



COACHING 101

From NLP to Neuro-Semantic Coaching

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This is the day of the *personal coach*. Today, top professionals in a great range of fields, from CEOs to attorneys, politicians, to physicians, entrepreneurs, and business owners employ personal coaches. With increasing frequency, we hear about TV and movie personalities, public officials, and corporate executives who want to be “at their best” and stay “in top form” and who do so by using a *personal coach*.

- What is this new development? What does it involve?
- Why are highly successful people employing personal coaches?
- For what objectives and benefits?
- What are they seeking to experience through such coaching?
- What does a personal coach do in such “coaching?”

What is Coaching?

From one perspective, “coaching” is the positive side of therapy. It is *generative change and development*. That is, it is focusing on how to think better, feel better, attain higher levels of health, well-being, focus, alertness and relaxation, skill, etc. Rather than solving problems or dealing with difficulties, coaching operates from the concern, “*How can I make things even better?*” “*How can I become even more resourceful and effective?*”

This is the *generative* use of psychology—to generate new levels of competence, success, and well-being rather than the *remedial* use of psychology—fixing problems. A well-trained and qualified personal coach needs to have a good understanding and background in psychology regarding human functioning and especially the self-actualizing processes that enable a person to move to peak experiences and performances.

Unlike counseling, which focuses almost exclusively on “problems,” coaching works on refining and honing *the best skills*. Coaching works on playing to one’s strengths and eliminating anything that gets in the way or that sabotages excellence. This makes coaching a generative, solution-focused discipline.

From another perspective, coaching is the business consultant focusing on *the manager, leader, or executive* rather than on *the tasks* of the business. Obviously, a coach will need to have a good understanding of business, management, leadership, groups, social psychology, and marketing, yet such is not the expertise of the coach. The personal coach mostly uses his or her consultancy skills regarding business as background knowledge to focus on coaching an executive on how to play out his or her role to make the business succeed, to translate his or her knowledge into action. To do this, a coach will want to have a good business background, an understanding of social psychology, group dynamics, and change principles as applied to institutions.

From yet a third perspective, “coaching” is a systemic approach to getting our brains and bodies to function at their best within all of the contexts within contexts that we identify as factors in our lives, factors that affect our success. For this, the personal coach needs a good understanding of systemic thinking, processes, and ways of interacting.

Catching a Coach at Work

So what does a personal coach or executive coach actually do?

Several things. One of the most important things is working with a client in such a way as to enable the manager to develop *top-notch clarity* about his or her role, performance, and challenges. This frequently involves increasing understanding about motivations, intentions, goals, skills, strategy, etc. To achieve this, a coach needs an elegant model for communication precision. He or she needs a set of questions that will facilitate the leader in clarifying understandings.

For the NLP and Neuro-Semantic coach, this means using the Meta-Model. This linguistic model, which began with 12 distinctions, and has now expanded to 21 (*Communication Magic*, 2001) that allows a coach to hear the very constructions of subjective experience and to coach expanded awareness. We refer to the Meta-Model as “the precision model.” This model was primarily created by Dr. John Grinder, along with Richard Bandler. Grinder later translated it into the business context and focused it as a high-quality information gathering tool (*Precision: How to get the Information you need to get Results*, 1993).

Like effective consultants, Coaches do not give advice or counsel but coach *performance*, whether it be mental performance (clarity, precision, understanding), emotional performance (emotional intelligence in working with people, teams, empathy, etc.), verbal performance (skills at linguistic framing and reframing of meaning), and behavioral performance (competency skills at leading, influencing, persuading, organizing, etc.).

Because coaching focuses on performance—on empowering people to produce higher quality behaviors, the coach will focus on resources.

- What resources do you need in order to enhance your performance?
- What do you need to know or learn?’
- What do you need to implement?

To do this, an effective coach has *a set of practices* (i.e., patterns, processes, interventions) that

allows him or her to coach the executive to actually learn and adopt these skills. And to determine which pattern to use, the coach will need to have a model of human functioning that allows him or her to *profile* the executive in terms of needed skills. The NLP and the Neuro-Semantic coach does this by using both the Meta-Model and Meta-Programs. In addition to the questioning model, the model of Meta-Programs gives us access to a person's mental-emotional filters, the very filters that govern how we sort for information, what we pay attention to, and how we respond. These models enable us use our awareness that every experience has a structure. The coach can now identify the structure of both the executive and the task and then intervene with yet another NLP Model, the Strategies Model.

Strategies refer to the step-by-step process that makes up a task or activity. Through strategy work, we can *unpack* the structure of an effective strategy and design an even better strategy for a particular person in a given context. The next step, strategy installation, then involves the disciplined practice of the fundamental skills that make up a particular excellence.

With our NLP and Neuro-Semantic patterns, we will sometimes use such patterns as *the Behavior Generator*” to create new skills, *The Swish Pattern* to create in the executive an automatic program to directionalize the mind toward “the Me for whom handling this or that task is ‘no problem,’” or any of the 200-plus patterns. Sometimes it involves developing the self-motivation, sometimes alignment of the executive for more congruency, constancy, and/or persistence in moving toward a highly valued goal.

NLP/ NS and Coaching

Coaching with NLP/NS means using the cutting-edge technologies about how our brains work and how to run them for state management (NLP) and to create enhancing meanings at all levels of our minds (NS). It means using these cognitive-behavioral domains to translate great ideas into actual practice in our lives. It means using neuro-linguistic patterns for incorporating the best practices that enhances mental, emotional, verbal, behavioral, and relational performance.

The skills and processes of coaching involve assessment of needs and profiling of patterns. For this a coach needs *meta*-models for detecting patterns of thinking, emoting, speaking, relating, etc. Coaching begins by developing goals with well-formed objectives so that they can be measured and used to detect progress. Because of this coaching often start with a form of contracting.

Neuro-Linguistic Coaching

Effective coaching begins as we develop a personal vision through using *the Well-Formed Outcome pattern*. This utilizes the best criteria for setting smart goals that can pull us into a more compelling future. Against those goals, that direction, and the sensory-based evidence of where we are in the process, we can use feedback effectively as valuable information that enables us to use the responses we get to hone our skills. The giving and receiving of feedback in an effective way represents another key coaching process. Without a positive relationship to feedback, we can't accelerate our learning and learn from others. So we develop in-process measures that gives us accurate feedback.

Coaching inherently involves patterns for transforming limiting beliefs. After all, beliefs that limit

and sabotage us, work as self-fulfilling prophecies and undermine performance. How do we transform them? The best NLP belief change pattern is *the Museum of Old Beliefs* (Dilts) the best Neuro-Semantic pattern for changing beliefs is *the Meta-Yes-ing Pattern*. With these processes for transformation, we coach a person to step out of the limiting beliefs and into more enhancing ones.

Yet we do not only have beliefs, but we have belief *systems*—layers of embedded beliefs within yet higher frames of beliefs. Accordingly, we can also use the Neuro-Semantic pattern *Opening Up Belief Systems*. That's why we can oftentimes change a limiting belief and find that it either pops back or is still insufficient for improving performance. Actually, given the Matrix Model, there are numerous processes in Neuro-Semantics for detecting, exploring, and transforming a matrix of frames.

Neuro-Semantic Coaching

When we move up the levels of the mind (Meta-States model), we are able to coach people in *intentionality*. This enables them to become much more intentional, or purposeful, in moving through the world. By using the pattern of intentionality that aligns everyday *attentions* to our highest *intentions*, we can coach ourselves or another to take an intentional stance in the way we move through the world.

Neuro-Semantic coaching includes learning to focus attention in a primary state so that our attention becomes a laser beam focus. To do that we have to set numerous meta-frames that will support and give permission for us to get lost in an attention and stop the double-tracking. We call this “accessing personal genius.” It is not only a state of high energy and concentration, but one of pleasure that meta-details from our highest intentions. With this, then we have the ability to know when to let outside triggers interrupt us and when to not respond to the interruption.

“Blowing Out Excuses” is another pattern in Neuro-Semantics that we use to stop ourselves from stopping ourselves with silly excuses. Obviously, when we are coaching a person for congruency and alignment with values and visions, we have to deal with the excuses that come up, the excuses that people use in letting themselves off the hook. This pattern empowers us to do that kind of coaching.

“*Mind-to-Muscle*” pattern is the key pattern for closing the Knowing-Doing gap that is so prevalent in our world. We *know* more than we *do*. We make great living-room armchair quarterbacks. We can be so critical as we set back and see all the things that others “ought to do.” But then we don't do. Translating the great ideas in our heads down into our body so that they become commands to the nervous system enables us to utilize what we know. This is but one of the accelerated implementation skills in NS that we can use in coaching.

So is the *Efficiency pattern*. Since there is a structure and form to all experience, there is a structure to personal efficiency. Those who pull things off in an efficient manner with little waste of time, energy, indecision, procrastination, etc., how do they do it? Coaching, by its very nature, is coaching for efficiency. So the Efficiency Pattern represents a key process in the Meta-Coaching for that kind of concept. There are many other Neuro-Semantic patterns that a coach can use, these

are typically introduced in the Meta-States training (*Coaching Genius* or *Accessing Personal Genius*).

Coaching for Specific Expertise

Coaching not only uses many different patterns (these human technologies for running a brain) but also can be applied to very different areas. We can coach higher level performance in athletics, leadership, conflict resolution, highly resourceful states like resilience and un-insultability, managing people, defusing hotheads and other cranky people, selling and marketing, product development and creativity.

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