written transcript loses a lot of the information conveyed by actual speech. Consider:

Did you commit this crime?

I did it. I'm the criminal.

Now, is this a confession or a denial? At first you might say this is obviously a confession, but if you were there and could hear the voice patterns, you might think differently...

Try to read the words "I did it" as follows:

I did it. I'm the criminal. (looks down shamefully).

And as:

I did it? I'm the criminal? (You must be joking! Laughs.)

Of course, this pattern of denial is very common:

You were rude!

I was rude! I certainly wasn't.

The intonation patterns of English are very complex, and there is also a danger than written language ends up saying something different from what is intended—it could even be interpreted to mean the opposite!

Emails are notorious for creating the wrong impression and meaning. Sometimes people write in all capitals, it looks like they are shouting.

Mind Mastery by Ken Ward

The point here is that we should always be on the alert when reading to check our first impression is correct and the writer really meant to communicate what they actually did to us.

See [Using Voice Patterns to build rapport](#)

Presuppositions

Sometimes an expression assumes something, that is, it has a presupposition. For instance, the lawyers' question, 'Have you stopped beating your wife', presupposes that he had previously beaten her. Yet we do presuppose a great deal in our daily lives. We can say that almost all of what we say or write has presuppositions.

Even a simple expression has lots of them:

How is your wife?

Presupposes:

- You have a wife.
- Wives exist.
- Wives are the kind of thing you can have.
- Wives exist in states which are different (Otherwise, what would be the point of asking 'how is your wife', if wives did not occur in various states?)

Also the asking of the question to you presupposes you:

- Understand English.
- Can hear.
- Can speak (to answer).
- Are a man. (Which presupposes that only men can have wives.)
- Understand the question is polite, normally answered by 'Fine, thank you', and not a long list of her ailments and states of mind.

Many presuppositions are obviously acceptable from the context, but sometimes they aren't: One cannot always tell by looking that someone is deaf or blind, or in some way challenged.

We can respond to presuppositions by asking a question about the truth of the presupposition, or by making a statement denying the truth of the presupposition.

Questions to identify presuppositions

What happened before that?

Presupposes something happened before.

Was there something (of relevance) before that?

There was nothing (of relevance) before that.

After you read this book, you will have many new life skills.

Presupposes I am going to read this book, and also that reading it will make me better at life skills.

It also suggests I need to improve. It doesn't say how much I will improve.

Am I going to read this book?

How, specifically, will reading this book make me better at life skills?

Am I somewhat challenged in life skills? Do I need to get better?

How much better?

Are you feeling better?

Presupposes you felt ill.

Yes thank you.

Was I unwell?

I have not been unwell recently.

Statements

While the presuppositions of many statements can be relied upon most of the time, sometimes they cannot.

Your ability has improved.

Was it worse before?

[Presupposition: You were worse before. (How else could you improve?)]

He has changed.

Was he different before?

[Presupposition: He was different before. (How else could he change?)]

He never goes to the doctor's.

Is he ever sick?

[Presupposition: Perhaps unknown. But if he is never sick, why should he go to the doctors?]

We are suspicious of her.

Has she done anything wrong?

[Presupposition: There is some good reason to suspect her.]

They do not do what they are told.

Is that wrong?

[Presupposition: They should do what they are told. If the person telling them to do something has the authority, and gives wise instructions, then perhaps they should do so. Otherwise, why should they.]

When an aircraft caught fire (on the runway), the passengers were told to wait while the escape shoots were assembled. Those who obediently waited died. Some passengers disobeyed and jumped out without waiting. They survived.]

They do not do what they are told (statement repeated)

Do they understand (English)?

[Presupposition: They understand the orders given. Perhaps they don't understand English, or some other reason. The person giving the orders might have a strong, hard-to-understand accent.]

They do not do what they are told (statement repeated)

Is there a physical problem preventing them obeying?

[Presupposition: When we say something to someone we assume they can hear what we say. That is they aren't deaf to some degree. If the message is in writing, we assume they can read and have the ability to see.]

They do not do what they are told (statement repeated)

Are they able to do what they are told?

[Presupposition: They can do it, but they won't. If they cannot drive, they cannot obey the instruction to do so. If they cannot do arithmetic, they cannot add up, etc. People with short-term memory problems, such as some dyslexic children, go off with the intention of doing what they are told, but forget almost immediately, and do something else, sometimes getting into trouble for disobedience.]

She never gives to charity.

Has she got any money?

[Presupposition: She has sufficient money. The implication she is mean might be unwarranted.]

He did not answer me.

Did he hear you?

Can he speak?

Is he deaf?

[Presupposition: He can hear you and he can speak. The implication might be that he is rude, when he isn't.]

She did not stand when the anthem played.

Can she stand?

[Presupposition: She can stand. Many years ago, a paraplegic woman went to the cinema. At the end the National Anthem played. A woman standing next to her kicked her for not standing. But the paraplegic woman was not able to stand.]

Presupposition: She knows that in that culture she should stand.]

He just pushed me aside and muttered something foreign.

[Presupposition: He knows how to say, 'Excuse me!', meaning let me pass, in that culture. When I was a little boy a lady sat next to me on the bus, and when my stop arrived, I did not know how to politely get past her. I missed my stop, but might have rudely pushed past.]

Questions with Presuppositions

The following question, 'Why do I always fail?' contains the presupposition 'I always fail.', and responding to the question strengthens the presupposition. If we try to answer the question, we might get:

Because I am:

- stupid
- careless
- lazy
- cursed

Clearly this is a non-resourceful question. By reframing the question as 'How can I succeed?', we have a question that presupposes 'I can succeed.', which is resourceful. Answering the question makes resources available to the conscious mind.

We should, therefore, examine questions such as those in self-talk and reframe them into something resourceful.

Presuppositions and the Being Specific Model

The Being Specific Model is extremely powerful and effective. At a higher level of use, we examine some presuppositions in the Being Specific Model.

I can't do it.

What is stopping you?

[Presupposition: There is something stopping you.]

This may presuppose there is a barrier or thing in your way. Something to remove. But perhaps there is something that is lacking.]

It is raining.

What, specifically is raining?

[Presupposition: it stands for a thing or an idea.

Actually it does nothing of the kind. It's called a dummy **it**. And the question has no answer. There isn't a thing that is raining: Not the weather, the clouds (the clouds are raining sounds funny)... there isn't any thing that is raining. In this case the question has a false presupposition—that the 'it' refers to a noun.]

Simple Deletions

Something has been left out. For instance, 'I am concerned', omits what she is concerned about. By asking 'About what?', we can retrieve the missing information.

Incomplete Predicates

I understand.

Understand what, specifically?

I have a need.

For what, specifically?

I am upset.

About what, for example?

I haven't any.

(Any) Of what?

The next chapter deals with this in greater detail.

About what?

Here we continue with the idea of [incomplete predicates](#), giving more examples. We are mainly concerned with recognizing that something is missing from the statement, and asking for the omitted information. This is really an exercise, and we should avoid being too mechanical and failing to establish and maintain rapport.

I feel sad.

Oh dear. About what, specifically?

I am getting mad.

About what specifically?

About you.

What about me, for example, is getting you mad?

I am thinking.

About what, for instance?

We must take immediate action.

About what, specifically?

[Also challenging other parts:

What would happen if we don't (take action)?

Who, in particular, must take action?

What kind of (action)?

When must we take it?]

[Presupposes: There is some action to take, something to do about the problem.

Also presupposes that we should take action, rather than to do nothing at the moment.]

Use your imagination!

About what, specifically?

Questions related to 'about what?' are:

For whom, specifically?

This is too much!

For whom, specifically?

This is a valuable skill.

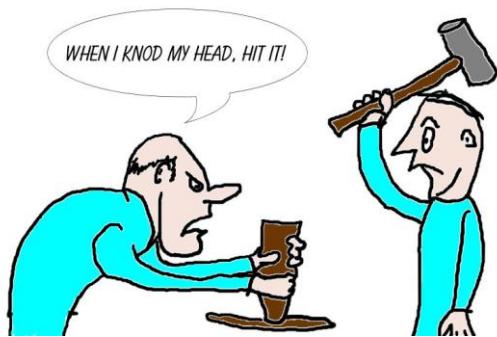
For whom, specifically?

When did it start?

Since, when?

The above questions tend to retrieve information in a cause and effect statement.

Lack of Referential Index



When we hear the words he, she, it, they, etc, they refer to some person or thing, but this might not be clear. Sometimes asking these questions gives an enlightening answer, even when they seem silly to us, they may not be to the other person. The examples which follow demonstrate the technique. In longer speech or in texts, the he's and she's can become confusing and we end up wondering who is doing what. This technique clarifies matters.

Handling Lack of Referential Index

Personal pronouns – he, she, it, we, you and they – refer to people and things. Sometimes what they refer to isn't clear. In a therapy situation, the answer could be surprising. For instance, the person who is upset might suddenly realise they are thinking of a time when they were upset with their mother in childhood. They might even be talking from a childhood memory.

Personal Pronouns

He annoys me.

Who, specifically annoys you?

It is impossible?

What is impossible?

For whom is it impossible?

She did it wrong.

Who, exactly, did it wrong?

Other Pronouns

Other pronouns refer to nouns or groups of nouns. For instance, **what** refers to one or more things.

For instance:

What are you going to do?

The pronoun, what, presumes there are two or more options.

What options do I have?

Which one do you prefer?

'Which' presumes there are a limited number of options, but at least two. And that you can have only one of them.

What choices are there, specifically?

Which of... which ones?

Do you have **any**?

(Any) Of what?

They are **ours**.

‘Ours’ presumes the listener knows who ‘we’ are.

Whose, in particular.

Which, specifically, are yours?

Do you have *some*?

Which ones, in particular?

(Some) Of what, specifically?

[Presupposes: There are more, perhaps elsewhere, and more basically, presumes they exist.]

Everybody’s doing *it*.

Literally, all people are doing it, but this is rarely true.

Who, specifically, is doing it?

Doing **what**?

Unspecified Nouns

Sometimes nouns are not very clear. For instance, 'People will never stand for it.' We can ask, 'Which people, specifically?'

Story: Collecting for the poor

Nasrudin knocked on a neighbours door.
"I am collecting for poor debtors."
The neighbour made a donation, and then asked, "Which poor debtors, for instance?"
"Well, mainly me."

Somewhat later Nasrudin knocked on the same neighbour's door and asked for a donation for those in debt.
"Is it for you, Nasrudin?" the neighbour asked suspiciously.
"Of course not!" said Nasrudin.
The neighbour made a donation. And then, as an afterthought, asked, "Why are you collecting for these debtors?"
Nasrudin answered, "Because I am their creditor."

Drawing universal conclusions from one example is characteristic of early childhood, and the use of this language in adults suggests Nominal Thinking in the part producing it.

For example:

Scientists have shown it is true.

There are many branches of science. For instance, a physicist might not be trained in the toxic properties of substances used. So a physicist saying something is safe, cannot be taken on authority. Also, not all scientists in a given branch have equal credibility. So we ask:

Which scientists, specifically?

(And:

How specifically have they proved it?
See Unspecified Verbs)

Example:

This substance is dangerous.

Something might cause illness after 20 years exposure. Such dangerous substances require different handling from those which produce immediate death!

Which substance, specifically?

How is it dangerous? (See Unspecified Adjectives)

Women believe in this.

Which women, specifically?

Which doctors, specifically?

More on Unspecified Nouns

All language and all words are valuable, and have a use, otherwise they wouldn't exist! But if we are stuck in one style at one particular time, then we become the slave, rather than the master of that language style. In this section, we deal with unspecified nouns.

There's nothing wrong with saying:

"This has been proved conclusively by Science."

So long as we ask:

'What exactly has been proved?'

If a drug for example has only been proved to be harmless, then that isn't likely to give us much confidence in its effectiveness! To be assured of that, we would require proof of its effectiveness. We'd also like to know it's harmless too, of course!

'Which Science?'

'Which scientists have proved it?'

If the answer is 'An obscure scientist in some remote country.', we might not be filled with confidence! Similarly, a single experiment by a single scientist cannot be relied upon, if the results haven't been repeated by other scientists.

The art of being specific is learning to ask questions automatically. Fortunately, this model is logical and can always be used. With words like 'scientists' we should automatically ask, or think:

'Which scientists?'

For example:



'Women won't stand for this!' (Surely all women don't think the same thing!)
We ask, 'Which women, for example?'

'Teachers' disagree with this new regulation.' (Surely some teachers support it?)
'Which teachers, for instance?'

The Being Specific Model helps us recover the deletions, generalisations and distortions which occur in all languages. By asking questions we avoid contradiction. The above is just two of the questions in the model. Make this automatic when you hear or read words or think them in your head. This is just the first part of the being specific model. When you have learned all parts and use them automatically you will have an extremely powerful skill to handle language.

Everybody's Doing it!

Is there anything we know everything about? Even the simplest thing, like a pen. Can you say you know **everything** about it? Do you know where every electron in every atom in that pen is located? Of course not. Even with the simplest thing we cannot say we know everything about it. But do we (or others) act as if we do?

Consider this:

Everybody thinks this is a good idea.

No one will agree with that.

These are statements about the whole of something. Every person. Whoever makes this sort of statement is claiming that they know what everyone thinks or doesn't think. This is mind reading, and as we learned, we can ask, 'How do you know that?' The point we are making now is about the claim to know everything (although the person doesn't make this claim explicitly.) Linguists call certain words we use to make statements about everything universal quantifiers.

Universal Quantifiers

Story: The Dog and the Oyster

A certain dog loved eggs. One day it saw an oyster and gobbled it up. The dog then had terrible stomach pains.

As he groaned, he said, "My fault for thinking that **everything** round is an egg."

Apologies to Aesop.

Universal quantifiers are words like: everybody, no one, never and all. They make generalizations and they also delete important information, such as exceptions. They are always (⌚) or almost always inherently contradictory.

This kind of thinking is similar to that naturally found in very young children.

We suffer a lot as a result of universal statements, because they delete many options—hiding from us the opportunities in the situation.

Words such as 'all' are often omitted, so we might need to clarify whether the person means 'all' or just some. In which case we can explore which ones are and which ones aren't.

We will mention **three** ways of dealing with statements about everything.

1. [Drawing attention to the extremes](#)
2. [Ask for an example](#)
3. [Ask for a counterexample](#)
4. [Double Binds](#)

Method 1: Drawing Attention to the Extremes

A generalization can seem reasonable providing we omit extremes. It is often the extremes that show our generalization is false. For instance:

- All women are selfish.

What about Sister Teresa, Florence Nightingale ?

By drawing attention to extremes we can show the rule doesn't follow. We can often use the following question:

All (men)? Every single one? Has there **never** been (a man) in existence who was not (sexist)?

The Exception Proves the Rule

The above is an old expression. In its day, it meant (prove means to test) the exceptions test whether a rule is universal or not. Nowadays, it is often misunderstood, because the word ‘prove’ is more likely to mean ‘show to be true.’

An exception does not show a rule to be true. It shows it to be false. Any exceptions test the validity of the rule.

In testing a rule, we cannot prove it however many examples we find (however many instances that show it to be true), but we can disprove it with just one counter-example.

When we consider the truth of a principle, law or rule, we do, of course, check for examples that are consistent with the rule, but our most important work, when we have established there seems to be a rule, is to search hard for exceptions.

If, after that, we can find none, we can be confident in our rule.

For instance:

Everybody thinks this is a good idea.

Everyone? Every single person who exists?

Everyone who has ever existed – now, in the past and in the future?

No one will agree with that.

No one? Not even one single solitary person in the whole world?

(As we know people believe all sorts of crazy things, it's so unlikely that **no one will agree** with our idea.)

I could never speak in public.

Never? Not even if your life depended on it? Your child's life?

All men are sexist pigs.

All men? Every single one? Has there **never** been a man in existence who was not sexist?

All women are money-grabbers.

All women? Every single woman who has ever lived. Has there never been a woman in the whole of existence who was not a money-grabber?

Method 2: Ask for an Example

The second approach we can use is simply to **ask for an example**. This is probably the best way in dealing with concerns. One asks for examples and discusses them. The fact that we can get only a few examples suggests that the generality is false.

All bankers are crooks.

All bankers. Which banker, for example?

Men are so cruel.

All men? Who, for example?

We might follow up their answer with, '**How do you know that?**'

We deal with the third approach in the next section, '[Ask for a counter-example](#)'.

Method 3: Ask for a counter-example

Story: No one complains about the spring

In the tea house, a philosopher was claiming that **everyone** complains **all** the time.

He said they complain about winter, because it is too cold.

And they complain about summer because it is too hot.

The crowd in the teahouse were nodding in agreement to show their philosophical understanding and to share in being profound.

Narudin commented, "It is curious that no one complains about the spring."

You can ask for or give a counterexample:

Learning is boring.

All learning? Have you never experienced any pleasant learning—even once?

Has no one in the world experienced interesting learning?

All women are deceitful.

All woman? Has there never been a woman who wasn't deceitful? What about Saint Teresa?

Method 4: Dilemmas (Double binds)

The **third method** to deal with generalizations is a bit tricky. It is called using a dilemma. A dilemma offers a choice between two (or more) options. Whichever option is chosen, the same result occurs. Whenever we say something about **everything** (or **nothing**) we are almost always being self contradictory: when we assert it, we deny it! Dilemmas are sometimes called double binds, but they are normally a simple bind. This technique isn't always applicable. Its purpose isn't to be clever, but to open up possibilities for the other.

I can't say, 'No' to anyone.

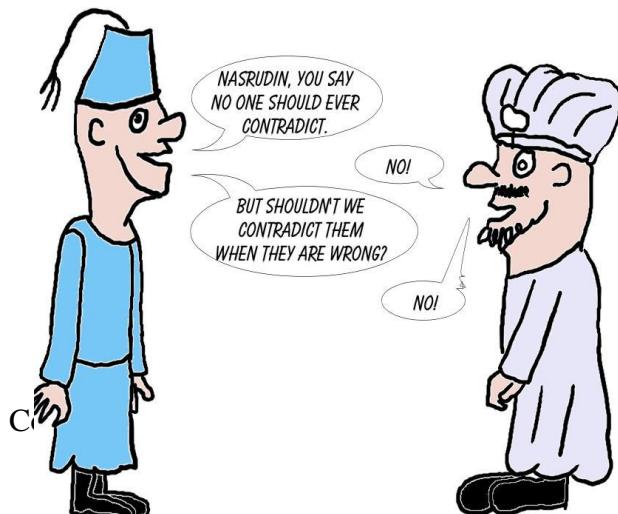
Go and say no to him!

Either the person says no to him or to you!

I can't say, 'No' to anyone.

And is this a good thing?

The person doesn't have to say 'No', but it is likely.



I can't learn anything.

How did you LEARN that (you couldn't learn anything)?

(They have learned "they can't learn anything", haven't they?)

I lack self-confidence.

Are you CONFIDENT about that?

You seem CONFIDENT about saying that.

In this dilemma, the person can't avoid answering in a self contradictory way.

Alfred Korzybski made the point that we can never know *EVERYTHING* about *ANYTHING*. There is always something else we might learn.

For instance, every two or three decades, physicists tell us they have now completed the study of physics and now know **everything** about physics. Usually this lasts for a short time until they discover something else! If it is true there is always something else to learn in physics, it is certainly true of our everyday statements about everything (or nothing.) There is always something else to learn.

I will never succeed.

Who believes that?

I do.

And will you succeed in being right about that?

Scientific statements are different from ordinary everyday ones. In science there is a lot of evidence to support statements and there is some interrelationship between the statements, so if they were wrong, then so would a vast body of knowledge be wrong. The world would be quite different from how we image it. Yet, even the most cherished theories of science are not completely certain. How much less certain are the everyday claims to know everything made by us ordinary mortals?

Doctors know best.

EVERY doctor? Do all doctors agree on everything all of the time? Has there never been a doctor who made a mistake? (If all doctors don't agree, they can't **all** be right. If one makes a mistake, you cannot say he or she **always** knows best.)

When people claim to know *all about something*, they often claim to have knowledge they could not possibly have!

To make a statement about every man (or woman) is to claim to know about every man and woman. That is, everyone who is alive now, has lived and will live. Clearly an absurd claim! Therefore, we can often ask, '**How do you know that?**'

People sometimes make 'all' statements with almost no evidence at all. So when we ask for an example, they often struggle to find even one, let alone several.

Dilemmas are often used in therapy. Although the person cannot handle a dilemma without being inconsistent, they might not realise this. So a dilemma is often used several times until the listener realises.

See also [Binds](#)

Nominalizations



There is nothing wrong with nominalisations (or other violations of the model) providing they are used properly and with understanding. A nominalisation is a noun that is to some degree general or abstract, so it isn't a thing. Often the nominalization is a verb or adjective that has been turned into a noun. We test whether it is a real thing – something we can touch, or not—by asking questions like, “can we bottle it?”, or “Can we put it in a wheelbarrow?”

For instance, embarrassment is a nominalization because it is a noun, and you can't bottle it or box it! We feel (internally) embarrassed, but we can't touch it.

Under the heading of nominalizations, I also include abstract words, which can be dealt with in a similar manner—even though they aren't nominalizations.

Story: The Lion's Roar

A fox observed a hunting dog who had spotted a lion, and gave chase.

The lion turned round and faced the dog. He roared fiercely.

The dog whimpered, and turned and ran.

As he ran past the fox, the fox said, “You pursue a lion, but cannot even bear his roar!”

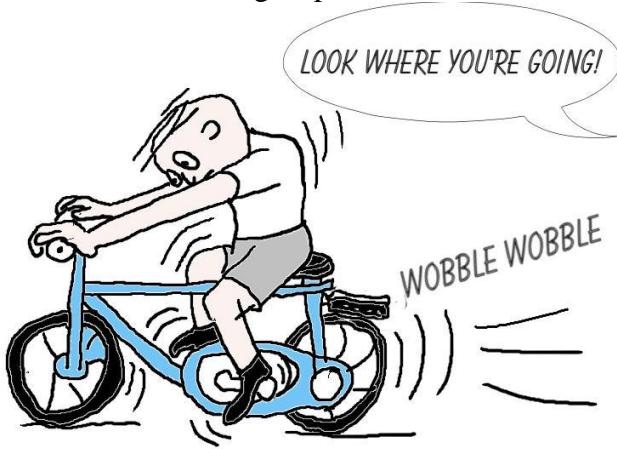
The word **lion** isn't a nominalization because we can put it in a box (and I suppose we could bottle it, or put it in a wheelbarrow with some struggling!).

The word **education** is a nominalization because it is a noun, but we can't box or bottle it. Other nouns, such as the wind and fire are not nominalisations or abstract. Although we cannot put them in a wheelbarrow, we can feel the wind as something external, and we can see the fire (and feel it!).

When we use a nominalization, we delete some information. For instance, with the word **embarrassment**, we leave out who is embarrassed, who embarrassed them, and how they did it. The stock questions, below, retrieve this missing information.

Reflective Thinking and Nominalizations

When we think about a subject, we might draw conclusions or make judgements about it—resulting in a nominalization. For instance, when wondering how to teach a young child how to ride a two-wheeled bicycle, we think they need to keep their balance (a nominalization.) But this does not help in telling the child what to do. To follow the advice, “Keep your balance!”, the child needs to understand how to do it. If the child knew, they wouldn’t need any instruction! We need to guide the child in the following steps.



In a simple way, when riding a bicycle, we need to pump the pedals and steer. The learner can do these things. When remembering to pump the pedals we forget to steer, and vice versa. When we learn to do these things together, we stop falling off so much. There are many other things to learn, but this is a start. So we yell, “Keep pedalling!”, when they have stopped pedalling. Or “Look where you’re going!”, when they are watching their feet. Of course, in learning to ride a bicycle, you need to learn to balance, but you need to know exactly how to balance.

We need to ask, “How” and get clarification until we get something we can actually do.

The standard question to unravel nominalizations is:

Who or what is (verb) and how are they doing it?

So:

Who or what is balancing, and how are they doing it?

In this example, the important bit is ‘**how are they doing it?**’ This leads us to express riding a bicycle in more useful ways—such as looking where you are going and pumping the pedals. The **who** is also important because if the person being taught is a child, we might use different language from that we would use with an adult.

Many people seek to be more confident, but confidence is a nominalization, and we need to know how to do it and what it means.

Also, we might tell someone, “Don’t feel embarrassed!”, but to be effective, we need to tell them exactly what to do. If they knew how ‘not to be embarrassed’, they wouldn’t be embarrassed! At root, when we are embarrassed, we have embarrassed ourselves through visual or auditory thinking, or by self talk (auditory digital). We might ask how exactly did we embarrass ourselves? And to be more specific, we might ask questions to identify and change the submodalities.

Dealing with Nominalizations

Keeping with the example nominalization, embarrassment, we can ask:

Who embarrassed whom, and how did they do it?

Clearly, someone was embarrassed and someone (or some thing) did the embarrassing. This has all been left out, and the questions seek to retrieve the deleted information. We can ask:

Who was embarrassed?

Who embarrassed them?

How, exactly, did they do it (embarrass them) or **What, for instance, did they do?**

If we assume the submodalities model, we might also ask:

What do you see, hear, say to yourself and feel, precisely, when you embarrass yourself?

Here is how Shakespeare deals with the nominalization **honour**.

Story: On honour (Shakespeare)

Based on: Henry IV, pt. 1, Act 5, scene i

Comparison of a nominalization with a tangible thing.		
	Nominalization: honour	Concrete word table
Falstaff: honour prods me. Yes, but what if honour prods me off my horse? What then? Can honour set to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery then? No. What is honour? A word. What is in that word honour? What is that honour? Just a puff of air! Who has it? Those soldiers who died this Wednesday. Do they feel it? No. Do they hear it? No. Is it insensible then? Yes. Therefore I'll none of it. Honour is merely cosmetic.	What does it do? What can (word) do for you?	It can inspire you to ride into battle. It cannot heal you though.
	Who has it?	No one
	Can you Feel it? See it? Hear it?	No. Yes, but you cannot hear it.
	What is it?	A puff of air. Just a word.
		A tangible thing.

Keeping to the word embarrassment as an example, we can ask:

Who embarrassed whom, and how did they do it?

Clearly, someone was embarrassed and someone (or some thing) did the embarrassing. This has all been left out, and the questions seek to retrieve the deleted information. We can ask:

Who was embarrassed?

Who embarrassed them?

How, exactly, did they do it (embarrass them).

If we assume the submodalities model, we might also ask:

What do you see, hear, say to yourself and feel, precisely, when you embarrass yourself?



The article, [Words that say it all](#), is also about nominalizations.

What kind of thing is it?

Speaking roughly, there are several kinds of things (a thing is here considered anything that exists or is known). For instance:

- Tangible things (objects)
- Processes
- Concepts
- Ideas

We say such things as stones, trees, wind and **tangible things**. They are entities in the real world.

Processes are like real things, but they usually require perception over time and they are considered abstract. For instance, running seems something real, which it is, but we deduce that someone is running by observing them over a period of time.

	<p>Is the horse on the left running? Perhaps. But is it walking fast? Could it be standing on one leg, or trying to? Could it be about to fall over? Could it be jumping?</p> <p>Although it seems to me to be jogging, it may be any of the preceding and it might actually be running (or even walking) fast. I am not sure. I would have to see more pictures and more context.</p> <p>Without a context, and without a series of pictures in time we do not know for sure. Running (and other activities) are abstract and we refer to them as processes rather than tangible things.</p>
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A **concept** is an abstract idea derived from particular instances. So, if I said:

I saw a lion in the zoo.

You could think of many images in response to the above—a male lion, a lioness, an old lion, a cub... all in different sizes and colours and kinds. We probably have a fixed image or symbol for words, and we all have different ones. Therefore, the writer has no idea what someone would think about the lion in the above sentence.

Nonetheless, in the example above, I would be referring to a particular lion. If I said:

Lions eat meat, or

The lion eats meat

I would be referring to a concept of lion (the species) rather than particular lions. While we may all have a stereotype image of a lion, these are likely be different for different people.

An **idea** refers to anything we are thinking of, and could be a representation of something in reality. For instance, an image of the lion I saw in the zoo. Ideas are, of course, not real, although they might represent real things.

According to Shakespeare, some words are no more than a puff of breath.

Words that say it all - or try to! (More on Nominalizations)

Story: The monk's uncontrollable temper

A certain monk had an uncontrollable temper. He consulted a teacher.

Teacher: This sounds like a wonderful thing, this temper. **Can you show it to me.**

Monk: Sorry, I can't show it to you now.

Teacher: **When can you show it to me, then?**

Monk: I can't say. It comes randomly.

Very roughly, we can say that words refer to things - which you can see, feel, etc, or to ideas. Words such as table, horse, car and house seem clearer than words such as communication, confidence, honour and temper. When a noun refers to an idea, it has probably deleted a lot of stuff—perhaps everything.

For example:

You will learn a lot about **communication** on this course.

(Communication isn't a thing that you can see or feel!) We might ask:

Who is communicating to whom about what, specifically? And how are they doing it?

When communication occurs, then one or more people or things are communicating with each other about something and in a certain way. The questions pull out the real meaning.

This is outrageous!

Who is outraged about what? And how exactly are they doing it?

Can you show it to me? (from Zen, and Shakespeare)

I want peace.

Who do you want to be at peace with whom? About what? How exactly do you want them to do it?

I want peace with myself.

Who or what is fighting with whom or what? Exactly how are they doing it?

Master, I want to be free.

Who, young monk, holds you in bondage. (This response is said to have caused the enlightenment of the Zen student!)

I want to be happy.

Who, or what, is making you unhappy?

How exactly are they doing it?

Instead of accepting the highly complex abstract word, we ask:

- **Who or what is doing what to whom or to what?**
- **How exactly are they doing it?**

We try to pull out one or more scenes and we ask the questions to discover the players and the action.

I have made a decision.

Who has decided **what about what?** **How exactly** did they decide?

I have achieved some understanding.

Who understands **what?** **How exactly are they doing it?**

Story: Take all the breath you can carry.

Nasrudin promised to teach a man metaphysics.

“Come round one evening!” the man said, “We can discuss it.”

He thinks that learning metaphysics is all about words, Nasrudin thought.

A few days later Nasrudin saw the man on his roof.

“Help me please Nasrudin.” He said.
“Go and blow the charcoal in my fire—it’s going out.”

“With pleasure!” said Nasrudin.
“Come over here and take all the breath you can carry away.”

Abstract words are not things you can sense—you cannot feel them. They must, if they are anything, be processes or highly general concepts—transcending the 5 senses. If they refer to anything real, then they must have verbs (or other parts of speech) that can be clarified. To clarify the verb, what is being done, we ask:

- **How exactly are they doing it?**
- **What exactly are they doing?**

For instance, consider:

We seek excellence.

Excellence is a nominalization of the verb excel.

We expand this to:

Someone or something is seeking to excel in something by some method.

This leads us to at least these questions:

Who or what is seeking to excel in what, and exactly how are they doing it?

We live in a world of sensory experience. We see things, hear them, feel them, smell or taste them. Language sometimes takes us from what is real into the world of abstraction. We can sometimes make sense of abstract 'things' by bringing them down to Earth using the questions we have demonstrated.

This is not just about words and language. It is also about thoughts and ideas. When we confuse real things with abstractions then we can be distracted from being able to do something or to see or hear it. First we need to identify the nominalization (or other abstraction) by asking whether we can ‘put it in a wheelbarrow and carry it away’. Then we try to clarify it so we can apply it in the real world.

Unspecified Verbs

Verbs are sometimes vague and unclear. The following are examples. For instance:

He hurt me.

There are many ways to hurt someone, sometimes violently, thoughtlessly, etc.

How, specifically, did he hurt you?

He did not call me.

He touched me.

How did he touch you?

Where, specifically, did he touch you?

She upset me.

Upset you ... **What precisely** happened?

Upset you ... **What precisely did** she **do** to upset you?

Analyse the problem carefully.

How, for example, should I do that?

She helped me.

How did she help you?

What, exactly, did she **do**?

The key word in clarifying unspecified verbs is **how**. There are a host of other words that we can use to clarify unspecified verbs:

When, where, in what direction, what, who, how, for what purpose, for what reason.

We need to clarify vague verbs sufficiently so we have instructions or explanations we can do or visualize.

How exactly did he hurt you? (More on unspecified verbs)

In this series we are looking at the Being Specific Model. This model, when you have learned all of its parts will do marvellous things for you. Your interpersonal skills will improve, you will learn better and you will be less gullible, to mention only a few benefits. But I have to tell you this. Almost everyone who has learned the model has managed to get up the noses of all who have been the victim of their practice!

Strong medicine has the power to help tremendously, but until we learn to use it wisely we may produce unwanted effects. Practice the model on yourself, on your own thoughts to begin with and go easy on others.

As a treat here's a bit of theory from General Semantics (which is probably the basis of the Being Specific Model anyway.) The basic idea is that we are aware of far less than actually exists. And we report in words far less than we have in experience.

To start with we cannot experience all of the world. Our eyes only see in a limited range of frequencies. If we are colour blind we perceive even less. Similarly for the other sense. We can experience only part of the event. We call the part we can experience the object, which could be a person or a thing or a mental image. But we are not aware of all we could be aware of in the object. Have you ever looked at a car thinking how good it is only to have someone else point out the scratch on its door?

When it comes to words we express only a fraction of what we experience. We abstract, organise and distort the experience with words. When I say that scientists have proved this system, you would now ask, 'Which scientists, for example?' Because I have left out of the message the particular scientist or scientists who have 'proved' the system.

The Being Specific Model helps to bring back some of the detail and information that we have left out of the message.

When I said, 'Scientists have proved this', you might wonder, 'How exactly did they prove it?' (And which scientists?)

If I said, 'I helped someone yesterday', you might ask, 'How exactly did you help them?'

If someone said, 'My husband hurt me', you might ask, 'How exactly did he hurt you?' (There is world of difference between forgetting to buy some flowers and punching someone in the nose!)

If someone tells me, 'You should learn some manners', I might ask, 'How exactly should I learn them?' (What would happen if I don't?)

A simple way to make these questions less abrupt, say, when you are talking to nice people, or counsellng someone is to prefix them with 'I wonder...' For example, 'Mm! I wonder ... Exactly how did they prove it.'

For the practice period, remember to ask the question whenever you encounter a vague verb:

He went to town.

How exactly did he go? (Which town?)

I solved the problem.

How exactly did you solve it?

I worked hard.

How exactly did you work hard?

You get on my nerves.

How exactly do I get on your nerves?

Women are changing.

Which women, specifically? (unspecified noun)

How exactly are they changing?

What exactly are they changing? (simple deletion)

Modern men are changing their roles.

Which modern men, specifically?

How exactly are they changing their roles?

Which roles, for example, are they changing?

Remember that reading about something isn't the same as practising it. And if you don't do it, you won't learn it! Also, we can use the Being Specific Model in our own writing and on our own self-talk, to clarify ideas.

Unspecified Adjectives

Sometimes we hear:

- He was cold with me.
- She is intelligent.
- This is horrible.
- It is unsightly.
- It is ridiculous.
- It is garish.

These are examples of abstract words and the handling has been hinted at (at least) under [nominalizations](#). Just as verbs can be fossilised in nominalizations, so can other parts of speech, including adjectives. In the above examples, we can nominalize them as:

- Coldness
- Intelligence
- Horribleness
- Unsightliness

And handle them as we handle nominalizations.

These adjectives indicate in some way **how** a person thinks or feels about something, but they tell us little. Like nominalizations, we can identify this kind of word to ourselves by asking:

- Can you show it to me?
- Have you got some now?
- Can you get me a sample (for analysis) in a box or tube?
- What does it look like, specifically?
- Can you put it in a wheelbarrow?

Words that fail these tests do not refer to anything specific and tangible. They may be just a word, puff of air, and nothing else.

We or the speaker must have experienced something to use these words, but what they saw, heard, etc, has been deleted from the sentence. Presumably they know, but have not stated it. Mostly, we see, hear, etc something and react to it, and we say, for instance, “that was ridiculous!”, but we do not say exactly what we saw, felt, etc. The questions make the experience more tangible and clear.



To find the omitted information we can ask:

What specifically did he say, or do, that made you think he was (cold) with you?

What specifically did she say, or do, that made you think he was (intelligent)?

We might first ask about the following, for example, “**What, specifically, is (horrible)?**” ([Lack of Referential Index](#))

Exactly, what made you think it was (horrible)?

Exactly, what made you think it was (unsightly)?

What, specifically, made you think it was (ridiculous)?

What, specifically, made you think it was (garish)?

Comparatives

Words like better, more intelligent assume that someone holds this opinion, and that one thing has been compared with another or others. Even superlatives, such as good, the best, right, cheapest presume some comparison by someone. The things being compared may have been left out, and the person making the evaluation might not be mentioned. When two or more things are compared, a basis of comparison is used. Sometimes it is omitted, as with the word 'better' below.

This is better.

Better than what?

According to whom?

Some words such as **better** and **the best** invite the question:

In what respect?

When two things are compared, there is a basis for comparison. Sometimes this is omitted. If someone says this is better, we often have no idea in what respect it is better. Therefore, we ask:

According to what criteria?

In which respect?

In what way?

This is the best deal going.

Better than which others?

According to whom?

Sometimes, when the evaluation was made or how long the belief was held is important. For instance:

Ice cream is good for you.

According to whom?

That doctor.

When did she believe that?

When she was 4 years old.

In this example, the time (age) when the belief was held is important.

Discovering Value

Traditionally people don't like mathematics, but they seem keen and able to work out what others owe them and what change they should get in the shop.

I overheard a couple of people talking in a shop. They were looking at some potion or the other and reading the box. One said, 'It contains Vitamin C, so it must be good.' They were making a fundamental mistake—and a very common one. They had omitted discussions of quantity, and what that quantity means.

How MUCH Vitamin C did it contain?

And,

What is the SIGNIFICANCE of this amount?

If Vitamin C is good for you, then the amount you need for that good effect is important. If you have too much, its probably bad. If you have too little, then it won't do any good. The twice Nobel prize winning champion of Vitamin suggested that you should take mega-doses, that is several grams a day. If the potion contains only a few milligrams, then it probably won't work. (This page is not about nutrition so take the above with a pinch of salt. Don't forget to ask: How much salt and what is the significance of that amount!!!) (-:)

These are two essential questions that should pop into your mind whenever there is the remotest possibility that quantity is involved. If you hate mathematics, then steel yourself, because these questions can take you a long way.

There is a chance the operation may kill you.

How much of a chance?

What, specifically, is the significance of that chance?

People do not understand probabilities. If the chance is 1% then that might be OK. Sometimes a 50% chance is OK. It depends on what the alternative is.

In the UK 2 out of 3 people do the Lottery. They have more chance of being run over by a bus than winning a substantial amount. They do not believe they will be run over by a bus, but they do believe in some way they will win the lottery. They wouldn't buy insurance against being run over by a bus, but they waste their money on gambling!

The point is that we need to have some idea of the significance of any value.

You'll get a good discount.

How much of a discount?

What is the significance of this amount of discount?

Values are largely comparisons. And we have already learned how to deal with comparisons.

This is a good deal.

COMPARED with what?

She is strong.

COMPARED with whom?

We can now add the quantity questions:

This is a good deal.

How much of a good deal, specifically?

Sometimes we can't use numbers to answer these questions. We use comparisons.

I want this greener.

How much greener?

Well, greener than that. (Points to something green.)

This is a better college.

How much better?

What is the significance of this?

Better in what respect?

You will live longer if you take my advice.

Now, living longer may seem like something good. If the advice is to run for 4 hours a day, give up smoking and lovers, and eat only peanuts. Then we might not even bother to ask any questions! But if it was something reasonable we might ask:

How much longer?

And we would ask ourselves, if not the adviser:

What is the significance to this?

If you would live an hour longer, it might not be very significant, unless you were about to expire in the next minute!

Many statements seem to make sense or be attractive because we do not know what the quantities involved are.

You'll earn a lot of money working there.

How much, specifically?

A lot of people like this idea.

How many, specifically?

Don't forget to ask yourself or the speaker:

What is the significance of this?

It is said that one of the secrets of wealth is to know value. Certainly a lot of bamboozling involves statements with undetermined values. A statement can sound good, as long as it isn't quantified.

A variation of this is:

You get 10% discount on this.

How much money, exactly is that?

10% of a penny isn't really worth anything, is it?

Folks usually do it, you know (More on comparative deletions)

We are looking at the Being Specific Model. This model is about what really happens and what really goes on. By really, I mean the physical universe. Here someone usually experiences something in a visual, auditory (hearing), touching, or smelling or tasting. When we report something we often speak of something seen, heard, felt or smelt or tasted. (This article is about comparative deletions).

Sometimes, when we use language, we get very abstract and leave out the senses. However, there is something else which might be left out, and that is the person. Almost everything (if not everything) has to do with people. Do you remember the excuse, the computer made a mistake? Well, we usually use this excuse for mistakes the computer couldn't make all on its own. We miss out the person who told it wrong. We hope the person complaining will tell the computer off, and forget to yell at us!

If a volcano erupts, this may have little to do with people, but we can only know it erupts if someone reports it. When we say, 'This is unacceptable!', we forget to say who finds it unacceptable. Things can be more persuasive if we make them into a mystery. If we hide something in our language, then the resulting expression can be much more persuasive. The being specific model brings these bits we have omitted into awareness again and separates the reasonable statements from those which are all hot air.

Don't worry about losing all this hot air, though, later on we will learn how to pump it back in again! But for now we are learning how to recognise and deal with unclear and vague expressions.

Consider this:

This is the best deal you will get anywhere!

Best deal compared with what?

When we talk about comparisons, we compare one thing with another. When we want to be persuasive we forget to say what we are comparing it with.

Einstein is the greatest scientist that ever lived.

Compared with whom?

This is the most exciting holiday you can get.

Compared with what other holidays, for example?

This mailing list is simply the best!

Compared with which others?

And don't forget there are usually people involved here, and they are left out too. (What a shame!)

So let's not be unkind, and grab the folks back:

According to whom?

Who, for example, says so?

This computer deal is the best in town.

Who says so?

Compared with what other deals is it the best?

You can't get anything better than this.
Who says so?
Compared with what other things is this better?

Consider this:
She runs like an antelope.
On four legs? Sounds interesting.
No. Very fast!

So don't forget that when we compare two things we need to say in which way we are comparing them.

This is the best deal.
In what way, for instance, is it the best?
Compared with what other deals?
According to whom?

I'd rather go to the cinema.
Rather than do what?
In what way is going to the cinema better than the alternative?

Sometimes the fact we are comparing is not ever so clear:
This is excellent.
Compared with what?
In what particular way is it better (more excellent)?
According to whom?

Listen to this marvellous idea!
Marvellous compared to what.
According to whom is it marvellous?
In what ways is it marvellous?

So, to get better at communication, practice all the parts of the being specific model that you have learned in the series and practice dealing with comparisons. This is the best way to develop your communication skills! You will find yourself improving beyond your wildest dreams! You won't believe the excellent results!!!

Universal Quantifiers

The obvious way in which we can generalize, and therefore leave out particular details is to use words like **all**, **none**, **every**, etc. In this way we make statements about every member of a group without exception.

For instance:

All men are evil.

All men? Every man who has ever lived? [Even baby boys, Jesus, Gandhi, Buddha, Mohammed, etc]

All politicians are liars.

Can you think of a politician who isn't a liar?

Nothing works.

For instance? [To lead on to more clarification and discussion.]

Modal Operators

The modal verbs are:

can, shall, must, may will.

The ones of interest are **can**, **must** and **may**. That is those related to ability, obligation and possibility. These words have various meanings, but we indicate below the meanings of interest to us here.

Can: Ability

Can refers to ability or inability to do something.

I couldn't do that.

What prevents you?

What would happen if you did?

What would happen if you didn't?

Can is also used to ask permission, or to give an order, in a polite way:

Can I sit here? (May I sit here)

Can you reach this? (Please, reach this).

We are not concerned with this use here, although it is used in hypnotic language:

Teddy **can have good feelings Milly**, can't he? Perhaps he's **feeling good now**, Mmm!
(Which instructs her to have good feelings, but is ostensibly about her teddy.)

Must: Obligation

Must relates to obligation.

You must do it.

According to whom?

Who says so?

What would happen if I didn't?

What would happen if I did?

We shouldn't do that.

According to whom?

What would happen if we didn't?

What would happen if we did?

Like the other modals, must has other meanings. One is to indicate that something is logically demanded (when the use of must is correct).

No one lives much more than 100 years. Socrates lived two thousand years ago. So he **must** be dead. (If the first two premises are true, then the conclusion **must** follow.)

May: Probability

Story: You can't change a lake to yoghurt—Or it might work.

A philosopher and a scientist were discussing knowledge.

The philosopher said, “I can’t believe anything that isn’t rational.”

The scientist said, “I can’t believe anything that I can’t see, measure or test.”

They noticed Nasrudin was pouring something into the lake.

“What are you doing, Nasrudin?”

“You know when you add yoghurt to milk, you get more yoghurt.

“Yes”, they said.

“Well, I am adding yoghurt to the lake.”

“You can’t turn a lake into yoghurt!” they said.

“I know. I know”, said Nasrudin, “but just suppose... it might happen.”

We might get mugged.
How likely is it?

It could happen.
It could happen, but is it likely?

Other uses include asking for and giving permission:

May (Can) I open the window?
Yes, you may (can).

May relates to uncertainty and probability. It is a difficult concept to understand and to make clear. Some people believe something is likely, such as winning a lottery, when it is nearer impossible. And some people believe something highly unlikely is something to worry about, such as a plane crashing. In this sense of the word ‘may’, *might* is used.

Mind Reading—Claiming knowledge without verification

Story: Imaginary Soup

One winter's day, Nasrudin sat shivering before his meagre fire with a blanket round him, and wishing he had something nice to eat.

At least, he thought, the neighbours wouldn't come round begging for food when they smelt it cooking in his kitchen.

He began to imagine that he had some tasty hot soup to eat. He smelt it and tasted it. As he relished this thought, there was a knock on the door.

It was one of the neighbours children. "Can we have some of that hot tasty soup, we have nothing to eat?"

"Goodness me!" thought Nasrudin, "the neighbours have started reading my mind!"

In mind reading we make statements, which, if true, require we have the ability to read others minds or that they have the ability to read ours. Mind Reading is an example of claiming knowledge without verification. For instance:

I know what you are thinking. (How could this be true, unless the speaker can read minds!)

Yet we hear statements which imply the ability to read minds every day.

'Mind Reading' is a distortion of reality. Because we cannot mind read others and they cannot mind read us, such statements are unwarranted. Sometimes this type of thinking causes upsets, when we imagine that others are thinking badly of us.

We commit this violation when we make statements, such as, "You don't believe me, do you", when this is an inference and not a fact. We also 'mind read' when we make statements about the future, because we do not know the future for sure. For instance,

If you don't study regularly, you won't get your qualifications. (Assumes to know the future.)

If you don't treat him better, he will leave you. (Claims to know what another thinks or would do.)

When we encounter mind reading we can deal with it as follows:

For instance:

They don't like me.

Often people say this when they have no evidence for it. Of course they might think that, but we do not know they do. To clarify the error in thinking we ask:

How do you know that?

Sometimes this makes us realise that we don't know for sure.

We could ask:

How can you tell they think that?

Or:

What leads you to believe they think that?

In response to the questions, we could get mind reading:

They are very cold with me.

We could ask:

When you say they are cold, what specifically do they do? (See [Unspecified Adjectives](#))

Of course, the answer to the question might indicate that it isn't mind reading:

I heard them talking and Alan said he hated me. And they all said, "So do we."

We might prefer to deal with this as a [Complex Equivalence](#)... "How does the fact that Alan said you were stupid, mean you are stupid? If he said you were the greatest genius of all time, would you actually be such a person?

Often, the listener realizes that they have no reason for their belief. Or realise they are the ones thinking it.

I know what is best for him.

How, specifically, do you know what is best for him?

Also,

Compared with what other things?

Best in what respect? ([Comparatives](#))

They should know what I want.

How could they know what you want? (Unless they read your mind!)

What would happen if they did (they didn't) know? ([Must: Obligation](#))

When we or another claims knowledge, we might ask:

How do you know that?



However, we should not always expect a rational answer from a rational person.

Doctor: The patient has booglitis major.
Someone not a doctor: How do you know that?

The doctor might say something like she has 3 of the 4 signs in the diagnostic manual and this means she has it (presumptively), but we might not understand the answer or the signs and tests mentioned. The doctor could also have said, "I learned it in medical school" meaning it isn't my job to teach you medicine—if you want to learn, go study medicine. (Which is a fair answer sometimes, in response to idle talk.)

It may not always be possible for a knowledgeable person to give a simple answer. If we do not understand a subject, asking, "How do they know that?" might lead us through a study of that subject.

In general, when another claims knowledge when they are not 'experts', then we might ask:

- How do you know that?
- What references did you consult?
- Why is that so?
- Who told you that?
- Etc

Is someone reading your Mind?

Can you read minds? Can others read your mind? Have you heard or used expressions like these?

- "I know what you are thinking"
- "You think I'm wrong, don't you."
- "He thinks we don't know what he is planning."
- "I see what you are thinking."
- "You don't agree with this, do you."

There can be good reasons for these statements, but at face value they appear to indicate mind reading. And between you and I, I can't read minds, and I don't think that people who make these statements can either. In psychology, they are sometimes called projection. That is, we have a thought in our own minds, and think it belongs to someone else. We project our thought on this other person and blame them for thinking it! Sounds like good fun to me, but how do we deal with it?

I know what you are thinking.

How do you know what I am thinking?

You think I'm wrong, don't you.

How, specifically do you know that?

He thinks we don't know what he is planning.

How specifically, do you know that?

I see exactly what you are thinking

How specifically, do you know that?

The question, 'How, for example, do you know that?' is specific to mind reading, but is very useful on many other occasions.

Science has proved XYZ

How specifically, do you know that?

This is good for you.

How specifically, do you know that?

Don't forget all the other questions we have learned so far. For example:

Science has proved XYZ

Which science, specifically?

Which scientists, specifically?

How did they prove XYZ?

and,

How specifically, do you know that?

There is a little problem with 'How do you know that?', however. Strictly, if someone knows something, then it is true. So our question is assuming what the person says is true. Very often, a person's mind reading is false. As I said, it is a small problem because people usually take 'know' to be 'belief.' But consider:

You are trying to get out of this.

What, specifically, leads you to that belief?

Or

What, specifically, makes you think that?

And consider the last questions from the first set of examples:

You don't agree with this, do you.

What, specifically, makes you think that?

Or,

What, specifically, leads you to that belief?

When you catch yourself mind reading, or others claim to read your mind or make a statement without giving the reasons or evidence for it, you can use the question, 'How, specifically, do you know that?' On other occasions you might prefer to use variations of:

What, specifically, makes you think that?

Or,

What, specifically, leads you to that belief (conclusion, decision, etc)?

Remember, you will have attained one of the goals of this mini series when you automatically think of the appropriate question when you catch yourself or others violating the Being Specific Model. If you do this, and use it regularly, then you will discover that:

- Your communications skills will improve
- You will be more able to deal with awkward situations
- You will find study easier.

You will learn that unless you learn and apply what you have learned, it will not have a great effect in your life.

Why the Being Specific Model is so powerful

I don't know to what degree you have been using the parts of the Being Specific Model, but if you have learned the techniques used so far, and used them automatically, then you may have noticed something interesting. You see, although we think of the value of a question is to get answers. And think answers are all important. You may have noticed when you use the Being Specific Model on your thoughts a change occurs just by asking the questions, before you even think of any answers. One reason for this is that the part of the mind generating the thought has never reviewed it in an adult way. As soon as the question is asked, the solution occurs almost without awareness.

We all have thoughts that pop into our mind we react to them. We do not examine the thought, but we have feelings and other thoughts or even go and do something because of that thought but we never 'look' at the thought itself and challenge it (with adult thinking). We take it as true without trying to find out whether it really is true or not. For instance, you might think:

They will never agree to this.

And start thinking about ideas 'they' might agree with, or going into a panic because your idea won't be accepted. But when you use the Being Specific Model and recognise you are Mind Reading - you immediately ask:

How do I know this?

How do I know this idea won't be accepted?

You may have noticed that when you do ask the question, and before you think of any answers, that the thought loses its power almost immediately. It's as if it suddenly stops in its tracks, amazed that you got round to challenge it. And it sometimes seems that your thinking gets clearer, as if scales had fallen from your eyes and you begin to understand much better. And this happens just by asking the question!

You can sometimes see the same thing happening when you ask another person a question from the Being Specific Model. For example, someone says:

It's all hopeless.

And you say gently and slowly:

What, specifically, is hopeless?

And you look with interest as they compose an answer. You may notice that their eyes move as if they are searching for something. Their facial expression changes and they look momentarily puzzled. If you look very carefully, you might notice other changes. Their breathing changes. They may change their posture. Then they might laugh.

Can it be that when you ask the question they start thinking about the thought, perhaps for the first time ever? In past, the thought came into their heads and they say it and feel the appropriate miserable feelings which they associate with this thought. But they've never examined the thought before.

And when you ask your question, they begin to think, and probably realise that they were just RE-ACTING to the thought in a way they've always done. They just hadn't THOUGHT about it before!!! But when they start to think and face up to this thought, it seems to move aside and things become clearer. At that moment, this thought that has controlled their thinking and feeling just seems like nonsense! And it will never have that old power over them again.

Keep an eye on this, and be aware how questions can have this power.

Let's look at another part of the Being Specific Model.

Certain words express obligation. The king of these is 'must.' For example:

You must work hard?

Ask:

What will happen if I do?

What will happen if I don't?

You ought to be a bit more polite.

What will happen if I am?

What will happen if I am not?

The questions can be used to clarify obligations. It may be that we do have this obligation, but when we question it as above, we clarify it so we can choose to do things, rather than to be impelled to do them, when, perhaps we don't have to do them at all. Asking the questions makes it clear.

You mustn't answer back.

What will happen if I do?

What will happen if I don't?

You shouldn't ask too many questions.

What will happen if I do?

What will happen if I don't?

Remember that these words expressing obligation sometimes express likelihood.

Ah, that must be Tom, now.

They ought to be arriving soon.

Mary should be at work by now.

You should pass that exam easily.

You would, if you wanted to challenge these, ask:

How do you know that? rather than:

What would happen if I do/don't?

Just as a reminder. Interpersonal communication skill is about getting agreement and understanding. We do not challenge everything. We are gentle with others, especially because the Being Specific Model can be very strong medicine. Use it wisely. Use it on your own thoughts, to start understanding instead of just reacting. And use it wisely to help others.

Lost Performatives

Performatives

When a judge says, "You are guilty" then you are guilty, because she has the power and authority. Similarly, when the preacher say, "I pronounce you man and wife," then you are married, because he has the authority. If anyone else makes these statements, they do not have any meaning.

True performatives are characterized by the fact that uttering the words means you have performed the action it reports or names. Performatives include:

- I promise
- I bet
- I claim
- I doubt

By saying, 'I promise', you have performed the action of promising. By saying, 'I bet', you have performed the action of betting. Nothing else needs to be done.

These are statements which are true because they are said by an appropriate person. Some performatives can be done by anyone. If you say, "I promise" then you have promised. Also, if you say, 'I doubt it', then you have completed the action of doubting.

Other performatives require a person with authority. If you say, 'You are guilty', but you are not a judge, then we do not take the statement as seriously as if you were. For instance, the 'guilty' person wouldn't be imprisoned or fined. If a priest says, "I declare you man and wife.", then you are married. If someone else says it, then you remain single. When the speaker does not have the authority to utter the performative, it is a pseudo-performative.

Pseudo-Performatives

Many of the examples considered here are pseudo-performatives. The statement, 'You are stupid' is not a performative, but the person utters it as if it were. It is a pseudo-performative. Pseudo-performatives are called performatives in this section.

Lost Performatives

The kind of performative considered here – the lost performative – is one that does require authority, but this authority has not been mentioned. For instance, if someone says 'This food is very healthy', we need to know who is the person originating the claim. We ask **According to whom?** If the source is a trusted authority in nutrition, then we are inclined to believe it; if it is not we may keep an open mind. Or we might require more evidence, and ask, **How do you know that?**

A Performative is not an Opinion

A performative is not an opinion. If I lick an ice cream and say, 'It is good', I am expressing an opinion or preference. If I say, 'This ice cream is good' and imply that it is good for everyone, then I am uttering a pseudo-performative.

Handling Performatives

This is good.

According to whom is it good?

For whom is it good?

How does the fact that you say it is good **mean** it is good **for others**?

This is right.

Who says so?

Could you mention the references you consulted to draw that conclusion?

That's stupid.

According to whom?

By what standard is it stupid?

In what way is it stupid?

How do you know that?

Clearly this is the meaning.

Who says this is the meaning?

To whom is it clear?

There is more on performatives in [how does your saying that make it a fact.](#)

How does your saying that make it a fact? (Performatives)

There is a kind of language which is rather strange. The 'action' is completed merely by uttering the words. These words sometimes have to be uttered by a certain authorised person but not always.

For example, when you stand there in front of the clergyman and he says, 'I pronounce you man and wife,' then at that point you are married. What has happened? What has changed? What has happened is that someone has uttered some words, and because he or she has uttered them then something is true. For example:

I promise I will do this.
I declare (war)
I pronounce (you man and wife).
You are fired!
I find you guilty
I warn you
I order you to

The true expressions of this kind are ones where having said something an act has been done or performed. (For this reason they are sometimes called performatives).

Be careful!
(You have, as a result of this statement been warned.)

I order you to stop talking.
(You have been ordered to stop talking - I don't suppose you will stop, though! But you have been ordered.)

This reveals a way of thinking wherein we believe that something is the case because someone said it is.

For example, why should we be upset because someone says we are stupid? For no reason other than we think because they say it is true. It acts like a performative.

One response to these is to make clear who is the origin of the statement.

I declare you man and wife.
According to whom are we man and wife?
(God, the State, the Church?)

I order you to do this!
According to whom should I do this?
(This makes the speaker self-conscious and perhaps wonders about his or her reasons.)

Some questions for performatives are illustrated below:

We promise to guarantee your product for 10 years.

How does your saying, "it is guaranteed," mean it is guaranteed?

(An insurance company guarantees it.)

(You can rely on our good name.)

You can rely on us.

How does your saying, "You can rely on us," mean I can rely on you?

I love you.

How does your saying you love me, mean you love me?

Don't worry! Everything will be all right!

How does your telling me not to worry, mean I don't need to?

Sometimes we get a sensible or reasonable response to the question: How does your saying something make it a fact? Other times it reveals that what could be a powerful persuasion technique is really empty.

The Being Specific Model can sometimes appear confrontational. This is not the purpose. Questions asking for clarification are preferable to contradictions. You have to use these questions sensibly and try not to put people on the spot, if you haven't built rapport with them.

This question for performatives can really bring into our awareness what the assumptions and reasons for a statement are. It can also make clear exactly what a sales person is offering, for example.

Now I urge you to use and practice all the elements of the Being Specific Model. You can find past postings in HTML form at one of the web sites below.

Cause and Effect

BRABANTIO: These sentences, to sugar, or to gall,
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal:
But words are words; I never yet did hear
That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear. *Shakespeare, Othello, Act 1 Scene 3*

Very often when we claim that things are so because of something, there isn't really a cause and effect. Words are words, not weapons, and they cannot hurt us, except through our thinking about them. The language pattern here attempts to find the relationship between an alleged cause and an effect. When we are upset by something, it is often not the something that upsets us, but something else, perhaps our thinking.

Story: The axel moans while the oxen do the work

Some oxen were pulling a heavy cart with a noisy axel.
“How wonderful is this cause and effect”, said one of the oxen. “We do all the work and it is the axel that moans!”

Sorry, Aesop.

The letter upset me.

How specifically did the letter **cause** you to be upset?

If he leaves me, I will die.

How could his leaving you **cause** you to die?

I couldn't bear it if I don't get this job.

Have you ever failed to get a job, **yet** endured it?

She makes me miserable.

How does she **make** you miserable, **specifically**?

Making Meaning Clear

Sometimes we hear an expression or word which we do not understand, or do not understand it in the context. For instance:

It's caliginous today, isn't it?

What does caliginous mean?

This is obvious enough. It is the question you might ask yourself while reading. The problem is it is a bit abrupt for some people. If you can get away with it, ask:

How do you mean, caliginous?

Also you could try:

When you say caliginous, what, for instance, do you mean?

When it is important to know the meaning or the other uses a word we do not understand, or seems to use it wrongly, we have to ask for clarification. Sometimes it can go like this:

It's caliginous today, isn't it?

Caliginous?

Foggy.

Complex Equivalence—what does it really mean?

Story: Debating in Silence

In the east, it was customary that a travelling monk would earn a bed by winning a debate about Buddhism.

In one small temple there were two brothers. The older brother was wise and intelligent. The younger was unwise. He also had only one eye.

A monk came to request a night's sleep, and the older brother, who was tired, said his younger brother should do the debating—but he requested it was done in silence.

They left the older brother to sit by the shrine.

After a while, the visitor returned and said he had lost the debate and would leave.

“Tell me about it” said the surprised older brother.

“I raised one finger — which means the Buddha. Your brother raised two fingers—meaning the Buddha and the teaching.

“I raised three fingers—meaning the Buddha, the teaching and the disciples. Your brother made a fist—which means all these are really one. At that profundity, he won the debate.”

The visitor left.

The younger brother ran up to the older.

“Where is he? I want to beat him up.”

“Tell me what happened” said the older brother.

“Well,” said the younger, “he raised one finger—calling me one eye.

“I made allowances for the fact he was a visitor, and raised two fingers —meaning two eyes are good.

“He raised three fingers—meaning we had only three eyes between us. I was furious and raised my fist to hit him, but he ran away.”

When we imply that one thing means something else, we are equating two things. Sometimes, when we are led to think about it, we realize that they aren't the same.

The story on the left illustrates how two people can completely misunderstand each other.

When he looks at me like that it means he's angry.

How does his looking at you like that mean he is angry?

What else could it mean?

She is late, so she isn't coming.

How does the fact she is late mean she isn't coming?

What else could it mean?

Transderivational Search

When we encounter a sentence that is at first sight difficult to understand, we might immediately reject it (labelling it nonsense, or jargon) or perform a transderivational search for some meaning. A transderivational search is an everyday hypnotic state wherein we try to make sense of something – perhaps a sentence – that is vague or unusual. It causes us to search widely inside ourselves for some meaning. This process can be a compelling, automatic and unconscious process. It differs from an ordinary search wherein we seek an exact match. For instance, the question:

What's the time?

May prompt us to consult our watch. The question:

What is time?

May prompt a transderivational search. We might hesitate for a second and realize the speaker means 'What's the time?' and answer normally. Of course, we might think the speaker has asked a philosophical question, and this may cause hesitation – we wonder whether we want to answer this question – or we might search for an answer.

The question:

Have you forgotten something?

Can lead to a transderivational search, when we wonder what we might have forgotten. We look inside and search widely for something that might have slipped our memories.

Restriction Violations—the conscious mind looks at metaphor

This is the conscious mind's take on 'metaphor'. It is about identifying restriction violations and handling them. The truth is, however, that we use figures of speech all the time, and the unconscious mind appears to use this type of language to communicate with the conscious mind, and we use them to understand. In fact, we live our lives according to metaphor. This approach is dealt with in [Symbolic Modelling](#).

The conscious mind's approach to metaphor is to identify non-resourceful ones, and clarify them so they are seen as something untrue (when we drop them). This approach can be used to handle problems and difficulties. However, if we consider that a large amount of our thinking is metaphorical, then we will expect to find metaphors in most of our communications. In this paragraph alone, there are many metaphors.

Here is the conscious, rational minds approach...

Selectional Restriction Violations occur when we use words together when they do not fit. Chomsky's example is:

- Colourless green ideas sleep furiously

This sentence is grammatically correct nonsense. It is not a figure of speech.

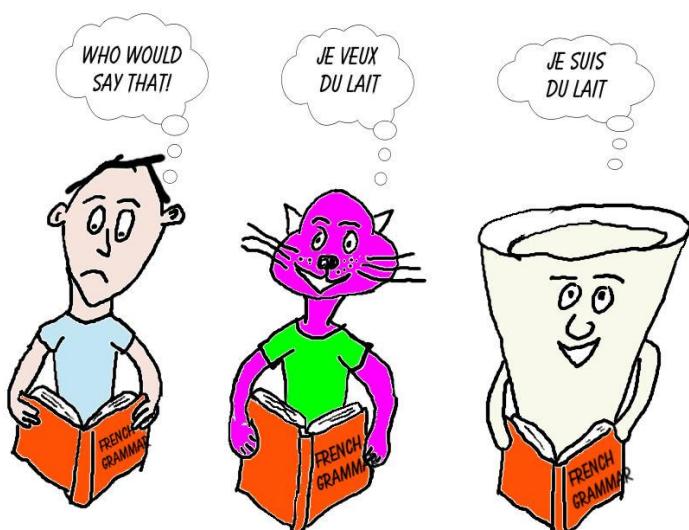
Here we examine expressions which are not literally true, but appear to have some meaning. For instance:

- She shot out the door.

When we mean she left hastily. In this book, we call most of these expressions metaphors—even though they might in grammar be something else, such as similes. The correct term is **tropes**, but as this is so unfamiliar we use metaphor. The most general expression is selectional restriction violation, which includes tropes as well as grammatically correct nonsense—see Chomsky's example above.

Compare the following sentences:

1. The man was sitting in an armchair and reading a book on French grammar.
2. The cat was sitting in an armchair and reading a book on French grammar.



In linguistics the second sentence is called a **selectional restriction violation**, because the noun cat cannot be used in a sentence which involves reading books. We have **selected** the wrong noun for this sentence. The subjects of such sentences are **restricted to** beings that can read (and sit in armchairs) and these are usually humans and not infants and certainly not cats. And we have **violated** this restriction by **selecting** the noun cat as the subject of 'reading'. The second sentence above is, therefore, an example of a selectional restriction violation.

Selectional restriction Violations also occur in metaphors, similes and analogies. They often cause us to make a transderivational search, which is a hypnotic state, in which we produce a personal meaning for something that is literally meaningless. They are often used by persuaders. (Although not often about cats!)

When others seek to persuade us they might make highly illogical, but nonetheless persuasive statements. They might be statements that have a hypnotic effect upon us and lead us to believe something for reasons that just aren't valid. For instance, a lawyer might use a metaphor when arguing for her client:

- He was a pressure cooker, wound up by the victim till he could do nothing else but explode with rage.

As part of a speech it might be persuasive if we do not keep our wits about us. Without the aid of the conscious mind, our unconscious minds would treat the man as if he were a pressure cooker. To resist this compulsion to hypnotize ourselves, we might ask (ourselves or others):

- Is he made of metal and full of water?
- Could we cook vegetables in him?
- Can a pressure cooker be wound up (mixed metaphor)?
- Does a pressure cooker explode if it is wound up?
- Did he explode (literally)?
- Don't they have safety valves to prevent them exploding?
- Was he really a pressure cooker?

Quite evidently, he was not a pressure cooker. So we do not have to use our thoughts, knowledge, feelings and reasons related to pressure cookers to respond to the present case. Without thinking, we might conclude:

- What happened was inevitable (pressure cookers explode according to the laws of physics, not intention).
- He acted naturally
- So, he was not responsible.

See [Clean Language](#)

Anthropomorphism

We speak of what is not human or personal in terms of human or personal characteristics. We give it qualities it does not possess.

- My cat understands every word I say.

Do cats understand English?

- My computer does that on purpose.

Do computers have intentions?

Anthropomorphism is a form of selectional restriction violation. This term from linguistics refers to attributing a quality or ability to something that cannot have these qualities or abilities. So, saying 'My cat understands every word I say' implies that cats understand English, which we normally do not believe. Examples are:

- Don't speak harshly in front of my car: it is sensitive.
- Walls have ears.
- Wasps are wicked.

- The news is carried by the wind.
- The dictionary says what words mean.
- A little bird told me.

Some of these expressions we use and accept routinely with a rational meaning. In fact, the verb say means 'to express in words'. So 'The dictionary says...' is quite correct and quite literal (as literal expressions go!)

Selectional Restriction Violations

However, some of these expressions seem insane, if used by adults. Even so, we often overlook their literal meaning and 'understand' their figurative meaning, almost hypnotically. While in literature and poetry they can be delightful, in serious communication, we need to be careful that they do not influence us irrationally.

They are very useful in hypnosis.

- A flower, you know, can have feelings. (Sounds okay to a keen gardener while in hypnosis.)

(If we wanted to be grammatical, this is personification.)

- We saw some stuffed birds nesting.

Makes the listener hesitate and become a bit confused. At first it seems illogical, but then perhaps it means the birds were stuffed in a nesting position. Or does it have some other meaning? (This isn't a figure of speech, but a confusing, but perhaps literal—just an apparent restriction violation😊)

1. Wash the dishes.
2. We serve delicious dishes.

After getting in mind the ceramic nature of dishes in the first sentence, the second one is a bit confusing, if only for a moment. Of course, the word, dishes, in the second sentence means meals. (Grammatically, synecdoche)

He dived off the high board.
He dived in his car and flew home.

We might just take the sentence to mean he hastily entered his car, and drove home fast. But if taken literally, it seems diving into a car is just a strange thing to say, and flying home in one's car is also somewhat fanciful. Such expressions cause us to become a little confused, whether we are aware of it or not, and be influenced not by the truth of what is said, but by the effect of the language. (This is a metaphor (Actually, catachresis).

Metaphors

Story: He is a turnip

In the teahouse, they were talking about Wali.

“He’s stupid” said one.

“More than stupid, he’s an idiot” said another.

“He’s a prime turnip” said another.

Nasrudin said, “If he were a turnip, I could feed him to my donkey.”

Metaphors are a type of restriction violation. They are expressions where we use words in a non-literal sense. They are effectively used in novels and poetry, but they may be out of place in argument.

It is possible that a great deal, or even all our thinking is metaphorical. See also [Symbolic Modelling](#)

Sometimes we are influenced by what feelings and emotions comes with the metaphor rather than with the facts.

For instance:

- The ship ploughed through the water.

We can ask, 'Do ships plough? Really? Could I use one to do my garden?'

- He was so tensed up he was a pressure cooker that was bound to explode.

Was he a pressure cooker?

Made of metal and full of boiling water?

Was he used to cook vegetables?

[Clearly not.]

If we accept the metaphor of the pressure cooker, then we bring all our ideas of pressure cookers to thinking about his behaviour, including that it was inevitable, understandable and natural. Although if this was stated plainly, we would ask for more evidence, or we might not believe it at all.

The following was said by a small boy of a television program:

- It's chewing gum for the eyes.

We make no comment, except it is a good metaphor!

- She is moving up in her career.

Of course, she might be sitting at her desk (not **moving** more than usual). And although we might say she is rising (**up**), this does not mean she is levitating. To get really enthusiastic about picking out metaphors, we can also note that a career seems to be something you can be **in**—like in a box, or like salt in the sea?

- He is a tiger in the business world.

Is he not human?

Is he eight-feet long and striped?

Is he a loner?

Does he kill his prey?

[Clearly not.]

If we think of him as a tiger we tend think he is also powerful, fearsome, and ruthless. We may be less willing to accept this if it were plainly stated.

Similar expressions, often using the word, like, can be similarly challenged. (These are actually called similes.)

- I felt like an old, wet and cold dog.

Are you a dog and not human?

How do you know what dogs feel like?

- He has a mind like a computer.

➤ Does he have microchips and wires in his head instead of a brain?

➤ Can he compute in microseconds?

➤ Does he have a program running?

[Clearly not.]

The computer is the best analogy we have ever had for the mind and brain; nonetheless, the mind and brain are not an electronic computer. Because an electronic computer never forgets does not mean a human being never does. Computer memories do not change, but human memories do.

- Your financial plan is like a buoy floating on the sea of market forces, and always keeping on top.

➤ Is the plan really a buoy, floating on the sea?

➤ Is it made of floating material?

➤ Are market forces a sea? Is it a large mass of salt water?

[Clearly not.]

Saying the plan can't lose money might be less believable than the metaphor, even though the metaphor gives us only a fantasy.

Words: Emotional and Personal Meanings

Words that suggest how we should feel towards something

Some kinds of words have one or, usually more meanings that describe certain facts about existence. Sometimes words have other meanings that evoke our emotions or describe our attitude to something.

Emotional Words

For instance:

1. Jim made a **brave** attempt to rescue the boy.
2. Jim made a **foolhardy** attempt to rescue the boy.

The words brave and foolhardy have about the same factual meaning, but they have different emotional meanings. In the first sentence, the writer speaks of the attempt as something to admire, whereas in the second sentence the writer speaks of the attempt as being something we should not admire. The two sentences describe the same act, but the writer slips in a suggestion how we should react to it. The emotional meaning is something that is suggested or implied rather than stated openly.

Words evoke a frame in our minds. A frame is an unconscious schema, which tells us the meaning and how we should react to something described by the word (or expression). Frames tend to come with assumptions, guiding us in our reaction to the thing. See [Reframing](#).

In the above sentences we can state the plain facts simply by deleting the adjectives brave or foolhardy:

Jim made an attempt to rescue the boy.

Often in our reading and listening we might not consider consciously the emotional meaning that has been slipped in, and the writer might have us expressing emotions before we have made up our own minds about it. And the emotional meaning may not be supported in any way.

How Emotional Words lead us to believe ideas thoughtlessly

The **ruffian** was brought before the magistrate and sentenced.

By calling the defendant a ruffian, the writer presupposes his guilt and, if we read the sentence thoughtlessly, we tend to read it with the unconscious presumption that he or she is guilty.

We can retrieve the facts by [chunking up](#) from ruffian to person. So the factual statement becomes:

The person was brought before the magistrate and sentenced.

This sentence begs the question: "Why?", or "For what reason?" whereas the sentence containing ruffian does not. Yet this sentence does not answer the natural question. In some way it presupposes the person is guilty or at least a bad person deserving to be sentenced but it does not tell us the reason. The word ruffian suggests this person is a bad or violent person, but does not say what he or she has done. And it is what this person has done which leads us to agree that he or she should be sentenced. In the first sentence, the writer has tricked us into believing something which has only been hinted at.

The following sentence has a positive meaning:

When you buy from us you get a **good deal**.

If we chunk up or generalize 'a good deal' to the word 'something', we get:

When you buy from us you get something.

This leads us to ask, 'What do we get, exactly?', which is what we would have asked about 'good deal' had we used the [Being Specific Model](#).

How to handle Emotional Words

Adjectives and Adverbs: Simply delete them

To obtain the facts, we can often simply omit the adjective or adverb.

He behaved **horrendously**.

Deleting horrendously, we get:

He behaved.

Which leads us to ask: '**What exactly did he do?**'

She is a disgusting person. She is a person.

The only facts given are that she is a person. We could ask:

What did she do or say?

By eliminating the adjective or adverb, we get the facts, if there are any. We can ask a question directly, of course.

He behaved **horrendously**.

What did he do or say that you thought was horrendous?

She is a disgusting person.

What did she do or say that you thought was disgusting?

Nouns: Chunk-up

If the emotional word is a noun, we can retrieve the facts by chunking up, or generalizing the noun.

He is a rat.

We do not mean he is an animal, and the chunk-up is that he is a person:

He is a person.

This tells us hardly anything, but it does tell us as much as the original sentence does, without playing with our emotions. We could ask:

What did he do or say?

She is foul-mouthed. → She said something.

By chunking up 'She is foul-mouthed' we get 'She said something'.

This leads us to ask:

What exactly did she say?

While it is helpful to extract any facts from the emotional statement, we can also challenge them directly.

He is a rat.

How did he behave to make you call him a rat?

She is foul-mouthed.

What exactly did she say that you considered foul-mouthed?

Metaphorical Thinking

According to some—for instance, the linguist George Lakoff and the therapist David Groves (See [Symbolic Modelling](#))—much, if not all of our thinking is metaphorical. This article is about commonly held metaphors within a society, particularly the English speaking community.

“The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.” —George Lakoff “Metaphors We Live By” p5

Consider the following paragraph:

Paragraph 1: This product enables you to save time, and therefore money. Your time is valuable, so with this product you need to spend only a little time on necessary chores. The product enables you to make the best use of your time and give you more time to do more enjoyable things.

Time is one of those inscrutable indefinable things. Even physics struggles with a definition of time apart from ‘time is what clocks measure’. I think the above paragraph about a product is sensible, but look again. What is time? The paragraph above says:

- You can **save** time
- Time is **valuable**
- You **spend** time
- You can **make the best use of** time
- Something can **give** you time

The words in bold are all money words. The metaphor used is therefore ‘*time is money*’: it is valuable; you can save and spend it; you can manage it wisely, or not; and you can give it.

Usually, we do not even notice the metaphors in thought and speech.

While the paragraph seems to make sense in English—because we have a frame which includes the metaphor, ‘time is money’—in some cultures it would not make sense at all. They might say, “What’s all this hurry! You have all the time you want. You can relax and enjoy what you are doing.”

We can experience and know about time in some fashion, but we cannot understand it unless we try to explain it in terms of something else we do understand. In the above, we understand time in terms of money.

The following spoof paragraph illustrates some of our folk knowledge about metaphor.

Paragraph 2: We need to control anger. A client told me something happened and she stewed over it all day, and when she saw him her whole body shuddered. She blew her top and went up in the air at him, exploding and pouring her fiery rage over him.

When we feel anger, we should cool down, and turn down the heat. We should pour the cooling water of forgiveness on our boiling temper.

In Paragraph 2 [stuffed with hackneyed expressions to illustrate a point], anger is represented metaphorically by a boiling pot, perhaps even one that can explode, or at least blow its lid off. The advice may be appropriate in dealing with a real stew pot. But is anger really an overheated stew pot? In Paragraph 2, we note:

- control anger [is anger a machine to switch on or off?]
- stewed all day
- body shuddered [like a pot about to boil over]

- blew her top [like an overboiling pot does]
- up in the air [like a pot's lid]
- exploding [perhaps stretching the pot to a pressure cooker]
- pouring [The pot cracks and the contents pour out]
- fiery rage [slightly different metaphor, but could mean the hot contents of the pot—metaphors within metaphors!]
- cool down and turn down the heat [still the pot]
- cooling water of forgiveness [still pot related, but also creative visualisation!]]

Like time, emotions can be mysterious. They seem to come to us and sometimes overwhelm us, causing us to do things we would not normally do. We could think of them as being like a person, or a chemical that takes us over and controls us, even against our will. With anger, above, we think of it as being like a boiling pot.

Milton Model

[Comparative Deletions](#)

[Nominalizations](#)

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[Unspecified Nouns](#)

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[Possibility](#)

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[Chain of Necessity to Possibility](#)

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[Embedded Commands](#)

[Pace Current Experience](#)

[Binds](#)

[Simple Binds](#)

[Double Binds](#)

[Double Dissociative Double Bind](#)

[Analysis:](#)

The expression ‘Milton Model’ refers to the modelling of Milton Erikson by Richard Bandler and John Grinder. The model deals largely with the linguistic aspects of Milton Erikson’s work. After developing the Meta model, Bandler and Grinder discovered that the outstanding therapist Erikson broke all the rules of the model.

The Milton Model is the opposite of the [Being Specific](#) Model. That is, whereas we might challenge nominalizations in the Being Specific Model, in the Milton Model we use them extensively.

Comparative Deletions

We omit saying who thinks it’s better, leaving it up to the listener to decide. We also avoid stating an authority.

- It is better to relax deeply [compared with what?]
- It could be something really worth doing. [compared with doing what?]

We also omit saying which is the basis for comparison, leaving this to the listener's unconscious mind.

Nominalizations

Common ones include:

- knowledge
- understanding
- insight
- learning
- resources
- quality

We omit saying who and saying how. The listener's unconscious is free to add the missing parts.

- You may notice a new **confidence** developing.
- Certain **changes** are occurring.
- You can imagine what **qualities** you might bring to this problem.
- New **learnings** can occur

Universal Quantifiers

Universal quantifiers include these words:

- all
- every
- never
- always
- nobody
- each
- any

We can use them to generalise the hearer's experience.

- And **all** these things will help you become more and more relaxed.
- You can experience **any** change which lets you know that it is working.

Unspecified Nouns

We do not say which ones we are talking about, so someone who might resist being told, 'You can relax', might happily respond to 'People can relax', substituting themselves as an example of 'people' (and relaxing).

- **People** can relax.
- There are important **things** in everybody's lives.
- **Women** find this helpful.
- **Scientists** tell us this is good.

Unspecified Verbs

These include:

- learn
- know
- understand
- change
- wonder
- think
- feel

Here we omit the ‘how’ of the verb.

- You **may understand** at once, or later
- Everybody **knows** how to learn.
- How nice it is to **wonder** as the changes occur naturally.

Commentary adjectives and adverbs

- It is an **important** milestone to be able to observe such changes.
- You may be **surprised** and **excited** when you notice the changes.
- And it’s **wonderful** to know that you can learn this.
- **Luckily**, the unconscious mind can do this.

Conjunctions

There is a progression in causality in the use of conjunctions. The suggestions below go from ‘and’, which is a simple link, implying no connection explicitly; to time words such as ‘as’ which are a stronger implication of cause; and finally, to explicit cause, using ‘because’ in the example.

1. You are sitting in the chair **and** feeling relaxed.
2. **As** you are sitting in the chair, you feel relaxed.
3. **Because** you are sitting in the chair, you feel relaxed.

And

‘And’ is a simple linking of two things with hardly a suggestion of causation:

- Mmm! You take a deep breath **and** feel even more relaxed.

Time Words

The relation between two ideas can be expressed more strongly by using time words:

- During
- Soon
- While
- As
- When

For instance:

- As you begin to settle in the chair, soon you will feel more and more relaxed.

Causation

This is the third level where the relationship is expressed more strongly. It uses words including:

- Causes
- Requires
- Forces
- Will make

For instance:

- Every breath you take will make you more and more relaxed.

Mind Reading

By claiming knowledge we could not have—even though what is claimed seems reasonable or even a truism—enables us to make indirect suggestions.

- You are wondering if you will really experience hypnosis.
- I know you understand certain things.
- As you are now in this special place, and you are feeling relaxed, there is no need to think.

Complex Equivalence

We say A=B, to suggest resourceful states. We say that one thing, which is occurring means something else. For instance, “Because you just sighed, it means your unconscious mind is working on this matter.” This enables us to indirectly suggest “your unconscious mind is working on this matter.”

- Your noticing some of these changes **means** you are growing.
- When you notice this **you will know** these wonderful changes are occurring.
- Your deep, easy breathing **shows (that)** you are beginning to feel different.
- Sitting in the chair **means** you are taking it easy.

Lost Performatives

We leave out the ‘according to whom’ so the listener can concentrate on the suggestions. Opinions are stated as authoritative facts.

- It is **good** to take time out.
- It is **important** to sit comfortably.
- The **mightiest** power in the universe is now working on the problem.
- It is **best** to let the unconscious mind do the thinking for now.
- How wonderful it is to remember the times you did **well**.

Conversational Postulates

Same as modal operators of possibility. It is more friendly to use ‘can’ when we mean ‘will you’.

- Can you let your left arm raise, or your right arm?
- Can you open the window?
- And you can relax deeply.

Tag Questions

These are better shown in the examples:

For instance:

- You can, **can you not?**
- You have, **haven't you?**
- It is so, **is it not?**

Presuppositions

We assume that something will take place, or is so.

Ordinals

We presume there will be a first and a second time, and perhaps there must be the third. We imply that these changes will occur without saying so directly.

- After the first or second time you notice these changes, you may notice them more often.

Or

We presume there is a choice of only two things.

- You could feel relaxed now **or** later.

Awareness

We presume that something happened, even though the listener might not have noticed it or realized it.

- Did you **notice** how you are now drifting into trance?
- You may wonder whether you will be **aware** of these changes immediately, or in a while.
- In the next few days, you might **notice** how much change has occurred.
- You may not **realize** at first, just how far you have come.

Adverbs and Adjectives

- **How easy** it is to make changes when you let your unconscious mind do it.

More and more

- Well! **The more** you want to change, **the more** changes you get!
- It's amazing. **The more** you take it easy, **the more** easy it becomes!
- Listen to this! **The more** you feel good, **the more** good you feel.
- **The less** you try, **the more** you notice changes.
- And then it's gone! **The more** you notice this, **the less** you think about it.

Modal Operators of Possibility and Necessity

These include the words: can, could, might, may, should, will.

Possibility

These include can, possible, could, able, can't, impossible, couldn't, unable, may and might.

- **Can** you take a deep breath?
- You **could** find this interesting.

- **It is possible** the changes will occur sooner than you could imagine.
- You **may** realize that you can learn.
- You **can't** be sure the changes will occur before our next meeting.
- **It is not impossible** to change—even quicker than you think.
- It **could** be exciting to consider the changes which **might** occur first, although you **can't** consciously know exactly and in detail what they **might** be before they happen... although you **might** at some special level within you notice more than you initially think even...In fact, **it is impossible** not to because of changes. **It is not impossible** to notice them even sooner. You **may** have thought you **couldn't** but—who knows—you **can** now.

Necessity

These include should, need to, have to, will, ought to, must, mustn't needn't, shouldn't and ought not.

- You **should** take the opportunities when changes occur.
- You **must** do this before our next session.
- These are changes that, you **must** know you **have to** make. Everyone knows that you **mustn't** let them pass you by now is the time when you **must** make them. It **needn't** take too long and you **won't** have to try hard. It's about doing without **having to**, making it happen without **needing to**. [Note grammatical error]

Chain of Necessity to Possibility

There is some gradation in the use of these verbs, from the concept ‘must’ through ‘might’ to ‘must not’.

1. will, must
2. could, might, should, ought to
3. might not, shouldn’t, oughtn’t
4. couldn’t, won’t, mustn’t

The following longer list needs to be used with caution, because different people may rate the phrases differently, and the meanings differ when used in the second person. For instance, ‘I shouldn’t do it’ sometimes means the speaker will do it anyway. And ‘You shouldn’t do it’ means the listener is advised not to do it. If the word ‘really’ is added it weakens the meaning. So ‘You shouldn’t do it really’ can mean ‘You may’.

1. I will do it
2. I must do it
3. I have to
4. I could do it
5. I might do it
6. I may do it
7. I should do it
8. I oughtn’t to do it
9. I shouldn’t do it
10. I probably won’t do it
11. It isn’t impossible to do it
12. I can’t do it
13. I mustn’t do it
14. I won’t do it

Chaining from Possibility to Necessity, or Vice Versa

Client: I must do it.

Helper: Yes, you think strongly that you **must do** it. And you **could** actually do it, and even **might** do it. Have you considered that you **might** actually do something else, though...**it isn’t impossible** is it?

The above illustrates the idea, although in practice, we might more gradually add the increasing freedom to do something else over several exchanges.

You say you **could** fill in the application form. It seems this **may** be a good thing to do.

While you **don’t have to**, some people would say ‘You **mustn’t** waste this opportunity’. I wonder if you **could** fill it in right now? You really **ought** to.

Embedded Commands

These are instructions to the listener which are ‘hidden’ within other communications. For instance:

- I do not know whether or not **you will relax now**.

The instructions in bold are said in a different way from the rest of the words. This is sometimes called analogical marking. The way this marking of the instructions is done is various, and can be done nonverbally by hand movements, looking at the other (or looking away). The speaker of the above example could say the words in bold more slowly, more deeply, etc than the other words. The speaker could be looking away when saying the other words and turn and look the client in the eye when saying the words in bold.

Sometimes ambiguity is used.

- Your unconscious mind relaxes =[Sounds like] You are unconscious...mind relaxes
- Right here (pointing to the contract to sign)=[Sounds like] Write here

There are many ways to give embedded commands. Another example is:

- You are wondering what is **going** on from the time you came **into** this room, and wondered about **a trance** just **now**. [Go into a trance now!]

Pace Current Experience

We have dealt with this at length earlier. For instance:

- You are sitting in the relaxing chair, and listening to my voice. You are looking at me and wondering how soon you will go into trance.

Binds

Binds limit the options while giving the illusion of free choice. There are many kinds of binds, and we mention three types here. Whichever choice is made, something is assumed in either (or any) case.

Simple Binds

- Would you like a teacake or a cream bun? [Presumes you will eat a cake.]
- Can you come today, or would tomorrow be better? [Presumes you will come.]
- Would you be more comfortable if I put some music on? [assumes you are comfortable]

These give the illusion that there are only two choices, and we often respond as expected, rather than to choose another option. The choices involve voluntary behaviour (Compare double binds).

They can involve all possibilities:

- Would you prefer to come today, or would tomorrow suit better. Or some other time. Or not at all.

Double Binds

These offer choices outside the client's conscious control:

- At some point the pain will change to a new, easier sensation.
- Will you feel better immediately, or later?
- I wonder if the sensation will change by this evening, or whether it will change tomorrow.
- Do you think this solution will come to you before you begin to feel much better, or will you begin to feel better before you think of the solution?

Double Dissociative Double Bind

This is a double bind—it gives the illusion of choice between two unconscious possibilities—and it uses dissociation twice. For instance:

- And you may well find yourself creating new ideas and solutions that you don't know about, or know that you know about them without realizing that it's happening now.

Analysis:

- And you may well find yourself creating new ideas and solutions [associated]
- that you don't know about [dissociated]
- or know that you know them [second association]
- without realizing that it's happening now [second dissociation]

Pattern: associated — dissociated—or—associated —dissociated [Variations possible]

Here are some more examples:

- You can discover new learning without knowing how you did it, or know how you did it without knowing where it came from.
- I wonder if you will realize you are quitting smoking very easily, without realizing how soon, or whether you will realize how soon without realizing how easily it was.
- You may notice the sensation becomes less and less without noticing how much you are concentrating on new experiences, or you may find yourself concentrating more and more on new experiences without noticing it becoming less and less, or you might be surprised how quickly this is happening without noticing other pleasant changes, or you might notice other pleasant changes without noticing how quickly it is happening.

Symbolic Modelling

When I first learned about Symbolic Modelling (over a decade ago), I found it a very effective system, and unlike some techniques, does not require higher mental states, even in self work. It can handle extreme upset even when it is occurring. In spite of the previous sentence, we should practice the technique with simple problems first in order to become skilled at it.

Symbolic Modelling as a therapy originates from the work of David Grove. It was explained by Penny Tompkins and James Lawley who wrote ‘Metaphors in Mind: Transformation through Symbolic Modelling’.

Because it is difficult for the conscious mind to understand some issues, the unconscious mind often uses metaphors. The therapist cannot understand these, according to the theory—only the person’s unconscious mind really understands them. For this reason, the therapist uses non-directive language, called Clean Language to help the client resolve their issues. This is ‘clean language’—language that is not contaminated by the therapists thinking on the clients issues. Similarly, the language is not contaminated with the rational conscious mind’s understanding (when using the principles on oneself).

Clean Language

Using Clean Language in Symbolic Modelling means that Symbolic Modelling does not seem to have the limitations of other systems because it utilizes the power of the unconscious mind—even though the conscious mind might not fully understand. When used in Symbolic Modelling, Clean Language is applied to metaphors and symbols and addresses them directly, so we can better understand complex issues and handle them in ways the conscious mind might not fully understand.

The therapist uses the client’s own language in the Clean Language questions which have minimal assumptions.

Note: Clean Language is used in Symbolic Modelling in facilitating metaphors. It can also be used in different applications—such as business—when non-directive language is appropriate. In Symbolic Modelling, we always use Clean Language, but in other applications, such as interpersonal communication, we use Clean Language sometimes: we also use, for instance, the Being Specific Model.

Unclean Language

Suppose someone says

Client: I feel stuck

Therapist A: What if you used a magic solvent!

The assumption is that the stuckness is caused by mental glue—a metaphor that the client might not have. This advice might work sometimes, but could leave the client feeling cold (another metaphor!) In Clean Language, we do not make these assumptions. We would ask, for instance:

And when stuck, what kind of stuck is that stuck?

And another example:

Client: I feel stuck

Therapist B: What specifically is making you stuck? ([Unspecified Adjectives](#))

Stuck to what? ([Simple Deletions](#))

The therapist assumes there is something that is making the client stuck and the client knows what it is. There is an assumption that the answer is a logical rational one and also one that the client can articulate. The second question, “Stuck **to** what?” assumes some thing the client is stuck to (the question could have been “Stuck **with** what?”), which assumes something of this kind exists (when it might not). We would use these questions when studying, and sometimes with clients. But in Clean Language we would ask, as before:

And when stuck, what kind of stuck is that stuck?
(Or another Clean Language question, see below.)

Clean Language Questions

Example: I feel stuck.

Therapist: And when stuck, that's stuck like what?

Client: stuck like in a bog.

[Other clients might say:

Like a rusty bolt

Like a trapped rabbit.

Having no way to turn.

Like a potholer stuck in a tunnel.

Etc—the variety of possible responses means the therapist or our conscious minds cannot anticipate the answer (or delve into solutions)—without asking Clean Questions]

The therapist assumes (in the Clean Question) that there are things similar to that stuck, or kind of stuck. This is a minimal assumption—and this produces minimal therapist contamination. Because the therapist cannot imagine what the client's words might mean (see the variety above) she uses Clean Questions.

There are 12 clean language questions, which should be asked **exactly** as below.

The questions are:

ATTRIBUTES

1. **And what kind of** [some of client's statement] (is that [some of client's statement])?

Example: **And what kind of** (stuck) **is that stuck**?

2. **And is there anything else about** (that) [some of client's statement]?

Example: **And is there anything else about that** ‘stuck’

Presumption: There is always something else about anything. When the client answers no, it means he has enough information for now.

WHERE

3. **And where/whereabouts is** [some of client's statement]?

Example: **And whereabouts is** stuck?

The **where** is often taken as a general location, and **whereabouts** is used to ask for more detail, but different clients might react differently.

METAPHOR

4. **And that's** [some of client's statement] **like what**?

Example: **And that's** stuck **like what**?

MOVING EARLIER IN SEQUENCE

5. **And what happens just before** [part of client's statement]?

Example: **And what happens just before** stuck?

6. **And where could/does** [some of client's statement] **come from**?

And where could stuck come from?

MOVING LATER IN SEQUENCE

7. And then what happens? / And what happens next?

Presumption: Everything is part of a sequence and so there is something before and something after.

USING THE RESOURCE

8. And when [part of client's statement], what happens to [another part of client's statement]?

Example: And when the great wave, what happens to bashfulness?

9. And can [metaphor] [intention of metaphor]?

Example: And can 'all loving warmth' 'melt the frozen sea'?

RELATIONSHIP

10. And is there a relationship between [part of client's statement] and [another part of client's statement]?

Example: And is there a relationship between stuck and being in a bog?

ASKING FOR A RESOURCE/INTENTION

11. And what would [you/metaphor] like to have happen?

Example: And what would stuck like to have happen?

12. And what needs to happen for [some of client's statement] to [intention of (some of client's statement)]?

Example: And what needs to happen for stuck to get out of the bog?

We use Metaphors to understand

Metaphors are used in everyday thought and communication to make sense of our world and structure our thinking.

Certainly, in English, we find gaps in our language where there are concepts we cannot express in words, or at least, in single words. Some concepts do not have names. For instance, the Emperor's New Clothes Phenomenon—where everybody knows something but no one says—does not have a name in English (but is called mokita in Kiriwina, New Guinea). The concept is expressed as a metaphor in the story, The Emperor's New Clothes, by Hans Christian Anderson. When referring to this, we might say 'the Emperor's New Clothes' phenomenon—a mouthful—for want of a word (mokita is unfamiliar in English).

Metaphors can enable us to understand and structure our thinking. A metaphor is present when we explain one thing in terms of something else. Stories, such as the Emperor's New Clothes, are sometimes metaphors, because they explain something in terms of something else.

What we call a metaphor, here, is a communication from the unconscious mind—as opposed to a linguistic curiosity—a mere form of words. We call it a metaphor because we don't know a better word. This means we are using metaphor metaphorically! This communication from the unconscious is expressed in words, although there aren't any words to express this communication literally. For this reason, when an unconscious communication is expressed, it is often expressed using figurative words—which we call metaphoric, even though they might not be, strictly, metaphors.

So when another, or we, communicate using non-literal language when reporting what is going on in mind, we take this communication to be from the unconscious mind—a communication using the language of the unconscious (Or a communication from the unconscious using language that the conscious mind can understand, at least a bit). These communications are metaphoric, and ironically, they are themselves metaphors: because they indicate the unconscious communication in terms of something else (metaphoric words).

If you look at the Example (below), you will not be able to understand the answers given—the speaker knows what she means, or, at least, her unconscious does. But she has not, or cannot express them precisely in language. Because the therapist uses Clean Language, it is not necessary for the therapist to understand the client. Even so, by using clean questions we can facilitate that person effectively without trying (and failing) to completely understand them.

Back to topic...

Here, a metaphor is indicated by any non-literal word or collection of words. So metonyms are also counted as metaphors for our purposes. In general, we class a word or words as metaphors when they do not literally express what is going on.

Metaphors usually involve space and force. They may also involve: places, paths, motions, agency, and causation. Essentially, metaphorical words and expressions are not used literally. For instance:

- I am **burning up** inside.
- I feel **left behind**.
- I have a **hunted feeling**.
- I feel **cold**. (Meaning without feeling)

Assumptions

We make the following assumptions:

1. We cannot wholly understand the unconscious mind in rational terms.
2. We cannot wholly understand another person.
3. We cannot always wholly understand our own unconscious messages.

For instance, if a child said she wanted a pet bird, we would need to get an idea what she meant—a chicken, canary, ostrich... whatever. We need to find out what kind of bird. This isn't that difficult, especially if we take the child to select the bird he or she wants.

In helping others, or doing self work, it is a bit more difficult. For instance, if someone represented an idea by a bird, they might not be able to tell us exactly in words what kind of bird—at least, they might not be able to describe exactly their bird. Still, they may have a clear idea of their imaginary bird. Of course, they cannot take us to show us their bird, say, in a zoo, because their bird is unique—it is a symbol or metaphor in their minds. Therefore we cannot really understand their bird. To avoid misunderstandings and unnecessary attempts at explanation we use Clean Language, and use the questions exactly as we have written them.

Because the client cannot always express in words precisely what they mean, the questioner uses Clean Language—that is, non-directive language.

General Points

When doing this work with another or alone, it is a good idea to note down the points—especially because after finding the resource, you want to move forwards and apply it to the items found, so you need to remember them. For instance, in [Example Procrastination](#), the list is:

1. procrastination
2. cold
3. frozen heart
4. frozen sea
5. wicked witch
6. loving all powerful warmth

The resource (at the bottom of the list) is applied to all the items above it:

8. And what happens to (issue) when (resource)? [The numbers refer to the number of the questions in the [list above](#)]

Note: The questions are directed to the metaphor (or the unconscious mind) rather than to the conscious mind (or client).

In general, we explore, find and develop metaphors by using these questions:

1. **And what kind of** [some of client's statement] (is that [some of client's statement])?
And what kind of (stuck) is that stuck?
2. **And is there anything else about** (that) [some of client's statement]?
Example: And is there anything else about that 'stuck'
3. **And where/whereabouts is** [some of client's statement]?

We ask for the metaphor, when we can:

4. **And that's** [some of client's statement] **like what**?

After finding a metaphor (that is not a resource) and having developed it, or if it is too stressful, move earlier. Ask:

5. **And what happens just before** (point).

Or

6. **And where does/could x come from?**

If a resource is not forthcoming then we can ask:

11. **And what would** [you/metaphor] **like to have happen**?

Example: **And what would** stuck **like to have happen**?

12. **And what needs to happen for** [some of client's statement] to [intention of (some of client's statement)]?

Example: **And what needs to happen for** stuck to get out of the bog?

Normally, the resource metaphor will appear by itself, and it is better to allow this to happen. Every now and again, though, we might use questions 11 and 12, above. But resist forcing a solution!

When a resource is found that is powerful enough to deal with the problem, we move forward again through the metaphors with the resource. For instance:

8. **And what happens to x** (preceding metaphor) **when** (resource).

4 Steps in Therapy/Guidance

The steps are:

1. Finding a metaphor.
2. Develop the metaphors and move earlier in time or causation.
3. Find a resource powerful enough to solve the issue.
4. Move forward through the issues with the resource

Example Procrastination

For instance:

A: I procrastinate

Finding a metaphor

FACILITATOR: And when you procrastinate, what kind of procrastinate is it?

RESPONDER: I feel cold

FACILITATOR: And when you feel cold, where is that cold?

RESPONDER: In my heart.

FACILITATOR: And whereabouts in your heart?

RESPONDER: The whole heart.

FACILITATOR: And is there anything else about that cold in your whole heart?

RESPONDER: It is a frozen heart.

Develop the metaphors and move earlier in time or causation

FACILITATOR: And what happens just before frozen heart?

RESPONDER: There was a frozen sea.

FACILITATOR: And what kind of frozen sea was this frozen sea?

RESPONDER: It did not move.

FACILITATOR: And when frozen sea did not move, what kind of move is this move.

RESPONDER: It was stationary.

FACILITATOR: And where does frozen sea come from?

RESPONDER: A wicked witch.

FACILITATOR: And is there anything else when wicked witch?

RESPONDER: She is very old and haggard.

FACILITATOR: And what happens just before wicked witch?

RESPONDER: There was a great warmth.

Find a resource powerful enough to solve the issue.

FACILITATOR: And what kind of warmth is great warmth?

RESPONDER: It is a loving warmth.

FACILITATOR: And where does great warmth come from?

RESPONDER: From my heart.

FACILITATOR: Whereabouts in your heart.

RESPONDER: My whole heart.

FACILITATOR: And when there is great warmth in your heart, what kind of warmth is this warmth?

RESPONDER: It is a loving all powerful warmth.

The loving all powerful warmth is a resource to be used.

Move forward through the issues with the resource

FACILITATOR: And it is a loving all powerful warmth, and then what happens to the witch.

RESPONDER: It is the witch.

FACILITATOR: And what happens to the witch when the loving all powerful warmth?

RESPONDER: She flows with it. Actually, I had forgotten this. But when I tried to do things for my grandmother if there was the slightest difficulty she would almost panic and tell me to stop and that she would get someone else to do it. She was very loving and would struggle herself to do things, but she didn't seem to tolerate any difficulty that I experienced.

FACILITATOR: And what happens to the frozen sea, when the loving all powerful warmth?

RESPONDER: It melts.

FACILITATOR: And when the frozen sea melts, what happens to the frozen heart?

RESPONDER: It becomes all loving warmth.

FACILITATOR: And what happens to cold and procrastination when the loving all powerful warmth?

RESPONDER: It begins to move. There is no more procrastination. The loving warmth melts the frozen sea and it begins to move again.