

NEURONS

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From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 – #1
January 2, 2012

Teasers from the new Book: Neuro-Semantics (#3)

From Chapter 1: **Neuro-Semantics:**
Actualizing Meanings and Performance

PREMISES OF THE NEURO-SEMANTIC MODEL

The Neuro-Semantic Model

With this list of variables that make up Neuro-Semantics, I am now able to describe the model itself. I will do so in a progressive way beginning with the elements of the model that are most obvious, overt, and explicit and move on to those that are more hidden, implicit, and unconscious.

Premise 1: Neuro-Semantics begins with neuro-semantic states. Almost any and every consideration about yourself or another person, or even a group as an organization of people, begins with state. You begin by considering a person’s behaviors, linguistics, or emotions because these are expressions of state. They are the outward and external expressions of a person (or group of persons). And they come from a state— a mind-body-emotional state.

State, a key word in Neuro-Semantics and NLP, because it is *the grounding experience*. Whatever is going on in the mind, if it is real, if it is substantial, then it shows up in the person’s mind-body-emotion state. This neuro-semantic and neuro-linguistic state is a systemic process of all of the person’s thinking, framing, remembering, imaging, anticipating, hoping, fearing, believing, and so on. And while we can linguistically sort out some things as “mental” and some as “emotional,” this artificial separating is only linguistic. In reality, mind-body, mental-emotional go together as a system. *State* is a holistic or systemic term that captures the fullness of the experience more accurately.

Now regarding *state*, you and I and everybody and every group are always in a state. The question is not whether we are in a state, but *what state* are you in, how intense is the state, how pure, how mixed, how useful or unuseful, how resourceful or unresourceful, how much are you in control of the state or how much does the state have you?

In fact, exploring state with such questions explores the very territory that is covered by the Emotional Intelligence model (EQ). The EQ model uses a more dichotomous term (“emotion”) and seeks to enable people to develop emotional awareness, monitoring, management, and use in relating. We do this in Neuro-Semantics explicitly by exploring what state, how intense, what triggers it, what intensifies or reduces it, how to anchor it, qualify it, and then use it for

navigating the world.

Using the foundations of NLP, in Neuro-Semantics we recognize that you can access a state through memory (“Imagine a time when...”), imagination (“What would it be like if...”), or modeling (“Do you know anyone who experiences this...”). This gives us two royal roads into state— thinking and acting. By recalling and imagining you can get yourself into a state. You can also adopt the physiology characteristic of a state and in that way act your way into state. Both provide “emotional management” tools so that you can have the state rather than the state having you.

Anchoring a state, another NLP contribution, adapts Pavlov’s discoveries that are used in Behaviorism, as a user-friendly way to work methodically with a state. By linking sensory-based trigger to a state, you can link that trigger (a sight, sound, smell, word, gesture, movement, etc.) to the state and thereby be able to elicit, increase, decrease, or alter the state so that it can work more effectively to enable a person to be more resourceful in responding to life’s challenges.¹

Premise 2: Neuro-Semantics ground neuro-semantic states. In working with human experiences, you not only have to identify the state that it comes from and the expressions that comes out of that state, you need to ground that state so that you can explore its depths and transform it. *Grounding a state* is critical because states, as processes, are forever moving, changing, and altering. You can and do shift states quickly and rapidly and unless you *ground* it, the very experience that you want to enrich, alter, transform, or use can disappear.

A state, as a process, is a process of thinking, framing, believing, emoting, speaking, acting, moving, etc. It is not a thing. It is not static. And as a system, anyone who enters that system *by the very act of making contact with it changes it.* There is no naive observer position. Every act of observation, noticing, witnessing, speaking, communicating, inter-acting, etc. *influences and affects* the mind-body-emotion system of the state. Hence the reason to ground the state.

Now grounding a state is an anchoring process. And with primary states, a sensory-based anchor is generally sufficient to ground it. Not so, however, with higher or meta-states. For those, the grounding process involves more.

Primary states refers to states that are thinking-framing-emoting responses to something or some person in the world. You are making a thinking-and-feeling response to something “out there.” The referent is real, actual, and physical. *A higher or meta-state* refers to a state in which you are offering a thinking-framing-emoting response to a previous state. Now you are thinking-and-emoting *about* a thought, a feeling, a response. You are self-reflexively in response to yourself. It is your second thought-feeling to a first thought-feeling.

In a primary state you might think-and-feel *fear* about a barking dog, closed space, high cliff, snake, etc. In a meta-state, you are thinking-and-feeling *shame* about your *fear*, or *fear of your fear*, or *anger at your fear*, or *curiosity about your fear*, or even *pride of your fear*. In the higher

state about a state, your focus is not on a thing, person, or event “out there.” You are now focused on what’s occurring “within” yourself. And this self-reflexive process is an infinite process so that you will also respond to your meta-response: *depressed* about your *fear* of your *fear*. And, in fact, with each response, you can respond yet again and do so without end. You can always step back to respond with another state to the previous state or states.²

To *ground* a meta-state, you have to repeat back and get a confirmation from the person about his or her thinking-feeling states. And doing that feeding-back and confirming begins to *hold* the meta-state in place in the person’s mind so that you can then work with the meta-stating structure. Knowing that none of this is a “thing,” that none of this is externally real, and that you as a visitor are influencing and inviting change by your very presence heightens your understanding of the importance of the grounding process.

Premise 3: Neuro-Semantics invites a mindfulness by accessing of your self-reflexive consciousness. The reason for the grounding is so that you can hold the experience stable as you explore it. Without the grounding, the experience itself easily morphs into other experiences and the person can start a negative downward spiraling that will make things worse. I’m speaking here of working with another person because it is far easier at first to work with another person, or have someone else work with you, than to do this with yourself.

There’s a reason: Your self-reflexive consciousness. If your *neuro-semantic states* were only composed of one layer and you could just think of one thing at a time, it would be pretty easy to stay focused, not get side-tracked, and not get into spin. But minds are not so simple. You do not just think or just feel. You think-feel about your thinking-and-feeling and do so in a nano-second, layer upon layer. You do not just process information and make an internal movie with your thoughts of what you see, hear, sense, smell, taste, and say. You reflect upon whatever you experience and do so repeatedly.

It is your self-reflexive consciousness that is your greatest glory and deepest agony. With it you can ascend to the highest visions and values and dreams possible and feel an ecstasy and delight in just thinking-emoting about something. And with it also you can create internal nightmares that distance you from reality, distort the messages you send to your body, and that drive you insane so that you become a danger to yourself and others.

The Meta-States Model in Neuro-Semantics is the model that enables you to appreciate, understand, and work with your *reflexivity*. This dynamic, systemic process distinguishes you from all of the animals and makes our kind of consciousness so special, so incredibly powerful, so sacred, and so dangerous. Without the ability to recognize and manage the reflexivity, you can get yourself into a spin that can diminish you as a human being and even make you a candidate for suicide. The way you respond to your responses can become so toxic, so perditious, and so morbid that you become your own worst enemy as you just sit and “think.”³

Yet your reflexivity is precisely the mechanism that also enables you to transcend and include your previous states. *Within the reflexivity process is your power of transcendence*—you can

transcend any current reality. You can transcend and escape, you can transcend and build masterful resources into yourself and your states, you can transcend what *is* and begin to create what *can be*, you can transcend difficulties and problems and invent incredible solutions that only are available to those who can access the unimaginable potentials of human beings.

It is your self-reflexive consciousness that lies at the heart of all “spiritual” states and that expands consciousness so that you are not limited merely to the past, to what has been, but you can imagine new possibilities and then reverse engineer unimaginable solutions. It is this reflexivity that lies at the heart of science, human improvement, the dreams and visions and values that make all of us “religious” at heart. No wonder it is imperative that we take charge of this reflexivity and learn to manage it effectively!

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #2
January 9, 2012

Teasers from the new Book: Neuro-Semantics (#4)

PREMISES OF THE NEURO-SEMANTIC MODEL

Premise 4: Neuro-Semantics invites and provides direction for how to explore higher neuro-semantic states. So how do you get there? How do you rise above your first-level primary states and enter into the human experience of these layers upon layers of meta-states? How do you go about exploring the meta-levels of the mind so that you can now enter into a person's inner world more deeply?

Begin with rapport skills of NLP. Listen for the specific words and expressions that a person offers. Watch for and detect her specific ways of gesturing and using her body and then feed that information back, become a living, breathing bio-feedback mirror to the person. Do this in an attitude of respect, care, and sensitivity, and you create the experience of "rapport" or trust with that person. Doing that typically creates the sense of safety with you so that you earn the right to enter into that person's inner world of meanings.

The structure and strategy of rapport as discovered in NLP involves matching and mirroring the outputs of a person—the energy that they express in their speech and behavior. You receive it at the primary level and mirror it back. As you then enter in further and further, you continue to repeat this same process. As you hear meta-level expressions—value words, idiosyncratic expressions, beliefs, etc., you simply mirror it back as expressions of those higher states, invite the person to confirm or disconfirm, and hold it for them.

In this way, the receiving the person's feedback and mirroring back (giving it back) makes you a living, breathing bio-feedback mirror which enables the person to *hold* and *ground* the experience. Typically, doing this rather than problem-solving, giving advice, lecturing, teaching, correcting, etc., is so new and strange that it is an incredible and marvelous experience that for the first time enables the person is really able to see, hold, and embrace oneself. And with that, both you and them can then move up to the next level. Now the exploration has truly begun.⁴

This is why the first step in any communication with another human being has to be listening, questioning, exploring, checking out, reflecting back, and suspending judgment to enter into that person's world. If you don't do that, you can't even begin to "understand" the meanings that drive and govern that person's experiences. This "pacing" involves using all of your *output systems* (not only your words, but our postures, movements, tones, etc.) to match or fit in with

the person you're communicating with.

To *pace* in that way is the basis for mutual understanding. It enables you to enter into the other person's *structured* reality. It gives you a way to try on another reality structure. When you do that from a stance of respect for the person, a desire to truly understand and to help, the person feels understood, confirmed, and validated. You don't have to agree with the other person in order to create such strong and powerful subjective experiences, you only have to *match the other's experience of the world*. Doing so gives you entrance.

Then, from there you earn the right to *lead* them somewhere else. You can influence them in ways that will enrich and enhance their experience. This holds true whether you are a formal change agent like therapist, hypnotist, teacher, marketer, manager, sales person, or less direct influencers— a lover, parent, friend, etc.⁵

By receiving whatever the person says and respecting it as that person's mental model of the world, and by not judging or evaluating it, but just hearing it, that *enables them to also hear it*. And whatever they offer you, whatever they say is just words, just gestures, just emotions. And it is real to them. It may not be real to you. It may not make sense to you. That's besides the point. The exploration is not about you! You don't have to agree in order to understand. You only have to hold this space and let them go into the next higher level of their mind.

The next higher level is a layer of thought-and-feeling which operates as a frame. Its position, as a context for thinking and interpreting, makes it a frame of meaning or a frame of mind. And as such, it makes up the Matrix of frames that the person lives inside of. And from inside it is *psycho-logical*. Whenever or however the person drew the conclusions and made the interpretations that created that layer of thoughts-and-feelings, it made sense to them at that time. Of course, it could have been created by a 15-year old brain or a 5 year old brain or even a 9-month old brain and so may be childish, ridiculous, wrong, even stupid. Yet when created, it made sense and continues to make sense until seen, examined, and then changed.

Frames of reference which you and I experience as our frames of mind or frames of meaning are like that. Regardless of your age or mental capacity or life circumstances, when you take a referent event that happens to you and *represent* it within your mind (re-present it to yourself as your thought) you thereby *hold* it in mind. That is what the term "meaning" means— "to hold in mind." So whatever you hold in mind is what something means to you.

This explains how you can get some really stupid, toxic, childish, and accidental meanings lodged in your mind as your frames of reference. Some event happens and it catches your attention, it triggers a strong emotional state, and so you *bring it in by representing it in the theater of your mind*. Then you don't let it go. Instead you reflect upon it. And yes, you may reflect on it with a 3-year old mind! You draw conclusions, you make interpretations, decisions, beliefs, understandings, identities, etc. You layer thought-and-feeling layer upon layer building up a whole matrix of frames about that event. And given the primitive cognitive style of thinking during infancy and childhood, it's no wonder that you create all sorts of limiting, stupid,

and even toxic ideas about things, about the world, about yourself, about others.

Now unless there are been plenty of corrective experiences or unless you have engaged in a self-awareness program to chase out the limiting beliefs, like most people you probably have lots of limiting frames at the top of your Matrix of frames. And most of them are outside-of-conscious awareness. These are your unquestioned assumptions that organize your perceptions and responses and that make up your inner reality. If you were conscious of them, your very consciousness of them would cause many of them to just vanish away. But you are not conscious of them. They make up your blind-spots. So they operate as your unconscious, assumptive presuppositions about life. And that's what makes them powerful and dangerous.

This highlights a central Neuro-Semantic distinction: *Higher levels govern the lower levels of thought and meaning.* And that leads to a key principle: Personal effectiveness is about utilizing and using these higher meta-levels of mind. The best and most pervasive personal change is made at these higher levels of mind. And here lies the difference that makes a difference.

Neuro-Semantics enables you to look at the frames of reference you use to make sense of things. Frames grow from how you take a reference event “out there,” bring it into your mind, represent it, use it as a map, and then transform it into a frame of reference, frame of mind, and the frameworks of your conceptual understandings.

Higher levels govern the lower levels of thought and meaning.

“Mind” grows in this way. It evolves and transforms and emerges from within your neuro-linguistic system. And just when you have it mapped, it changes.

To tolerate the journey around the loops of reflexivity and up and down the embedded frames within frames, you have to have a good stomach for putting up with ambiguity, paradox, uncertainty, transitions, and transcendence.

Premise 5: Neuro-Semantics de-mystifies many of the old myths of psychology and philosophy. Recognizing this structure of mental-emotional frames demystifies a lot in human psychology. First and foremost it clarifies that there's nothing wrong with you. If you have a problem—the problem lies in your frames, not in you. This specifies another one of our key premises in Neuro-Semantics (#1): *The person is never the problem; the frame is the problem.*

Another demystification is this (#2): *There is nothing inside you but frames and frames are made out of images, sounds, sensations, and words.* There's nothing alien within you which needs to be cast out. The worst experiences of a human being—the personality dis-orderings are just that, *the dis-ordering* of a person's thinking-and-feeling. The person is not flawed or broken or sick, the person is suffering from flawed and sick frames. That's why exorcism isn't called for, education is. What is needed is a renewal of the mind and the transformation of the governing frames.⁶

Another de-mystification (#3): *There is a structure that makes psycho-logical sense of every experience.* It all makes sense! Well, it makes sense *from the inside.* It makes sense given the

frames that any person is living within. If I had those frames, I'd be thinking and feeling and believing and acting as the person who has these frames. And because it makes sense, because there is a structure that we can identify and make explicit— transformation involves changing the frames. It is as simple as that; it is as profound as that.

De-mystification #4: *Human nature can be changed and that change can be without pain.* Two of the old ideas are first, “You can’t change human nature,” and second, “Change is hard and painful and takes a long time.” These statements were indeed true given the tools that mankind has had for most of its history. They were even true through the early years of psychotherapy. Yet with the tools that are now available in Neuro-Semantics, we have made these old belief statements redundant. After all, if the problem is the frame, not the person, we do not have to fight or wrestle or trick the person. Instead we can align with the person and facilitate the person changing his or her own frames. That’s because we can change no one, but we can facilitate any person to choose to make changes which he or she wants to make.

*The person is never
the problem; the frame
is the problem.*

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #3
January 16, 2012

Teasers from the new Book: Neuro-Semantics (#5)

PREMISES OF THE NEURO-SEMANTIC MODEL

Premise 6: Neuro-Semantics searches for the structure of experiences. Neuro-Semantics arose from the revolutionary work of Alfred Korzybski in the field of General Semantics via his book *Science and Sanity*. That work initiated the search for structure. That's because Korzybski said that *the only content of knowledge is structure*. If our maps are not *the same* as the territory, but are symbols, maps, representations, facsimiles of the territory, then *structure*, and structure only, can give clue as to what we're dealing with and how to cope effectively as we move through the territory.

From this concept Korzybski provides NLP its foundation. The developers of NLP founded their approach upon the core principle of General Semantics: "*The map is not the territory.*" That lead them to searching for the *structure* of the interventions and communications that seemed so magical which that they found in the therapeutic geniuses—Fritz Perls, Virginia Satir, and Milton Erickson. And with the development of NLP, of "the study of the structure of subjectivity," came a whole field dedicated to modeling the structure of experience.⁷

In the meantime, other disciplines developed a very similar vision and direction. From the Cognitive Sciences, the neuro-sciences, meta-cognition, cognitive linguistics, artificial intelligence, etc., the search for structure continued.

Neuro-Semantics, growing out of NLP and other disciplines, continues this adventure of studying the structure of intentionality and meaning. Doing this takes NLP to a new level. Using *the Meta-States Model*, we explore *the levels of mind* to model the systemic structure we find in actual awareness. This means modeling the structure of reflexivity, recursiveness, thinking in circles, thinking in loops, going round and round, etc. It's all very messy. It lacks the nice linear black-and-white structure of Behaviorism's old Stimulus—Response model.

Premise 7: Neuro-Semantics facilitates the change process in multiple ways. I have already mentioned three change factors: create a high quality relationship of rapport for the safety and trust that allows a person to experience a mirroring of his or her own reality. The older psychologists (Freud, Adler, Jung, etc.) often said, "Awareness *per se* is curative." And sometimes it is. Sometimes when you can truly and safely see and hear yourself and witness yourself, that awareness changes things. Suddenly the deception is over. So just your presence

of care, compassion, safety, and trustworthiness as you enter the system, changes things.

But not always. If the kind of awareness you bring to yourself is judgmental awareness, you will make things worse. Then a downward negative spiraling begins. So that's where holding the frame in the context of *just exploring* to see what's there introduces non-judgmental awareness and pure witnessing. NLP got this idea of pure witnessing as a powerful change agent from Fritz Perls who said, "Lose your mind and come to your senses."

Third, there is the change factor of *changing the frame*. If the frame of meaning is the problem, then changing it, changes the person. Transformation occurs by altering the reference point. And whether it is an old belief, decision, understanding, prohibition, intention, identity, metaphor, etc., altering or reframing the mental map transforms things.

Two key change principles that we use in Neuro-Semantics are these.

First, we can change no one, but as we change, the game changes and that invites others to change.

Second, we can change no one, but we can facilitate another to choose to change.

Both of these principles empower you to give up the need to change people. Knowing that you can't, you then release others from the grip of your manipulations. And when you do, something magical happens. People change. They change because the pressure is off. And when the pressure is off, then the person is thrown back on one of the most important Neuro-Semantic principles: *The responsibility and freedom of choice point*.

Choice point can occur at any and every meta-level in a person's Matrix. By holding the frames, mirroring them back, providing a context of care and support, you invite a person to step back or step up and gain a larger or wider perspective. "Ah, this is what you have been thinking-feeling, believing, understanding, identifying with, etc., how is that?" It's an open-ended question and it is a question that begins to invite the person to a point of choice.

"So what do you want to do? Do you like that belief? That prohibition? That intention? Does that understanding serve you well? Does that frame empower you as a person?"

These are quality control questions, because that's what they do. They invite the person to check the quality of their frames and at the same time they put the person at choice point. It is their life. What will they do? Perceiving at this higher level empowers them now with the *ability to respond* as so they choose. And this typically creates a leverage for the changes that the person has been looking for.

Facilitating change in a person who has developed a strong enough sense of self (what we call ego-strength) moves through four stages: Motivation, Decision, Creation, and Integration. These are the four axes in the *Axes of Change Model* of Neuro-Semantics which was originally designed for the Meta-Coaching System. That is, to facilitate a person through the change process requires four resources:

1. *Energy or motivation* to move away from what does not work and energy to move toward

one's dreams, visions, and hopes— the life that a person wants to experience. Is there enough energy in the person's mind-body system to invest the effort for change? If no, work the motivation axes. If yes, then move to the next resource.

2. *Decisiveness* to make an informed and clearly weighed decision for paying the price that the change will require. Has the person weighed the pros and cons of making the change and of not making the change? Is the person crystal clear about the price that he or she will pay for making the decision for or against the change? If no, then probe the person's pros and cons and the values inherent in each and then challenge them to make the decision. If yes, then move on to the next resource.
3. *A creative new vision* mapped out as a blueprint of the new life chosen and a plan for innovating this creativity in everyday life. With the preparation for change completed, now comes the research and development phase as the person puts together a plan or a strategy for the change. Does the person know with precision and clarity what and how she will make the change happen? Does the person have a time-table and schedule for beginning to innovate and actualize the plan? If no, then work the creation axes. If yes, then move on to the next resource.
4. *An integration in life-style* so that the new change is now in muscle-memory as the person's way of being in the world. Change created and begun won't last if not practiced in a disciplined way until it becomes automatic and one's default program. Have you reinforced and celebrated that successful steps so that a person finds the effort rewarded and the pattern now integrated? Have you begun the continuous improvement of testing the pattern to see what else could be taken to a new level? If no, then work the integration axes. If yes, then what's the next change you want to embrace and experience?

Facilitating change in Neuro-Semantics can occur in that deliberate, conscious, and methodical way; it can also occur in a more unconscious and holistic way. For that we use *The Crucible Model*.⁸ This model utilizes the key change ingredients of Carl Rogers (unconditional positive regard, accurate empathy, and authenticity) along with other ingredients from Maslow, May, etc.—witnessing, acceptance, responsibility, and appreciation. Put all these together into a metaphorical space that brings out a person's best and you can then create a crucible space where old learnings can be reprocessed and the heat of truth—response-ability—and appreciation can come together for a transformation. The clue that it works is an ecstasy of falling back in love with life, with self, with others, with meaningfulness.⁸

Premise 8: Neuro-Semantics facilitates an unleashing of potentials that enables the transformation of personality, identity, and life's purpose. Finally, all of these premises culminate in the premise of self-actualization. It was Maslow and Rogers who postulated that *the self-actualization drive* is our most fundamental drive of all. It is the drive to keep moving forward and upward in making real (actualizing) what is clamoring within you. This life-long and never-ending drive is a drive to be real, to *be* who and what you are, and to keep

transcending and including your current life situation.

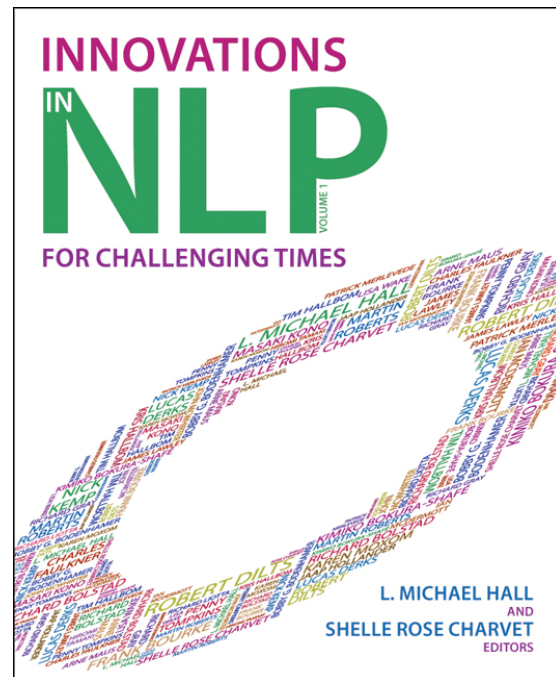
This is a drive for *becoming* increasingly more and more authentic so that you unleash your real self. And in doing that, then you step into “the zone” or the “flow” zone, or the “genius” state of experiencing and giving yourself to that which makes you come truly alive and make a contribution that makes a difference in the world.⁹

Here’s a paradox: while self-actualization has the term “self” within it, *it is not about you*. It is about actualizing yourself— your gifts, abilities, potentials, etc. so that you can truly contribute what is uniquely yours to contribute. And in that way, you truly make a difference in the world.

From: L. Michael Hall
January 11, 2012
Advertisement for “*Innovations in NLP*”

EVOKING NLP INNOVATIVENESS

When we (Shelle Rose Charvet and myself) designed the book, *Innovations in NLP*, we focused on a simple objective—to create a book that would bring together the key innovations in NLP during the 1990s and 2000s. Nothing like this had ever been done before so when we started and when Shelle and I conceptualized the plan. We really didn’t have a sense of what would happen. But we moved forward. Having a pretty good sense of the field, we made a list of people who had made innovations that we knew about from the NLP journals, conferences, and our own personal experiences. [We certainly missed some and hope to have them in the next Volume of *Innovations*.]



Having gotten the idea from the book *Third Generation NLP* by Robert Dilts and associates, we wanted to bring together, acknowledge, honor, and celebrate the key thinkers, developers, and innovators in the field of NLP. There was no thought about whether we agreed with or even liked the innovations. That wasn’t our concern. Our concern was to acknowledge and highlight that influential people in the field were creating and innovating new models, patterns, applications, and communities. So in that sense, the question was not whether it fit or did not fit with our vision of NLP, but whether people who come from the NLP premises were offering new ideas of practical value. If they were, we should recognize what they have done.

Now creativity differs from innovation. Creativity actually is the easy part. “Creativity is a dime a dozen” to quote Maslow. Innovation is much harder. Taking an idea and turning it into something practical, useful, and effective and then selling it to others so that it can be rolled out—that’s an incredibly more challenging proposition. So the book is not about creative ideas in NLP, it’s about actual innovations.

In planning and working on the book we were up against a 30-plus year trend—the trend that the field of NLP has not been very successful in cooperation, collaboration, synergy, or team work. This is as strange as it is sad. *Strange* because it grew from the roots of the first Human Potential Movement and the synergy that Maslow proclaimed and practiced with Rogers and many others.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #4
January 23, 2012

THE ART OF FRAMING

Whether you like him or not, Newt Gingrich has an amazing and skillful ability to frame. And if you are outside the USA and don't know who Newt is, he was the former Speaker of the House during the Clinton Presidency and is now one of the candidates for President on the Republican side. Now his skill in framing and reframing has appeared recently during the Republican Presidential debates. In those debates, Newt has showed himself incredibly skilled in detecting frames, identifying frames, challenging frames, deframing, reframing, and outframing.

I first began noticing this in the early debates when the "media" people who were asking the questions would ask a rhetorical, manipulative and semantically loaded question which Newt called a "gotcha" question. Then Newt called their hands on it. "That's a gotcha question, can we raise the level of this conversation?" He did that several times last year. At first it seemed to have embarrassed the person who asked the unfair question that was semantically loaded and after doing that two or three times, the media news people stopped doing it! I found that amazing! Single-handedly he called them on the assumptions inside of the questions and because he didn't take the bait and get caught up in the content, he brought to people's attention the framework that the questions were coming from thereby exposing the uneven hand in the media people.

That's leadership by framing. That is both detecting the frames and by identifying it and making it conscious, reframed it. And whoever sets the frame controls the game, so Newt's ability to frame demonstrated leadership.

In the days after Newt started to do that, there was lots of political analysis about the questions and his answers. And as a result, the questions became "cleaner" — more honest, more straightforward, and less semantically loaded. And that improved the quality of the following debates.

Last week Newt again went for frames rather than content. When Juan Williams asked him about his comment about Obama being the "food stamp President" and "isn't that belittling him?" Newt made a meta-comment to the effect that while those who are politically-correct may "dislike uncomfortable facts," the facts are the facts and one fact is that Obama has put more people on food-stamps than any other president in history, now costing \$76 billion a year.

When asked about his comment about getting inner city kids to work in the schools, to do some janitorial work and be paid for it, the questioner posed it as an insult to them. "Don't you realize

that some people hear that as if you are belittling them?” Newt’s answer was as blunt as it was succinct. “No.” Then he explained by setting out the difference between being “taken care of” by government and “learning the work ethic and the pride of a job.” Newt said he wanted people to take pride in working, earning money, becoming independent, and growing up to “own” the job. For that he got a standing ovation.

The frame of the question tried to hook him about a low-level job, doing “janitorial” work. The frame of Newt’s answer was about the value and honor of any and all jobs. The battle was about *meanings*. One assumed the cultural *meaning* that cleaning things up is something shameful like it means being a servant. The other meaning views work as honorable and that the experience of learning to work, learning to do well whatever one does, learning to see it as the first steps and as confirmed by many of Newt’s supporters, “That’s how I also got started, washing dishes, bussing tables, cleaning up, etc.”

Another comment that Newt made concerned the government giving longer and longer periods of unemployment pay. In the US it is now 99 weeks. And while the official unemployment rate is 8.5, the actual rate is between 12 and 15 and those who are under-employed extends to another 5 to 10 percent. That’s somewhere around 25 million people. Now statistics about that have consistently indicated that the longer the unemployment lasts, the longer it takes a person to find a job. Newt made a comment about the 99 weeks was — “That’s an Associate Degree.”

Meaning what? Meaning that that is the amount of time it takes to earn an Associate’s Degree at a College or University. Meaning that if a person is unemployed the best thing government could do would be to ask people to use that time to *learn*— to learn a trade, how business works, how to be an entrepreneur, how to add value, how to learn, etc.

Instead of sitting at home or doing whatever they do, they should be asked to attend 99 weeks of training in business skills. Now that would truly support people— it would teach them “how to fish” in addition to giving them a fish.

After writing the above, I watched the next debate on CNN Thursday night, Jan. 19 and Gingrich did it again. During the day, more “dirt” was thrown at Gingrich, ABC using his ex-wife and some of her accusations. So John King, the moderator started by asking about the “accusations that your ex-wife has made...” That was the content. Newt refused to take the bait. Instead he turned to the frames:

“I am astonished that you would start a Presidential debate with that.”

The way the media goes after those who would run for public office is destructive, vicious, and despicable.

The way the mainstream media is protecting Obama and attacking the Republican candidates is appalling.

And when John King said, “This story did not come from this network...” Newt didn’t let him off the hook:

“John, you chose to start the debate with it. Your network made that choice. So you

can't blame someone else.”

Now later on CNN, a panel interviewed John King and he kept defending himself in asking the question. “It was the story in the news that day; everybody was talking about it; it had to be asked.” He presented his reasons so as to say that he didn't have a choice as a journalist but that he *had* to bring it up and ask the question. Hmm. So that was (is) his frame and so explains his game. With those frames, no wonder he felt and behaved as he did. As such, I would say, he was thereby the victim of his own frames. He certainly had other choices which from his interview he apparently didn't realize or see. For example, he could have started the debate like this:

“Mr. Speaker, the news of the day has centered around accusations of your ex-wife and it may or may not have anything to do with this presidential race, it is personal and not political, if you want to say something about it, fine. If not, then we will start with the issues of this campaign that face the American people— the economy, the wars, the budget, etc.”

A framing like that would have brought it up the subject *and* given Newt an opportunity to do with it whatever he wanted to. But John King didn't do that. He presented “the news of the day” to wit, the nasty accusations of a bitter ex-wife two days before the primary election as the first thing to talk about. That prioritized it, that tried to make it an issue. In terms of that *content*, Newt afterwards simply said it was false, his daughters wrote to ABC to deny it, and they offered witnesses, but ABC refused.

Now in the few days that have now passed, every news commentator that I've heard do not seem to understand what Newt Gingrich did. This is true for those on the right and the left. Most called it “shrewd” dealing with things; others described it as “turning the tables on them,” several morning shows decided that it was “media bashing,” “... blame it on the media, the American people love it.” Then there were many who decided to interpret it as Newt being an “angry” person. “He's just angry, that's why he did that.”

I even heard other commentators complain that after the shrewd attack, Newt never dealt with “the substantial details” of the question. In these words they equated “the substantial details” with the *content* rather than the frame. Yet I shouldn't be surprised by this. This is the seduction of *content*. Content seduces us as it gets us to confuse the details with the most important part of the message. But for Neuro-Semanticists, we know that the frame governs *how to interpret content*.

Ah, the battle of the frames! It's always about frames, everything human is. And at this point in human history, this is a leadership skill, that is, the ability to detect frames and then address them effectively. Interested? Welcome to Neuro-Semantic NLP! Two books to get you started in this realm: *Winning the Inner Game* and *Mind-Lines: Lines for Changing Minds*. And if you want to advance beyond these, then *Neuro-Semantics: Actualizing Meaning and Performance*.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2011 #5
January 26, 2012

META-COACHING ANYONE?

The field of Coaching is still new, evolving, growing, and finding its way as it slowly moves toward becoming a profession. Will it eventually become a separate and distinct profession? Yes, I think so. When? Who knows?! There's much to be worked out before that happens and mainly deciding on what it is.

Yet while a clear definition of *what coaching is* is still debatable and undecidable within the field of Coaching, we are much clearer in Meta-Coaching.

For us coaching is the process facilitation that unleashes potentials in individuals and groups for pushing the limits of meaningful performance.

Now that's a Coach's definition. People who *coach* others facilitate the very processes (psychological, mental-emotional, personal, semantic, physiological) that enable a person to actualize a significant meaning into their behavior. So if you are a consultant, trainer, salesperson, leader, manager, or parent— this takes your professional skills to the next level.

Yet coaching isn't just for coaches. Coaching facilitates *processes* so that a person can become more fully what one can become. Who knows what a person can become? The person. That's why coaches don't teach, don't train, don't counsel, don't do therapy— the coach doesn't know what is best for the client. Only the client knows— except that he or she usually doesn't know consciously. Yet at some level the client knows and that's what the coach facilitates— that deep knowing.

So another way to think about the coaching process is to recognize that it is *expert level communications*. When you use the “coaching” processes, you actively listen at multiple levels, you ask empowering questions, you set frames, you induce states, you give feedback, you support, and in a word — you develop your relational and influential skills to a whole new level.

Now in the field of Coaching, Meta-Coaching has become a leading model in framing the process of effective coaching in a highly systematic way. The design is to provide a Professional Coach the ability to know *what* to do, *when* to do it, *how* to do it, with whom to do it, and *why* to do it. The design also is to establish the field of coaching in the unique psychology for psychologically healthy people who want to change and develop, namely, *Self-Actualization Psychology*.

To do that end I have been putting the models and processes that we use in Meta-Coaching in a series of book so that the full process is set out.

Meta-Coaching Series of Volumes of Books:

Volume	Title	Model
I:	Coaching Change	Axes of Change
II:	Coaching Conversations	Facilitation Model
III:	Unleashed: A Guide to Your Ultimate Self-Actualization	Self-Actualization Quadrants
IV:	Self-Actualization Psychology	Self-Actualization Volcano
V:	Achieving Peak Performance	Meaning–Performance Axes
VI:	Unleashing Leadership: Self-Actualizing Leaders and Companies	
VII:	The Crucible	The Crucible Model
VIII:	Benchmarking Intangibles	Benchmarking Model
IX:	Systemic Meta-Coaching	
X:	Executive Meta-Coaching	
XI:	Group and Team Meta-Coaching	

And there are also a set of supplementary books that are actually a part of Meta-Coaching:

<i>Figuring Out People</i> (2006)	The Meta-Programs Model
<i>Secrets of Personal Mastery</i> (1997)	The Meta-States Model
<i>Winning the Inner Game</i> (2007)	The Meta-States Model
<i>The Matrix Model</i> (2003)	Neuro-Semantic Systems Model
<i>Communication Magic</i> (1999)	The Meta-Model of Language

Meta-Coaching New for 2012

In 2012 Modules I and II will be conduct in many, many places around the world by Neuro-Semantic Trainers (see www.neurosemantics.com / Training). Module III will be conducted in 7 places.

1) May (May 14-21): Hong Kong

May 13 Team Leaders

Mandy Chai mandy@apti.com.hk

2) May (24-27) & June (21-24): Mexico City (Parts I and II)

Omar Salom Omarsalom@hotmail.com

David Murphy david@neurosemantica-latam.com

3) August (25—Sept. 1): Belgium. First Ever in Europe

Germaine Rediger – indialogue@me.com

Mario Mason --- mma@phoenix-strategies.com

4) September (15-22): Brazil, Rio de Janeiro – First ever in Brazil

Jairo Mancilha jairo@pnl.med.br

5) October (5-12): New Zealand

Lene Gray --- lena@ignition.org.nz

Colin Cox --- colin@ignition.org.nz

6) Nov. (17-21) & Dec. (6-10): Guangzhou, China (Parts I and II)

Mandy Chai: Mandy@apti.com.hk

Nov. 16 and Dec. 2 – Team leaders

7) November (23-30): Pretoria — South Africa

Cheryl Lucas --- cheryl@peoplesa.co.za

Carey Jooste --- carey@psacoaching.co.za

From: L. Michael Hall
Re: Trainers' Training
Feb. 5, 2012

NSTT RETURNING TO COLORADO

NSTT is Neuro-Semantic Trainers' Training and *if* you are at the place where you are ready to step up to a leadership role in the field of NLP as a trainer or public speaker, and **if** you have the prerequisite trainings and preparation, then the attachment to this email, the 2012 Brochure for Neuro-Semantic NLP Trainers' Training, is especially for you and your next step for unleashing your potentials.

I'm sending this out at this time also in anticipation that you may have to now be planning for your holiday time. This year we bring it back to Colorado in July / August and here are some of the details for that event:

Training: Neuro-Semantic Trainers' Training
Dates: July 24– August 8
Venue: Country Inns of America Hotel and Conference Center
Grand Junction Colorado, USA

Are there prerequisites for this training? Yes, you bet there are! This is not a general training for most people. It is actually an exclusive training because once you have completed the training requirements, you have to be recommended and after that, if all is in place, you will receive a special invitation to the training. So this is a *by-invitation-only training*. Here are the requirements that prepares a person for the invitation:

- 1) NLP Practitioner Certification
- 2) NLP Master practitioner Certification
- 3) Meta-States Certification (the APG training)
- 4) Recommendation by a Licensed Neuro-Semantic Trainer
- 5) Application Form

Why attend, invest, and come to NSTT? What would you get from NSTT? What are the values and benefits of this training? There are many. For the first six days we focus on your *Presentation Skills*— effective public speaking, working with groups and facilitating a learning environment, inspiring, framing, and training skill development for competence. There are also three days of *the Psychology of APG* (Accessing Personal Genius) which is the flagship of Neuro-Semantic and Meta-State Training. With this psychological foundation, you will have the background for understanding the psychology of psychological health and vitality for actualizing your highest and best.

The training also involves three days of advanced Training Skills and three days of Business

Skills, the skills needed to run a training center and/or to sell yourself as a trainer. NSTT is always an international training and this year as always, we are expecting people from all over the world. This year the training will only be in English without any translations to French, Spanish or Chinese.

Then when you have completed this Training / Presentation / business Boot Camp, if you met the standards, you are able to train and certify NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner, APG and any of the Neuro-Semantic trainings you have experienced under the auspices of the ISNS as an internationally licensed trainer.

What can you expect? Expect a Training Boot Camp that will be very intense with high standards and rigorous benchmarks, an introduction to an international community and challenges that will invite layers upon layers of transformations in your life.

Ready for more?

Got questions about the training?

Then contact me, L. Michael Hall, at meta@acsol.net.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #6
January 30, 2012
Empowerment Series #1

THE NEURO-SEMANTICS OF EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment — empowering people to recognize and own their own personal powers and to develop those powers or energies so that they become their skills and competencies. This lies at the heart of every model and pattern in the field of self-development. Empowerment was a theme that first caught my attention about NLP. The early NLP literature presented Neuro-Linguistic Programming as a model that enables a person learn how to “run your own brain” and from that then be able to manage your own state. I liked that. I needed that. So I entered into the field to explore what NLP could offer on the subject of personal empowerment.

Empowerment also led me to study William Glasser’s Control Theory, Frankl’s Logotherapy, Ellis and Beck’s Cognitive Psychology, and many others. I wasn’t looking to have power *over* others, I just wanted to have *power over myself* and power *with* others. Then in the process of learning and developing self-power (self-efficacy or trust in self to handle things in the future) I discovered that this is the very structure of proactivity, responsibility, accountability, taking initiative, and feeling in control of your own life.

Later, when I discovered “the secret history of NLP” (e.g., the first Human Potential Movement, HPM), I discovered that NLP’s “running your own brain” was just one small facet of actualizing your highest and best by identifying and unleashing your potentials (self-actualization). In Maslow’s work I also discovered an emphasis on a fundamental facet of empowerment—that of one’s biological, mental-emotional *energy* that we experience as *vitality*. And that led to the Self-Actualization Workshop on “Unleashing Vitality.”

So within *empowerment* are numerous concepts and experiences that are fundamental to being able to live with yourself and others and enjoy your life as you seek to become your best self:
Energy, power, responsiveness, response-power (responsibility), initiative, proactivity, control, feeling in-control of oneself, power *with* others (empowering others via coaching, managing, leading), accountability, etc.

Therefore with *Neurons* post, I am beginning a new series on *Empowerment* which will cover these subjects. Additional articles will appear depending on your questions and responses.

Your biological energy or vitality in living.

Your four fundamental powers.

The structure of response-power — responsibility.

The myths and truths about “energy.”

How to take control in your life and feel in-control.

Your Foundational Power — Your Metabolic Energy

When it comes to your personal *power* — your *power* to respond, to feel, to think, to speak, to act, to relate — all of these powers depends upon your biological *energy*. All you have to do is catch a cold or get the flu to feel your “power” drain out of you, your experience. Suddenly the achy feeling in your body, the stuff-up feeling in your head, the sore throat, the congestion in your lungs makes everything feel like a burden. Suddenly, you have no vitality, no energy for doing anything! We all know that. But why is it that way?

It’s because *our life vitality is a function of the health and well-being of our body and that arises as a function of our metabolism*. This is the *neuro-* part of Neuro-Linguistics and Neuro-Semantics. That is, it is dependent upon how well our body brings food and oxygen in and processes it and thereby giving you the energy to think, feel, speak, and act. When your life-energy is down through an illness like the flu or due to lack of the basic survival needs (food, sleep, etc.) we feel weak. Then it becomes harder to think, to feel up or positive about life’s challenges, to speak and to act.

Your fundamental powers and energies, and mine, then are obviously functions of our most basic survival skills and habits. It’s a function of your eating and exercising habits, your life habits of drinking, sleeping, stretching (taking care of your health and fitness). These are foundational for your life vitality-energy. If you are not meeting your basic lower needs of survival, safety, social, and self needs— your energy levels will be compromised.

For each of these there is a level of *understanding* that’s required. If you are “burning the candle on both ends” pushing your sleeping hours til late in the night and getting up early so that you are not getting sufficient sleep (which sleep researchers say is between 7 and 9 hours), sleep deficiency will undermine your energy and the quality of your responses. The same goes for skeleton strength exercise, for cardio-vascular exercise, for stretching, for eating moderately, etc.

A lot of “depression” falls back to these things. Why do people feel fatigued, tired, bored, easily frustrated, anxious, easily angered, stressed, etc.? Often it is because people are not taking care of their physical energy by effectively meeting their biological needs. Minimally this is the place to begin— check the foundation of the person’s energy. Biological needs adequately met releases a person’s natural vitality. Here it is a matter first of knowing what the true gratifiers are, second of providing them, and third, of giving them the appropriate meanings.

With animals only the first two steps are needed. Not so with us humans. As a semantic class of life, we also need the third step. That’s because above and beyond taking care of your biology and metabolism and all of the environmental factors that enhances or dimensions your energy are your mental-emotional states. You can worry yourself into unhealth, stress yourself, overwhelm yourself, you can waste energy in states of anxiety, jealousy, envy, hatred, fear, fearfulness, anger, bitterness, resentment, skepticism, pessimism, and so on. Such states operate as energy-holes in your vitality. Conversely, there are other mental-emotional states that will amplify your

vitality. It's all connected, mind-body-emotion. It's a system, a neuro-semantic system. More about this later.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #7
February 6, 2012
Empowerment Series #2

THE ISSUE OF CONTROL

You've heard it many times. We all have. It's a phrase that abounds by arm-chair psychologists and most people seem to think they have a license to say it several times a day. Yet it's a phrase that's as full of myths and misunderstandings as any. The phrase? "Oh that person has *control issues*." So, what does it mean to have *control issues*?

We generally use it to mean, "The person tries to control too much." Or, "The person is too bossy." Or "The person is mentioning too many details." Or, "What the person wants is different from what I want." Yet what is too much control or details? What can we control and what can we not control? So when it comes to "taking control," let's begin by asking:

- ▶ What are you in control of?
- ▶ What can you control?
- ▶ What can you not control?
- ▶ What can you partially control?
- ▶ To what degree can you exercise some control?

The answer is actually so profoundly simple that it is very easy to dismiss. I did for years. For many years as a psychotherapist, I kept looking elsewhere for the heart and secret of personal empowerment. Eventually, however, I came back and in what seems so obvious, so simple, so small I found the source of all human power and "control."

The answer? Your four fundamental powers that comprise your powers-of-response (e.g., your response-power or response-ability). What profound simplicity! Every "power" that you have (i.e., ability, response, capabilities, skills, competencies, etc) arises from and are made out of these four powers. You can boil down every skill, no matter how complex, to these four powers. In fact, that's precisely what we do in several of Neuro-Semantic workshops and what Meta-Coaches do constantly with their clients.

It is when these *response-powers* come together that they create various meta-state gestalts (something that is "more than the sum of the parts"). Within personality they create a strong sense of *responsiveness, proactivity, initiative, confidence in self to act, and responsibility*. So if you are interested in any of these more complex states, the place to start is with the four powers. They are that important! And, of course, your personal sense of *energy* also arises from these four powers.

So what are your four powers that have all of this importance, value, and significance? They are your two private and internal powers of *thinking and emoting* and your two public or external powers of *speaking and acting*. And even though you do not have total or absolute control over these powers, you and you alone are the one in control of them. No one else is. It is over these powers that you have control to influence your life, your world, your environment.

Many people do not know this and because they do not, they also do not appreciate their powers, do not own their powers, and do not “count” their powers as the source for empowerment. Others may have some awareness, but default to others—and so, with their powers they give their powers away.

This way of thinking and feeling is described by the meta-program of *external referencing*. This describes the response of referencing to others in terms of one’s authority or right (and hence power) to act. Others default by conforming to external standards of how to think, feel, speak, and act. They believe that circumstances make them think, feel, talk, and act as they do. They believe that they are not free or able to respond as they want. To dis-empower yourself—focus on what you cannot control.

The truth is that these responses are *yours*. *You and you only can make them*. Others can invite you, provoke, influence, and affect you in your responses, but in the end, they are *your responses*. So even when you default to others or to outside influences (circumstances, life, God, etc.) *you* are the one powerfully making that response! You are the one believing in some ironclad concept about yourself that’s undermining your self-efficacy or self-confidence. *You* are the one giving your powers away!

One of the sources where I originally learned this was Viktor Frankl. This is what I wrote in *Unleashed!* (2007) about this:

“Viktor Frankl described these powers poignantly in the concentration camp when he said that although they could take away his freedom of movement and perhaps of speech, they could not take away his other powers. “They cannot make me hate them.” In this, he claimed the ultimate human power—*the power of choice*, the power that each of us have in choosing our thoughts and our emotions. These are *our* responses and no one can “make” us think, feel, or say anything.” (*Unleashed*, p. 160)

You can always respond! Whatever happens, whatever someone says or does, whatever challenges you face in life— you always can respond mentally to think whatever you choose to think about that, and as you think, so you feel. So you can manage your emotional responses, they are, after all, yours. And what you say and how you say it, those are your verbal and linguistic responses. They also are yours. And so also your actions— your behavioral responses are the responses that you make to the triggers that stimulate you to respond. This then is the bottom line for your powers:

Your personal power to manage or control your life falls back to your power to respond in four dimensions— mentally, emotionally, verbally, and behaviorally.

Mental Responses

Your power to *respond mentally* involves everything involved in thinking, representing, languaging, evaluating, associating, believing, framing, metaphoring, deciding, remembering, imagining, and so on.

You have the power to represent things, to picture goals clearly and compellingly.

You have the power to set your mind on something.

You have the mind to describe what you experience, to create meaning, set frames, make evaluations, invent solutions, and a thousand other things.

Emotional Responses

Your power to *respond emotionally* involves sensing, feeling, associating, somatizing, mind-to-muscling, etc.

You have the power to access emotional states, to access courage, desire, hope, love, joy, playfulness, and a thousand other emotions of pleasures.

You have the power to experience sadness, tension, fear, anger, and a whole range of emotions that help you register loss or danger or something else that might help you.

Speaking Responses

Your power to *respond verbally* includes using words, languaging, conversing, naming, labeling, framing, narrating, promising, requesting, forgiving, blessing, cursing, etc.

You have the power to use words to define things, words to support someone, to inform, to negotiate, to create relationships, to navigate your future, and to engage in a thousand other activities.

Acting Responses

Your power to *respond behaviorally* includes acting, gesturing, creating and using semantic space, relating, initiating, etc.

You have the power to act on your understandings, to experiment with testing what you think could offer new possibilities, to invite others to join you, to finance a new opportunity, to flexibly alter your plans, and to do tens of thousand of things that can enhance your chances at success.

All of these powers serve as the core of your responsiveness to life and to the worlds that you live in. As you now recognize this, you can take ownership of it. You can say to yourself: “I am totally in charge of my own thinking, believing, valuing, framing, emoting, caring, wanting, setting goals, speaking, acting, etc. These are my responses!” Now, if you don’t control these inner—outer powers that you have, you’ll be out-of-control. You will not be able to control yourself, that would dis-empower. Instead, step up to take control of yourself in all of the dimensions of your powers!

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #8
February 13, 2012
Empowerment Series #3

EMPOWERMENT: CONTROLLING YOUR ENERGIES

Following up on the two previous articles in this series, your *real control* lies in your accessing, owning, development, and expression of your innate *powers*. What are these? Your foundational response-powers (thinking, emoting, speaking, and acting). These are the powers that create a solid foundation for personal empowerment. That's because every competency is made out of these response-powers.

And here's the kicker, when you have full access to these powers and are actualizing your highest meanings into your best performances, you will not be look for all of the new age type of powers—reading-minds, remote reading of things, levitating, exercising telekinesis to move objects through space with your mind, sending energy through the ether, etc.

This highlights the difference between true and pseudo-powers, between a healthy and an unhealthy focus on power/ control. It points to the direction to go when you want to truly and actually *actualize* your powers, and conversely, it use the pseudo-powers as signs regarding when a person is off-track. That is, when you don't know, understand, know-how to access, develop, and use your true powers—you are liable to go off on a undisciplined chase for “power” or “control” for science-fiction “energies” that are delightfully presented in movies and TV shows but which are sci-fi.

For a person to be truly empowered, you have to take control of your fundamental energies—those given in your mind-body-emotion system and those based on solid science. And that's why we have designed *Accessing Your Personal Genius (APG)* for your own mastery of the “flow” state by using the basic meta-stating pattern, *Owning Your Powers*. To succeed in anything (and everything) requires knowledge and skills. You have to know some things and be able to put that knowledge into action. That means using your cognitive (thinking) powers and integrating it into your state (emoting), language (speaking), and behaviors (acting). And that's why we also run the Mind-to-Muscle pattern in APG so that people can close the knowing–doing gap and become implementers of what they know. (See *Secrets of Personal Mastery* for the content of the APG workshop or check out an APG workshop near you, www.neurosemantics.com / Trainings).

Human empowerment begins here. The person who lacks this will be looking *outside* to the powers of others or to magical powers from sci-fi movies. True human empowering is an *inside-out dynamic*. It arises from your thinking-emoting (your private powers) and shows up in the

world in your speaking-acting (your two public powers). And when you have that, *you* are able to become the person *authoring* your own life— *authoring* your beliefs, your values, your sense of self, your goals, your direction, your way of being in the world. And with this development, you have moved from being externally-oriented and referenced to being *internally-referenced*. In NLP we speak about this development as a meta-program shift (see *Figuring Out People*, 2005). Now in terms of self-actualization, if you want to actualize your own sense of power and control, recognize, acknowledge, accept, appreciate, and assume full ownership of your powers. You have the power of thinking, and from this power arises so many additional powers— the power of framing your thoughts, the power of believing, the power of intending, the power of identifying, the power of deciding, the power of remembering, the power of imagining, and on and on. Each of these *mental powers* speaks about the meta-levels that you can set in your mind.

How many of these meta-powers do you have? How many do you actualize and use on a daily basis? In *Neuro-Semantics: Actualizing Meaning and Performance* (2011) I listed 103 levels. So whereas the NLP model, “Neuro-Logical Levels” has 4 or 5 meta-levels, that’s just the beginning. Because we have been mapping out meta-levels for your psycho-logics for years in Neuro-Semantics, we now have identified 103 levels! So, are you using all of your innate mental powers?

You also have the power of emoting and, similarly, from this power arises many, many more powers— the power of joy, the power of wonder, the power of love, the power of anger, the power of fear, the power of sadness, the power of appreciation, and on and on. How many emotional powers do you have available to you? Anthony Robbins in *Unlimited Power* (1987) said he found 3,000 words indicating positive emotions and 5,000 words in English of negative emotions. That’s a lot! So, are you using all of your innate emotional powers?

You also have the power of speaking, and again, in a similar way, from this power arises many, many more powers— the power of asking, asserting, explaining, presenting, blessing, cursing, making poetry, making music, curiously inquiring, forgiving, asking forgiveness, negotiating, selling, and on and on. How many ways can we use words? How many different forms of linguistic power are there? Hundreds! So, are you using all of your linguistic powers?

You also have the power of acting— and from this power arises many, many more powers. From it arises all of the powers that are expressed in thousands of the different things we can *do*. From this arises every skill, every competence, every expertise, and every mastery. So, are you using all of your behavioral powers?

Ah, powers! Response-powers— we have thousands of expressions of these powers that are all innate to us. And this is the basis for human empowerment. If you and I are truly serious about empowering ourselves and others, this is where to begin. This also describes our focus in Neuro-Semantics —our training and certifying of NLP, of the Self-Actualization trainings, of Meta-Coaching, etc.

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Meta Reflections #9
Feb. 17, 2012

THE ULTIMATE CREATIVITY

There's creativity and then there is *self-actualization* creativity. The first is what we all inherit as human beings—our ability to create things. In this, everybody is creative. And the reason for this is our lack of instincts. We are born with a knowledge gap about how to be human—we do not naturally, intuitively, instinctively know that. That is the gap within us that we have to fill—and fill it we do. And this explains the tremendous range of *how to be human* and *how to create human cultures* that there are.

Without instinctive knowledge hard-wired into our DNA, the knowledge gap of the content of how to be the species that we are is wide-open for us to invent all kinds of ways. And invent them we do. This is the foundation of creativity. It begins as we *create* our thoughts, our ideas, our hopes, dreams, fears, dreads, terrors, etc. Thinking itself is an act of creativity. We cannot *not* escape from the demand of creativity. Even when we try to give up all individuality, all uniqueness, all personality, personal responsibility and try to conform perfectly to what other's want, say, require, demand, etc. —even that is an act of creativity!

As we cannot escape being creative, we cannot turn off the creativity. In fact, even when we close our eyes and rest in the comfort of sleep—we are creative! Our nature as creative beings is seen in our sleep—in the wild and crazy ways that we dream. Released from the constraints of daytime reality, we are free to wildly create in our night-time reality. This reveals our creative nature. It's within us. *Creativity is what we are* in the deepest part of our nature.

In the field of Creativity, the problem to solve is not how to become creative, how to think creatively, how to invent new ideas about things—the problem to explain is actually the opposite.

“How are some people so uncreative? What kills their creativity? What are the leashes that imprison some people to fail to tap into their God-given, innate creativity? Why and how do some people escape creativity into bland and stale conformity? What is so fearful for them to be what they are—creative human beings?”

This is the problem. In the Training Manual, **Creativity and Innovation**, the Executive summary begins with the following words:

The ultimate creativity is the self-actualization process—self-actualizing as a human being. This refers to how we create our self and our sense of reality. Regarding this, Maslow wrote the following as his opening statement in *Toward a Psychology of Being* (Chapter 4, *The Creative Attitude*, 1963).

“My feeling is that the concept of creativeness and the concept of the healthy, self-actualizing, fully human person seem to be coming closer and closer together, and may perhaps turn out to be the same thing.” (1971, p. 55)

So *self-actualization creativity* is using your innate creativity to *create* your highest visions and values and then to actualize those in real life as your contribution. Self-actualization creativity begins with a specific focus for creativity as it focuses first on *creating yourself*. Traditionally, we refer to this as maturing, growing up, developing, becoming an authentic and responsible human being. The *Self-Actualization Psychology* of Neuro-Semantics frames all of that as *using* and *being* the creativity built within us. We frame that as self-actualization psychology.

Commenting on all of this, Colin Wilson, one of the biographers of Maslow wrote the following in *New Pathways in Psychology*:

“Maslow’s observation [is] that *all* self-actualizers are creative—sometimes artistically or scientifically, sometimes in more down-to-earth ways; but always creative.” (p. 169)

To self-actualize is to discover, enjoy, and fully experience your own unique creativity. So, using that as a gauge, how much of a self-actualizing life are you now living? How much more of a self-actualizing life is possible for you? How much have you unleashed to this date? What do you need to be unleashed from so that you can fully experience your innate creativity? What would you like to invent and innovate into the world?

- How creative are you as a parent?
- How creative are you in exercising and staying fit and healthy?
- How creative are you in your relationships?
- How creative are you in enjoying the small pleasures of life?
- How creative are you in cooking a meal? In designing your career?
- How create are you in your wealth creation and financial independence?

The final stage of creativity is innovation. *Innovation enables you to take your creativity to market*. Whether it is creative ideas, products, information, or services, you are creative enough to successfully translate your great ideas into something that adds value and creates wealth for ourselves and others.

I write all of this reflecting on how *creative* a field NLP ought to be and how yet *uncreative* and *non-creative* it has been (and actually continues to be today). Yet NLP ought to be the most creative of fields! As a meta-discipline about the structure of subjectivity, running our own brains, managing our own states—you would think that NLP people would be among the most creative. Well, then again, maybe they are. Perhaps they do have lots of creative ideas. Yet even if that’s the case, what they are *not*—they are *not creative innovators*. They are not translating those creative ideas into actual processes and taking them to market. So NLP continues to be a small niche that most people on the planet don’t know about and most of the wonder and magic of NLP is not available to most people.

Want more? Check out the Module of the Neuro-Semantic Self-Actualization Workshop—**Creativity and Innovation: Unleashing Your Creative Potentials**. The design of this is, obviously, to facilitate more creativity among us and more ability to innovate.

From: L. Michael Hall

MYTHS AND TRUTHS ABOUT “ENERGY”

If you want to talk about something fluffy and vague, start a conversation about “energy.” My sense is that when it comes to *energy*, the majority of people seem to be highly superstitious and given to magical thinking. Maybe they’ve watched too many sci-fi movies! Now I am also a sci-fi buff and love movies about time travel, traveling faster than light, and the wonderful technology of the 25th century. Neat stuff. Yet there’s a difference. I’m crystal clear that it is all science-fiction! It is not reality. Sure, it would be fantastic if we could read-minds, levitate, exercise telekinesis and move objects through space, send energy through the ether, read remotely, etc.

Whether it is The Fantastic Four, or the X-men, or other sci-fi programs of haunted houses, channeling spirits, super-heros with wonderful powers, tapping quantum powers for controlling things— all of that is imaginative fiction. Now for the why question: Why are we so fascinated by such? Why are we so enamored by these possibilities? What attracts us to wanting such powers?

While there are numerous explanations, at the core it is within our nature to want to *take control of our lives*. Power, the “ability to do, to take action” is part and parcel of our nature. So imagining power in extremes seems innate to us. We are more human and more fully ourselves when we are empowered. When we are without power, when we are out-of-control —*that* is when we are dangerous to ourselves and others. It’s powerless people who launch revolutions to overturn things— they have less or nothing to lose.

So when we are humanly and adequately empowered, we are at our best— fully able to take effective action on the things that are important to us. And as noted in the previous article, this is an aspect of our *response power*. When we access and develop our innate powers (of thinking, framing, believing, emoting, speaking, acting, etc.) then we are able to take control of our lives and forge a life and a future that fits with our potentials. Then the energy of our powers works to support our life.

De-Mystifying “Power” and “Energy”

Linguistically, the word “energy” is a nominalization. That means that while it sounds like a noun and refers to a *thing*, it does not. So let’s do what we do in NLP with nominalizations— de-nominalize our terms. Let’s question the vagueness of these terms as false nouns in such a way that we can discover the actual *processes* which the terms are referring to. That’s because underneath or within the term is a hidden verb. It does not refer to a true noun (a person, place, or thing). Instead it is referring to a process and usually a conceptual process. This is the way it

is with *energy* and *power*— two nominalizations.

What is energy? The word energy comes from the Latin *energia* comes from a Greek word (*energeia*) that is made up of two smaller words: *en* (in) and *ergon* (work). So what is energy? It is an activity (influence, force) that works inside of something. “Power” is defined as “the ability to do” something or act in a particular way, especially as a faculty or quality.

What are the recognized and demonstrable forms of energy? Actually, “energy” has a number of different forms, all of which measure the ability of an object or system to “work” on another object or system. This means that there are different ways in which an object (or a system) can possess energy. So in terms of the physical energies that we experience, “energy” comes down to certain physical basics of chemistry, electricity, gravity, and kinetics. These are the facets of energy that exist in the world. And obviously, there are whole disciplines devoted to understanding and working with them.

Isaac Newton studied physical energy in terms of motion, speed, acceleration and created the basic “laws of energy” that we still use for macro-level experiences.

Chemical energy (chemistry) starts with the study of elementary particles, atoms, molecules, substances, metals, crystals and other aggregates of matter. The interactions, reactions and transformations result from the interaction between different chemical substances or between matter and energy. A chemical reaction is a transformation of some substances into one or more other substances. Energy and entropy considerations are invariably important in chemical studies. Chemical substances are classified in terms of their structure.

The glucose (blood sugar) in your body is said to have "chemical energy" because the glucose releases energy when chemically reacted (combusted) with oxygen. Your muscles use this energy to generate mechanical force as well as heat. Chemical energy is really a form of potential energy (microscopically) which exists because of the electric and magnetic forces of attraction exerted between the different parts of each molecule, the same attractive forces in thermal vibrations. These parts get rearranged in chemical reactions, releasing or adding to this potential energy.

Electrical energy is based on the forces that arise from the electromagnetic spectrum. Here energy as light is recognized as particles (electrons and dozens of sub-atomic particles) and waves. The energy of the electromagnetic spectrum describes the vibration of waves that show up in terms of our sensory-system, i.e., light, sound, sensation, smells, touch, etc.

What is the medium of the energy?

Every form of energy operates in a particular medium in which it functions. In that medium it increases, decreases, and is transferred.

Korzybski ...

4) *How is the energy transferred?*

Does the energy, like electricity, go through a wire? Rubber, however, stops the transfer. We know that metal transfers heat much better than cloth.

5) *What are the questionable forms of energy that people have postulated or invented?*

Telekinesis, telepathy, channeling, therapeutic touch, levitating, mind-reading, remote reading, reading auras.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #11
February 20, 2012
Empowerment Series #4

ENERGY FLOWS THROUGH IT

You have power. You have four fundamental powers and from those four powers, all of your other powers, energies, skills, competencies, and expertise arise. As I've described these powers in the previous articles (#1-3), the point is singular: *If you want to be empowered, claim and develop your innate powers.* If you want to act like a victim, feel that “the world” is against you, that you have no choice, that you can't determine your own life, then reject your powers, ignore them, discount them, rail against them, and set limiting beliefs in your mind about them.

Your *powers* enable you to have *authority*. I'm here talking about real authority. That is, your four powers enable you to *author* your life— to write the script of what you think, believe, understand, desire, hope for, speak, and act. And when you think of yourself as *the author of your life*, you *author* your values, direction, style, relationships, etc. This is your *real authority*. Without this, all of the external “authority” in the world will not give you a sense of personal confidence, efficacy, or power. And with this authority, nothing in the external world can rob you of your personal power.

Look at some of the world-changers. Look at Martin Luther King or Nelson Mandela— how much external power did they have? Long before anyone recognized their leadership and long before they had any status or position, they had *plenty of personal authority and power and energy*. They knew who they were, what they were about, their values, vision, and direction. Long before recognition, they were *actualizing* their highest meanings and best performances. The energy of their power and authority was inside-out power.

This highlights my next point: *Power is embodied in the energy of your speech and behavior.* How is power *transferred* from the inside to the outside? How is the energies of your innate powers *transformed* so that it makes a difference in the external world? Answer: Through your body as you speak and act. That's why *performance* is so important (and why I wrote, *Achieving Peak Performance*, 2009).

Now in Neuro-Semantic NLP we often speak about this. When we use our systemic model, *The Matrix Model*, we say things like, “With this model you can now follow the energy of your client through his or her system.” This is *not* a fluffy concept of psycho-babble so characteristic by people enchanted by various new age myths about “energy.” Instead, it is a description of the two communication loops that define the processes of empowerment. Here's a review of those communication loops:

1) The horizontal loop is the traditional behavioristic loop of *stimulus—response*. A stimuli occurs in the world that triggers a response from you. He curses at you, you respond by cursing back. She rolls her eyes while you talk, you consider her to be rude and inconsiderate. The “feedback” of these triggers into your mind-body system is followed as you respond and “feed-forward” your response back into the world. Stimulus—> Response.

2) The vertical loop is the cognitive and meta-cognitive self-reflexivity loop of *stimulus—response*. Now you are stimulating yourself with thoughts-and-emotions *about* the first level stimulus, you are thinking about it, you are feeling about it, you are meta-stating it with other states, other frames, other beliefs. You are feeding-back *to yourself* the next layer of thoughts-and-emotions *about* the first level and this can occur again and again. It can occur so that you create many layers of meta-states or meta-frames about the previous ones. This is your self-reflexive consciousness at work! And while you are doing this, you are also “feeding-forward” into yourself (into your body) orders / commands about how to feel, how to act, how to respond. This creates your feelings—your states. And this explains the responses that are created in your body which are sent out to the world in the horizontal loop. (I’ve written a lot more about these loops last year in *Neuro-Semantics*, 2011, and *Benchmarking Intangibles*, 2011).

So, to *follow the energy through the human mind-body-emotion system* — you follow the information *into* the system and *through* the system as it is processed, and then *out of* the system as the person responds linguistically and behaviorally.

Using *The Matrix Model* provides a way to distinguish the grounding state of a person, the person’s meaning-making and intentionality and then five facets of their “self” (their value as a person, skills and competencies [“powers”], relationships [“others”], their temporal self [“time”], and domain of experience [“world”]).

Energy always has a medium. Whether it is chemical energy, electrical, radiant heat, and so on, every form of energy has a medium. So in the sciences that handle those forms of energy, we are always asking about the medium. What is the medium of transfer? In humans, the medium is *our body*— our neurology, our multiple nervous systems. And that’s because *energy* within us shows up as nervous-energy as our protoplasm and nervous systems are activated and mobilized.

This is what we study and use in Neuro-Semantic NLP. It’s not just about *meaning* and *linguistics*, it is about the transfer of our linguistic meanings in our bodies, and what words, ideas, understandings, beliefs, memories, imaginations, decisions, etc. are actually *doing in our bodies*. So, we “follow the information—energy through the communication loops” to identify, model, and understand what’s going on. Then with that, we can intellectually intervene to facilitate true empowerment and self-actualization.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #12
February 24, 2012
Empowerment Series #5

THE STRUCTURE OF INTOLERANCE

Riots in Afghanistan! Dozens of Afghanistsans killed in the riots, many more hurt, wwo young American soldiers killed ... and why? Because someone burned a book. My first thought was, "Give me a break! Are we back in the 15th Century? Books are books, paper printed in ink recording some message." Why kill because someone disagrees with you? Why riot because you dislike someone else's opinion? Why international conflict over differing understandings about religion?

Oh yes, *intolerance*. That's the driving factor that is turning a disagreement around an opinion into this level of a problem. And where is this *intolerance* coming from? People confusing their mental maps with the territory. Someone somewhere is thinking that their "thoughts" about something *is* the ultimate reality. Silly people.

But, of course, we all have done it. And that's because we all came through the "concrete thinking stage" in our cognitive development as children. This describes one of the stages of cognitive (thinking) development from Developmental Psychology and one that you can see any day of the week in a 5 to 8 year old child.

They know what they know! If they think it, that's what it is! Period. End of story. "If you don't see it my way, you are wrong, bad, of the devil, going to hell, I hate you, leave me alone!"

This is the structure of intolerance:

"My view of reality is right; everybody else's that differs with mine is wrong, bad, malicious, hateful, sinful." And if your view is like that, then it needs to be stopped, destroyed, killed. And if you are promoting something that needs to be stopped, destroyed, and killed, then *you* need to be stopped, destroyed, and killed.

So what can we do. Afghan President Karzai called for calm after the incident at Bagram Air Base where copies of the Koran were found burned. The Government of Afghanistan have tried to stop the rioting and today shot a 12-year old boy. And yet for the past 3 days, the call for calm has not quelled the protests that have boiled over in Afghanistan. Moslem leaders have also called for calm at Friday prayers. And while this is good and admirable, it is also symptomatic. That is, it is not dealing with the cause, it is only dealing with a resulting symptom.

What is the cause?

The cause is the kind of thinking and mental framing that sees something one does not like, approve, and believe in as something that gives me the right to violently hurt and punish another person.

The source of the problem is *the state of intolerance* and the cure for intolerance is *tolerance*— to recognize, accept, and even appreciate that people differ in their understandings and beliefs. The problem is not difference itself, but our *attitude* and *response* to such differences:

- ▶ Do others have the right to differ from us?
- ▶ Do others have the right to be wrong?
- ▶ Do I have the right or the power to enforce others to see things my way?
- ▶ Will I accept differences in understandings and beliefs?
- ▶ Will I give others the right and the power to believe according to their conscience?
- ▶ Will I release my need to force others to see things and do things my way?
- ▶ Will I allow others to do whatever they want to do with books, even burn them?

The point is this— the problem isn't the burning of any written materials or books. Apologizing for that, as Presidents Obama and Karzai did misunderstands the real problem and assumes that “burning a book” *is* the problem. It is not. The problem is intolerance which arises from people not getting beyond the childish thinking of confusing a mental map with the territory. The problem is trying to force others to conform to our beliefs.

Meaning and performance— that's the analysis we use in Neuro-Semantics to understand human experiences. As long as *the meanings* of “my way or the highway,” “I have the right to *force* you to see and do things my way and if you don't to punish you or kill you,” then *the performance* of rioting, killing, etc. will occur. It's a frame game: with that frame (of mind, of meaning) you set the rules for that game— the Game of Intolerance.

How do we change the Game? *By changing the frame!*

So let's start with ourselves! Let's change our own frames about trying to *control* the beliefs, understandings, and behaviors of others. These things are outside our area of *control*. Let's set the *frame of respect* that allows, accepts, and tolerates the right and power of others to act according to their beliefs as long as it does not impose upon others. With that as a foundation, we can then begin discovery conversations to seek first to understand the other's views and seek to *influence* them without the need to *control* them. And in the process, all of us will probably change and becoming more humanly kind and understanding.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #13
February 27, 2012
Empowerment Series #6

YOU AND YOUR ENERGY FIELDS

Given your innate powers and the energy that they generate in your body, your mind-body-emotion *state* is, and operates as, an energy field. Given the metabolism within your body, you generate an energy field with your thinking-emoting, somatizing, speaking, and acting. And not only can you feel it, others can pick up on it. You feel your own energy field in terms of the health and well-ness of your body and in terms of your emotions, whether you are feeling up or down, discouraged or encouraged, joyful or sad, vitally alive or tired and fatigued.

When others pickup on your energy field, they generally pick up on the vibrations that you are putting out via your emotions. It's easy to detect this when a person is depressed or joyful, when someone is stressed and frustrated or relaxed and chilled-out, when someone is hateful or loving, when someone is fearful, apprehensive, or courageous and bold. *Emotions* transfer your energy first into your body as you somatize your semantics and then out to the world of others as you embody your emotions. There's no real mystery in this. It is true for all of us.

And that's why we say that, socially, emotions are contagious. We see this in mobs and riots whether in the streets in revolutions or at ball games and department stores. We see this when people are falsely told that toxic gas has been released in the air and dozens or even hundreds of people start fainting and even vomiting.

Now because *states* operate as an energy field, an energy field of our emotions, our meanings, our physical well-being (or the lack of it) —we can gauge the intensity of our states. Just ask a human being a gauging or scaling question.

“On a scale from 0 to 10, how much anger are you feeling right now? How much frustration? How much confidence? How much compassion?”

And the amazing thing is that everybody will give you an answer. If 0 is none and indicates that you don't have a smithering of that kind of energy in you and 10 is absolute and you could not have more of it, where are you?

And because we can scale our embodied emotional energies in this way, by doing this we can also begin to manage our energies. How? Simply explore with the person the following type of questions:

- ▶ What do you have to do in your mind or body to turn this up? Show me.
- ▶ How much does that alter things?
- ▶ What do you have to do in your mind or body to turn this down?

- ▶ What images, words, sounds, gestures, etc. increase or decrease this state?

In Neuro-Semantics, we speak about *states* as the grounding matrix in *The Matrix Model*. The process matrices of meaning and intention create the state. Or to put it another way, the *state* is the embodiment or the feeling of *meaning*. Something means something important to you! But what? If it is about your *self*, then the meaning may be about your worth, your competence, your relationships, your time, or some domain that you live and operate in (self, power, others, time, world).

The bottom line? *You create your mind-body-emotion states!* Your states are the energy fields that *you* generate by the meanings that you invent and by the way you treat your body and its needs. Yes, there are some additional variables that play a role— weather, viruses, genetics, etc. Yet the primary force or power that generates the energy fields of your states is *you*. It arises from *your* powers. So if you feel a victim of your states, of your emotions, of your energy fields — it’s time to ground yourself in your innate powers (revisit articles 1-4, or get *Secrets of Personal Mastery*, or get to one of the APG workshops).

Now as an energy field, the power of your communication loops (Article #4) means that the feedback and feed-forward loops that you have set up inside yourself are operating as a *self-organizing system*. This isn’t new. You’ve heard about this before. Every time you talk about “the self-fulfilling prophecy of a belief,” you are talking about the energy of your self-organizing system.

And this means what? It means that you have already been using your innate powers to set up a frame of reference/ meaning in your mind and sending orders to your nervous systems to actualize your belief as your “reality.” That’s why whatever you believe will tend to define your life and be realized in your life. And if it is a limiting, sabotaging, self-defeating belief like “I’m a slow learner,” “I can’t learn this stuff,” “I will never be successful,” “Nobody will love me.” etc., your innate powers of thinking-emoting, speaking, and behaving and the energy field of your *state* will tend to make the limiting belief actual.

Your energy field (your mind-body-emotion states) *is powerful!* Its energies is a “command to your nervous system” (Richard Bandler) which seeks to actualize its meanings, and attracts into itself according to what it’s looking for and expecting. Once you set it up, it operates automatically— which is probably why you may feel a victim of your states and not in control of them. Once you set it up (and *you* and only *you* have set it up) it operates as if it has a life of its own.

And how did you set it up? By thinking, by experiencing, by believing, by creating meaning, by adopting frames. It’s inevitable. You may not have set it up consciously. You probably didn’t. You probably set it up by growing up and by being human in whatever family, school, religion, and contexts that you grew up in. And the good news is that by becoming aware of your inner powers of thinking-believing-framing-and-emoting you can now mindfully take charge of your states and your energy fields. And to a great extent, this is what Neuro-Semantics (and NLP) is

about.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #14
March 2, 2012

DISCIPLINED INNOVATION

The Secret for being Creative *and* Successful

Innovation makes the world go round! If we do not innovate new products, new services, new information, new experiences— our businesses will not keep developing, growing, progressing, and succeeding financially. Businesses must innovate. Bill Gates, *Business At the Speed of Thought*, noted that every product at Microsoft will be redundant in three years. Three years and the business has nothing to sell that anyone would want! How about that for pressure!

Back in the 1950s Abraham Maslow was recognized as one of the foremost thinkers, developers in the field of Creativity. And why not? By then he had been modeling for over a decade self-actualizing people and noting how they were so innately creative and how they were the ones actualizing new ideas into products, services, businesses, etc. In doing so, Maslow sorted out primary and secondary creativity and distinguished it from innovation.

“Inspirational ideas are a dime a dozen” he wrote. And why? Because *merely having great ideas, big ideas, and inspirational ideas is not enough*. If you don’t know how to innovate the great idea, if you don’t have the discipline, consistency, dedication, commitment, and persistence to make the idea *real* and *actual*, the creativity will never amount to anything. You will be a dreamer— poor and unsuccessful, and your creativity un-actualized.

All of this has been recently re-discovered in the research that Jim Collins and Morten Hansen has conducted on highly successful companies. In their book, *Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos, and Luck— Why Some Thrive Despite Them All* (2011), they reveal what their latest research has indicated about the companies that actually thrive in the chaos of the turbulent and tumultuous events of recessions, change, and uncertainty. Now they thought and expected that innovation by itself would be the trump card. To their surprise, it wasn’t.

The companies that far exceeded the comparison companies, exceeded them by 10-times (hence “10X companies”) “were not necessarily more innovation than their less successful companies.” (p. 73). In fact, Gerard Tellis and Peter Golder *Will and Vision* studied 66 wide-ranging markets and found that only 9 percent of the pioneers of innovative products ended up as the final winners in the market. In fact, 64 percent of the pioneers failed outright. Obviously, pioneering new stuff by itself is insufficient—it isn’t the big secret for success.

So what’s going on? What’s missing? Collins and Hansen discovered that the secret ingredient

that made the difference is *disciplined innovation*. About innovation they discovered that innovation without discipline inevitably leads to disaster (p. 77). “It’s a discipline game, a scale game, a systems game, not just an innovation game.” Yes you have to innovate, but above the threshold level for innovation in a given industry, being “more innovative” doesn’t seem to matter very much.” What matters is the mixture of creative innovation with discipline. In fact, there has to be “fanatic discipline and empirical creativity.”

And what does all this mean? What is this *discipline*?

Discipline is consistency of actions— consistency with values, with long-term goals, with performance standards, consistency of method, consistency over time. True discipline requires the independence of mind to reject pressures, and long-term aspirations.

“For a 10Xer, the only legitimate form of discipline is self-discipline, having the inner will to do whatever it takes to create a great outcome, no matter how difficult.” (p. 21)

And what does “*empirical creativity*” mean? It means have a specific methodology, being able to identify the specific details that make the difference, recognizing what works, how it works, why it works, and then setting up a methodology that can be repeated and doing it consistently. *It is being specifically methodical and doing so consistently.*

“No human enterprise can succeed at the highest levels without consistency. If you bring no coherent unifying concept and disciplined methodology to your endeavors, you’ll be whipsawed by changes in your environment and cede your fate to forces outside your control.” (p. 145)

The energy for creativity and the power to actually create an innovative product or service may sound easy and simple. It is not. Long after the creativity and inspirational ideas comes the discipline to make it real. That’s why so many “creative people” with great ideas are not able to innovate them for practical results.

So what’s the solution? Easy, the solution is to *create a synergy between your meanings and your performance*. Your meanings— the creative ideas; your performance— your ability to actualize, to translate into action, to innovate in actual experience.

You can read about all of this in *Neuro-Semantics: Actualizing Meaning and Performance* (2011), in *Self-Actualization Psychology* (2010), and in *Achieving Peak Performance* (2009).

Or, you can attend the *Unleashing Creativity Workshop*.

Date: **March 16, 17, 18, 2012**
Place: Washington DC
Venue: Hilton Garden Inn Tyson's Corner, 8301 Boone Blvd., Vienna, VA 22182
Theme: *Creativity & Innovation: Unleashing Your Creative Potentials*
Contact: Mark Ashton: ma.ashton1@yahoo.com
Richard Liotta: rfliotta@gmail.com

To find out more and/or to register, the registration page is;
<http://lmichaelhallcreativityandinnovation.eventbrite.com/>
<http://bit.ly/creativityDC>

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #15
March 6, 2012
Empowerment Series #7

THE POWER OF RESPONSIBILITY

When you take and develop your four innate powers, you thereby develop an *authority* within yourself. No one is born with this. This develops over time as a person recognizes and owns their power to respond and develops their mental, emotional, linguistic and behavioral powers. In APG trainings we use a simple meta-stating process for this, we invite a person to bring awareness, acceptance, and then ownership to one's four innate powers. We call the result, "your power zone."

Developmentally, every child will go through this process as a natural development of their cognitive and interpersonal powers. *But* many do not ... and that's because their parent's didn't graduate from *Parenting 101* or because their parents never owned their own innate powers. The result: Children who do not know and own their inner powers. And that then results in children who grow into adult who have not developed their own *authority* to "write the script of their own lives." Result: Adults of all ages who lives their lives trying to please someone else or live up to the script that someone else has written. Result: dis-empowerment.

Yet it is this *power to respond* and the mindfulness that *you always have a choice in how you respond to life's events and challenges* that creates a solid sense of power, authority, control, and mastery within. We call this "response-ability." And it shows up in terms of a variety of states: the state of proactivity, of taking initiative in life, of feeling in charge of your own self (self-control), the sense of being "at cause" in life, etc.

Now the key is to recognize that these are meta-states and not primary states. After all, where in your body do you feel responsibility or proactivity or initiative or at cause? These are not primary feeling states, they are evaluative meta-states. They require rich and robust frames of mind (meanings). That's why if you treat *responsibility* as a primary state, access it, and "anchor" it in a traditional NLP way, you probably will not be able to set it as you could relaxation, joy, anger, fear, or other primary states. If you want to "anchor" responsibility, you will have to set meta-level frames and meanings.

What is the mind-set in *responsibility*? Typically it involves acknowledgment of one's powers,

acceptance of those powers, appreciation of them, and a self-definition of oneself as “at cause.” This involves several cognitive awarenesses:

“I’m the person in charge of my thinking, emoting, speaking, and acting.”

“I can hold no one else responsible for what I think, believe, understand, decide, remember, imagine, etc.”

“No one *makes* me or *forces* me to think or feel anything. My thoughts and feelings are mine, they are created inside my body, and they are created by the meanings that I create about things.”

Obviously, the rich and robust meta-state of *responsibility* is a no-blame state. It is also a no-victim state. Yes, terrible things happen in life. Yes, challenges, problems, and undesirable events occur. And yes, things can go wrong, plans can fall apart, the best intentions can fail to achieve objectives, people can trick and cheat us, rob and rape, and do all kinds of bad things. But to *think and feel that you are a victim* is a choice. You do not have to think that way. You do not have to feel that way. You do not have to make that decision.

How do I know that? By reading the biographies of those who have gone through living hells and who *intentionally claimed their powers and refused to be seduced into the weak state of victimization*. That is, they refused to victimize themselves with their thoughts-and-feelings. Sure bad things happened to them— concentration camps, murder of their lives ones, ripped away from everything that they had created and built in life, raped, beaten, tortured, imprisoned, and so on. And yet, they maintained their inside-out *authority*. As Viktor Frankl said after torture and deprivation in several concentration camps, “They cannot take away the ultimate human freedom— the power to choose my attitude. They cannot make me hate them.”

Talk about living from his own Power Zone! Talk about operating from his own personal authority! Talk about living above and beyond his circumstances! Talk about empowerment.

When you meta-state yourself with the required elements that make up a healthy and robust state of *responsibility* you stop looking *outside of yourself* for beliefs, values, direction, authority, etc. Instead, you begin by looking within yourself. You begin to take charge of yourself:

What do I believe? What do I understand?

What do I value? What’s important to me?

What are my talents, skills, possibilities? What can I develop?

How do I want to live my life? Relate to others? Invest my energies?

As a result you create *a solid sense of independence* which then allows you to be healthily related to others in an inter-dependent way (rather than co-dependent). Then with this core sense of *responsibility*, you know that you and you only are responsible for your—

Health: fitness, energy, vitality, etc.

Wealth: money, saving, spending, investing, etc.

Mental health: learning, understanding, integrity to live by your values, etc.

Emotional health: self-acceptance, appreciation, value, emotional intelligence, etc.

Relationships: acceptance, appreciation, and value of others, social intelligence, etc.

Work and play: investment of your energies, development of your talents into skills, etc.

Responsibility is powerful, isn't it?

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #16
March 12, 2012
Empowerment Series #8

THE POWER OF INTENTIONALITY

If there's a secret *driver* behind your personal power and your feeling level of empowerment, it has to be *intentionality*. Intentionality? And what is intentionality? It is your *intent*—the thoughts in the back of your mind about what you are wanting to do and to achieve. It is the direction that you set regarding where you want to go. It is your *motive* and of course, from your motive comes your motivation, your agenda, and your purpose.

Your *intention* stands in contrast with your *attention*. So in Neuro-Semantic trainings, and especially the APG training, we run an Intentionality Pattern as part of the Accessing Personal Genius pattern in order to facilitate the development of a laser-beam focus. And why? So that you can get your *attentions* at the primary level to be aligned with your *intentions* at the highest levels of your mind. And when you can do that, you have the foundation for another facet of personal empowerment, namely, self-discipline, the ability to get yourself to *do* what you say you're going to do and what you *intend* to do.

These two facets of consciousness (intention and attention) describes what's *on our mind* (attention) and what's *in the back of our mind* (intention). To live attentionally is to live only in the moment and only in reference to whatever is happening right now in sensory awareness around you. This is valuable for being in the moment and yet it has its downsides. To live attentionally is the life of an animal or small child and the downside is that you tend to respond / react to whatever or whoever *gets your attention*.

Choosing to shift to being fully present attentionally is a great choice. And to do so implies that you are living *intentionally*— living by your choices and intentions and to do that is a much higher level of consciousness. Now you direct these forces rather than being the subject of them. Living intentionally enables you to develop a laser-beam focus and then to move through the world responding to what matters and to what's relevant, rather than to the plethora of stimuli around you.

Your intentionality operates like a secret power behind your thinking-feeling and other

fundamental powers. There's a reason for this. It's because by your intentionality you set your direction, you decide on your values, you choose your meanings, your understandings, and so on. It is with your intentionality that you step up to your highest executive functions and become the CEO of your own life and inner world. It is here that you make your executive decisions. It is with your intentionality that you operate at *choice point* and become the *author* (authority) of your own life. Pretty powerful, wouldn't you say?

Question: *If intentionality is so powerful, then why do we not see everybody accessing and operating from this power?*

Part of the answer is that the challenge of requires *the development* of your intentions and intentional powers. It is far, far easier to live attentionally than intentionally. Attentional living is passive—simply react to whatever or whoever *gets* your attention. Just bounce off of the stimuli around you. Let others, let the media, let your environment determine what you think, what you talk about, what you focus on. It is easy to live this way, it is passive and reactive.

Conversely, to develop your intentional powers, you have to *think*. You have to exercise your mind and your mental-emotional powers. You have to decide—what's important, what's truly valuable. You have to think through where things could go, you have to think consequently about directions and the costs that will occur.

Then once you set intentional desires, objectives, and values, you have to *set your intentions* and *use them* as your guidelines for what's relevant and what's not relevant. The challenge here is the courage to be yourself, to be independent, to choose your own way, to resist the forces of conformity, to go against the current, to stand up for what you truly value and for the talents you want to develop.

It is easier to go along with the crowd, with media, with your immediate environment and let all of these influences define you, describe your world, and plot your pathway. It is easier and it is also less satisfying. That's why people living attentionally eventually start asking, "So where am I going? What's it all about? What do I want to accomplish? Why don't I ever stay with something and become highly skilled with it?"

Living attentionally feeds ADD— constantly shifting attention here and there until it becomes a habit of mind. Then people wonder why they don't follow through, why they can't concentrate, focus, have a laser-beam intentionality. Most often, they just have not developed their intentional powers. If you're ready to develop your intentional powers for your own personal empowerment, see *Secrets of Personal Mastery* (1997) or get yourself to an APG Training as soon as possible (see the list of APG trainings on the website).

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #16
March 6, 2012

COURAGEOUS BUT NOT FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING

After General Ulysses S. Grant defeated General Robert E. Lee in the Civil War in 1865 and returned to Washington D.C., the crowds were ecstatic to see and hear him. Here was a man who had distinguished himself as a soldier, having fought in several wars, and who had just brought an end to the bloody American Civil War. Here was someone with the courageous fortitude to go against a well-armed army, to lead the charge, and to live with threats from assassins on a daily basis. But when he got to Washington and the crowds yelled “Speech! Speech!” Grant looked for every way to avoid speaking and he did. Why?

“He was deathly afraid of public speaking.”

He had *the credibility to speak* having earned it over a lifetime. He had *a great story to tell* just coming from the surrender of Lee at the Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia. He had *the opportunity to speak* as crowds urged him on. So what was wrong? What the fear? Guess he didn't have the right state! And sadly, there was no Neuro-Semantic Presentation Skills training going on in the United States that year — or for the next Hundred and Thirty-five (!), so he missed out. **But you don't have to!**

This year, in July and August, in the beautiful state of Colorado — you can learn the art of public speaking, the structure and strategy of effective presentations, of accessing your best presentation states, how putting your thoughts together into an effective speech to inform, to inspire, to motivate, to empower, and to unleash potentials. If you want to train NLP— you can take your training and presentation skills to the next level and unleash more and more of your potentials as a Trainer. You can train and certify under the ISNS (International Society of Neuro-Semantics) and become part of a national Institute in your country.

If you want to train the short “gateway” trainings, you can do that, or the Self-Actualization Trainings, or the first two modules in the Meta-Coaching system, or you can take the things you've been training and turn them into Neuro-Semantic trainings, and that's just the beginning.

Two of us on the leadership team are training NSTT (L. Michael Hall and Colin Cox). And beginning this year at NSTT, you will be exposed to five additional trainers who are in the Master Trainer Track. And so you have a community of international trainers to learn from and model. The *Master Trainer* track in Neuro-Semantics is very, very different from what's called "Master" trainer in the rest of NLP. Everywhere else there are no benchmarks. Well, for that matter there are no benchmarks for presentation skills or training skills in the first place. In fact, those who have paid someone for the title of "master" trainer typically find that they have to really, really work at just reaching the benchmarks for "Trainer" in Neuro-Semantics. *That's the level of the standards we use and how rigorous we are in holding people to the standards.* There's no need to let people off the hook— we want top-notch trainers who can deliver, who can produce, who can and do *live* the materials that they train.

Ready for the Challenge? Here are the standards for application. They are high, and they are not for everyone:

- You will need a Certification in NLP Practitioner.
- A certification in NLP Master Practitioner.
- A certification in APG (Meta-States).
- And a recommendation form a licensed Neuro-Semantic Trainer.

Now if you are a NLP Trainer (from a legitimate organization), you can become a Neuro-Semantic NLP Trainer at fifty-percent of the cost. And for Neuro-Semantic Trainers, revisiting is at twenty-five percent of the investment.

Training: **Neuro-Semantic Trainers' Training (NSTT)**
Dates: July 24– August 8
Venue: Country Inns of America Hotel and Conference Center
Grand Junction Colorado, USA
Contact: L. Michael Hall, meta@acsol.net

Write for —
Application and Registration Form

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #18
March 19, 2012
Empowerment Series #9

THE POWER OF CREATIVITY

If you are intentional (last week's Meta Reflection, #15) then it is inevitable that you will be creative and access your powers of creativity. Why? Because you will be creating what you are intending to create, what you want to create, what you set as your desired outcomes. The power of intentionality governs how you use your other powers as it sets your direction and focus and the result is the creation of outcome.

You have powers of creation and are creative because you do not have instincts. And without instincts, you have to create! You have to create your thoughts, your understandings, your meanings, your values, your intentions, in fact, you have to create just about everything! And when you look at infants and small children—what creativity! They are so playful, inventive, full of surprising ideas, and expressions. In fact, to look at a small child, you are looking at *creativity in action*.

And why? From the perspective of Maslow's Self-Actualization Psychology it is because we are by nature and inherently creativity. Creativity is part and parcel of human nature. It is not something that we add on to our nature and skills, it is at the essence of what it is to be human. That is, to be human is to be creative.

I'm writing this from Washington DC where we (myself and the people of the Institute of Neuro-Semantics— USA) are doing the *Creativity and Innovation Workshop*. It is the third Self-Actualization workshop and has the title, *Unleashing Creativity Solutions*. And in this workshop, one of the quotes that come from Maslow is the quote that the problem is *not*, Why are we creativity or how can we be creative? But, Why are not everyone creative? What causes so many people to lose their innate creativity?

If *to be human is to be creative* that explains why the very process of thinking is the essence of creativity. After all, what do you do when you think? You create a thought, a representation, an understanding, a belief. In thinking, you are constructing a set of images, sounds, sensations, etc. You are creating your model or map of the world.

This innate creativity is so pervasive, so extensive, and so descriptive of what human nature is and how it expresses itself—that we can say that almost everything that we do is creative. And yet, surprisingly, most people — most of us— do not recognize the pervasiveness of our creativity. And so, it is so common to think that we are not creative, that others are creative, that we have to learn to be creative, that creativity is what we had to add to ourselves.

Yet it is the power of creativity that enables us to create both positive and wondrous expressions of the highest and brightest of human nature *and* the most negative and pathological of human nature. After all, when you look at animals, given their instincts, they do what they are programmed to do. There's little room for *creating* something new and different. In fact, with animals, it usually takes a clinical situation that a human being creates and imposes upon an animal in order to create “experimental neurosis” in a dog or sheep or some other animal! In their natural habitats, neurosis is very unusual.

But not so with us. We humans are so creative to creating all kinds of neurotic and sick and dysfunctional experiences! That's the dark side of creativity. The bright side of creativity is human excellence and expertise. And in terms of this power of creativity, once you recognize it, own it, and take charge of it, then all kinds of wondrous things open up. Of course, this is the purpose and reason for the *Unleashing Your Creativity Solutions* workshop— to empower people to discover, activate, mobilize, and apply their creative powers.

To give you a peek inside that workshop, we focus on four things: outcome, problem, solution, and innovation. Why? Because these are the four stages of creativity. *Outcome* because it is a desired and longed-for goal that provokes the best context for creativity. When you say what you want or what you need, that creates a space where creativity can thrive. Yes, necessity is the mother of invention, so is desire. And the wonderful thing about goals or desired outcomes is that where you *create* a goal, you thereby *create* a problem.

Ah, a *problem*— the gap between where you are and where you want to be. A problem is something between you and your goal, an obstacle. And if you want to fully use your creative powers, then frame and define the problem so that it is clear, precise, and solvable. Yes, that is possible. And Yes, you can learn to do that. You have that kind of creative power. Well, if you discover it, develop it, and use that power.

Solution is then what you answer your problem question. That is, with a problem, you have a question and when you pose that question and use your creative power to *solve* it, you come up with a creative solution. This is what is typically recognized as creative solutions and is what we need to resolve the obstacle between us and our goal.

The final stage of creativity is *innovation*. We innovate the solution. We implement and execute the creative solution that answers the problem question and the resolves whatever is interfering, sabotaging, or blocking us from stepping forward to experience our outcome. So with these four stages: outcome, problem, solution, and innovation and the ability to create precise and clear statements of each, we experience our full power of creativity.

May you unleashing more and more of your innate creative powers!

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Meta Reflections – #19
March 23, 2012

PRIME TIME COMMUNICATIONS

If someone forced me to give a one word answer to the question, *What is NLP?* Or if a visitor from Mars came to earth and aim a ray-gun at me and said, *What is Neuro-Semantic NLP in one word?* I would say, “Communication.”

Communication is the short answer because NLP at its core is a Communication Model developed from the language patterns of three world-class communicators (Fritz Perls, Virginia Satir and Milton Erickson) which used a communication model (Transformational Grammar, Noam Chomsky, John Grinder) to identify the communication patterns that Richard Bandler happened upon while listening to audio-tapes.

Communication led me to discover NLP in the first place. I was developing and delivering some Communication Workshops in 1986 when I came upon one of the key communication guidelines of NLP in a book: “The meaning of your communication is the response you get.” That summarized in a provocatively succinct statement a whole new paradigm of communication for me.

Just look at that statement and notice all that it brings together in such a short phrase: “The meaning of your communication is the response you get.”

- *Meaning*: references, frames, evaluations, understandings, beliefs — all that’s in your mind that you want to transfer to another person.
- *Communication*: what you are saying explicitly and implicitly, what you are communicating non-verbally in tone, gesture, movement, context, etc.
- *Response*: what the other person interprets your words and non-verbal expressions and then responds from the meanings it generates in him or her.
- *Response indicates meaning*: in other words, you never know what you’ve communicated, only what you said or did, not the interpretation the other makes of it.

Wow! Talk about a rich and robust premise of communication and that’s just one of them. Ready for more? Now for what may be a surprise to you— That’s what Meta-Coaching is all about. After all, what is Coaching? If an alien from Jupiter pointed a lazer-wand at me threatening to vaperize me if I didn’t give a one word answer to that question, I would say, *Conversation*. “Okay, continue Earthling.”

It is a fierce conversation that gets to the heart of things (meanings, and meanings of meanings) with a client and that results in one of seven different kinds of conversations

that can be life-changing and life-affirming.

And that's why we have focused the three modules of Meta-Coaching on the essence of communication using the NLP model, the Meta-States model, and then five models of Neuro-Semantics (Matrix, Facilitation, Axes of Change, Self-Actualization Quadrants, Benchmarking). And we have put these in three modules so that a person can learn how to be a professional communicator:

I: Coaching Essentials. The essentials of the NLP Model for prime-time communicating: pacing for rapport, languages of the mind, state-to-state communicating, Meta-Model of language, Meta-Programs, and much more.

II: Coaching Genius. The 14 coaching patterns of APG to enable you to lead yourself and bring out your very best so that you can turn off and on "being in the zone" at will.

III: Coaching Mastery. The coaching boot camp of 8 days wherein you practice using and integrating all of the communication models into explorative and transformative conversations and being benchmarked for your level of competency.

While we have already been launching many workshop of Modules I and II, very soon here in 2012 we will be launching this most intensive training in communication skills as the coaching boot camp occurs in many parts of the world — Hong Kong, Mexico, Europe, Brazil, New Zealand, South Africa, and China. Obviously, if you are interested in a profession as a Coach or already are a Coach and want to take your skills to the next level, this is custom-made for you. But what if you are not a Coach? Then this same training results in another certificate:

Professional Communicator Certificate

Meta-Coaching New for 2012

In 2012 Modules I and II will be conduct in many, many places around the world by Neuro-Semantic Trainers (see www.neurosemantics.com / Training). Module III will be conducted in 7 places (www.meta-coaching.org).

1) May (May 14-21): Hong Kong

May 13 Team Leaders

Mandy Chai mandy@apti.com.hk

2) May (24-27) & June (21-24): Mexico City (Parts I and II)

Omar Salom Omarsalom@hotmail.com

David Murphy david@neurosemantica-latam.com

3) August (25—Sept. 1): Belgium. First Ever in Europe

Germaine Rediger – indialogue@me.com

Mario Mason --- mma@phoenix-strategies.com

4) September (15-22): Brazil, Rio de Janeiro – First ever in Brazil

Jairo Mancilha jairo@pnl.med.br

5) October (5-12): New Zealand

Lene Gray --- lena@ignition.org.nz

Colin Cox --- colin@ignition.org.nz

6) Nov. (17-21) & Dec. (6-10): Guangzhou, China (Parts I and II)

Mandy Chai: Mandy@apti.com.hk

Nov. 16 and Dec. 2 – Team leaders

7) November (23-30): Pretoria — South Africa

Cheryl Lucas --- cheryl@peoplesa.co.za

Carey Jooste --- carey@psacoaching.co.za

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #20
March 26, 2012
Empowerment Series #9

THE POWER OF DISCIPLINE

If you remember, I wrote briefly about discipline in the sixth article. Yet there's much more to be said about this thing that we call *discipline*. First and foremost, we have to resuscitate the term because it has been so beaten up and despised, as a term it is gasping for breathe and unable to breath meaningful vitality into the minds of most people. For most people, the term *discipline* conveys ideas of hardship, difficulty, work, effort, even punishment! And if those are the connotations of discipline, no wonder so many people avoid it like the HIV virus!

So what is *discipline*? The dictionary defines it first as instruction, then a field of study, then a training that corrects and molds and perfects. So no wonder that the related term, *disciple*, is the person who follows a discipline and is committed to it. What I wrote earlier in defining discipline was this:

Discipline is consistency of actions— consistency with values, with long-term goals, with performance standards, consistency of method, consistency over time. True discipline requires the independence of mind to reject pressures, and long-term aspirations. ... And because the truest form of discipline is self-discipline, then discipline is having the inner will to do whatever it takes, no matter how difficult, to create or reach a great outcome.

This describes *the power of discipline*. When you develop a disciplined approach in your life, you set up the contexts so that you can function most effectively in doing and achieving the goals that you have set for yourself. When I learned about this some years ago, I set up several disciplines for myself:

- I read a minimum of 30 minutes every day.
- I write a minimum of 30 minutes every day.
- I exercise a minimum of 30 minutes every day.

Today these structures of behavior simply describe my “way of being in the world.” And due to the power of repetition, I no longer even think about these things, I just do them. They make up my way of life. Do I do these things regularly and consistently? Yes, of course. Does it feel like work, effort, or punishment? No way! It feels intuitively right to *being* who I am and what I'm about. *And* it makes many of the things that I end up doing “a piece of cake.”

Habituated discipline is like that. You can't imagine life without your disciplines. You are a *disciple* to your disciplines and what they stand for and mean to you. So what are your disciplines?

- Do you save at least 10% of your income every week?
- Do you operate from your highest intentionality every day?
- Do you always “swish” to “the You” for whom the challenges of everyday life is “no problem?”
- Do you sacralize the smallest things of everyday life so that you have peak experiences daily?
- Do you think strategically using the distinctions of the well-formed outcome?
- Do you always take some moments to create a well-formed problem so that you address real problems rather than pseudo-problems?
- Do you esteem yourself as valuable and worthwhile in an unconditional way so that you feel free inside to experiment and make mistakes as you keep learning?
- Do you access your “power zone” or power matrix every day to keep creating a robust self of self-efficacy?

These are just a few of the things we work on with ourselves and with clients in Neuro-Semantics. These are things that you learn in APG Workshop and the Self-Actualization Workshops and if you practice them regularly and consistently until they become your *discipline* then they become your “way of being in the world.” They become the *frames* that you have learned and incorporated within your meaning-matrix and now you are a disciple of them.

This is the power of discipline. The power of discipline is not about effort, work, or punishment. Actually, it is the very opposite. The power of discipline is about making your learnings the structure of your life so that they become easy to act on. By the way, that is the meaning of *facilitation*— to make whatever you are doing easy to achieve. And when you do that, you reach a new level of *freedom* ... free to step up to the next step, the next level of development.

How do you activate your power of discipline?

- 1) First, decide what you want as your “way of being in the world.” What is your choice? Now set your intention on it. Set an intention high enough to be a strong motivational engine.
- 2) Develop the required skills inherent in the discipline. What are the core competencies within the discipline? How many core skills are absolutely necessary? What do you need to know, understand, and believe to develop?
- 3) Deliberately practice the discipline. Are you ready and willing to engage in the practice consistently and regularly? What other resource do you need to make that happen?
- 4) Reward yourself until you experience the inherent pleasures of the discipline. Is the discipline inherently rewarding for you? If not, what external rewards can you add to it until you experience it as inherently pleasurable?

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #21
April 2, 2012
Empowerment Series #10

THE POWER OF EXECUTION

If you think that discipline is powerful, which it is (the last article in this series), then get ready to be awed at the power of *execution*! For more than fifteen years, we have made this one of our central themes in Neuro-Semantics. We call it by many different things:

- Apply to self: self-application.
- Closing the Knowing–Doing gap.
- Mind-to-Muscling, using the Mind-to-Muscle Pattern.
- Implementing.
- Innovation.
- The Axes of Performance: from incompetence to competence, expertise, mastery.
- Actualization, to make the potential actual.
- Walking your talk, doing what you say.
- Embodying, incorporation.

Because mind-body-and-emotion are all part of the same system, it *not execute* is to fail to work in a holistic and systemic way. It is to fail to bring something to completion. It is to dichotomize and work only partially. And as Maslow said, “To dichotomize is to pathologize.”

When you execute you are bringing your thoughts, beliefs, values, hopes, dreams, etc. into your body to embody it and incorporate it so that you fully prepare yourself to act on what you know. This is the meaning of “actualization.” We actualize what is potential, we actualize what we are potentially so that the meanings and inspirations and dreams within can be made real in the outside world. Self-actualization is making real what you are capable of which then enables you to make a difference in the world, contribute your unique gifts, and leave a significant legacy. And that’s why, as noted earlier, self-actualization is not about you, it is through you!

The opposite of execution is a problem —a personal problem, a psychological problem, and a big problem in life. After all, if you are all talk and no action, people will see you as full of hot air but no substance! If you are big talk and even if you can do it elegantly and inspirationally, it is still talk but not walk. And so you will be incongruent. Inconsistent. Untrustworthy. Undependable. Even hypocritical.

So getting yourself to actually *do* what you say is the purpose of discipline (consistency of

actions), of integration, integrity, and congruency. Actually, this is as much a problem for high potential people, high achievers as it is for the unmotivated and the traumatized, and for those who think of themselves as lazy, entitled, and/or victims of other people's actions. Why? Because if you *only* learn and learn and read more, attend more trainings, get more coaching, get more therapy, etc. *and don't take action*, your knowing—doing gap will grow bigger and bigger.

A few years ago I wrote the book, *Achieving Peak Performance* (2005) which formally was a smaller booklet, *Make It So!* Inside that book, I put pattern after pattern, and process after process to enable the process of execution— so that people can learn the how of translating knowledge in the head into muscle-memory so that it is so incorporated and installed in neurology that it becomes intuitive in you, your way of being in the world. Do that and it will change your sense-of-self. You will become an Implementer. You could put that on your business card: *Implementer par excellent*.

All of this equally applies to organizations, groups, companies, families, and communities. After all, in some business cultures, school cultures, government cultures, etc., it is all talk and no walk. Great ideas! Inspirational ideas! But no actuality. No execution of the great ideas into practical activities, rituals, or structures. It looks and sounds great on paper, but it is not in the fiber or soul of the organization. It is just talk.

There's no innovation of the principles, the vision, the values, or the mission of the organization in people's everyday lives. They do not operate by the principles they affirm. We then experience this form of hypocrisy as a disconnect and so in spite of the P.R. brand, the real brand is the reputation of that business in our mind. We know it is just P.R. So companies as much as individuals need the power of execution to implement and innovate the dreams of the business.

So what do we need to activate the power of execution? Mostly to get the interferences out of the way— excuses, fears, misunderstandings, myths, mis-beliefs, perfectionism, procrastination, etc. Execution is natural and normal within any system. So if a system is not implementing, mind-to-muscling, or actualizing, then something is interfering.

In APG workshops, Neuro-Semantic Trainers deal with the power of execution by teaching the Mind-to-Muscle Pattern, by running the Excuse Blow-Out Pattern, by running two integration patterns, Spinning Icons and Meta-Alignment, and by running the Dancing with Dragons pattern. Isn't that amazing? Obviously, a big part of accessing your personal genius (APG) is activating your natural and innate ability to execute what you know. You can find this information in *Secrets of Personal Mastery* (1997) and of course in the APG workshops (see www.neurosemantics.com for the list of APG courses around the world).

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #22
April 16, 2012
Empowerment Series #9

THE POWER OF CHOICE

From the four fundamental powers of your personality and your power of response-ability arises another power—*your power of choice*. You can choose. And choose you do. Consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or by default, you choose. In fact, you make lots of choices. You may love this power or hate it; you may delight in it or seek to avoid it. Yet this power is yours and if you handle it aright, you will be more fully able to take charge of your life and be the architect of your future.

Some years ago I began using the term *choice point* as I worked with people, I might say: “You are now at choice point about what you want to do, so what will it be?” Later when I found this phrase several times in Maslow’s writings, I began to realize just how powerful the phrase is. And especially the impact it has when it is brought to a person’s attention — You are now at choice point. In terms of the Crucible, this is right in the middle of the heat of a fierce conversation (*The Crucible*, 2009).

What is the power of choice? How can you more fully experience this power in your life? The power of choice begins with your four fundamental powers of personality because you have the power to choose what to think, believe, remember, imagine, etc. And when you make those choices, you are exercising the power to choose the emotions that you want to give yourself to. Your power of choice includes the words that you choose to use and the behaviors you choose to engage in.

So how is it then that so many people talk and act and feel and think that they have no choice? “I have to do this or that, I have no choice.” And yet they do have choice! Just because there may be a consequence to a certain way of thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting doesn’t mean that you have no choice. It means that you are choosing to not even consider that alternative. Sure you can stand up to your boss who may be doing something unethical or illegal.

“But then I may get fired.”

“Yes, that may be the price you would pay for the courage to speak up. So what is your choice? What will you do?”

Where there is a form of helplessness, hopelessness, or playing the victim, there is a human being choosing these responses. And that human being is more than likely also choosing to *not know* that he is so choosing. By keeping oneself blind and unaware, the choice seems to belong to others, to the world, to the markets, to external influences and forces. I heard it the other day

when during a conversation someone responded to an idea I suggested by saying:

“I could never imagine even thinking of doing that! I’m just not the kind of person who could ever go there.”

“So you are choosing to not make an movie in your mind about doing that, is that what you are saying?”

“Well, no, not really. You see I can’t imagine it. I’m not that kind of person.”

“So that’s your choice. Hmmmm. So you are choosing not to imagine it and you are choosing to not identify yourself in a new way so that you become the kind of person who would do it.”

“It’s not about choice, it’s about inability.”

“So you are choosing to frame it as inability rather than choice. ... [pause] ... It’s okay. It’s your life and you can do whatever you want ...”

“But you don’t understand, I can’t even imagine being that way...”

“That’s a good one. I had not thought about *that choice*— to choose to be a different kind of human being, one that eliminates that choice! So your choice is to think of yourself and define yourself as a choice-less human being. Hmmmmmm. Very interesting.”

I’d like to report that there was an immediate Eureka! movement, that the heavens opened, that the blinders fell of his eyes, that he suddenly claimed his power of choice ... but alas, it did not happen that way. My guess is that there were too many vested interests, but the person is a friend and what he reported was that he didn’t sleep very well that evening and that I “had bothered him with that disturbing conversation.” I smiled and said, “Yes, I’m so very powerful I can control your sleeping!” He smiled and said that yes, he knows that is one of his powers. Ah, he was beginning to move to choice point!

The power of choice is the power to decide about direction— what direction do you want to go in? What direction would you like to send your brain? What would you like to believe? What frame of mind would you like to live from? What kind of language would you like to use in framing problems, solutions, innovations, etc.?

The power of choice also is the very power by which you truly become the author of your life and of course, as you become the author of your life, you develop your own internal authority. You are the one in charge of writing the script and carrying out the story. You are the author. So what script are you writing and delivering?

Here’s to your power of choice! Make it a good one.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #23
April 23, 2012
Empowerment Series #10

THE POWER OF BOUNDARIES

A boundary divides one thing from another. As such it sets up distinctions between things. When you set up a personal boundary for yourself, you both identify and distinguish what's *inside* the boundary and what's *outside*. In doing this, you are thereby able to contain and protect your identity, energy, values, beliefs, and experiences. You are able to say, "This is me and those things out there are not me."

In the article on the power of responsibility (Empowerment Series #7), I spoke about the line between two kinds of responses and responsibilities. The line between responsibility *for yourself* creates accountability, you being accountable **for** what you say you believe and will do. In doing so, you are simultaneously distinguishing who you are responsibility *to*. That's relationship. You are responsible *for yourself to others for what you say you will do*. The other person can now hold you accountable for that. That defines your relationship with that person. What you are *not* responsible for is what the other person is responsible *for*— namely, their thoughts, emotions, words, and actions.

Because these are different experiences (accountability and relationship), the line between responsibility *for and to* creates boundaries. It sets up what is *inside* and what is *outside*. What is outside your responsibility is what other people are *responsible for*. I am not and cannot be responsible *for* what you think, believe, understand, remember, imagine (any and all of your mental responses), what you feel, say, or do. Those are your responses. Similarly, you are not and cannot be responsible for what I think, feel, say, or do. Those are my responses. You can invite me to think in a certain way or feel something, but if I do, that's my response. You can only invite, trigger, provoke, and do whatever you can to increase the likelihood of my response, but you are not *able* to generate that *response*.

If you don't draw *this line between responsible for and to*, you will have weak or non-existent boundaries and can easily become confused where you and others start and stop. This can then create all sorts of unsanity (a poor relationship in navigating the territory of reality). Then your ego-boundaries that define you and your world can fuse with those of others and leading you to feel responsible for someone else's experiences. Yet when that happens, you dis-empower both yourself and the other person. Do that and you confuse yourself and invite a confusion in them about the relationship. This is what happens with those who become co-dependent in unhealthy ways.

The idea of ego-boundaries goes back to Sigmund Freud and his original work in psychoanalysis. Your sense of self (ego) extends out into space and each of us experience so much of that space as ours, as “our territory.” So when someone gets too close to you physically (whether it is 18 inches or 5 inches or 1 inch), you will feel that they have intruded into “your space” and not respecting your boundaries.

“Boundaries” begin with physical space and as you create your sense of your space in that way, you also create your sense of space about other things. That’s why if someone tells you “what you really think or feel,” it feels like a violation. In NLP we call it mind-reading. The other person has assumed that he or she can get into your mental or emotional space and tell you what you think or feel! Obviously, they cannot know such, they are only guessing at best and projecting at worse. The result is that we all feel the need to push them away and not let them cross over the boundary. “I have the right to determine what I think or feel, not you!” Mental, emotional, identity, and relational boundaries such as these empower each of us to have a strong sense of self and an ego that’s strong enough to handle life’s challenges.

However, if you have weak boundaries, you may often find yourself in compromising situations and wonder, “How did this happen to me?” You may find that when others do mind-reading with you, you just go along with it and let them tell you what you really think and feel! When you set boundaries for yourself, you are setting values, standards, and role identities for yourself. This enables you to be strong and definite in what you do and don’t do, what you allow and what you don’t allow. You know yourself and you are able to stand firm when a boundary is crossed. Without such, you have weaker sense of self and so can find yourself experiencing things that you didn’t choose.

Children have very weak boundaries about themselves and non-existent boundaries about areas that they don’t know about. That’s why they need structure and order. And that’s why providing them rules is critical. The rules can serve as their first boundaries, setting limits on thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting. With regard to boundaries, there are many, many different kinds of boundaries. There are personal-space boundaries, physical boundaries, cognitive boundaries, sexual boundaries, financial boundaries, etc.

The power of boundaries is the power to know oneself, to protect oneself, to distinguish oneself, to know your limits. It is the power of making effective decisions and of becoming decisive which enables one to say, “No, that doesn’t fit for me!” as well as, “Yes, I like that, believe in that, and want that!”

Once you set boundaries for yourself, and grant yourself full permission to live within those boundaries, you develop another personal power—*integrity*. You now can live *true to yourself*—to your values, beliefs, decisions, standards, etc. Without boundaries or with weak boundaries, it is hard if not impossible to experience personal integrity, and without integrity, you will find it hard to be congruent, authentic, and disciplined to get yourself to follow through on what you say you believe and is important to you. So this power, the power of boundaries, is a critical and essential *power* that you and I need to live fully— to actualize our highest and best.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #24
April 30, 2012
Empowerment Series #11

THE POWER OF EMOTIONS

Is there any question about the power of emotions? I think not. After all, you don't have to live very long as a human being to know that your emotions represent a very powerful resource within you. The very term itself, "emotion" speaks about the *motion* that is present— motion that is directed to move you *out* (ex-, e-motion) from where you are to somewhere else. That's become an emotion is "an action tendency" in your neurology.

No wonder then that there's *energy* within your emotions— energy to move you to continue doing what is working and energy to move you to stop, look, and listen and change what is not working. Generally speaking, we call *the emotional energy that moves us to continue* a "positive" emotion and we call *the emotional energy that moves us to stop or slow down* a "negative" emotion. This corresponds to your neurology. After all, you and I have two kinds of nerve impulses— those that are excitatory and those that are inhibitory. In the excitatory nerve impulses which excite you and move you to continue to do more of what you're doing, you feel *positive*. In the inhibitory nerve impulses which interrupt the excitatory processes, and moves you to hold back, to reconsider what you are doing, you feel "negative."

*When you feel your emotions you are feeling **the meanings** that you have created.* That is, the meaning constructions that you've created in your thinking, cognizing, valuing, understanding, believing, deciding, appraising, identifying, etc., you now are *somatizing*. *Soma* refers to your body and when you transfer your thoughts to your body, you translate from mind into muscle or neurology. This is somatizing— incorporating your meanings in your body.

This explains why, and how, *every emotion makes sense*. Every emotion that you experience, *you* created in your body. It is a function of your meaning-making. It makes sense and is right— *right* to the mental mapping that you are operating from. In this sense, there are no "wrong" emotions. Of course, your emotions can be unproductive. They can be mis-informed; they can be fallacious, erroneous, and unhelpful, but they are always "right."

And if every emotion is right, makes sense, then you have no need to deny the emotion, resist the emotion, repress it, or get angry at yourself for it. Instead, meta-state the emotion with acceptance so that you simply *acknowledge* what you are feeling. Do that and you will find that you will begin experiencing the emotion as "just an emotion." In other words, you stop yourself from over-loading the emotion with too much meaning or turning against yourself because of the emotion.

In Neuro-Semantics when you turn against an emotion, we say that you are creating unresourceful “dragon” states. If you *hate* your *anger*, if you *despise* your *fear*, if you *fear* your *ambition*, and so on, you are first of all fighting against an emotion that you created in your meaning constructions and therefore preventing yourself from understanding yourself, your thoughts, your values and judgments, etc. And you are then meta-stating another layer or frame above the particular emotion and thereby texturing it with energy against yourself. In the end, this creates conflict within you so that you create another level of a problem. (This is the subject of the book, *Dragon Slaying*, 2000).

The meta-stating solution is to *accept* every emotion, *acknowledge* it for what it is, *curiously explore* how you have created it and what it means in your system, and then *decide* the best way to respond to it. This describes the basic Meta-Stating Emotions pattern that occurs in APG and other Neuro-Semantic trainings and is the foundation for emotional intelligence as it enables you to detect, monitor, and manage your emotions.

Now the power of emotions is basically the power to feel, to be real, to be motivated, and to experience vitality. Pretty important reasons to accept and appreciate your emotions. When you try to *not* feel some emotion and end up using some ego-defense mechanism like repression to make the emotion go away, you dampen your feelings, authenticity, motivation, and vitality. This also can create distorted emotions like depression.

For example, the emotion of sadness is a “negative” emotion designed to enable you to register loss, come to terms with that loss, and experience the motivation to replace what has been lost. But if you are *sad* about your sadness, or *angry* at yourself for the loss, or *afraid* of the experience of loss— you could create a distorted emotion called “depression.” Now you are “pressing” “down” your energies, hopes, dreams, desires, activities, etc. You are *de-pressing* yourself.

The solution? Get ready for what might seem like a paradox: *Accept* the depression and *curiously find out* what frame (meaning) that you have given the original emotion, then accepting that emotion (whether sadness, loss, self-despising, etc.), identify a more appropriate meaning frame. “Loss is natural and inevitable, just a part of life.” “Loss is a call for change.”

If you find yourself without energy— with no motivation, vitality, drive, etc., identify a context where this occurs and begin to “climb your meaning ladder” (layers of meta-states or logical levels) to find out the meanings that you have been somatizing. “What does this X mean to you?” “Let’s say that’s true, so what? What would that mean?” Continue this line of questioning and meta-questioning until you identify the matrix of your frames. Now you are at choice point! (Empowerment series #9).

Emotions— your biological, neurological engine for motivation, for vitality, for power! If this is new, get *Secrets of Personal Mastery*, or *Dragon Slaying*, or get yourself to an APG training somewhere in the world!

L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #25
May 7, 2012
Empowerment Series #12

THE POWER OF CONVERSATION

Among the most powerful things that you have available to yourself for *personal empowerment*, one of the most powerful arises from, and is expressed in, the conversations that you have with yourself and others. This power obviously arises from your power of language, to put into words your thoughts, your feelings, your requests, your hopes and dreams, your fears and dreads. Yet it is more.

Conversation is how you relate to people (including yourself), it is your primary way of constructing meaning, it is how you do most of what you do in your work or career, and it is how you make your evaluations and assessments about your values. Pretty important, wouldn't you say? Conversation even describes how you think. You talk to yourself, you have inner dialogues with yourself as you wonder, consider, brainstorm, attribute meaning, evaluate, and many, many more things. In fact, all of this is because you *are* a conversation.

Now if you are a leader, your leadership is mostly manifested in the conversations that you are able to have with people. That is, to be a leader, you conduct *leadership conversations*, conversations that lead people's minds and emotions. Given this, we can ask:

- What conversations do you carry on with people?
- What conversations do you initiate?
- What conversations do you want to have, but do not?
- What conversations do you need to have, but hold yourself back from?
- What conversations do you wish others would initiate with you?

Saying words is one thing. It is an entirely other thing to be able to *engage* another person (or a group of people) and *carry on an exchange of thoughts, ideas, dreams, etc.* That's a much more complex and important skill. Why is that? Because to facilitate a conversation means listening as well as talking. In fact, your listening skill determines the quality of your talking skills. That is, if you are not intensely listening with active presence to the person (or persons), your talk will not be very effective. Afterwards, someone may ask you, "What were you listening to that you asked what you did?"

In Neuro-Semantics' Meta-Coaching we have *7 kinds of conversations* that define the area of Coaching someone to unleash one's highest meanings and best performances. The reason for this is to know *the kind of conversations* that are possible to have with someone and what kind of conversation you are actually having with a person. The following seven kinds provides a way to

think about the kinds of conversations that someone can initiate and facilitate. In Meta-Coaching, you learn how to have these kinds of conversations.

- Clarity — To clearly understand oneself, another, what's needed, what to do, what to choose.
- Decision — To make a well-informed and smart decision so one will not regret later.
- Planning — To make a plan (map, blueprint, map-map, strategy, etc.) of what to do and how to get there.
- Experience — To experience something that adds to a person's resources that increases a person's capability to take effective action in making a plan come true.
- Change — To alter a set of actions, beliefs, decisions, identity, intention, paradigm, etc. To grow or transform in some way.
- Confrontation — To bring up something crucially important to someone which may be unpleasant and unwelcomed and to do so in a way that will enable the participants to talk it through to some resolution.
- Mediation — To facilitate two or more persons working through a conflict and finding some win/win resolution.

When you are able to initiate and facilitate a particular kind of conversation— you are able to do something that you otherwise would not be able to do. And when you do, you create a particular kind of relationship with someone.

- How do you manage in an organization? You engage people in a managerial conversation so that they understand what to do, why to do it, how to do it, and you can then have an evaluation conversation as you assess the results together.
- How do you lead the minds and hearts of people? You engage in a visionary conversation of hopes and dreams, or a challenging conversation of present day problems that will get worse if not addressed. You engage in a framing conversation that sets the frames for defining the problem and suggesting possible solutions.
- How do you sell someone on something that may resolve problems and offer valued solutions? You engage in a needs analysis conversation to discuss needs and hopes and potential solutions.
- How do you support someone so that they are empowered to unleash more of their potentials? You engage in a valued conversation about what's important to that person or some difficult challenge that the person wants to deal with.

If this is the year for you to become more masterful in your conversations— sign up for one or more of the modules of *Meta-Coaching*. Based on the NLP Communication Model (Module I) and the Meta-States Reflexivity Communication Model (Module II), you'll learn about and get to practice the Seven Conversations. In 2012 we have hundreds of trainings in Module I and II and seven in Module III (Coaching Mastery), for details see www.neurosemantics.com and www.meta-coaching.org.

[You can find the *Seven Kinds of Conversations in Coaching Conversations* (2011)]

L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #26
May 14, 2012
Empowerment Series #13

THE POWER OF EXPERTISE

To develop an expertise is to develop a unique power—a skill or competency that distinguishes you and that has the possibility of creating a particular self-confidence for you as well as the value that you give to create your form of wealth. So, what are you an expert in? What have you spent at least ten years in concentrated focus on that now you can take pride in as a legitimate talent that you have turned into a skill? Oh, yes, did I mention that it generally takes ten-years of deliberate practice to cultivate a talent or disposition into a legitimate expertise?

That was the discovery that Anders Ericcson, the Swedish Psychologist, discovered in his longitudinal research on expertise (*The Cambridge Handbook of Expertise and Expert Performance*, 2006). More recently Malcolm Gladwell has popularized this discovery and so you can now read about it in lots of books.

The power of expertise is that it enables you to develop what we call *self-confidence* in a given activity which you know that you can pull off. Why do you know that? Because you have done it. You have history with doing it. You have practiced, deliberately. And when you develop self-confidence again and again in various areas, that allows you to draw a larger or a meta-conclusion and create another really powerful state—one that we call *self-efficacy*. This is your sense of being efficacious—being able and skilled to trust your wits, intelligence, learning, emotional intelligence, etc. to handle the challenges of life.

Self-confidence is about the past—you have evidence that you have done something and proven yourself over and over. *Self-efficacy* is about the future—trust in yourself that as you have learned to become competent in other things, so you can in yet more activities.

Now if there is any solid way to create wealth, it is through the development of an expertise that adds value to people's lives. That's because when you have expert knowledge and skill in an area of importance, you have something valuable to give and contribute to others. And that's what wealth is and where financial wealth comes from. (See the book, *Inside-Out Wealth*, 2009). Of course, to develop the power of expertise requires that you use and apply several other powers that you have: the power of response, of responsibility, of ownership, of execution, etc.

Yet on the other hand there are lots of things that can undermine and sabotage the power of expertise. You probably already know what they are, do you not? Some may surprise you. Perhaps the most surprising one is that of multi-tracking, that is, trying to do too many things at

the same time. In recent years, the field of the neuro-sciences have demonstrated that multi-tracking undermines the efficiency of concentration and focus and that no one does as well in multi-tracking as most people think they do! Yet because you are dividing your attention when you attempt to pay attention to two or more things at the same time, the quality of your attention will inevitably suffer.

Another sabotage is living off of the thrill of the chase of every new thing and new fad that pops onto the scene. This is another significant sabotage to the power of expertise and also, at the same time, an occupation hazard for most people who want to be on the cutting edge and achieve as much as they can. Yet if you are changing your mind every three or six months, or every year or other year, you will never be able to tap into the power of deliberate practice, of persistence, patience, resilience, and perseverance that's required for true expertise.

Another sabotage is the attitude of having arrived and of knowing-it-all. The seduction is that as you do indeed master an area and develop true expertise, you may not want to be a novice again. And so you may refuse to enter into a new area of your field and be a novice again. After all, you may frame being a novice again as to be inadequate since you are receiving instruction and training from others. Yet here is the paradox. Those who do attain expertise seem to have something in common—namely, they have a childlike mind of curiosity, continuous learning, surprise, delight, playfulness, and the fantastic ability to say, “I don't know.” “But I want to know, and I will! Tell me what you know!” It is the non-expert who puts on airs and acts like a know-it-all and doesn't ask questions for fear that someone may think he doesn't know something!

Have you become an expert in a certain area? The danger of our age is that most people end up “a jack of many trades and a master of none.” Yet it is in thinking long-term, for at least a decade, and giving yourself intensely, deliberately, and in a focused way to a given activity or area that expertise emerges. Why is that? That's because mastery is in the details.

After all, what's the difference between someone who is very good at something and the master? Between the person who plays the violin in the back row of the orchestra and the front seat player? What's the difference between those golfers who play in the Masters and are listed in the top 100 and the 5 or 10 players who we know by name and who regularly play in the first five positions? The master of the details of that profession. The discipline of being consistent and focused.

Do you want more personal empowerment? More power to make a difference? Then take your mental, emotional, physical, and personal energy and focus it like a laser-beam on something so that you turn on your passion, your commitment, and your persistence. Do that and you will begin to unleash your unique powers!

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #27
May 21, 2012
Empowerment Series #14

THE POWER OF VITALITY

Ah, *vitality!* What is this thing we call *vitality*? It is the power of feeling *alive*. It is the power and energy to feel your body and mind fully alive, and ready to be used in a vigorous way—whether in action, exercise, activity, or in thought, problem-solving, creativity, etc. And vitality is what you and I were created for. How do I know? Well, look at a little child who has slept well and is well fed—isn't the child a bundle of energy ready to burst out? The child moves and runs and jumps and hops and curiously gets into just about everything.

To manage this bundle of energy, we usually have to send the kid to school to be trained to “sit still, stop moving around so much, stop asking so many questions, get your hands out of X,” and so on, and typically, after ten years of that kind of training, with sufficient “punishments,” most kids succumb. They dampen their vitality and they channel their energies into fitting in, conforming to others, to not standing out or being shamed for being unique or different. They become “socialized” into trying to be “normal” or “average.” In this way, they dampen and kill their innate drive for self-actualization.

There are many factors that can undermine your innate powers of vitality. The two primary sources are 1) how you cope with your biological needs and 2) the social context that defines your sense of reality.

The first factor has to do with how you handle, address, and cope with your biological needs. How you cope with them will determine whether the energies that you have and use are effectively tapped or wasted in the process. When you know what your biological needs are, understand them, know how to gratify their appropriately, the energy of those needs disappear. They go away. And as they do, the next level of prepotent needs arise to your awareness. And when you have a clear understanding of what they are and how to satisfy them, they go away. This is the nature of our human requirements (needs) for being human and what Maslow mapped out with his hierarchy of needs.

But if you do not understand the drives within your neurology and mind and do not gratify them effectively, then it takes more energy to cope. And if you mess them up with cognitive distortions so that you turn a healthy need into a neurotic need, then for all of your energy in coping with them, not only do they not go away, but they grow to become insatiable. And then you become obsessive and compulsive about the way you are falsely trying to cope with that need. What is a sign that this may be happening? Fatigue, exhaustion, depression, burn-out, and the depletion of vitality! You may be wearing yourself out trying to accomplish something that

cannot be accomplished (like being perfect, like having absolute safety and security, like having everyone approve of you or like you) will deplete your energy and leave you without any energy. You'll have no vitality for living life.

So *vitality* is your heritage and it naturally arises when you are adequately and accurately gratifying your needs. In fact, as you do that, you will find more and more energy available to you—energy and vitality that you can now use for living your life more fully, more humanly, more excitedly, more passionately.

This is one of the primary goals and themes of the Self-Actualization Workshop that we call *Unleashing Vitality (and your Real Self)*. By revisiting Maslow's list of human needs (survival, safety, social, self, and self-actualization), and using the Self-Actualization Assessment Scale that I created along with Tim Goodenough, we focus on the releasing of vitality.

The second factor that can undermine your vitality is the social context within which you live and that you mostly use to define yourself, your world, your reality, etc. It is in that system that you experience your particular Matrix, that is, your matrix of frames of meaning. You inherited it from the family system you grew up in, your language system, your religious system, your educational system, your ethnic system, etc. The ideas, beliefs, understandings, concepts, etc. that you grew up in, if they do not provide you a good and effective model or map of the world, then you can find your vitality drained and defeated.

How does this work? It works because as with any distorted or fallacious map, you are wasting your energies trying to navigate the experiences of life. It works because your map doesn't take you where you want to go, it doesn't allow you to generate the experiences that you want, and/or it may take you on the most circumlocutious route so that by the time you arrive, you have depleted all of your energy.

Here is another paradox. *Vitality* is your gift as a human being, it is natural, easy, and the very design of your mind-body-emotion system, yet it is also delicately dependent on you having an accurate map about the world and a context in which you develop the skills to meet your legitimate needs. With an accurate map and good healthy development, you should have *vitality* pouring out of your pores! Every part of you—and your experience should continue to express the vitality of a young child wonder-struck by the magic of our world. People should be hearing you say, "Wow!" and "Fantastic!" many, many times every day and come along to find out what you just discovered.

http://apti.com.hk/html/article_56.html

Neuro-Semantics is about the empowerment of human vitality. We're committed to enabling people find their passion, experience their passion, and live a life of passion. Our aim is to unleash this vitality so that people fall in love with life, with others, with meaningfulness, and with the sacredness of everyday. And this is your invitation to come join the adventure.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #28
May 28, 2012
Empowerment Series #15

THE POWER OF PLEASURE

As I wrote about *vitality* (Empowerment series #13) I was reminded of another power— the power of pleasure. And what a power this is! Here is another neurological predisposition of your mind-body system— your body is wired for a thousand pleasures. Pleasures of sight, sound, sensation, smell, taste, movement etc. And the range of the things that can give us pleasure, delight us, and induce the sense of the good things in life is incredible. How many tunes and songs touch you? How many sights are there of beauty, or tastes, or smells?

And what if you set out to explore the essence of the natural vitality that we see in little children, how many pleasures— pleasures of the smallest things— would you find? They are forever laughing and giggling and enjoying things. Is this the way we were born and the way we were made? And if so, what happens to so many people that they don't seem to have this simple power of pleasure any longer?

What happened? They were parented; they went to school; they went to church or temple or mosque! That is, they were socialized and in almost everyone's socialization there is little appreciation and almost no development of this power. Yes we develop the power of the mind, of the emotions, of speech, and behavior. But when have you ever seen a school curriculum for the development of joy, playfulness, fun, to wit, pleasure?

Yet without pleasure people lose motivation, lose energy, lose drive, lose intention, make excuses, procrastinate, get into states of dread, discouragement, boredom, ahedonia, etc. This is an important pleasure. You need pleasure; I need pleasure. It is one of the prerequisites of genius.

A prerequisite of genius? Yes! People who develop expertise in a given area, an expertise that requires consistency and persistence and resilience and perseverance must enjoy what they are doing. They must derive pleasure from it. And to master an area inevitably must require that a person absolutely fall in love with what they are doing. So in APG trainings, we introduce the Pleasure Pattern for this very reason. We want people to be able to know how pleasure works, how they can develop their ability to pleasure themselves in whatever engagement they choose and how to add massive pleasure.

Now what's most fascinating about the development of pleasure is that while it starts with the sensory pleasures, for us humans it never ends there. In fact, this is what gets us not only into the

states of excellence and expertise, but also the negative states of addiction. That's because with your wonderful self-reflexive consciousness, once you access pleasure (fun, excitement, laughter, playfulness, etc.), it is so easy for you to bring those good feeling of pleasure to your pleasure. Then you have meta-pleasures.

In the Meta-States Model (derived in part from the General Semantics Model), this is the multi-ordinality of "pleasure" at work. That is, because of the reflexivity of your mind, you create multiple levels of pleasure, pleasures all the way up. That's why when we ask, "What is the pleasure of that pleasure for you?" people will answer and identify their meta-pleasures. And when we step back from the meta-pleasures, lo and behold, they are the person's *values*. Incredible!

People answer by saying such things as, "Well, it is achievement, connection, relaxation, creativity, de-stressing, and so on." And when you ask someone repeatedly, "And what is the pleasure of achievement?" They will move up their levels and reveal a whole structure of multi-ordinal pleasures. And what gives you the most pleasure? Experiencing the realization of your values!

Now for the dark side of pleasure. The sad thing is that people can and do this about things which they shouldn't give so much power, so much pleasure to— like smoking, eating, shopping, gambling, drugging, etc. Why in the world would people give too much pleasure to things that are self-destructive? Well, obviously they don't do it on purpose, consciously, they just get those things connected with some meta-pleasure and then that meta-pleasure empowers it too much. It semantically loads it so that it means too much for the person. And what happens then is that the meta-pleasures can so over-load the primary state experience (like smoking or eating), that a person pushes through all of the inherent thresholds so they don't know when to stop.

It is for this reason that in APG we also introduce the De-Pleasuring Pattern so that people can move to choice point and if they recognize they have created an addiction, they can de-pleasure it to a more manageable place.

Ah, the power of pleasure. Too little and you lose the inner vitality and fun and joy of being alive. Too much on the wrong things and you can create destructive addictions. No wonder we say in APG that it's important to take charge of your pleasures and your pleasure-making powers and use it mindfully.

mFrom: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #29
June 4, 2012
Empowerment Series #16

THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

This is the 15th post on *Empowerment* and when you put together all of the other powers that's I've mentioned to date, and focus them into the area of "playing well with others," then another power emerges. And it is an incredible power, it is *the power of collaboration*. This is actually the power that has brought the human race to this age of science, technology, space exploration, terrorism, World Wars, the social media, etc. Why? Because we can do so much more together than alone or apart and our history has demonstrated that over and over. When you consider where we are in science, technology, civilization, and so on, it is *collaboration* that has made the difference.

What is collaboration? *Collaboration is people working together to create something that no one individual can create or do by him or herself.* This very special state and state-of-mind is far more than just complying to authority. It is more than just cooperating and passively going along with something that you agree with and believe in. It is positively and actively wanting and acting in unity with others for a greater good.

People working together with other people created the Pyramids of old and the great skyscrapers of every modern city today. People working together with others have come together to create unions and cities, and nations and governments. If collaboration refers to working with others, then the opposite is *going it alone*. The opposite is the drive for independence, of separation, of leading out on your own when no one else believes in your vision. And the fascinating thing about human beings is that everyone of us feels the pull of each of these forces; they are built into our very neurology and psychology. We want to be independent *and* we want to be a part of a community. We want to be true to our innermost self *and* we want to be part of a winning team.

Interestingly enough, we all begin life within a collaboration: a family, a community, a town, a nation, etc. Without others, we wouldn't survive at all. After that begins the developmental pull within us to separate, to individuate, to become a self in our own right, to define ourselves and find our own way. And so begins the individuation process of childhood and the teenage years as we become independent adults. And yet as this process is wrapping up, we feel yet another urge emerging—the social urge, the pull to be a part of a group, to have close friends, to find a special one to love, to become inter-dependent.

The pull of collaboration arises because we are social beings with social needs—for love and

affection, for bonding, for companionship, for having colleagues, to be a part of a winning team, to be recognized by peers, to count in their eyes, and so on. Yet so many things can mess up this power— this drive. Ego is a big one. Many people are blocked from creative collaborations because they have to have things “their way.” They have to have constant recognition, attention, honor, etc.

Others are blocked from effective collaborations because they lack basic social skills: caring about others, listening, supporting, validating, confirming, taking time to be present to them, etc. They didn’t learn the lessons of kindergarten— how to play well with others. They are bossy, demanding, self-centered, critical, sarcastic, judgment, unkind, etc. They are not good team players. Perhaps they were trained to be tyrants and bosses and dictators because that was the kind of leadership modeled for them at home or school or government.

There are many other blocks that interfere with effective collaboration: fear of change, vested interests in the status quo, fear of loss of self in a group; inability to be a part of a community, lack of vision, intolerance, etc.

In today’s interconnected world, collaboration is more important than ever. Neither individuals nor nations can afford to “go it alone,” operate in isolation, or act as independent from the rest of the world. Although, sadly, we see both individuals and nations attempting to do so. Today, big visions and “big hairy audacious goals” takes people working together effectively as high performance teams. Today companies are moving to self-managing teams of people who via their collaboration provide the leadership and management required for their area of responsibility.

This, in fact, describes a self-actualizing family, business, community, and country— *people know how to be and operate as a high performance team*. They know how to tap into the differences that each brings and enable people to feel an important part of the group. And of course, to facilitate this self-actualizing leaders are required. We need leaders who have the ability to set a vision, pioneer with a collaborative style, pull people together, and work through the conflict of differences so that a group spirit emerges, a community of care.

The power of collaboration is today creating new companies and is forecasting what corporations will be like in the future. In fact, the most successful companies today are the result of collaborative partnerships— people working together for a mutual benefit. Those who do not develop this personal power will be left behind. Now for some personal questions: Do you know how to effectively collaborate with others? Are you collaborative in your nature and style? Do you enjoy the process of collaborating with others? Do you know how to be an effective team player? If not, then call for a Meta-Coach immediately or get to a training by a Licensed Neuro-Semantic Trainer! Collaboration is our middle name.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #30
June 11, 2012
Empowerment Series #17

THE POWER OF EGO-STRENGTH

A power that you are not born with, but that you develop in the process of growing up is what we call *ego-strength*. This is the power of your self to be strong in the face of life and especially of life's challenges. It is the power of having a strong sense of self—to use your powers of mind, emotion, speech, and behavior to figure things out, to face and deal with the people and events of everyday life, and to neither fall apart, throw a tantrum, or get aggressive when things don't go your way.

Little children do not have this power and so do not feel themselves strong in this way. With a little child all you have to do is look at him or her with a cross look, then out comes the lip and they fall apart. In this they are very fragile, their ego or sense-of-self is fragile and easily overwhelmed.

Yet as a person grows, learns, and develops his or her powers (mental, emotional, linguistic, behavioral, relational, etc.), one's sense-of-self grows stronger. And as it grows stronger, a person develops another power—the power to be able to face reality as it is and for whatever it is. *This is ego-strength*. Now you have the strength or power to face new things, things unknown, confusing, upsetting, undesirable, challenging, etc. and feel that “I'll figured it out.”

“Sure, I don't like it, but no big deal. I can figure it out, think it through, ask others, read about it, google it, and use my powers of language and action to figure out some effective responses.”

I had an insight yesterday while presenting *the Unleashing Potentials* workshop in the Self-Actualization series to a group of the ABNLP (Australian Board of NLP) here in Sydney.

Someone asked, “What do you do if someone gets ‘all emotional’ while experiencing the Crucible pattern?” And someone else asked about ego-strength, what it is and how it relates to the Crucible?

That was great timing! I had just completed the introduction and demonstration of the Crucible. So an insight was generated that would probably not have arisen otherwise: The factors that we use as the resource mechanisms for the deep change in the Crucible to facilitate the unleashing of potentials are the very same factors that build up the power of “ego-strength” in a person.

What are these factors? We construct the Crucible from six primary resources, three giving us

safety-change factors and three giving us confrontation-change factors.

- 1) Unconditional positive regard for self or self-esteem.
- 2) Witnessing what is, observing sensory-based information.
- 3) Accepting or acknowledging what is for what is.
- 4) Ruthless honesty for speaking the truth about what's real and authentic.
- 5) Responsibility or ownership of one's responses.
- 6) Appreciation as the ability to see deeply to the value and preciousness of something.

Each of these factors are also factors that generate the powerful experience of ego-strength they do so by enabling you to feel safe in your own skin knowing yourself as having innate worth and value so that you can see cleanly and clearly without needing to distort things and able to just accept what is without fighting it, rejecting it, or defending against it. They also enable you to operate effectively in the world by knowing and speaking what's real and authentic, the truth, instead of needing to cover up, lie, deceive, or pretend reality is something other than it is. And doing that leads to two other powers— the power of responsibility and the power of appreciation.

Want to facilitate someone's ego-strength? Want to coach someone so that they build up a stronger resilience within, more proactivity, and self-responsibility? Use the Crucible pattern. I kind of knew this when I wrote the book, *The Crucible Model and the Fires of Change* and I also kind of did not know it. At least I didn't know it explicitly as I do now.

If you coach, train, consult, or do therapy with individuals or groups, your power to be a crucible and to create a crucible space is a power that enables people to face the truth, come to terms with the challenges of life, and at the very same time to develop the ego-strength that they need for such.

Where can you learn more about all of this? Well, of course, from the book, *The Crucible and the Fires of Change* and also from the workshop that Neuro-Semantic Trainers train all around the world, *Unleashing Potentials*.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #31
June 18, 2012
Empowerment Series #18

THE POWER OF FREEDOM

We see this power—the power and desire to be free—in 2011 in what the media labeled “the Arab Spring” as we saw many groups of people protesting in request for freedom, to choose their own way, their own leaders, their own values, their own way of life. This is the power to choose one’s own way and to be free in the exercise of one’s basic human powers, those of mind, emotions, speech, and actions.

Actually, as parents we see this power very, very early in the life of a young child. There’s seems to be something innate in human beings that we want to have choice, to choose our own way, to choose what we think and what we feel and what we say, and what we do. We do not lie down and acquiesce easily. Any adult who today passively complies with whatever is requested has been trained by experience and perhaps trauma to give up the need to be oneself, to be a free thinking person.

And so in democracies all around the planet, these happen to be the most basic human “rights”—freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and freedom of action. Yes, of course there are limits on these freedom of speech and action—we are not free to destroy or harm others. We are not free to yell “fire” in crowded theaters. And in such cases, these constraints actually support the larger freedom for all. This power that drives us to want to be free is innate in people everywhere and, as a power, it is nearly impossible to squelch.

So why would anyone want to squelch this power? Oh, that’s easy—because it is dangerous! It is messy. It is unpredictable. You do not have to be a control freak to want to control it. Parents and teachers find that things can go along much better if there’s less talk and more compliance to rules. Managers and leaders and governors also can get things done quicker and with less fuss if everyone will just go along with what they want! Actually, this is true for all of us. We just want to do things our way and the power of freedom of others to disagree, dislike, object, act contrary to, reject, criticize, etc. what we want sets up the challenges of life-with-other-humans, to wit, social life.

No wonder we all want to be king (or dictator) and have everything done our way and no wonder we also want freedom to disagree and disobey the kinds and dictators in our lives! Ah, the power of freedom is such an incredible power and obviously it is one not easily handled. And that’s because there are numerous paradoxes about this power.

There is the paradox that we both want to be free and yet contained. In fact, the greatest freedom for driving is to drive where there are roads. The structure of highways enables us to be most free and to more fully use all of the power of the vehicle at our disposal. The freedom of a train is when it is on the tracks, not under the conditions of being derailed. If you work out at a gym, you know that you are most free when you use your muscles and act in accordance with the mechanical laws of your body and not against those laws. Break those laws and you hurt yourself and that will reduce your freedom.

Yes, you have the freedom to think all kinds of thoughts— you are even free to think stupid, ugly, hurtful, malicious, and self-destructive thoughts. You are that free! But freedom from truth, from the facts, from reality, etc. will exact a price. Though free to think whatever you want and to send whatever thoughts and commands to your nervous system, what you are not free from are the consequences that you create. You have the power to be so free that you can neglect your health, eat junk food, drink yourself drunk night after night, and scoff at anyone who speaks to you about it. You are free to do that. You are not free from the price you will pay for that. Consequences will occur and you are free to experience them and suffer them.

The power of your freedom, all of your freedoms, then, comes with a price. And ignorance of that price will not excuse you from paying the price. How you exercise your freedom powers of thinking, emoting, speaking, acting, relating, etc. will result in consequences. If it didn't, those powers would not be *powers*. Yet they are powers— the ability to *do*, to take action, to make things happen. Yet they are not absolute powers. They are powers that operate within certain constraints or boundaries.

The power of freedom means that you ultimately have the power to decide and choose your way of life and you do that everyday as you choose your thoughts. The questions then before any of us and all of us are these:

- ▶ Are you fully using your freedom for unleashing your highest and best?
- ▶ Are you developing your freedoms so that they are enhanced?
- ▶ Are you enabling others to access and use their freedoms?
- ▶ Are your beliefs, understandings, decisions, etc. supportive of your freedoms?
- ▶ Are you fully using your freedoms for actualizing the best version of you?

If not, find the nearest Neuro-Semanticist and access your Power Zone as well as your matrix of meaning frames that will enrich all your inner freedoms.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #32
June 25, 2012
Empowerment Series #19

THE POWER OF VULNERABILITY

When you first read the words of the title of this *Neurons* post, did it immediately strike you as a *power*? Probably not. Most of us do not think of “vulnerability” as a power, we think of it as a weakness, as a liability, and not as a resource. So what is the power of vulnerability? How could it be a powerful resource? How could it assist you in moving toward a more self-actualizing life?

The answer is really simple: *The power of vulnerability is the power to be yourself, the power to be open, to be real, and to be authentic.* Still not convinced? Then think of the opposite. Consider the experience or the state of hiding, covering-up, pretending, living behind a persona, a mask, a P.R. image. Consider the experience of being afraid to come out from behind your persona and being open, honest, and real. If you are afraid of being real, then you have framed “vulnerability” as a weakness rather than a strength. You have not yet made *vulnerability one of your strengths.*

In modern culture, books and movies give the impression that the powerful person is the mysterious person behind some facade of glamor or status or fame and that the way to succeed is to create a P.R. persona that you can hide behind. Then you do not have to play your cards so others can see who you are or what you have. Yet to live that way is, more often than not, the way to alienation, falsehood, pretension, and a fragile house of cards. And in terms of actualizing your highest excellence, it is no way for a human being to live!

Again, look at a small child—the vitality and aliveness oozing from every pore, the curious inquisitiveness and playfulness emanating from every expression, the authenticity and realness beaming forth with every question and statement. The child is as real as he or she is open and vulnerable. We were made to be real in that way, and when we are real, we are loved. The naive simplicity of just being oneself frees one from all the work of posturing, pretending, and hiding. Then there’s no need to anticipate rejection, dislike, or criticism. Being open and okay with your vulnerability enables you to be real and that chases away unrealistic expectations, like the need to be perfect.

While the power to be open and vulnerable is a gift of childhood, for the adult it is the result of self-actualization effort. After all, for us adults, to be vulnerable requires a very strong sense of self, of unconditional self-regard or esteem, a deep knowing of oneself, an acceptance and

appreciation of oneself, the social skills to reach out to others, genuinely care and invest in them . . . do all of that and you be on your way to experiencing the power of an open vulnerability.

If you want to be unattractive, be defensive. Now defensiveness can take a great many forms of pretense and falsehood: living behind a persona, over-identifying with job, money, friends, beliefs, status, etc. Then you begin living a lie—you focus on the impressions that you give out rather than what's true and real. Do that long enough and you can become so alienated from yourself, from what you really want, believe in, are passionate about, that your life itself becomes a sham.

In Self-Actualization Psychology, Abraham Maslow said that it generally takes a lifetime to become real and authentic. He noted that there are so many forces fighting against this drive for authenticity in us. Often it is not easy to know yourself, love yourself, accept yourself, and just be yourself. Yet *being yourself* is the objective of the *being-values* and of the *being-dimension*.

So if you wanted to develop your power of vulnerability, what would you do? Hmmmm. I think the first thing is to set this as an objective— to be open and vulnerable and real. And if that's your goal, then what resources do you need so that you can do that? Probably a big dose of acceptance— acceptance of yourself as a fallible and mortal human being, acceptance of the world as it is and people as they are. Here's a paradox: It takes a lot of self-acceptance, appreciation, regard, and love to be open and vulnerable and real.

In fact, what I've discovered in the past couple years is that this is the true heart and essence of mastery in the field of Coaching. That's because after you get to Okay, are living in the present, are ready to take life on and step up to finding and unleashing your potentials, after you have received training, consulting, and mentoring — the next biggest step is that of *becoming real*. This is not for the faint of heart. To become real you have to have a lot of courage. You have to be ready to take and manage risks of living an authentic life.

Are you ready to claim your power of vulnerability? Are you ready to be authentically real so that you don't turn this gift (that of being vulnerable) into a liability or weakness? Are you ready to ground yourself in your reality as a fallible and mortal human being?

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #33
July 2, 2012
Empowerment Series #20

THE POWER OF RESILIENCE

If there is a particular *power* that you and I need, it is the power to *bounce-back after a set-back*. There's a special term that we use when we refer to this power—resilience. And resilience power is the power to not let any defeat, failure, mistake, or misfortune keep you down or kill your vision. Resilience is the power to get back up, shake off the dust and dirt and *go for it again*. It is the power to not let circumstances or your environment control your thinking, feeling, speaking, or acting. It is to empower your vision, your values, and your intention. In other words, your meanings so that the meanings you create in all of these dimensions (and more) become the controlling factors in your life.

Now isn't that an incredibly mighty power?

- ▶ Do you have it?
- ▶ Do you have enough of it so that you can walk through the world with the sense that no one and nothing can deprive you of it?
- ▶ Is your sense of resilience so robust, so stable, and so intense that you feel free to go ahead and take smart risks?
- ▶ Do you have the resilience to embrace the day fully?

When you have resilience fully and completely integrated into yourself, into your mind, your emotions, the way you talk, and the way you act, you have a level of freedom within yourself that allows you to truly be your own person. You are not dependent on the outside world, on circumstances, or on your environment nor even your social environment to determine whether you feel good or bad, successful or not, effective or not. You are dependent on something internal—your choices, your intentions, and your vision. In fact, with resilience you are able to develop a fierce resolve about a vision and persevere in making it real and to do so in the face of setbacks or disappointments.

With resilience, you become unstoppable. When you are stopped, it's only temporary. That's because you get right back up, tend to your skinned-up elbows and knees, reflect on what the most important lessons that you can learn from the set-back, adjust your thinking, framing, attitude, relating, and whatever else needs adjusting, and then *go for it again*. Resilience makes you a ferocious learner, a life-long learner, a learner who accelerates the learning that makes for wisdom by squeezing every bit of learnings from every experience. The way I like framing this description is to say that you have *bounce* within you. Knock you down and you bounce right back up. That's why in the Resilience Training that we do in Neuro-Semantics using the Meta-States Model, we talk about *resources that put bounce within you*.

What creates this kind of resilience power? As I've already indicated, you have to access and own your core powers of thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting (Empowerment Series #2 and #3). You also have to create the meta-state powers of ownership, responsibility, openness, vulnerability, choice, and the other things already mentioned in this series on personal empowerment. And that's why resilience is not a simple state, that is, it is not a primary state. That's why you cannot just "access the state of resilience, anchor it" and presto, you are resilient. Resilience is a more complex and layered meta-state than that.

Because resilience is a meta-state, it has layers. Within the state, it is not just a feeling experience. It is that, it does involve some strong robust feelings, yet it is so much more. To develop the meta-state of resilience and have it well integrated into yourself, you have to have many layers of frames of mind (attitudes, beliefs, understandings, decisions, identities, intentions, etc.) that support and empower this state. This is what I discovered when I did my very first modeling project (1991-1994) and in the process discovered or invented the Meta-States Model. By interviewing many, many people who "had been to hell and back" and who were resilient, I discovered that they all certain frames of mind that were now their operational framework.

Like what? They lived in a Matrix of frames that were characterized by such tremendous and empower ideas as the following:

- ▶ Getting knocked down is just life, no big deal; I will learn from this and get back into the game.
- ▶ I shall get through this. This is just one step back as I now take three steps forward.
- ▶ This too shall pass and as it does, I will let it go after I have mined all the learnings that I can from this so that I never make that mistake again. Onward to new mistakes!
- ▶ I have a vision of my life that will fulfill a set of values that I treasure as precious. I will let nothing kill my vision!
- ▶ Now is the time to take a step backwards to renew my vision of the big picture and the resources that I need for my next step forward.
- ▶ Every setback tells me to refine my coping skills so that I can cope with, even master this aspect of life. And so I will.
- ▶ I have plenty of resources, both internal and external, that I can turn to and access to help me cope and get back on my feet.
- ▶ I have an untraumatizable center— whatever happens that is disappointing or hurtful or even even is not about me, not about everything, and not forever. It is not personal, pervasive, or permanent (Martin Seligman). It is *That There Then* or *This Here Now*.
- ▶ I will not traumatize myself because something undesirable happen. I will not play the victims who whines and moans; I will get over it and master it.
- ▶ I am more than what happens to me. My happiness and destiny are in my hands. No one can take away my power to choose my attitude.

For more about the meta-state of resilience, get the *Meta-States* book (now in paperback as well as hardback) or track down a Neuro-Semantic Trainer who trains the *Resilience Training*.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #34
July 9, 2012
Empowerment Series #22

THE POWER OF IMPLEMENTING

We often talk about “knowledge being power,” and indeed, it can be. Yet there is a much greater power and that is the power of *acting* on knowledge, putting knowledge to work— or to use the language that best describes this power, this is the power of *implementing* knowledge. Knowing something means you have a mental understanding and possibly an accurate mental map about how to navigate something, but having a map by which you could navigate a certain territory is not the same as being actually able to navigate that territory.

In NLP we talk about this as the difference between map and territory and quote Alfred Korzbyski’s famous statement, “The map is not the territory.” Hand almost any adult a map of Hawaii or Bali or London or Sydney and no one thinks that the map *is* anyone of those places. It merely refers to those places or some other place. And if you know how to use a map, it gives you a way to get around when you are there.

This doesn’t mean that the map is not important. It is! In so many areas of life, if you do not have a map to navigate some experience, you will not get things right, and you could mess things up, and you could even die. So yes, maps are important. They are important for understanding, comprehending, for information about what to do, where to go, who to ask, how to think, etc. But a map doesn’t create the experience, *you have to do that*, and the map will help, but it is not sufficient. More is required.

What else is required for success? You have to take action on the information that the map that you have provide. You have to do something about your maps. When you enter a restaurant and the waiter hands you a menu, you now have in your hands access to a lot of information— information about the possibilities of dining in that restaurant. But the menu is not enough. Would you be satisfied if that’s all you got? After using the information to make a decision, you have to communicate what you want. Then, after the meal comes, you have to eat it if you want the nourishment and delight of the meal which that restaurant provides.

If somehow you get disoriented and think that the map is the territory or the menu is the meal, then you begin biting down on the map and trying to chew it. Not wise. It is just a menu, not the meal.

Implementation describes the process of taking something that you know and translating it into action that actually *uses* the knowledge. *Implementation is then the power of knowledge activated.* Implementation, in fact, is the design of knowledge. It is what knowledge is for! To know something and *not* act on it is to misuse knowledge. It is to miss the opportunity that the knowledge provides. Why do you learn things in the first place? Isn't it so that you can take effective action and *do* whatever it is that you need to do that will translate your beliefs and understandings into reality?

That's what implementation is all about. Implementation is, as we say, "where the rubber hits the road." It is the putting into one's body, one's neurology, one's action, and one's lifestyle the information that one has come to know. It is then executing that knowledge so that it becomes real to you and in your life.

Obviously this is a tremendous power and separates those who just talk about doing and those who do. It separates those who turn their dreams, visions, and values into reality and those who keep dreaming but do not fulfill their visions. Do you have this power? Do you regularly and consistently *act on* what you know to do and especially in the areas that are critically important to you?

Actually, you do have this power. It may not be in the critical areas that you want it, but in some areas, you act on what you know. So if you want to develop this power, begin by identifying those areas where you already *do* what you *know*. To do so, think small and simple. What knowledge do you naturally, inevitably, and regularly translate into action? Spend a day or a week or even longer observing and reflecting on events in your life that fits this pattern?

Once you do that, now identify the areas where you want to do this, where you want to transfer this power. What are those areas? As you think about acting on what you know, what stops you? Is it a feeling, a belief, an attitude, a fear, or what? What stops you from acting? Does it seem too risky? If so, what would you be risking to do so? Is it forbidden? If so, by whom? What is not allowed? Who took permission away from you?

What do you need to believe about yourself in order to implement what you know? What do you need to believe about taking action to implement? What do you need to decide?

As you develop implementation power, your identity changes. You become *an implementer* of what you know. When you experience a moment of insight or enter a scene of knowledge, you don't leave it without taking some action. And no matter how small that action, it is the beginning of a new momentum. This is what people commonly report after the run the Mind-to-Muscle Pattern a dozen or more times. They talk about how they have now built a habit of implementation. They talk about how they can't just think or talk or know something, they have to act on it! To your highest and best in terms of implementation!

From: L. Michael Hall
2012 Meta Reflections #35
July 16, 2012

RESEARCH AND THE FIELD OF NLP

Whenever I'm interviewed by media people (journalists, writers for specialized magazines and journals, radio and television) about NLP or Neuro-Semantics, there are inevitably questions about research:

- What research has been done on this?
- Does research prove the validity of NLP?
- Have you personally conducted research to determine if this really works?

And if a reporter or journalist takes his job seriously and does his or her homework, the interviewer probably knows that while there has been some research done on NLP, there's been very little and the research that has been done is mixed, some offers some validation and some indicates that some things are invalid. A recent example was sent to me this week by Denis Bridoux in the UK. This comes from the BBC website:

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburg-east-fife-18871072

It is about "eye accessing cues and lying." Now in the original NLP books Bandler and Grinder repeatedly when asked, "Can you catch someone lying because their eyes go to 'construct' rather than memory?" they always said, "No." But many people have been poorly and inadequately trained in NLP and were either told that "NLP can detect lying," or came to believe that on their own. [After all, it is a seductive idea that you could "see" people lying by one single indicator!] So some researcher decided to test it and, surprise of surprise, they found that the hypothesis did not prove valid. Then they falsely (and inadequately) concluded that "research does not support NLP."(!) And the fact is that there has been a lot of this kind of shallow and inadequate "research" about NLP.

But now things are changing and changing in a big way. Today we have —

The NLP Research Conference — held in the UK every other year.

www.nlpresearchconference.com

www.anlp.org/the-international-nlp-research-conference

The NLP Research Journal edited by Dr. Paul Tosey— two volumes already completed.

p.tosey@surrey.ac.uk

The NLP Research and Recognition Project – led by Dr. Frank J. Bourke

fpmc1000@hotmail.com

I write all of this because we have just completed the *Third NLP Research Conference*. The conference occur on July 6 and 7 at the University of Hertfordshire, in the UK. This year I had the privilege of giving the keynote presentation on *The Qualitative Problem*. 30 papers were presented about research projects that people had conducted in many different countries and languages although all of the presentations were made in English. Researchers, Trainers, and Academicians came from at least 10 different countries. I was really, really delighted that we had two of our people there delivering papers.

- **Dr. Susie Linder-Pelz** from Sydney Australia presented a study of the effect of benchmarking on participants and did a fabulous job! I sat in and when she mentioned the title— “The effect of Benchmarking on participants” I sudden experienced a vision of a rush of faces of many, many participants which I’ve seen in many, many countries when the benchmarking of their skills didn’t support their own sense of competence (!!). In spite of my personal anticipation of horror (!), Susie had a great presentation in terms of research design, quality, and reflection.
- **Scott Pochron** from Ohio, USA, similarly did an excellent job in presenting a synthesis between Developmental Psychology and NLP (including Meta-States and Neuro-Semantics) ... he referred to the excellent book of John Burton, *States of Equilibrium* where Dr. Burton put the Meta-States Model of self-reflexivity together with the higher levels of adult development. Scott put all of that together with many, many models from the field of Developmental Psychology and is in the process of creating a website for Developmental NLP.

Today there are a lot of people in a lot of places doing research on the validity of nearly every aspect of the NLP Model. And there are a lot of exciting things that are currently in the works about research. Increasingly men and women in places of academic influence ate using NLP books, models, and methodologies. For years, *The Structure of Personality: Ordering and Disordering of Personality* (2001, Crown House Publications) has been used as a textbook in courses on personality.

So if research is important to you and you want to stay up with the research that has bene occurring and is occurring in NLP, check out the *Research Journals* and the websites. Also I have attached a file of descriptions of the papers presented at this current Conference. And if you haven’t noticed, we have a “Research” button on www.meta-coaching.org.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #36
July 17, 2012
Empowerment Series #22

THE POWER OF HUMAN CAPITAL

Reading Warren Bennis recently on leadership and management in the context of business, he quoted Mayer, head of MGM Studies, who said many, many years ago, “The inventory goes home at night.” And from that idea Bennis then wrote:

“The only capital that really counts is human capital.”

Back in the 1960s when Mayer wrote those words, that idea was radical, “crazy,” and considered way out there. Today it is pretty much common knowledge. Do you believe that? “The only capital that really counts is human capital.” Do the people you work with believe that? Do the leaders and managers of your organization believe that?

Human capital— this is the capital that’s within people, their innate wealth-creating powers of understanding, imagination, thought, intention, creativity, commitment, dedication, persistence, resilience— all of the fundamental human “powers” that gives people the “energy” to do what they do and to take effective action in the world, which is the theme of this series on Empowerment.

At the personal and psychological level, *human capital* describes the richness and resourcefulness of your basic assets—your mind, emotions, speech, and behavior.

What’s in your *mental capital*? In that treasury there are such assets as your understandings, meanings, frames, creativity, visions, dreams, etc.

Within your *emotional capital* there are your relationships, care, values, ethics, compassion, heart.

Within your *linguistic capital* there such assets as your abilities to inspire, validate, correct, instruct, inform, encourage, confirm, negotiate, etc.

Within your *behavioral capital* there is your competencies for implementing, executing, taking effective action, being efficient, etc.

That’s a lot of capital, isn’t it? And what is *the power* of such human capital? Is it not that from this *living capital* of what you can do with these powers of thinking, emoting, speaking, and doing come every skill and competency that makes up any and every set of competencies for every demonstration of expertise and excellence? “Genius” lies not in a static possession, in the human and social world it lies in what we can do with what we have. It lies in the expression and use of the capital. It lies in the energetic use of this capital as we invent new ideas in our

imaginations, communicate that with others, and collaborate with them to bring those ideas to market.

This is the *energy* within an individual or an organization that makes the person or the company dynamic, growing, and increasing in its capacities—in its creative capacities, innovative capacities, its wealth-creation capacities. Conversely, when this is missing, the person or the company seems and feels stagnant, dead, not-alive, sitting on its capital and not using it.

Today the capital of individuals, companies, and businesses does not lie primarily in stuff—the things that we own: buildings, equipment, money on hand, cash flow, ability to borrow, etc. Yes that is capital— financial capital. The capital we would put down on profit and loss statements in a financial document regarding assets. But the *real* capital, the *living* capital, the *human* capital that actually creates the value and worth lies in the people—in their intelligence, their relationships, their creativity, their emotional-intelligence, their social intelligence, their passions, their problem-identifying and solving skills, and perhaps most surprisingly, in their ability to have fun and to enjoy what they do. This is the power that causes a particular business to thrive and grow. When that happens, it's because of the mental-emotional capital which people are exerting and investing.

Enough description, now for some application. How are you doing in terms of appreciating, identifying, and developing your own human potential? Obviously, as always, it begins with your four core powers of thinking, emoting, speaking, and acting. That's the heart of your treasury for true wealth and richness. So how much capital do you have there? How precious does that capital seem to you?

If you don't think and feel yourself as your core powers is a treasure-chest of immense wealth and wealth-creating energy, it's time to meta-state yourself with the beliefs, understandings, decisions, intentions, identities, permissions, and frames that will do precisely that. That would be the first step.

After setting the frames that enable you to appreciate those energies or powers, now identify and develop them. That's what personal development is all about. And to assist with that there's a whole industry these days about personal development: books, tapes, videos, CDs, workshops, trainings, coaching, etc. Are you taking advantage of those? Are you on a self-development journey? What are you developing in yourself this month? This quarter? This year? Got a plan? If not, then my recommendation is: Call up a Meta-Coach and schedule an appointment!

Next, take action. Do not make the Perfectionist's Mistake of Seriously Procrastinating until you won't make a mistake and your first steps will be flawless, perfect, excellent, and the finish product. Your treasury of human capital is a living, growing, developing set of competencies that are refined in the fire of experimentation and risk. So go for it!

www.meta-coaching.org

www.metacoachfoundation.org

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #37
July 23, 2012
Empowerment Series #23

THE POWER OF PLANNING

In the last post in this Empowerment series, I asked if you have a plan for your own self-development for identifying and developing your *human capital and potentials*. Well, do you? Is it written down? Is it detailed out so that you have an *action plan* for each day and each week? And do you consider it important?

Typically when I pose such questions at trainings, several people will pipe up and ask, "But do I have to have a plan? What's the big deal about a plan?" Others will say that they "did that and it did not work."

The key here actually is not the plan, it is the process of planning. There's a famous quote from General George S. Patton during the Second World War about plans.

"A good plan, violently executed now, is better than a perfect plan next week."

The other quote is that what's most important is not the plan, but the planning. If the next day you find out that the plan is no longer relevant or useful, throw it away. You have not wasted time or effort, because the value was in and is in the planning. So Patton identified that what is important is not the Plan per se, but the process of planning. So be ready to abandon any and every plan that you draw up. If the key to success then is not the plan, then the key is the planning.

Ah yes, *planning* is the important item. This is the process of going through *the struggle of figuring out what you want*. Planning is the process where and when you want it, what's involved in accessing the required resources and prerequisites to get what you want, identifying the obstacles and constraints to be dealt with, the problems to solve, the solutions to invent, and the process of innovating the plans so that they become real. The experience of *planning* involves a lot! And it is this that is important.

- So, do you have a plan for your own human capital development?
- What plans do you have for actualizing your highest and best?
- What plans have you created and are creating so that you can become the best version of you?
- What is your planning process for your most highly desired objectives?
- How do you incorporate continuous improvement into your plans?

Now the power in planning obviously lies in using all of your core powers (thinking, emoting, speaking, and acting) as you engage in a process of imagining and inventing a desired future and then figuring out the steps and stages for getting there. It is this whole *process* that we call *planning*.

When I modeled the experience of wealth creation in the early 1990s, this was one of the things I discovered in those who had succeeded in becoming financially independent. They had sat down and planned what they wanted and how they would go about obtaining it. Later when I examined the literature and the longitudinal research on wealth creation, the same theme emerged. So I sat down and wrote my first wealth creation plan. Talk about hard! It was “hard” because it revealed that I really didn’t have a clear idea about what or how. So to complete the planning process, I had to do some intense and focused thinking about that, I had to revisit my notes on the process, I had to do a lot of self-exploration about skills, potential competencies, weaknesses, plans for addressing those weaknesses, passions, etc. Eventually I created a 10-year plan which I broke down to a year-by-year development, which I broke down to a month-by-month set of activities, which I broke down to a day-by-day checklist of things “to do” that would be my small everyday *steps* toward financial independence.

The *planning process* itself involved all of that intense focused thinking that detailed the grand idea., the grand idea was financial independence, but the work of planning was the *meta-detailing* the specific everyday activities that would make that possible. And true to what General Patton said, the truly important was not the Plan. As life kept happening, I found myself constantly change it and updating it. And that was the important thing.

That’s why to this very day, one of the objectives and take-aways from the *Inside-Out Wealth Training* is the ten-year-plan that every participant is encouraged to create. I even put that in the book by the same title so that if you are just using the book, you will be invited repeatedly to create a ten-year plan and have even offered a template for creating that plan (Chapter 15, p. 234ff).

If *the planning process* is the key to creating your own inside-out wealth so that you win the inner game of how you think, understand, believe, and decide about “wealth,” and then win the outer game of actualizing that, the same will be true for other objectives. It will be true for your personal empowerment.

- Have you set out to create a ten-year plan for *empowering* yourself mentally, emotionally, linguistically, behaviorally, relationally, etc.?
- If you set out to create a personal empowerment plan— what would you write?
- What planning would you do?
- What competencies would you focus on developing?
- What beliefs would you need to identify and install so that your beliefs support you?
- What states, intentions, identities, etc.? (here using the distinctions of the Matrix Model).

The power of planning taps into the power of a well-formed outcome, into the power of

intentionality, and into the power of meta-detailing.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #38
July 30, 2012
Empowerment Series #24

THE POWER OF META-DETAILING

What do you think when you first look at the title of this post? Unlike other “powers” that I’ve written about, this “power” may strike you as a strange power— the power of *meta-detailing*? So first of all you may be wondering, what is meta-detailing? It is not just details. If it was that, I would have written “details” or “detailing.” Nor is it just a meta-level awareness, that is, the big picture.

Somehow it is a combination of details and the global perspective. I first put these two words together some years ago, when I actually wrote an entire book to describe and provide examples of meta-detailing. Today in that book, *Sub-Modalities Going Meta*, meta-detailing is described as one of the *key* facets of “genius.” And where did I get that idea? From Robert Dilts and his series of books, *Strategies of Genius*. In fact there’s a whole chapter in that book on Meta-Detailing (see Chapter 17).

So what is meta-detailing?

The *meta* is the big picture, the gestalt, the overview or generalization while the *details* are the specifics of that larger image or understanding. In terms of the Meta-Programs Model, the *meta* is the general or global perspective and the *details* refer to the specifics. Now structurally in a holistic experience of excellence, the meta will govern the details. This is what we call meta-detailing. The *meta* provides the larger perspective, the *details* gives the specifics that pick out the sensory-based data.

Meta-detailing as a process therefore holds two things together in a creative tension. In meta-detailing you are able to focus on the crucial and essential details of a concept (a belief, value, understanding, etc.) which makes it real and actionable. Robert Dilts describes the genius of Walt Disney and how he could take a larger-level concept like “charming” in the animal characters he created in his art and movies (like Mickey Mouse) and detail such “charm” into long eye-lashes and dimples in the cheeks.

To *meta-detail*, start with a meta-level frame which you want to actualize. You then identify the critical, essential details of that frame which translates the higher into the lower. What does that higher level phenomenon look or sound like when you specify its details?

The meta-detailing process synthesizes the polar ends of the general/specific meta-program. It

creates a holistic synergy so that you no longer are pulled apart by the either-or frame. No longer is it a matter of “being *either* global *or* detailed.” Now you can be *both* at the same time. Now you can sequence both so that you can focus in on details from the perspective of some meta-frame. And because of this you can now sort out the trivial details from the details that matter and then zoom in on the relevant details in just the right way.

Whether in your meta-program you are more naturally a “global” thinker or a “specific” thinker, you can expand your meta-program so that you can operate more holistically and synergistically. If you posit that you have to be one way or the other indicates that you are operating within an either-or framework that views this meta-program (and probably others) as a dichotomous choice. So what’s the solution? Meta-state that either-or frame so that you can operate from a more systemic frame, a both-and frame which moves beyond dichotomizing to synergizing.

[There’s a lot more to say about this. For a pattern for expanding meta-programs, see *Figuring Out People* and the chapter on changing meta-programs. This is also something that we focus on and deal with in *Coaching Mastery*, module III of Meta-Coaching, so if you need a coach, search out for a Licensed Meta-Coach!]

Meta-Detailing then stands in contrast with the two polar opposites. First it stands in contrast to the not-so-resourceful experience of “getting lost in details.” Usually this means lost in *irrelevant details*. And that is a problem. What details are *relevant*? What details are core, essential, and critically important? The problem with details that are not governed by a meta-level frame is that you can get lost in details that do not matter.

Conversely, meta-detail also stands in contrast to getting lost in abstractions— global and general ideas that may be noble ideas, inspiring ideas, fabulous ideas, etc., but ideas that are so much in La La Land that they could never be actualized in life on planet Earth as we know it.

The power of meta-detailing is that it gives your “genius” state of engagement, focus, and flow a specificity that enables you to make real your higher level concepts. Now you have a laser-beam focus which directs you about what to do, how to do it, where to do it, when to do it, etc.

There’s a story told in NLP circles about the furnace repairman who came into a home, looked over the furnace, and then tapped on a certain pipe two times, and then charged the home owner \$100. The home owner was shocked and furious.

“Why are you charging me \$100? It only took you two minutes and all you did was tap on a pipe. Give me a detail bill.”

So he did: “\$1 for tapping. \$99 for knowing where to tap, how to tap, and that tapping is the solution.”

That’s meta-detailing. In the communication of change and transformation, meta-detailing is that genius perspective of knowing, seeing, and responding effectively to the critical leverage points where a very small action or intervention can result in very large and effective results. In meta-detailing, you develop a laser-beam focus on the critical details of something, those details which make up “the difference that makes a difference.” And when you can do that, you have the

power of precision, the power of leverage, and the power of relevance.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #39
August 6, 2012
Empowerment Series #25

THE POWER OF GOING FOR IT

There's a power in *going for it*. Do you know this power? Perhaps you know the opposite, the dis-empowerment of hesitating, procrastinating, being indecisive, and/or fear of risk taking. These dis-empowering experiences undermines your sense of power, drains your sense of being efficacious in living your life, and contradicts your empowerment. In these experiences, you are *not* "going for it."

Conversely, when you *go for it*, you take action. You try things. You experiment and then you look to see what worked, what did not, and what you can learn from the experiment. It's like being in a laboratory—the laboratory of life. In taking a scientific attitude about life, your experiments enable you to figure things out and use the power of continuous improvement. When you "go for it," you take initiative and this prevents you from getting stuck in the fearful place of waiting until you perfectly understand or until you can avoid all errors, mistakes, and failures.

When you *go for it*, you also demonstrate that you trust yourself. It is not a matter of trusting that you will always succeed or do it right or perfectly. No. Instead you trust yourself to learn, to figure it out, to adjust, to be flexible, to be resilient, and to make things more and more right. *Going for it* then is an act of courage and heart. It is a bold move, one that indicates that you believe in yourself and in the future.

The power of *going for it* means that you don't have to know it all in order to start. Isn't that great? And that means, you can start today. You can start where you are by taking small, measured actions, and build up the momentum that you need. The power of going for it also means that you can invent it as you go. This is another discovery that I've made from modeling the wealth-creators (in the wealth-creation modeling that I did), modeling the entrepreneurs, and modeling leaders. All three groups of people shared this same quality—they were responsive persons who took initiative, who were proactive in their way of being in the world, and who would *go for it* when they had a vision that they wanted to actualize.

Test yourself about your personal power of going for it:

- Do you trust yourself in doing at least something to act on your goal?

- How often do you stop yourself by procrastinating?
- When considering stepping out to do something new, how much fear do you experience?
- Do you let the fear hold you back?
- What risk-management skills do you have, or do you need?
- How responsive are you in terms of taking effective action even if it is just a small act?

Obviously, to go for it requires a strong sense of self, a strong sense of your own self-efficacy, a strong sense of your ability to learn and to flexibly adjust to an ongoing process. The power to *go for it* arises obviously from your four fundamental powers, from your power of owning your own responsibility, and from your power of resilience.

I learned about this power in my very first NLP Training, it was a phrase that I heard over and over from Richard Bandler. Later when I was just about to complete my Resilience Modeling Project (1994), I presented a workshop at Denver that I titled, “*Go for it— Again!*” The idea was that in the set back we lose our ability to “go for it,” and that through resilience we are enabled to recover this fundamental power.

Going for it describes the attitude and spirit of an entrepreneur. Men and women who catch a vision and then think through how to make that dream come true have to have the ability to just “go for it.” That is, to take the risk to launch forward and to step up and make the dream come true. Dreaming by itself doesn’t accomplish anything. After the dreams comes the planning, the work, and the discipline of managing yourself through time and many activities so that you can transform the dream into reality. This is self-actualization.

Now a person can “go for it” in an undisciplined way, in a reactive and impatient way. But that’s not a form of personal empowerment. An empowered person “goes for it” accesses the state of patience and mindfulness and then steps forward in a disciplined way to turn great ideas into action. Here then is the paradox and the synergy—you and I need both. We need both the impulse to take action and we need to take action (or “go for it”) after we have thought through our vision and turned into a well-formed outcome.

Healthy and productive *going for it* then occurs as a synergy. You have to move up the Meaning Axis and generate a great idea and then you have to move out on the Performance Axis to take the initiative. Do both in a balanced way and you create a gestalt of an intelligent *going for it*.

This is not only what entrepreneurs do, it is a very quality of leadership. Great leaders have this action tendency, this bias for action and initiative. They *go for it*. They don’t leave their great ideas and visions as mere Business Plans written out in a book or a Vision statement posted on a wall. Those who are highly effective leaders synergy their vision into an action and then *go for it* as they lead out into the future.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #40
August 11, 2012

A SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF MORE NEURO-SEMANTIC NLP TRAINERS INTO THE WORLD

While the Olympics were being held in London and the billion dollar Mars “car” landed on the Planet Mars — in GJ Colorado we began and completed **NSTT—2012**. And with that, we made a successful launch of the next group of trainers into the world — in fact all over Planet Earth. With this group we now have more trainers in the USA, Mexico, Brazil, Canada, Sweden, South Africa, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Panama!

Like the Meta-Coaching System, NSTT is a Training Boot Camp— very intense, it lasted 16 days this year and some were here for 21 days for the long hours (9 am to 9 pm) although that was just the classroom time. Much more went on prior to those hours and sometimes long afterwards. Why so long and so intense? *Preparation*. To prepare the trainers for handling the stresses and pressures of training.

In terms of quality, I think that we can modestly say that there is no NLP Training for Presentation Skills or Training skills that matches the quality. Each trainer-in-training presents 10 times in mini-presentations and then a final 30 minute presentation on a specified subject and each time the person is given extensive feedback to the benchmarks. The final presentation is measured at a minimum of 2.5 on the benchmark scales. In addition, there are dozen and dozens of Neuro-Semantic Drills that Colin Cox has invented that puts the trainers through stretches and challenges for their voice development, focus, management of semantic space, and more.

It was wonderful this year to have four NLP Trainers with us, adding Neuro-Semantics to their repertoire of skills and training options as well as joining the community. And it was wonderful to have four of our five Trainers who are in the Master Trainer Internship — Lena Gray (New Zealand), David Murphy (Mexico), Alan Fayter (New Zealand), and Patrik Fordell (Sweden), (Omar Salom could not be with us this year). They challenged Colin Cox and myself in benchmarking presentations that were at a 2.7 to a 3.3 level causing us to make many, many more finer distinctions of excellence and expanding the benchmarks for the upper levels.

And due to this factor, for the first time since the introduction of the formal benchmarks in 2004, every single person reached competency level on the seven core competencies. WE also had four other experienced Trainers who returned to assist in the process: Germaine Rediger (Belgium), Femke Stuut (USA, Netherlands), Mark Ashton (USA), and Mohamed Terek (Eygpt).

If you are interested in developing your Presentation (public speaking) and Training skills, the next NSTT will be in Hong Kong (Sept. 14 through 25, 2013), and after that the plans are for both Australia and Brazil (2014). Several have asked if there are more copies of the NSTT Training Manual ... after making sure that we had enough for the training, I can now confirm that I do have some extra copies and for those you can contact me directly (see below).

If interested, write to me with your mailing address at meta@acsol.net

The training manuals are bound as a book in perfect binding and are \$45 plus shipping.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #41
August 13, 2012
Empowerment Series #26

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

After 21 days of trainings here in Colorado and seeing so many people from so many countries coming here for the Leadership Trainings of NSTT and seeing people network, create new associations, and plan how they will support each other, I feel impelled to write about the power of community. This is one of the things that people most often speak about when they speak about the value that they derive from Neuro-Semantic trainings. They talk about feeling a part of a community, that they have found a new family, and that they are part of something bigger than themselves—a world-wide community of like-minded visionaries out to change the world!

The power of belonging is an incredible power and, of course, is one of the basic “needs” in our hierarchy of needs as detailed by Abraham Maslow. Because we are social beings, we need to be welcomed into community where we feel love and affection, and where we are valued and appreciated. And when we experience the gratification of this need, it brings to nearly everyone a healing and wholeness. And because it does, with it we are enabled to move up to the highest needs, the *being*-needs of self-actualization.

The power of community not only speaks about what it does for us in terms of our health, well-being, completeness, and motivation, it also speaks about what we can do together as a community. We have a special way that we express this in Neuro-Semantics.

We can do so much more together, than alone or apart.

Doing things together—that is actually also the secret of the success of the human race, the secret of civilization itself. Korzybski called it time-binding. By creating symbols and then language, we have been able to cooperate and collaborate with each other over the years and centuries and millennia. Today you and I can read Aristotle and as we do, we train our brain and nervous system with the very distinctions that Aristotle learned, discovered, and transmitted. We bind what he learned in his time to what you and I can learn today and as we bind those learnings into our nervous-system—and-brain. And together we can know more and do more than alone or apart.

The same principle holds for all of the manmade “wonders of the world” that we hold dear and awesome, whether the Pyramids of Egypt or the Eiffel Tower of Paris or one of the Castles of Europe, the Great Wall of China, or one of the skyscrapers in today’s modern cities. We marvel in amazement at what we can achieve by working together, coordinating efforts, cooperating with resources, and collaborating in visions. So also what we can do when we collaborate: defeat a

Hitler, engineer nuclear power, go to the moon or send a rover to Mars, invent computers, and a million other things that makes life better. Together we can generate more transformative creations than we can alone or apart.

Actually, in the lives of all genius and creative people, we find that they didn't do it alone. There were always colleagues and supporters whether they be mentors or sponsors or co-workers. Michelangelo did his work through 14 painters that worked with him. Edison created thousands of patents, many if not most of them created by his thousands of workers and associates.

The power of community is the power to multiple one's influence, to spread new resourceful ideas, and to embody the transformation it makes in human lives. The power of community in today's world also facilitates credibility. In research, the most credible journals are peer-reviewed which means that others who are equally knowledgeable and experienced examine the writings and offer critiques. And this refines the articles making them more accurate and therefore useful. In community we can create accountability structures so that we manage ourselves, our egos, our pride, and our use of power.

Communities generate numerous energies. They generate for us a context in which to make sense and meaning of what we do and create. Here is a place and a group that recognizes the contributions that individuals make and that honor those contributions. This was the point that Howard Gardner made about "creating genius" in his book, *Creating Minds*. To have a "genius" legitimized as a genius, you need a community that does precisely that.

Yes, community is powerful. In an effective and especially in a self-actualizing community, we are able to become more fully ourselves, more loving and compassionate, more disciplined and focused. Community brings out our humanity as social beings and calls upon us to move beyond the small world of self and to enter into the larger world of others. Community also challenges us to develop the special social skills, states, and attitudes that enable us to from being a private person to being a public person — a man or woman *for* others.

Today *community* and the power of community is spoken about in so many different ways and studied from so many different perspectives: social intelligence, emotional intelligence (EQ), groups, high performance teams, organizations, sociology, anthropology, social psychology, and the list goes on and on. We are social beings and, on the average, we do not do well alone. While we can use solitude for growth and reflection, we are diminished by loneliness. We need others. We need to be a part of a cohesive and supportive community.

And yet *needing* others doesn't mean that we innately know how to get along well with others. If we see anything from human history— we don't know that intuitively. We have to learn that. We have to discover and be trained for the social skills, states, and attitudes. High performance teams do not just happen, they are created, or better, co-created. They are facilitated by group and team coaches who know how to bring people together, integrate differences, confront and resolve conflicts, and empower people for "playing well together."

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #42
August 20, 2012
Empowerment Series #27

THE POWER OF SYSTEMS

You are a system! Most fundamentally you are a mind-body-emotion system that takes “data” or “information” from the world and transforms it into your own personal, unique, and idiosyncratic mental-emotional maps that you then use to navigate life and all of the challenges of life. You are an information-process-and-outputting system. It is the very nature of your mind-body system as you use your neurology to “abstract” from the electromagnetic spectrum that informs you of events in the world, take that data into your nervous-system-and-brain system, process and filter that information, and then output it in terms of energy, emotions, and actions. [This, by the way, is the content of the NLP Communication Model.]

And you are also a system which lives inside of multiple embedded systems. So you are not just one system, you are multiple systems. In addition to your mind-body-emotion system, there is your language system, family system, religious system, ethnic system, business system, political system, and so on. Is it any wonder then that you are systemically complex as a person and that your “way of being in the world” is most essentially systemic?

What does all this have to do with empowerment? Well, if you want to be empowered in an effective and informed way as a person in moving through the world, you will definitely want to recognize these systems, how they operate, what they are doing, and how they are all interacting. You will also want to know how to *think* in terms of systems, how to *communicate* systemically, and how to act and relate systemically. If you are a system within systems, doesn't that make sense?

But what if you do not learn to think, communicate, act, and relate systemically? If you do not, then the likelihood is that any one or more of these systems will *have you* rather than you *having* the systems. Think about that: The system will have you! That's what Morpheus told Neo in the movie, “The Matrix,” “The Matrix is a system of control.” Compare that to what Quality Theorist and Expert, W. Edwards Deming once said about problems in organizations. “90% of the problems within an organization are system problems, not individual problems.”

System problems means that the problem lies in the very system, as it is set up and operating. And that means that any and every person *within* that system will experience the same problems and interferences. In these cases, the person is not the problem, the system is the problem. And so often with us—in many cases, we are not the problem, you are not the problem— “the system” is the problem. It may be the meaning-system, it could be the intention-system, it could be the

strategy-system, the language-system, the cultural-system, the political-system, and so on. And in such cases, if you want to find your powers and take effective action, you will do so by learning to think, speak, act, and relate *systemically*.

Regarding the power of a system, one of the central powers that any and every system has is that it operates to achieve an outcome. This is what systems are designed and organized to do. They are designed to achieve some outcome. As some do, they spin out of control and become run-away systems (escalating systems). Others are designed as homeostatic systems so that they maintain a healthy balance between various forces. This is especially true of living biological systems.

What is your mind-body-emotion system designed to do? What self-organizing attractors have you set in your system? To ask these questions is to ask about your system of values and beliefs, your internal system intentions and purposes, and your system of orientation as you move through life, work, career, relationships, etc. It is asking you to begin to *think systemically*.

Once set, your thinking-perceiving-noticing-sorting system (your meta-programs and other higher meta-levels) are organized to see what you have designed it to see. So also your belief-understanding-decision system. And while from outside the system, it may be toxic, destructive, and dysfunctional, from inside the system it makes perfect sense and is well-intentioned to achieve something that it thinks will be helpful and beneficial. It is this which creates the blind spots in our mental-emotional systems.

We have just released the latest book in the Meta-Coaching series, *Systemic Coaching* (2012). This book is especially written to enable you to fully appreciate the power of systems and to use systems thinking, speaking, acting, and relating when working with a human mind-body-emotion system. Of course, it is especially focused on the communication excellence that we call “coaching.” In it you will find that I have set out the characteristics of a system and how these characteristics and variables interact in the human system and knowing that you will then see how they can be effectively used in the context of coaching someone for greater empowerment in service of unleashing the person’s highest and best potentials.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #42
August 20, 2012

HUMAN POTENTIAL PEAKS

What is Neuro-Semantics?

It is a model that enables you to make real in your everyday life (*actualize*) your highest values, visions, and meanings as your very best performances (skills, competencies, results, activities). Neuro-Semantics gives you practical processes whereby you can find, develop, and expressive your best version of you. And of course, when you do that, you experience a profound joy and meaningfulness that gives you a focus, a simplicity, a passion, and a vibrant reason to live.

Growing out of NLP, Neuro-Semantics uses the best of NLP as processes for modeling, communicating, and empowering. And growing also out of the first Human Potential Movement, Neuro-Semantics builds on the wisdom of Maslow and Rogers for actualizing excellence as one steps up to the highest human drives and values.

Neuro-Semantics is also the second Human Potential Movement launched that in 2007. Prior to that launching I focused my attention on making the *unleashing of human potentials* explicit. Today there are four trainings and training manuals to that effect and three books. Now for the very first time, we are putting the four Self-Actualization Psychology trainings together into a single format under the title — *Human Potential Peaks*.

The Peaks		The Self-Actualizing Life —
The Peak of Vitality	—	means energy, coming alive, living passionately
The Peak of Unleashing Potential	—	creating and living as your Authentic Self
The Peak of Creativity	—	creating and innovation solutions to problems
The Peak of Leadership	—	bringing out the best in others

What's in this new series and why should you plan to attend? The following describes the content of the 9 day program (and Day 10 for trainers and coaches). Why call in and reserve your spot? So that you can use the positive psychology of Maslow and Rogers in a practical way to make real your highest and best potentials. So that you stop selling yourself and human nature short and begin to embrace the everyday passions and peak experiences that occur when you are experience the Human Potential Peaks —vitality, unleashing, creativity, and leadership.

Day 1: Self-Actualization Psychology

A psychology of the vision of the incredible potentials within human beings. A description of people operating at their best (self-actualizing their potentials) and seeking the peak of their highest drives and values. In this opening introduction, you will learn

about the numerous models in Neuro-Semantics that allows you to full experience your authentic self.

Days 2-3: The Peak of Vitality

First, discover your biological self and how to effectively master your driving “needs.” Doing this releases lots of energy and vitality so you can move to the level of *being* your authentic self. Release yourself from being stuck at a lower level need. Learn how to use the Hierarchy of Needs via the *Self-Actualization Assessment Scale* as you seek the peak of your highest drives where you can be fully alive/ fully human.

Days 4-5: The Peak of Unleashing Potentials

Discover your most unique human drive (making-meaning) and your innate powers for becoming the author of your life, the architect of your future. Enter into your Meaning-Making Construct to clear out every non-enhancing meaning and develop a high level of meaningfulness. Create your own crucible of authenticity so that you can change with ease and grace.

Days 6-7: The Peak of Creativity

After *creating* your best authentic self, you will be empowered to create solutions to all kinds of problems—problems that people need solving and that adds value which thereby creates wealth for yourself and others. Experience the creativity of identifying and solving problems as you seek the peak of creative innovations.

Days 8-9: The Peak of Leadership

First there is self-leadership, bringing out the best in yourself, then there is self-actualizing leadership— bringing out the best in others. By seeking the peak of actualize your own best potentials and authenticity—imagine the kind and quality of relationships, families, businesses, companies, corporations, organizations, and governments that you can create!

Day 10: Using Human Potential Peaks for Coaching and Training

Day 10 is an Insider’s Guide for using Self-Actualization Psychology for Neuro-Semantic Trainers and Meta-Coaches—preparing them for how to teach and certify the seek the peak series as well as how to use the unleashing of potentials methods as a transformational coach with individuals and groups.

When and where?

The first one will be in Hong Kong — Nov. 24— Dec. 2, 2012

[After that, Rio de Janeiro, May, 2013]

The *Human Potentials Peaks* Certificate with NLP Practitioner and APG comprises the Self-Actualization Psychology Diploma of Neuro-Semantics.

Sponsor: **Asia Professional Training Institute**

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From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #43
August 27, 2012
Empowerment Series #28

THE POWER OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Japanese word that summarizes the idea of *continuous improvement* is kaizen. This describes a very unique power, the power of believing that whatever you are working on can be improved again and again and again and, in fact, there is no end to the refines, improvements, and shaping that you can bring to that product, service, information, or experience. So you persist, you persevere, you keep questioning what could be better, what isn't working as well as it could, and you keep revisiting it to improve it a little bit more.

Di Kamp (1996), an NLP Trainer, noted that in today's world of business where change has become the constant and where a company's capital has switched from money and buildings and physical assets to human assets—to the human capital of intelligence, creativity, and resourcefulness, to have a powerful organization and business, we need powerful, resourceful people.

“The essence of the dynamic, effective and resourceful organization is its dynamic, effective and resourceful people. This requires a re-education of most people in what is expected of them at work. ... We were trained if something was wrong or missing — the deficiency model — and the training was designed to bring us up to standard for the job we were doing. . . . To be effective in a world of constant change and development demands an ability to be constantly learning and developing. It is only recently that concepts such as ‘the learning organization’ and ‘life-long learning for individuals’ have come to the fore.” (p. 18, *The Excellent Trainer*, Di Kamp, 1996).

Shifting then to a continuous improvement orientation requires that we also shift from a deficiency model for problem-solving to a proficiency model. That is, we shift from merely working on what is wrong or missing to the more creative perspective of wondering, “What could be better?” “How can we improve our current methods, products, services, etc.?” This is the frame for continuous improvement. “Everything can be improved. Nothing is perfect. Whatever we have created can be refined and taken to yet another level.”

What is the power of continuous improvement? It is the power of living life from the perspective of creativity. It is the mental-and-emotional power of constantly looking for new ways and methods for improving things and the excitement of wondering where will the next batch of new

ideas come from. And when you think-and-feel from that frame, life itself becomes much more adventurous and exciting.

This frame of continuous improvement also empowers our sense of curiosity, playfulness, experimentation, etc. We are now empowered to recognize that we have a much fuller range of abilities than we suspected and can wonder what other potentials are yet to emerge as we seek to continually improve our knowledge, our skills, our relationships, etc.

As I've been learning the power of continuous improvement, it frees me to release whatever I'm working on when I judge it as good as I can do right now. I know it's not perfect. I may even know that there's some problems with facets of it, but it is good enough and anyway, life is one big experiment in finding and refining what works and what brings more power and joy to our lives, so I release it. Then with feedback and more practice and more experiments, I learn better, learn more, and so I refine it. I take it to the next level. And so the continuous improvement continues.

I often speak about how that's what I did with the first volume of *Meta-States* in 1995. It was only two years later when I discovered the first significant mistake in the book, and by 2000 when I created the second edition, I had found four which I immediately corrected. Those were conceptual mistakes and the truth is that if I had waited until I found all of those mistakes, I still might not have ever published that book. It was through the feedback and sharp questioning and even the skeptical disbelief of some people which helped me to find those errors and correct them.

For the person operating from kaizen (the continuous improvement frame), there are no fatal errors or failures, there's only more discoveries about what can be improved, refined, and taken to another level of expertise. This is where true empowerment requires responsibility and accountability. Without responsibility and accountability, empowerment is not only reckless and stupid, it can be downright dangerous. Yet when you combine a passion for continuous learning and improvement with responsibility and accountability, with feedback and ongoing discovery, then you have an incredibly powerful way to move through the world. And the synthesis of all of that is creativity, innovation, courage, boldness to move forward, and fun.

Let your progress be incremental ... one small step at a time, one small improvement at a time. Over time, the small steps amount to something significant.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #44
August 29, 2012

FINALLY, THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION!

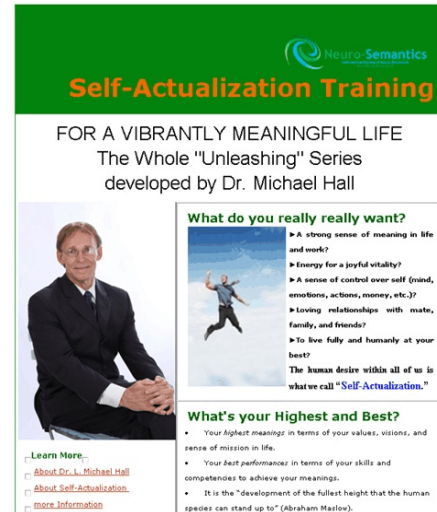
Yes, finally we have put together a sequence of trainings that captures the heart and soul of “self-actualization” and especially how you can apply it to yourself and your life situation. It equally applies to change agents like Coaches, Trainers, Consultants, Therapists, Leaders, Managers, Human Resource people and so on for using Self-Actualization Psychology to inform and guide their efforts at transformation.

What is this psychology and how do you use it? It is the psychology of people who have developed “normally” through the life-stages, are “okay” in themselves, living in the present (rather than the past), with the ego-strength to face life on its own terms, and ready for a challenge. Other psychologies focus on many other aspects of life such as therapy, childhood, career, organizations, education and learning, leadership and management, influence, communication, etc.

Self-Actualization Psychology grew from Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers’ original work in the “third force” of psychology that culminated in the Positive Psychology or Humanistic Psychology of the first Human Potential Movement. And what was the trigger that set it off? Maslow’s discovery of some specimens of “good humans” that discombobulated him and got him wonder: “What’s the healthy side of human nature? What is the highest level of development possible for humans? How great can people become?”

Using this psychology and recognizing the history of the first Human Potential Movement as the ground and context for the development of NLP (see *Self-Actualization Psychology*), in Neuro-Semantics we have been developing this. In 2007 we launched the New Human Potential Movement with the first Self-Actualization Workshop. Since then that workshop has been delivered in two dozen countries many, many times and three additional workshops have been created and delivered scores of times. And now for the very first time we are putting it all together into a single intense training.

We are calling the training — **Seeking the Peak of Human Potential or Human Potential Peaks**. The first presentation will be this November in Hong Kong and the second presentation in



The flyer features a green header with the Neuro-Semantics logo and the title "Self-Actualization Training". Below the header, it states "FOR A VIBRANTLY MEANINGFUL LIFE" and "The Whole 'Unleashing' Series developed by Dr. Michael Hall". On the left is a photo of Dr. Michael Hall. On the right, there are two sections: "What do you really really want?" with a list of desires and "What's your Highest and Best?" with a list of performance goals. At the bottom left, there are links to learn more about Dr. Michael Hall, the series, and more information.

tha

May in Rio de Janeiro Brazil.

Now when you *seek the peak of your possibilities* all kinds of wonderful things happen:

- New levels of energy and vitality.
- A strong sense of purpose and passion in life.
- The personal power and credibility of congruence.
- Enjoyment of everyday life.
- Peak experiences in your relationships.
- Creativity for effective problem-solving.
- Feeling in charge of your life and your choices.

Does any of that interest you? My bet is that it does. Why do I bet that it does? Because according to the originators of Self-Actualization Psychology, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, *you were made with an inner drive for actualizing your highest visions and values and transforming them into your very best performances.* And that, of course, is what Neuro-Semantics is all about— actualizing your excellence.

Now if that's true, then the biggest danger you face is this: *Selling yourself short!* It is failing to recognize your possibilities and potentials, your uniqueness and greatness. It is to settle for a mediocre life and to miss the joy, the challenge, the passion, the love, and all of the *being-values* that make life so special.

By now I hope you are more than just interested, I hope you are *fascinated* by the possibilities that all of this brings up. After all, life is not about “getting by” and “surviving,” it is about *thriving* and *creativity* and *joy* and *love* and *contribution* and *making a difference* and continually learning and developing. The psychology that informs and governs how to live life more fully, more humanly after you get over all of the hurts and traumas is Self-Actualization Psychology. It is a psychology that enables you to *Seek the Peak in being Authentically You.*

If you are still reading and feeling increasingly captivated then you will probably be delighted to know this focus is the heart and soul of Neuro-Semantics. It is also the subject of a whole series of trainings that are designed to facilitate and empower you to step up to the Real You— *the Authentic You.*

The Human Potential Peaks series

Day 1: Self-Actualization Psychology

A psychology of the vision of the incredible potentials within human beings. A description of people operating at their best (self-actualizing their potentials) and seeking the peak of their highest drives and values. In this opening introduction, you will learn about the numerous models in Neuro-Semantics that allows you to fully experience your authentic self and seek the human potential peaks.

Days 2-3: The Peak of Vitality

First, discover your biological self and how to effectively master your driving “needs.” Doing this releases lots of energy and vitality so you can move to the level of *being* your authentic self. Release yourself from being stuck at a lower level need. Learn how to use the Hierarchy of Needs via the *Self-Actualization Assessment Scale* as you seek the peak of your highest drives where you can be fully alive/ fully human.

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Discover your most unique human drive (making-meaning) and your innate powers for becoming the author of your life, the architect of your future. Enter into your Meaning-Making Construct to clear out every non-enhancing meaning as you develop a high level of meaningfulness. Create your own crucible of authenticity so that you can change old meanings with ease and grace.

Days 6-7: The Peak of Creativity

After *creating* your best authentic self, it’s time to create solutions to all kinds of other problems—problems that people need solving and that adds value thereby creating wealth for yourself and others. Experience the creativity of identifying and solving problems as you seek the peak of creative innovations.

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First there is self-leadership, bringing out the best in yourself, then there is self-actualizing leadership— bringing out the best in others. By seeking the peak of actualizing your own best potentials and authenticity—imagine the kind and quality of relationships, families, businesses, companies, corporations, organizations, and governments that you can create!

Day 10: Using Human Potential Peaks for Coaching and Training

Day 10 indi is *an Insider’s Guide* for using Self-Actualization Psychology for Neuro-Semantic Trainers and Meta-Coaches—preparing them for how to teach and certify the *Seeking the Peak series* as well as how to use the unleashing of potentials methods as a transformational coach with individuals and groups.

Human Potential Peaks Certificate

A Certificate indicating completion of the four modules of the Self-Actualization workshops as you have learned how to unleash your vitality, potentials, creativity, and leadership. The **Peaks Certificate** indicates that you have learned the fundamentals of the Neuro-Semantics of meaning-making, meta-stating, and transformation.

Self-Actualization Psychology Diploma

An ISNS Diploma indicating that you have completed the HPP along with NLP Practitioner training and Introduction to Meta-States (APG) as well as a self-assessment on the seven core competencies for actualizing your highest and best.

Competencies and Benchmarks

You may be wondering. Have we identified the core competencies of self-actualization and have we benchmarked those competencies? And the answer is “yes we have.” When it comes to *actualizing* (making real in everyday life) your highest values, visions, and meanings so that they show up in your best performances (skills, competencies, activities), there are *7 core competencies* to develop. These are the prerequisite skills for actualizing your highest and best. While there are other skills that enable self-actualization, these are the foundational skills first to learn and master.

The Competency	Self-Actualization Injunction	What to Stop
1) Authenticity	Get Real! You have to be real to self-actualize.	Stop playing the Games.
2) Passionate	Get Emotional, excited. It takes energy to self-actualize. You’ve got to care, love, feel.	Stop acting sophisticated!
3) Empowerment	Get response-able, power. You have to own your powers to s-a. You have to be the author of your life.	Stop being a victim. Stop playing helpless
4) Congruence	Get Aligned, whole, integrated. You’ve got to walk your talk to self-act.	Stop the gap between talking and doing.
5) Creativity	Get meaning, get meaningful You have to invent great meanings to s-a.	Stop the discounting. Stop the negativity.
6) Presence	Get into the here-and-now of today. You’ve got to be present to self-act.	Stop the escapes.
7) Courage	Get bold, audacious, ferocious! You’ve got to take risks to self-act.	Stop playing small. Stop selling yourself short.

Contact

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Asia Professional Training Institute — by Mandy Chai

Power of Questioning:

“In NLP the approach is to ask rather than tell. ‘What do you think would make it possible for you to...’ ‘How would you tackle...’ ‘What would enable you to...’ By structuring the questions carefully we can help people to produce their own solutions, which enables them to recognize their own ability.” p. 82)

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #45
Sept 3, 2012
Empowerment Series #29

THE POWER OF TRANSCENDING HISTORY

Are you your history? You certainly *have* history—you have *lived through* numerous experiences, and because you have, you also *use* those historical events and experiences as reference points for your thinking and emoting. What does that mean? It means that you “point” to your historical experiences, especially if they were strongly emotional, positively or negatively, as experiences that enable you to understand other experiences and people when they speak about their experiences.

So yes, it certainly seems that maybe “you are your history.” But no. This statement is too shallow and superficial an analysis to summarize you in that way. Things in the real world are not that simple. The event or events to which you refer are just that—events, and often a set of accidents in life. The fact is that you just so happened to be in a given context of place, time, people, activities, a context in which you did or received some activity.

What really matters is not *what* happened, but *what you make of* what happened— your understanding and interpretation of those events. And what you carry with you into your future as your interpretative scheme for interpreting other things are those understandings and the way of interpreting that they provide you.

So, *no* you are *not* your history! Instead of that, you are the creative result of how you interpret your history. The role of your history is entirely relative to your interpretations. How you today experience what happened to you in your past determines on how you interpret that history. So that’s why when you change your interpretation, you change your experience of your history. This is your power for transcending your history. To change your history and to thereby transcend it—

- Change your representations.
- Change your words and languaged descriptions.
- Change your evaluations.
- Change your conclusions.
- Change your meanings.

This is why and how you can experience what Richard Bandler famously said that has now become one of the mantras of NLP: “It is never too late to have a happy childhood.” Or, “It’s never too late to have a happy divorce,” or firing, or anything else that you’ve been through. How you feel and respond to any previous historical event today is a function of how you have come to

code and frame it, and how you continue today to frame it.

The past does *not* exist today. What exists today is how you record and hold memories of a past. This means that your feelings, emotions, habits, style of life, responses, etc. are all symptoms of your interpretative style. Dealing with that symptomology is dealing with symptoms, not causes.

What are the symptoms that disempower you? A sense of being stuck, of the past determining the future, of helplessness, hopelessness, discouragement, depression, built up anger, a negative frame of mind, a set of regrets about childhood or something that you lost as an adult, jealousy of what others have, envy, mean-spiritedness, and on it goes.

What's the cause? Your interpretations. How you think about, represent, evaluate, frame, meta-state, draw conclusions, etc. — that is the cause. History is not the cause of your historical references or how you use that history. History doesn't create anything. "History" is a generalization (a nominalization) that we use for a category of things that have previously happened. History simply speaks about the original context in which something happened. After that you interpreted those events in such a way that you now experience that history in the way that you do. If there is a problem, the frame is the problem.

Now about your experience of history, often your first interpretation which you made back then was based on insufficient information or even on a child's mind as a way of thinking, or on toxic cultural beliefs. That's good news. It means that you can today update your history and use a new frame to think about it ... and therefore experience it. Today you can transcend your history and learn to become the architect of your future —if you want to.

How? Well, there are numerous patterns that we use in Neuro-Semantic NLP to achieve such. From the original NLP patterns, you could use the Change Personal History pattern, the Movie-Rewind Pattern, the Decision Destroyer Pattern, or almost any of the Time-Line patterns. From the Meta-State patterns you could use Meta-Stating Emotions pattern, Meta-Stating Concepts, Meta-Stating Self, and on and on.

The bottom line? You have the power to manage, frame, and reframe your memories of what you've been through in such a way that it supports your hopes and dreams, your skills and possibilities, your sense of self and relationships with others. You can unleash potentials that are yet untapped and you can release toxic frames that do not serve your highest and best. It's all up to you. You have the power to choose and to take action.

Learn more about Neuro-Semantics —

Begin with *Winning the Inner Game*
Then read *Secrets of Personal Mastery*
Or *Meta-States*
Or the new book — *Neuro-Semantics*.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #46
Sept. 10, 2012
Empowerment Series #30

THE POWER OF FLEXIBILITY

As Morpheus says to Neo: “Good! Adaptation, improvisation...”

Flexibility is power. Yes, I know that the images of flexibility may not convey the idea of “power” in the traditional way of being rigid and unmoveable, and yet it does convey another kind of strength and effectiveness, the strength of adapting. Consider a tree blowing in the wind or a 100-story skyscraper moving in a thunderstorm or tornado. So while it might seem more intuitive to think that both the tree and the skyscraper need to be more rigid, stiff, and stable, yet counter-intuitively, we know that something stiff and rigid would not be as strong in that context. The strength of the tree and of the skyscraper lies in its flexibility, its ability to adapt.

The power of flexibility lies precisely in how it enables us to be flexible so we can adapt within an acceptable range of movement. And because it does, flexibility enables us to survive, cope well, and even thrive.

The power of flexibility in sports and in strength-development is well known. That’s why athletes stretch. After the exercise of using muscles or a muscle group, to maintain the highest levels of strength and power, the athletes stretch the muscles in the opposite direction. The stretching increases flexibility and that, in turn, increases actual strength. By contrast, the person who does not stretch can over-exercise a set of muscles and can become too rigid and so stiff that the person becomes much less capable, much less effective.

This concept of flexibility doesn’t just apply to physical things like trees, buildings, and the muscles of athletes. It also applies to thinking—to mental flexibility and to emotions—to emotional flexibility, and also to relational skills—to relational flexibility. Mental and emotional flexibility refers to such important competencies as creativity, inventiveness, the ability to “think out of the box,” to entertain new and weird ideas and possibilities— all critical ingredients in human capital in organizations and in problem-solving.

Relational flexibility speaks about the ability to cope with change, with the stress of things being unpredictable, with the need to be quick in adapting effectively to the challenges that life can throw at you. It is this kind of flexibility that enables one to “think on his or her feet” while under pressure, to perform well when others suffer from performance anxiety, and to adapt ideas, thoughts, perspectives, metaphors, etc. when speaking.

Now for a set of personal questions:

- Do you have this power of flexibility?
- Does the power of continuous learning and adjusting to current conditions endow you with a sense of trust of yourself and that all you need is to stay current?
- Do you have the mental-emotional flexibility so that you can create multiple meanings?
- Do you have the semantic flexibility that you have multiple choices about how to respond to any given stimulus?
- Are you ready to develop the powers of flexibility?

Semantic rigidity occurs when what you know, understand, and believe results in you only have a single response. When someone says or does something, you only have one response. That is not flexibility; that's rigidity. You also lack semantic flexibility if all of your choices are either-or choices, Either you think and feel X or you think and feel Y.

The power of flexibility depends your ability to represent and frame things in multiple ways. In fact, the more choices you have in your representing and framing, the more flexibility you can express. This of course is one of the more important reasons for studying NLP and Neuro-Semantics. By discovering how you represent and frame and learning the full range of choices in this, you extend your ability to “think” and that increases your flexibility.

The power of semantic flexibility saves you from the semantic rigidity that sets us up with “buttons.” Every “button” that you have that someone can push and “get” you signals that you have lost the semantic flexibility. In that area, you no longer (if ever) could choose your response. The person who finds and pushes the button controls you! That person “gets” you because you have only one response or even two or three, but they are all on the same order and you cannot escape. You cannot transcend the situation and so you feel controlled, determined, and out of control. And in that situation, you are.

The solution? Recover the power of semantic flexibility by dis-identifying with whatever you've identified with and recover the map/territory distinction. Use your self-reflexivity to meta-state a step-back response so that you can first gain perspective about what's happening and then choose the meaning and the subsequent response that will give you the effective response. If nothing like that is occurring at the moment, be sure to do some stretching— some semantic stretching. In *Unleashing Potentials* the homework we give is to take any item and give it 7 meanings, and then 7 more and then 7 more. That's good practice for recognizing that you are the meaning-making and developing the flexibility to choose your meanings with thoughtful elegance.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #47
Sept. 17, 2012
Empowerment Series #31

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU ARE EMPOWERED?

What are the telltail signs when you are empowered? When you have accessed all of the powers that I've been describing in this series, how will you know? What will be different? How will others recognize your innate powers?

You will first and foremost move through the world with a sense of confidence that you are in charge of you and your life. You do not talk or think or whine like a helpless victim. When there's something to do, you take action. When you make a mistake, you simply say so and make the needed corrections. There's no blame, no accusations about others, no pointing the finger to the universe or to God and accusing that you've not been given a fair shake. When you are empowered, you access your core powers of thinking, emoting, speaking, and behaving and put them together to generate the skill-set that you need to cope and to master the situation.

This feeling of confidence of being in charge means that if someone were to ask you, "Who's responsible for your financial well-being? For your health and fitness? For your character and personality? For your love relationship and friends? You would take your index finger and point to your chest, to your heart and proudly say, "I am of course!"

This feeling gives you the sense of being "at cause." You are the *cause* of your experience and the quality of those experiences and knowing that, you make choices that will enhance the quality of your life just as you set frames of meaning that makes every experience richer. This includes experiences that are under the control of others like perhaps a job in a large organization. That's because no matter where you are, who you report to, how many bosses or authority figures you answer to, you know and feel that you have choice. "I am the architect of my experiences! I am a meaning-maker!"

Being empowered you glory in the fact that you are a meaning-maker. You know that for you there is no "meaning" that exists out there independent of your thinking–emoting powers. You create the meanings that you experience and even the "meanings" that you receive from others, accept from others, for those meanings to be meanings in you, you create, invent, and construct them through the process of receiving communications from others. And knowing this, you know that all the meanings that you experience are yours. You are therefore empowered to change those that do not enhance the quality of your life.

You know you are empowered when you live with passion. Empowered people live on purpose. They listen to their inner voice of what excites them, what brings out their very best, what makes them feel fully alive and then set an intention to develop those inner capacities clamoring to be expressed. This is the self-actualization drive that is within everyone but that is dampened and reduced in so many people. You know you're empowered when you set out an intentional course of action, which may take ten or twenty or fifty years to complete, a course that makes your life an adventure. It becomes a discovery of what you have to develop and express and the difference it makes in the world.

Setting out on the course doesn't mean that you know all the steps, or that you're confident you can make it work, it only means that you don't sit around waiting— you take action. You do what you can with what you've got now. You face your fears and courageously go for the vision and the dream in spite of periods of confusion, insecurity, doubts, and all of the other emotions that often plague us humans. You live above and beyond that— you live for a dream that you care passionately about. So you step out, maybe not knowing precisely where you are going, but you step out inventing it as you go.

You know you are empowered when you empower others. The power that I'm speaking about isn't just for you, it is for sharing with others— as many others as you can. So you are not wanting to have power *over* others, but power *with* others. A truly empowered person takes no pleasure in trying to control others or force others to do it their way. There is far too much to do, to experience, to learn, to enjoy, to contribute to be focusing on what belongs within the power zone of other people.

Trying to control other people actually is a sign of insecurity. The person who tries to control others is insecure and low in personal empowerment. This is an indicator that the person has little power him or herself! They may be trying to experience “power” in a toxic way by trying to control others. They may have become addicted to a pseudo-power and so try to control their world by getting all of the externals under control. Whatever they are trying to do, they are not demonstrating an empowered life. Empowered people love to see others become empowered and enjoy the process of turning over control of others to those others.

You know you are empowered when you have self-control. Ah yes, self-control. The ability to control yourself. This is the power to discipline yourself, to be a “disciple” to whatever passion that you want to live and express. This speaks about the ability to follow-through— consistently, regularly, methodically, congruently. An empowered person sets an intention high enough so that it becomes easy and natural to follow-through and carry out the plans in order to make them real.

Empowerment begins here. Self-control is the beginning place. After all, if you cannot lead yourself and manage yourself, you won't be able to control yourself. And without self-control, the likelihood is that you can get out-of-control and do things that undermine your highest and best. Solution: Learn the Meta-States Model so that as you learn to effectively reflect on yourself, then you can meta-state yourself with the understanding, acceptance, appreciation, discipline, etc. that puts *you in charge of you!*

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #48
Sept. 24, 2012
Empowerment Series #32

THE POWER OF TESTING THINGS

I like NLP because it is a pragmatic discipline and one that encourages the testing of things. If you read the original NLP books, the originators constantly urged this:

“Don’t take our word for things, test it for yourself. See if it works for you. If something does not work for you, keep refining it so that you customize it for you, or try something else.”

We test things constantly because if something isn’t working, maybe we have not applied the proper skills or maybe we do not yet have an accurate map of things. Korzybski (1933/ 1994) emphasized that a mental map was only as good as it could be used to navigate the territory. If your mental maps is not taking you to the places you want to go and giving you the experiences you want to have— do one of two things:

- First, check the map to see if it is accurate and appropriate.
- Second, check your skills to see if you have the appropriate competencies for using your map to navigate a certain domain.

Testing your map against reality in terms of what works, what does not work, what works poorly, what works effectively is a practical way to determine pragmatic truth. This is not absolute “truth.” It is not truth with a capital T. It is *the truth* of a situation, of a given context and time.

Now I write all of that because of the confusion and myths and non-sense that’s perpetuated these days about “energy.” And since I’ve been writing about power and empowerment, I figured it’s time to address some of these. The first on a controversial methodology that lots of NLP people have gotten into. You may not like what you are about to read. Yet if you are committed to testing things and not just blindly believing things, then I invite you to read with an open mind and check it out.

The story begins in 1996 when Emily Rosa watched a videotape with her mother on the growing industry called “therapeutic touch,” a controversial method of treating ailments by manipulating the patients’ “energy fields.” While a patient would lay still, a therapist would move his or her hands just inches away from the patient’s body to detect and remove “undesirable energies,” which according to those who practice this controversial method would presumably caused various illnesses.

Now Emily suggested to her mother that she might be able to conduct an experiment on such a

claim. Linda Rosa, her mother was a nurse and long-standing member of the National Council Against Health Fraud gave her some advice on the method.

So this is what Emily did. She initially recruited 21 therapists and set up a test. The test involved Emily and the therapist sitting on opposite sides of a table with a cardboard screen separating them. The cardboard screen blocked both of their views so that neither of them could see the other. The screen had holes cut out at the bottom through which the therapist would place her hands, palms up, and out of sight. Emily would flip a coin and, based on the result, placed her hand four to five inches over the therapist's left or right hand. (This distance was marked on the screen so that Emily's hand would be at a consistent distance from the therapist's hand.) Then the therapists, unable to see Emily, would have to determine whether she was holding her hand over their left or right hand by feeling for her energy field. Emily reported her results at the science fair and received a blue ribbon for her science project.

Some time later Emily's mother Linda mentioned this experiment to Dr. Stephen Barrett from the NCAHF. And he, intrigued by the simplicity of the method and the initial findings, mentioned it to the producers of the TV show, *Scientific American Frontiers* on PBS. For that, Emily managed to convince 7 of the original 21 therapists to take the experiment again so that the show could be taped. From 280 individual attempts by 21 separate therapists to feel Emily's energy field, they correctly identified the position of her hand just 44% of the time. Now left to chance alone, they should get about 50% right with a 95% confidence interval of $\pm 6\%$.

With these results, Linda and Emily thought the work might be worthy of publication. And it was. So in April, 1998, Emily had her experiment published in the JAMA. Emily reasoned that if the therapist can do what they claimed, then they must *at least be able to feel the energy field*. If they cannot even do that, then everything about therapeutic touch would be cast in doubt. One of the amazing things about this is that when Emily began, she was a 9-year-old working on this idea for her fourth-grade science fair project. She was 11 when her research was published and that made her the youngest person ever to have research published in the prestigious medical journal. Ah, the power of testing, the power of questioning assumptions, the power of putting a claim to the test!

Post Script

Bob Bodenhamer sent the following after checking articles on Wikipedia. Emily Rosa's name is mentioned in the first paragraph on Therapeutic Touch. And Simon Singh and Edzard Ernst concluded in their book *Trick or Treatment* (2008) this: "The energy field was probably nothing more than a figment in the imaginations of the healers."

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From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #49
Oct. 1, 2012
Book Review: *Raising Talent*

FAST TRACKING HIGH PERFORMANCE

***Raising Talent: How to Fast-Track Potential Into Performance.* (2012).
Tim Goodenough with Michael Cooper, Penguin Books, South Africa.**

This book follows up on Tim and Michael's first book, *In the Zone With South Africa's Sports Heroes* and focuses on developing sports potential in children and so it is written to parents and coaches about how to raise talent. This book also, like the first, is a thoroughly Neuro-Semantic book that contains many of the APG (Assessing Personal Genius) patterns within it. In it the authors speak about Neuro-Semantics and about Meta-Coaching as a methodology for fast tracking potential. So if the subject of *fast tracking potential* is important to you— here are two books you really need to get.

In developing their themes the authors quote many authors and researchers including K. Anders Ericsson about the 10,000 rule and the importance of “deliberate practice.” They focus on meaning and adding rich meaning to performance, they use the Self-Actualization quadrants as one of their models, and they have a fascinating discussion of the issue of “choking” up before a performance (pp. 48-51). I really like the Gratitude Pattern that they developed (p. 64) as a way to link strong gratitude to your mental moves. In that way “you will be more insulated against negativity and more likely to lock in a high performance mood.” (p. 64)

Then with the asking of “why questions” regarding your goals and objectives, they invented a Lightning Rod Movie Technique (p. 67ff). And what is the design of the lightning rod technique? To trigger the very limiting beliefs that are holding you back which are connected with your mental movie of some outcome that you desire. They even present seven criteria for asking such unique questions.

Then there is the Meta Kolb Model which Tim had been working on for several years. Here the Kolb Model for adult learning is taken and expanded (p. 142ff).

Great quotes from the book:

“If you really want your child to be the best version of him or herself that they can be, the first place to start is with you. Your child's mental model of the world will reflect many of your strengths and weaknesses; the more you work on yourself, the less re-work they will

need to do later.” (p. 3)

“The ability to win the ‘talent race’ requires both an *inner game* (mindset) and *outer game* (performance). Both are critical to maximise potential— to run your best race. In this book we will cover the *what, how, when, and why* to develop both the inner and outer game.” (p. 7)

“This mindset (i.e., of success) is characterised by the belief that no ability, skill or aptitude is ever fixed in stone— it can be developed, grown and fine-tuned...” (p. 14)

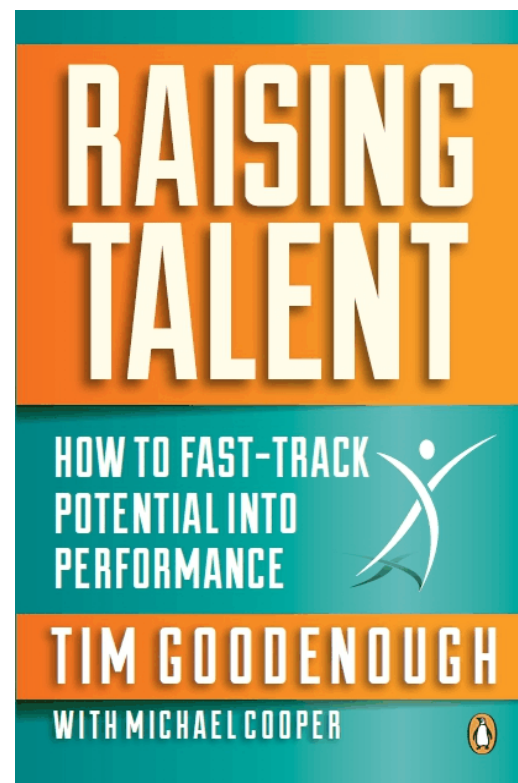
“Part of a Meta-Coach’s job is to help a client to find a leverage point, or the top-most (cluster CEO) meaning that they want to shift, either by removing, reframing (giving it new meaning), out framing (making another meaning superior to the existing meaning, or using any other of many different methods to enable positive healthy change.” (p. 79)

“A great mindset is not every effective without action— meaning needs to partner with performance/competence to get high performance.” (p. 97)

As a book about performance — fast tracking potential into high performance, this book is an excellent follow up on my book, *Achieving Peak Performance* (2005) as it adds additional patterns and processes, and applies it specifically to children, parenting, and coaching.

There is a lot more in the book and you can find more about it by going to —
www.raisingtalentthebook.com

out



From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #50
Oct. 1, 2012
Book Review:
The Magic of NLP Demystified
(2012) by Byron Lewis, Crown House Publ.

DEMYSTIFYING “MAGIC”

One of my favorite books in the field of NLP which I found just a few years after I entered the field of NLP was the book, *Magic of NLP Demystified: A Pragmatic Guide to Communication and Change* (1990) by Byron Lewis & Frank Pucelik. Following on from the original books, *The Structure of Magic Volumes I and II* (1975, 1976), this book focused on simplifying and demystifying the structure of language as coded in the Meta-Model of Communication. Now originally, that book was titled, *Meta Principles for Communication and Change* (1980) which really is an excellent summary of what NLP is primarily about and used for— communication and change.

Now today, 2012, after more than two decades, Byron Lewis has updated and extended the book. In fact, in this updated version he has especially used the work of Tosey and Mathison *NLP: A Critical Appreciation for Managers and Developers* (2009) and my work *Communication Magic* (2001 Crown House Publ.) in extending the book *Magic Demystified*.

Now in terms of the term “magic,” this term does *not* refer to real magic or to stage magicians. People seem to easily confuse “the structure of magic” in NLP with these. Instead, it refers to *what seems like magic in experts*. That is, when someone is highly skilled in a particular domain, what they do can seem like “magic” to those who don’t know how they do it, the models they use to guide their perceptions and performance, or the distinctions that they are making. This was the original case with Fritz Perls, Virginia Satir, and Milton Erickson when Bandler and Grinder first found them and so began modeling the structure of their expertise so that the so-called “magic” could be understood and replicated. And that gave birth to this field that we call NLP.

Byron’s newest edition of *Magic Demystified* contains the same chapters as the original books and so presents the essential modeling of NLP and the original tools that were developed for modeling.

- 1: Models
- 2: The Communication Categories Model
- 3: The Meta Model
- 4: The Visual Model

If you ever tried to read the original books, *The Structure of Magic, Volumes I and II* and found it thick and undecipherable, then try *Magic Demystified*. It is an excellent introduction to NLP and the models of NLP, a much user-friendly version. And in this edition, Byron quoting Susie Linder-Pelz has put the Meta-States Model in Chapter 1 as part of the basic NLP model. This is the first time I've seen this in any work other than what Bob Bodenhamer and I did (*User's Manual of the Brain, Volume I*, Crown House Publications). So in answer to the question, "Is the Meta-States Model part of NLP?" The answer has always been yes, and works like this keep supporting that.

Also, in Chapter 3 on The Meta-Model, Byron adds all nine of the distinctions that I added to the Meta-Model in 1997 (the book was then titled, *Secrets of Magic* and now it goes under the title, *Communication Magic*, 2001). Byron Lewis has taken and used the research I did at that time when I reviewed the development of the Meta-Model, extended it with linguistic distinctions and questions (challenges) from Korzybski and others. I did that in 1996-1997 at the bidding of Richard Bandler who wanted the book to be co-authored, but who later got upset with me and refused to complete the co-authoring project. Eventually it was published by Crown House Publications anyway under my name alone. And now you can find those nine extensions of the Meta-Model in this book (*Magic Demystified*) along with Byron's correlation of the different Meta-Model distinctions and how they fit and overlap.

Here are some great quotations from the book:

"This systematic *demystification* of normally out-of-awareness aspects of communication gives the client a heightened sense of control over himself and his environment." (p. 2)

"One of the most important ingredients in being influential is the ability to elicit the belief that you understand. Understanding implies that you can 'join' a person at his model of the world." (p. 18)

"Susie Linder-Pelz ... explains that people 'layer' information from the outside world and then 'frame or *meta-state* that information as they feed back to themselves more information about that information; that is, they feed back to themselves layer upon layer, beliefs and understandings." (p. 30)

"Language is the only system that can represent all of the other representational systems. It can create models of each system including itself." (p. 41)

"Even though a person demonstrates a preference for one of the representational systems, it does not mean that he does not use the other systems too. On the contrary, we all use all of the systems all of the time." (p. 49)

If you are interested, go to www.crownhouse.co.uk and you will find this new book.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #51
Oct. 15, 2012

THE NEXT BIG THING

If there's anything that seems to be continuously on everybody's mind it is, "The next big thing." Now when I say "everybody," I mostly mean people in marketing and sales, people in self-development, organizational development, H.R., positive psychology, success, wealth creation, screenplay writing, novel writing, etc. Well, yes, I guess that means most of us. And when I say "continuously" I mean that it seems to be ever-present and that it never stops or goes away.

For decades, business (and other fields also) have experienced "the next big thing" as new products, services, and experiences have been offered as "the big solution," the panacea, the cure-all for the problems that undermine and interfere with success. This has come to be known as "fad of the month" ("flavor of the month"). Yet as one thing after another didn't pan out and prove to be the cure-all, and as more and more people worked on develop "the next big thing," the cycles became shorter, and the sense of "oh, just another fad" became more and more pronounced.

Now it is true that from time to time someone does discover or create "the next big thing" in a given field or domain. Yet most often that is not the pattern. Most often the pattern is that when the next big thing is first discovered and created, it is not truly "the next big thing." It is just something new and different. Often when something is presented and marketed as the next big thing, the reality does not pan out.

The internet offers an interesting example. In terms of its importance as a discovery, it qualifies as one of those "next big things." Yet when it was created, it was not seen as the next big thing at all. It arose and was around for many years before it was widely discovered for the uses that we put it to today. Long before it became "the next big thing" in our minds, it was around as a small thing that hardly anyone knew about. Only later did people began to learn how to use it so that it became the next big thing. The same thing could be said for Bill Gates and his associates creating their first products in his garage. It would eventually become "the next big thing" although it didn't appear that way at first.

What drives this hunger for the next big thing? One thing that has driven it and continues to drive it is an assumptive frame: When someone, somewhere, somehow comes up with "the next big thing," it will be quick and easy and completely change our lives. Ah yes, *quick and easy*. That's what we all want, isn't it? We want things quick. And we want things to be easy. That's why "Get Rich Quick" schemes continue to multiply and why old worn-out schemes keep re-asserting themselves seducing people to the quick and easy next big thing. If human being weren't so impatient, there

would not be so many people so gullible for the message, “This will be really quick!” “It won’t take much time.” So people still buy silly gadgets that’s going to wear off the fat of the mid-section while you sleep, while you eat, while you watch TV. It’s quick and easy.

Easy is one of the seductive words when it comes to “the next big thing.” No work, no effort, you don’t have to study, sweat, feel exhausted, etc. It is low cost, fun, quick, won’t cost you much at all and you will start to see results in three days!

So what am I getting at? Recently I have been asked repeatedly by several people, “What’s the next big thing in NLP or in Neuro-Semantics?” Maybe it was in editing the book, *Innovations in NLP* with Shelle Rose Charvet. Anyway, the truth in answering this question is: I don’t know. And to take that a bit further, I have never pursued the next big thing. So then I was asked about some of the models that I’ve created and if when they first appeared they were recognized as the next big thing.

Yet that’s just the thing—I never sought any of them, I never pursued “the next big thing” in Neuro-Semantics. For example, when *Frame Games* emerged, when *the Matrix Model* came to me, when *the Axes of Change* and the *Self-Actualization Quadrants*—I had not plan for any of them. I did not seek after any of those models. Nor did I spend any time “trying hard” to find or create them. They all emerged while I was engaged in something important to me ... they emerged and it would be more accurate to say that they found me rather than I found them. When they did emerge in my mind, it was the result of having been engaged in a study or in a modeling project and they came to me when I least expected them.

It is paradoxical, isn’t it? To chase after “the next big thing” seems to be one of the key things that prevents us from discovering the next big thing! Conversely, to release the pursuit of the next big thing and to focus on exploring something that you are fully engaged in and to do so in depth, to model a human expertise that fascinates you, this is what enables next big things to arise when you are ready for it. Looking for magical answers, lost-cost easy and quick solutions will actually misdirects you and the use of your powers.

I think we could argue that many of the things that we now recognize as “the next big thing” started off as a small thing and that it became the next big thing by how certain people began employing it. And if that’s the case, then *what if—just what if—* there are several “next big things” present in your life and mine right now? Suppose that the next big thing has already emerged, already been around for awhile, and it has simply not yet been recognized. If that was the case— what would that call upon you and me to do? Would it not call upon us to refocus our search so that we begin to look about us with eyes of appreciation?

Perhaps instead of pursuing “the next big thing” we should focus on pursuing the most important meaning or solution that would make the most difference to us. Perhaps you should aim to be more present, more here in the here-and-now and more appreciative of solutions and resources that are all around you. This is, in fact, one of our themes in Neuro-Semantics. Be present. Learn to become fully engaged in this moment with what you endow with rich meaning, access this state as your optimum “zone.” If this is your genius state, and from within it will come your “next big thing” are

you willing and able to make this your focus?

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #52
Oct. 22, 2012
Empowerment Series #33

THE POWER OF DIS-EMPOWERMENT

Two months ago I received a letter from a lady who had been reading the series of articles on *Empowerment*. She wrote to complain. And her complaint came to me as a surprise. She complained that every time she read one of the articles, they made her feel more dis-empowered!

I was absolutely fascinated by her response. “That’s amazing!” I thought, “How could a person do that?” I also wanted to offer her what I seek to offer everyone I deal with—a greater sense of personal empowerment. So we exchanged three or four emails. Yet at the end, she was even more dis-empowered. I know because she said that! Yet in the process I learned something really important. I learned how a person could take material that 99% of people read and find resourceful for their personal empowerment and use it to undermine and sabotage one’s sense of personal power. And how does someone do that?

First, start by assuming that your history creates and determines your present and future.

Be a pure behaviorist and assume that the “cause” of your problems, your pain, your dis-empowerment is the experiences that you have been through or the events that have happened to you. Once you do that you *empower* something outside-of-your-control to be in-control of your thinking-and-feeling. And by doing that, you *empower* something that you cannot change. That then puts you into a state of feeling helpless as well as powerless.

“What I mean by this is that you seem to blame people for their own pain. For example, in the email below (#29 The Power of Transcending History) you talk about how it isn’t history that is causing someone problems, but their interpretations of it.”

Second, assume that what you feel is real, not to be denied, and of primary importance.

By doing this, you *empower* your emotions to be *the determining factor* in your mind and belief systems. The lady who wrote to me framed what I had written in an either-or framework: If I didn’t absolutely validate the emotions of pain and suffering from the way a person interpreted an experience then I was saying that “nothing is truly painful” and discounting the painful experience.

“For me this suggests that nothing is truly painful or abusive, just our interpretation of the event and that if we just made better pictures in our minds or believed a different belief about it, all would be well.”

Of course I didn’t say that pain isn’t painful or abuse isn’t morally repugnant or painful. Of course, pain is painful! Of course, any kind of abuse by someone is wrong and results in suffering. And these emotions are also just emotions. And as emotions, they are functions of two things: your experience in the world and your mental maps about those experiences (what they mean to you).

Third, assume and interpret disagreement (or difference) through the filter of guilt.

Once you assume “the past is all-determining” and “whatever I feel is real and defines me as a person” (“I am my emotions,” “I am what I experience”) then it is a short step to assume that anyone who disagrees is “making” you wrong, “blaming” you and doesn’t understand.

“That is how several of your emails have read to me, and made me feel quite worse about my own terrible childhood experiences and the issues I'm dealing with today that are connected to it. Your point of view, if I have the right of it, is basically saying it's my fault I'm still suffering from my painful past. That I'm not doing enough to change my beliefs about it. I could go into a lengthy email about what my past was and the issues today, but I realize NLP is not concerned with content. So if you could please explain what you mean I'd appreciate it. Short of it, I don't feel empowered when I read your emails, I feel angry, shamed, blamed and re-hurt all over again.”

Well, just to be clear, my articles did not, and do not, *blame* anyone for anything. There’s a difference between *blame* and *response-ability* (*the power to respond*). Holding someone accountable to their powers and inviting them to use their powers does not “make” them anything. It invites them to do something different. And that’s my hope— that when people discover there is a better way, they will step up to act in that better way.

Actually, NLP does care about “content”! The distinction is that there is something *more important* than content and that is the structure. That’s why we do not focus on content as much as we focus on structure and process. What is that reason? It is because “the content” operates at a lower level than the process— and the process of self-blaming, empowering the past, one’s emotions, identifying with one’s emotions, and confusing responsibility with blame —these processes are more critical for change and empowerment than the content. When we can’t change the content (what happened at a certain time and place), we can change the process (how we interpret what happened).

Fourth, confuse reframing with trying to make something bad “good.”

What now follows is a vivid example of how someone caught up in a belief system is not able to “listen” and hear what is actually said. The lady here says that I am saying the following three things which of course, I did not say, do not believe, and which I completely repudiate. What’s interesting is that the person does not ask about these things, but states them as what my position about personal empowerment inherently entails.

Rape is good and has positive values.

Rape victims are responsible for their suffering and hurt

Rapers are to be excused from their responsibility of harming others.

“You've used the example of the Matrix before. And while the Matrix is a fine movie, I have a very difficult time believing that just "loading" a new belief system into my brain will change how I feel about something or a painful problem I'm dealing with. For example, a woman is raped. No matter what she opts to believe about it, say for example, "Oh, it's actually good that I was raped because I was really prideful about my good looks." that doesn't change the rage, anger and other issues that come from said event. It just masks them under a belief, whether true/false. Simply changing one’s understanding of the situation doesn't make it better or a positive thing. That's my belief, maybe yours is different. Which this ties into point number one. If you think my belief is incorrect, then you are implying that rape victims and or anyone is else is the responsible party for their own suffering and hurt. Effectively excusing anyone from responsibility for harming others. After all, they (the

rapists etc.) have their beliefs about the world and if it's OK in their heads, and it's on me to interpret it in a positive way for myself, well how can we hold anyone accountable?"

Of course, neither I nor anyone else in NLP or Neuro-Semantics would argue for any of those things. What I believe is very different:

Rape is a horrible and unacceptable action, hurtful and destructive and anyone who does so should be held responsible as someone who has harmed another.

Rape victims are responsible for their interpretations and responses, but obviously *not* for being raped! The rapist is responsible for that. After someone has been raped, they will feel the emotions of hurt and suffering—which is normal and those emotions help them acknowledge the wrong and do their emotional work. After that, the most psychologically healthy thing is to release the anger, rage, and resentment, and move on with one's life.

Rapers are *not* to be excused from their responsibility of harming others.

How did I respond to the lady? Here's what I wrote.

First, I'm sorry that you do not feel empowered. I will try to do better.

If there is one thing I say over and over and over— **The person is never the problem, the frame is always the problem.** Do keep that in mind and you will not hear "blame" anywhere in my writings! ☺ It is no one's fault, but it is everyone's responsibility! There's a big difference between the two!

If you are creating negative emotions like anger, shame, blame and hurt ... well *you are responding with thoughts that create those emotions.* Responsibility, not blame. Response-ability means you can respond in new and different ways. That's the good news. How do you feel when you fully know that?

NLP is a cognitive-behavioral model as indicated by the original books, its history, and in the realm of research today. That means that ultimately "as you think, so you feel." That's the good news. Many women who are raped become very resourceful in spite of it, and sometimes because of it—Ophra is a good example of that. And yes, changing your understanding does change everything *if you truly change the understanding and incorporate that into your neurology.* That's what NLP is all about.

Rape victims have been hurt by someone. That person is responsible. The person raped is responsible for how to think and feel about it. That's their responsibility. They will suffer until they learn that. Accountability: we hold both accountable to their powers — the person who did wrong for doing wrong. The person who blames self for that response.

Finally, if you feel judged— then the judgment must be coming from you, that is, *you* are doing the judging, and believing the judgment. I certainly am not. I never judge people. I offer choices. I have offered choices in every article that I write. What will you choose? Whatever it is, it is your choice. And ultimately, only you can choose it! I wish for your highest and best choices!"

Ultimately, personal empowerment is just that— *personal and empowerment.* You have to do it with *your* powers of thinking, believing, understanding, framing, meaning-making, your powers of emoting, choosing, speaking, and acting. No one can do it for you and for that matter, no one can deprive you of your personal powers. So if you are dis-empowered, the strange paradox is that you are using your core powers to dis-empower yourself by empowering ideas, experiences, events, people, etc. outside of yourself. The paradox is that it takes a lot of power to live a dis-empowered life! In Neuro-Semantics our focus is to facilitate the empowering of people even though we know people can resist it.

"Persons who have achieved their identity are *causers* rather than *caused.*" Maslow

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #53
Oct. 29, 2012
Empowerment Series #34

THE POWER OF RELEASING YOUR CREATIVE ENERGIES

I've already written about the power of creativity and the power of your core powers, now I'd like to write about the power of *releasing* the synthesis of both—the releasing of your creativity energies. There was a question which led to this:

What happens in the process of unleashing potentials?

The answer is that *it releases creative energy*. That is, when individuals and societies (teams, groups, families, companies, etc.) actualize their highest meanings and best performances creative energies are released.

Are you ready for that? Are you ready to unleash new energies within yourself and for yourself and your world that you can then mobilize and put in service for your highest vision? Are you ready to have activated those energies and then implement them for bringing new creative solutions into existence?

1) *Biological vitality*. So what energies are released in actualizing your potentials? One of the first is the energy of *your own biological vitality*. You feel more alive, more present, more focused, and more intentional. You have more mental alertness and emotional vitality and these show up in your passion and excitement. At first this may seem paradoxical. The more you identify, activate, and mobilize those needs or drives clamoring within you, the more you feel energized. Yet this is exactly what happens. Even though it is effortful and requires expending thought, emotion, and action—the more you do this, the more you are energized. The more you seem to be more fully alive to your inner nature.

2) *Fun and joy*. This release of energy also shows up in the degree and quality of fun (joy, humor, playfulness, etc.) that you as you pursue your passionate vision with focused energy. But this not silly or superficial fun. It is not mere laughs. It is a much deeper fun. As you give yourself to making your dreams come true, you experience an engagement so deep that you get lost in it. And while others may look at you and think, “Boy, he or she is really working hard.” You are thoroughly enjoying what you are doing. Your vocation (work) has become your vacation (your fun). You love what you do and what you do, you love.

This is one of the things I've been experiencing for years and which I've been increasingly experiencing. In spite of the travel or the long trainings or the intense trainings (sometimes 12 and 14 hour days), I hardly ever notice. My energy lasts from morning to night and I don't even think about it until someone asks me, "How do you maintain your energy for the long hours and the long extended trainings?" What I've realized recently is that the question doesn't fit. That's because it is *not* a matter of "maintaining" or "protecting" or "keeping up" my energy. It is more a matter of loving what I do and can't believe that I get paid for doing what I love doing! So the energy is there naturally.

3) *Solving problems.* After the biological and physical energy you will find the emergence of *the energy for embracing problems and creating new solutions.* Maslow talked about this as moving from the problems of self, the problems of learning what things are and how to cope, and from the pseudo-problems of self to the *real* problems of the world and to the *real* creativity that's required to create a better and more humane world. This also begins to identify people who are truly self-actualizing. If a person is truly reaching his or her potentials, they are putting their gifts, talents, skills, and competencies to good use making a difference in the world. Having transcended self, they are now in the mode of giving back and contributing what they can— their highest meanings and best performances that enrich their families, communities, and companies.

4) *Expressing your inner drives.* When you are releasing the creative energies within yourself, you operate from a level of abundance as you are driven by one of the expressive needs. This contrasts with the deficiency needs (the lower needs) of our biology. You are now driven by the need to express your highest development as you add value in the unique way that only you can. The abundance that results from your own inner development now begins to spill over. And in spilling over, your expressions are contributions that make a difference in the world.

All of this describes the *releasing* process. And it lies at the heart of the self-actualizing life. Yet many people, probably most people, only experience it in brief moments of life, and not as their way-of-being-in-the-world. So, why not? What is stopping people from tapping into their highest and best? What is preventing people from *seeking the peak of human experience*?

What restrains, mitigates against, and stultifies the development and unleashing of one's creative energies and potentials? Lots of things. At the head of the list are various limiting and even toxic beliefs and other frames of mind that undermine and destroy the energy. Expectations also will do it. If you have unrealistic expectations or too-high demanding expectations, that too can stop the releasing of your energies. Doubts, cynicism, and pessimism provide another trio of hindrances. So also various structures that you may be living within like various social limitations, taboos, the social control that keeps a person dependent upon approval.

Today Neuro-Semantics as the synergy of two critical variables for actualizing your highest and best— integrating your highest meanings into your best performances— has identified many of the *unleashing* processes so that you can experiencing more and more of the *releasing of your creative energies.* And this is perhaps one of the most important benefits of the *Seeking the Peak* trainings.

From: L. Michael Hall
Re: The Second International Neuro-Semantic Conference
November 4, 2013

ACTUALIZING COACHING EXCELLENCE

*It is now time to get out your 2013 calendar and mark it for the second International Neuro-Semantic Conference. This coming year we will hold the Conference in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia and the theme will be **Actualizing Excellence in Coaching**. And that means that the Conference will be a Coaching Conference.*

What do you mark down on your calendar? Date, place, and contact information.

When: June 21-23, 2013 — Friday, Saturday, and Sunday

Where: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Venue: **Hotel Blue Wave Shah Alam**

Selangor Malaysia

Tel: 6-03-5511 8811

Email: info@bluewaveshahalam.com

Sponsor of the Conference: Hj Md Taib Mat mtm@akademinlp.com

MTM Consultants Sdn Bhd

No. 2-5, Pusat Dagangan UMNO Shah Alam

Persiaran Damai, Seksyen 11

40000 Shah Alam

Selangor

Tel : 03-55134588 / 55134462

Fax : 03-55134461

HP: +6012- 297 4141

What can you expect at the Conference? You can expect many of the top international Trainers and Meta-Coaches to be traveling in to share their expertise and wisdom. You can expect most of the Neuro-Semantic Leadership Team to be present and available so that you can connect faces with the names of many people that you have seen and read from. You can expect some of the latest cutting-edge developments in Neuro-Semantics. You can expect a kind of “home-coming” feel to the conference as it was in Colorado in 2011. And you can expect to hear about the ongoing and ever-developing Vision of the future of Neuro-Semantics.

To facilitate the Conference this year, we have selected to have a central theme— one that will be supported by numerous sub-themes. **This year, the Conference’s Theme is *Actualizing Coaching Excellence in five core tracks*:**

- Coaching
- Business
- Self-Actualization

- Education and Training
- NLP and Neuro-Semantics

We have also expanded the keynote presentations to six and these will begin and end each day. Because in Neuro-Semantics we know that intentionality is the engine of progress and direction, we have planned for **6 Keynote Presentations** which one designed to create an inspiration for all of us to step forward even more to reach for excellence. The *Achieving Excellence* will be in the following areas:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| • L. Michael Hall | Modeling Self-Actualization |
| • Mandy Chai | Collaborative Abundance |
| • Lene Fjellheim | Coaching Business |
| • Omar Salom | Developing Leaders |
| • Hj Mohamed Taib Mat | Education / NLP |
| • Colin Cox | Training / Presentations |

Yet it is not enough to merely inspire people with a vision, we have to equip people with skills if we expect people to be empowered and enabled for the vision. So to achieve that we have planned for **18 Workshops** given by **22 Presenters** who come from **9 countries**. Here are the speakers, their country, and their titles:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|--|
| • Mohamed Taib Mat | — | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | Actualizing in Education |
| • Billy Teoh | — | Peang, Malaysia | Business Owner Coaching |
| • Mohamed Marzuki | — | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | School for Actualiz. Potentials |
| • Alan Fayter | — | Christchurch, New Zealand | Presuppositions in Coaching |
| • Colin Cox | — | Auckland, New Zealand | Using Music in Training
Motivation |
| • Lena Gray | — | Auckland, New Zealand | Establishing a Coaching Culture |
| • Joseph Scott | — | Tasmania, Australia | NLP Communication Model |
| • Jay Hedley | — | Sydney, Australia | “ ” |
| • Susie Linder-Pelz | — | Sydney, Australia | Neuro-Semantic Research |
| • Susie and Scott Pochron | — | | Benchmarking Meta-Coaching |
| • Shane Stewart | — | Sydney, Australia | Axes of Change |
| • John Sands | — | Melbourne, Australia | “ ” |
| • Tim Goodenough | — | South Africa | Raising Talent– Fast Tracking |
| • Kgobati Magome | — | Johannesburg, South Africa | Cultural Transformation |
| • Cheryl Lucas | — | Pretoria, South Africa | Supervision in Coaching
Systemic Coaching |
| • Taryn Sydow | — | Johannesburg, South Africa | Consulting for MCC |
| • Michele Wickham | — | Johannesburg, South Africa | “ ” (Manager Coach Cert.) |
| • Scott Pochron | — | Ohio, USA | Actualizing Leadership |
| • Mark Ashton | — | California, USA | — |
| • L. Michael Hall | — | Colorado, USA | — |
| • Mandy Chai | — | Hong Kong, China | — |
| • John Murry Hunter | — | India | — |
| • Omar Salom | — | Mexico City, Mexico | — |
| • Mustafa El-Masry | — | Egypt | — |

So as you can see, this second Conference truly will be an International Conference and will highlight one of the central developments in Neuro-Semantics — the Meta-Coaching System. As you mark your calendar for that very special weekend at the end of June, 2013 — **June 21, 22, and 23, 2013 in Kuala Lumpur** — you might also want to make some plans for some holiday time in Malaysia, Singapore, Bali, etc. There's a whole world to discover in Malaysia.

Many thanks to Anthony Pinto the first dreamer of this Conference and to Hj Md Taib Mat who is hosting the Conference.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #54
Nov. 1, 2012

“DESERVING” AND WEALTH CREATION

“I don't deserve this award, but I have arthritis and I don't deserve that either.”

Jack Benny

During the *Inside-Out Wealth* training in Italy last week, someone asked me a question about the idea of ‘deserving’ wealth.

“How did you get to the place where you felt you deserved to charge what you are now charging? What did you do to feel that you deserved the wealth that you have created?”

Now I have to admit that at that moment, I was taken aback. I really did not know what to say or how to answer that question. So in attempting to answer it, I focused on the relativity of ‘deserving.’

“I find it an *interesting* question given that you’ve asked about ‘deserving’ wealth. That’s because, after all, *deserving is relative*. A few years ago I read that Donald Trump charges \$250,000 for a speech. And after listening to a couple of his speeches, which were good, but not fantastic or exceptionally inspiring, I knew that I could deliver one as good, if not better (e.g., more practical information, more inspiration, more next steps for self-actualizing one’s wealth potentials). So do I *deserve* \$250,000 per hour in presentations or trainings?”

Then, as a joke and to inject some humor, I turned to Nicola Riva, who was translating my words into Italian, and who had organized the training as part of his and Lucia’s Neuro-Semantic Trainings there. I turned to him and suggested that he think in terms of \$250,000 per hour regarding my fees!

Yet in that response I knew that my answer was still not sufficient. I knew that there were aspects, implications, and frames about the question and about the word ‘deserve’ that still needed to be addressed. So later I spent some “jet lagging” time just thinking about that question. Then after landing in Chicago at O’Hare airport and waiting for my next flight, I began putting together an answer— one that I’ll use from now on. So here is what I’ll say next time I’m asked about that:

“Actually, I don’t *deserve* it. There’s nothing in my life, skills, or knowledge that *demand*s that I can now *require* a certain amount of money from anyone. Whatever I get— whatever the market bears is a fortunate opportunity for which I’m very grateful. That’s because it’s not about deserving, it’s about the exchange of goals and values—and experiencing that exchange with gratitude from a non-demanding perspective. So while I don’t *deserve* it, I do appreciate several facts:

- 1) I live in a cultural context where there’s a market for my knowledge and skills— in psychology, leadership, coaching, real estate, etc.

2) I'm grateful that what I've learned, the competencies that I have developed, the products and services that I have created, the experiences that I can now facilitate for people that can call forth the financial value in the cultures in which I live. If I lived in some other contexts and cultures, there wouldn't be the demand, need, or the desire.

3) So I am fortunate to live at this time, to have found the markets that I have, and over the years to have created the credibility to win the trust of so many."

The Neuro-Semantics about "Deserve"

All of this raises questions about "deserve." "Deserve" is defined as "to be worthy, suitable for some reward." And if I am worthy of some reward, if I "merit" it, then I can require it. I can demand it. I can expect it and assume it. And all of this creates a very unuseful spirit in anyone who takes it on— *a sense of entitlement*.

Yet when it comes to social rewards (e.g., money, recognition, success, etc.), these occur within a systemic context involving numerous factors. So what determines whether I get rewarded in a certain way is more than the mere fact of my knowledge and skill. There are many other variables. Is there a need for my knowledge and skills? Is there a desire? Are there many others who are also supplying the same? How much supply is there? Have I effectively packaged my products and services so that people can easily see and recognize the benefits?

The problem with "deserve" is that it implies *demand* and entitlement, yet there is no basis for being able to demand, expect, or require that others value the value that I offer at a certain amount or rate. In fact, if I operate from a sense of entitlement and demand what I think I'm worth, I'll probably undermine what I am offering and making it less attractive. Money, after all, is also a shared social reality that depends on a great many variables— variables influenced by governments, banks, stock markets, supply and demand, information, etc.

"Deserve" also implies that I have it within my power to force or impose my offering on others. But in fact I don't have that power. No one does. Whatever monies I can call forth is a *matter of negotiation* with clients and customers within the context of exchange.

"Deserve" also implies that the amount of money, success, recognition, etc. (social rewards) I receive for my services is connected with my sense of self, maybe even with my personal value. If I received less than I think that "I deserve" and am entitled to, I should feel bad, feel dis-valued. Talk about a belief/understanding frame that sets a person up and semantically loads these things!

So "deserve" carries lots of implies frames that, as I think about it, strikes me as increasingly unuseful, even toxic. So the next time I'm asking about "deserving" wealth or success or anything else, I have my answer prepared—

"I don't deserve it. What I receive is a gift— a gift within a system of exchange that I appreciate and am grateful for. I don't deserve it just as no one deserves it. If I receive success in recognition or in finances— it is a privilege, an honor, and a responsibility in a market that I happen to have entered."

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #55
November 12, 2012
Empowerment Series #35

THE POWER OF HABIT

“Habit is habit, and not to be flung out of the window by any man, but coaxed downstairs a step at a time.”
Mark Twain

You know *the power of habit*, do you not? The power is this—repeat anything often enough and before long it becomes the way you operate. If a behavioral habit, it becomes what you default to doing even when you try *not* to default to it. If a mental habit, it becomes your seemingly inherent and innate way of thinking. You just think that way. It happens faster than the speed of light—it occurs at the speed of thought! If an emotional habit, then before you can blink, off goes the emotion and the emotional state and if it is an unresourceful state, you are caught up in that emotion, hijacked by it and at its mercy. Habits are powerful, are they not?

We not only have habits of behavior, thought, and emotion, we have habits of talk, linguistic habits, non-verbal habits, habits of our gestures and movements and posture. We have habits of eating, drinking, exercising, not-exercising, reading, studying, not-studying; we have all kinds of habits. And once established, it’s the nature of habits to *have a life of their own*, or at least it seems that way.

It seems that way because, as we say, whatever was consciously intentional now “drops out of conscious awareness into our unconscious mind.” Now it is run by “the unconscious.” That is, our larger mind or our mind that is outside-of-consciousness now accepts the “habit” as if it were a computer “program.” And so it seems that by our repeated and habituated habits— we “program” ourselves to think, feel, speak, act, relate, etc. in certain standardized ways.

And overall, this is good; it is a positive value. Gregory Bateson described this as one of the “ecologies of the mind” (Bateson, 1972, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*). The ecology is that you can save the energy and effort of conscious thought by “programming” into you a dependable and regular way of thinking, feeling, acting, relating, etc. Then you don’t have to think about it. And, in fact, after awhile, you can’t think about it. It drops outside of your conscious awareness. And so it has a life of its own so to speak.

When we look up definitions of habits, we find that a habit is any succession of single acts which follow each other automatically. Ah, that’s the key, isn’t it— *automatically*. When you repeat

something over and over, you thereby establish it as a habitual way of operating. And so you create a “habit.” At a neurological level, you are activating the same neuro-pathways and so with each repetition, it becomes easier and easier for you to do the same thing. And this is great if what you are repeating is empowering you, making your mind and body healthier and more robust. It is great if it is an accurate and productive process that is unleashing more of your potentials.

But then there is the other side. It is not great, but terrible and destructive and even toxic if the habit you are establishing is undermining your mind and body, if it is enslaving you to your emotions, if it is dis-empowering you, making you more and more addicted to destructive forces and making you feel helpless, hopeless, and powerless. If your habitual way of operating is doing that, then you are creating a psychological gravitational pull that will automatically keep bringing you down.

Now regarding the power of habit, everything habituates. This wonderful and frightening power generates both our most excellent and our most problematic states. The difference lies in *the content* of what we habituate. Yet here’s another facet of this power. We can intentionally plan and develop new habits. What habit would you like to create? Where and when would that habit occur? What set of actions do you need to do to begin forming that habit? Are you willing to repeat it until it becomes automatic?

If you find problems doing that, then you probably need to undo (deframe) your current habit so that you get it out of the way so it doesn’t interfere with learning the new habit. How do you do this? First, by making your current automatic unconscious habit *conscious*. Bring it into consciousness by noticing when and where it occurs, what sets it off, etc. Tease the habit back into consciousness so that you can have choice again.

Then begin to practice the new steps, mindfully, consciously, and intentionally. Walk through them and attach reward or pleasure to them so that they are reinforced. A long time ago, psychologist William James wrote about this:

“When a resolve or a fine glow of a feeling is allowed to evaporate without bearing practical fruit, it is worse than a chance lost; it works so as positively to hinder the discharge of future resolutions and emotions. ... Never should we suffer ourselves to have an emotion at a play, concert, or upon reading a book, without expressing it afterward in some active way. Let the expression be the least thing in the world— speaking genially to one’s grandmother ... but let it not fail to take place.” (*Psychology: A Briefer Course*).

The power of habits— first to integrate and, as it were, “program” an efficient response-pattern into ourselves and then, once a habit has run its course, to un-install it so that a new and more effective one can replace it. So what set of responses would you like to turn into a habit? To turn into an unconscious competence? You can, you know.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #56
November 19, 2012

THE TENTH YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF META-COACHING

Wow! *The Meta-Coaching System* is now ten years old. Next then you'll know, she'll be in her teenage years! But maybe trainings age like the age of dogs or cats? Maybe a training-year is like 3 human years. Anyway, time has really flown by so quickly from that day in early November 2002 when Meta-Coaching was given birth in Sydney. It only seems like a few months ago.

Now at the birth of Meta-Coaching, I called together three expert coaches to help me deliver it—three expert coaches who fully participated in the experience inasmuch as they were there for the training from beginning to end. In addition, each of them took turns co-training with me. In the preparation period leading up to Meta-Coaching I had interviewed three wonderful people that I had meet in Sydney— each of them with a different focus and niche in Coaching:

Graham Richardson focused on Executive Coaching and working with executive teams having been a senior manager and a CEO himself before he stepped up to an even higher position of Executive Coach.

Michelle Duval focused on Personal Coaching and had created a company that specialized in many aspects of personal coaching: personal development, health, wealth, relationships, kids and teens, spirituality, etc.

Cheryl Gilroy focused on Group and Team Coaching and worked mostly with the Government of Australia and make her real niche working in the area of conflict resolutions and “angry” groups.

From these three original expert coaches, along with some others that I had interviewed and modeled like Dan Bagley in Florida, came a great deal of the content of Meta-Coaching. And to this day, the training manual for *Coaching Mastery* still has several pages from these coaches (and others) about these different areas of Coaching.

Why? First and foremost because I wanted the program to reflect not only the theoretical aspects of NLP and Neuro-Semantics, I wanted it to be transferrable to those entering the field and learning to be professional coaches. I wanted it to be practical, pragmatic, and actionable. Therefore I sought out living examples of people using NLP and Neuro-Semantics and creating a viable coaching practice from it.

Part of the *why* also is because that's what we do in NLP and Neuro-Semantics— we model experts, we model best practices, we find people demonstrating excellence and via the tools and models that

we have, we identify the internal *structure* that explains *how they do what they do*. And by finding the structure, we can then replicate that excellence. And in a word— that is what Meta-Coaching is. And it is also what Meta-Coaching is becoming year after year.

How is that? What do I mean by that? I mean that *the modeling has not ended*. Since the beginning, I am always seeking out other expert coaches —I obviously prefer to get other people using the NLP methodology, but I often get expert coaches from many other disciplines— Ontological Coaching, Results Coaching, ICF coaches from different schools, Integral Coaching, and so on. If someone is getting results with people, enabling people to discover their gifts and potentials, empowering them to take ownership of those talents, and releasing people for a fuller life— then I’m interested. I’m very interested! And if they are able to also do the business part, create a viable commercial business so that they build a reputation, and are known for getting results, then I’m interested in that also.

I also want to know what they do, how they think about what they are doing, and then see them actually do it. Typically, what they think they are doing and what they are actually doing are two different things. Their beliefs, philosophy, concept, metaphors, etc. about what they are doing does not fully or actually describe what they are doing. Of course, this is typical of experts—they are great at *doing* it, they are not so great at explaining what they are doing or at transferring that expertise. That’s where a modeler comes in. And that’s where the genius of NLP and Neuro-Semantics comes in.

NLP offers numerous modeling tools— *the Meta-Model* for being able to “see” into the invisible structure of language and what the linguistics of the expert is doing. *The Strategy Model* gives us a tool for following the flow of their thinking–feeling–choosing–responding etc. so we can capture the essence of the structure of the subjective experience. *The Representation and Sub-Modality models* give many layers of explicit detail to the strategy as does the *Meta-Programs’* set of distinctions.

Neuro-Semantics enriches all of that with *the Meta-States Model* for tracking the recursiveness of the person’s self-reflexive consciousness and all of the loops the person goes through in thinking–emoting– responding. *The Matrix Model* adds a fuller systemic approach distinguishing the creating processes at work and the developmental stages achieved. *The Self-Actualization Quadrants* built from the Meaning/Performance axes highlights the integration and synergy or the lack of it. So with these foundational tools, the modeling of coaching expertise and excellence continues to this day. Having now interviewed over 30 experts in the field of Coaching since 2001, the evolution of the Meta-Coaching system continues and will continue.

An example of that occurred in 2009 when I completely redesigned the presentation of *Coaching Mastery*, (Module III). When I began Meta-Coaching, we had 3 models: the NLP Communication model, Meta-States Model, and the Matrix Model. Within a year we had the Axes of Change Model, then the Benchmarking Model, and by 2005 I had come up with the Self-Actualization Model, and finally in 2007 the Facilitation Model. With each new development, new patterns and processes arose and so we would put that piece into the program. So by 2008 many of us had the feeling that

the Coaching Boot Camp program of *Coaching Mastery* was too disjointed and disorganized and needed a structural make-over.

In 2008, with input from Omar Salom, a Meta-Coach Trainer in Mexico, we re-examined all of pieces that had come together to make up that competency based training and from that rigorous re-examination, I redesigned everything based on the Facilitation Model— so today the program is thematic: Facilitating relationship (Day 1), facilitating exploration (Day 2), facilitating performance (3), systemic thinking (4), change and transformation (5), self-actualization (6), business acumen (7), and professionalism of the field (8). In 2009 also I began mapping out the unique competencies with the benchmarks for the level after ACMC, the PCMC (Professional Certified Meta-Coach) credentials and that led to the first PCMC assessments in January of 2010. In 2011 I began mapping out the MCMC level with Graham Richardson and we now have competencies and benchmarks for the Master Certified Meta-Coach.

So in this month of November 2012 on the tenth anniversary of the Meta-Coaching System, Meta-Coaching continues as Cheryl Lucas and Carey Jooste are delivering the 48th presentation of *Coaching Mastery* in South Africa and I'm in China with Mandy Chai delivering the 49th presentation. Today we have 5 Meta-Coach Trainers (including Omar Salom and David Murphy) and 7 or so other trainers in the process of becoming Meta-Coach Trainers. We have well over 1,500 Meta-Coaches in 41 countries and some 50-plus MCF Chapters being conducted all over the world. A lot of growth since 2002.

What will be the next evolutionary changes in the Meta-Coaching system? I don't know. But whatever it will be, it will be taking Meta-Coaching to yet another level of excellence.

For more about Meta-Coaching: www.meta-coaching.org Download the 16-page color Brochure.

Also, www.metacoachfoundation.org

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #57
November 26, 2012
Empowerment Series #37

MYSTERIOUS FUZZY ENERGY

Since I've been writing about power and energy in this series on *Empowerment*, when he said that he has combined "energy work and healing" with NLP, I was intrigued. So I perked up my ears. We were at an NLP Conference where one of the speakers talked about "NLP and Energy" and we were at a pub after the Conference had ended for that day. Now as he talked, he gave the impression that he had modeled the processes regarding how the "energy work" which he did worked to generate legitimate healing experiences in people. Being the natural skeptic, I didn't buy it, but I was interested and very willing to find out more. So as the conversation ensued, I asked:

"Okay, so you have modeled energy work and healing using the models of NLP?"

Well, no. He didn't do that.

"Oh, you didn't? You didn't find out what this 'energy' is and how it works?"

He again said no.

"So you don't know how it works?"

To my surprise, he immediately acknowledged that that was right, he didn't know. He said, "I know it works, I have had thousands of experiences of it working, but no, I don't know how it works." He went on to describe in great detail how he had been blessed by certain healers, even doubly-blessed by some healer in Brazil, and that it was "no question that it worked and was real; I know that."

"And how do you know it is real and that it works?" I continued to ask. "As with any system that has many, many interconnected variables, how do you know *what* was the key variable or variables? How do you know that something *other* than what you think was the healing factor? If you did not eliminate all of the other possible variables and you think it worked because someone got better, how do you know that would not have happened anyway? How do you know that anything you did was the healing variable?"

That's where the conversation ended (!). I say "the conversation" ended, but of course, the talk went on! He had claimed that what he did was scientific, that he had lots of scientific proof, that there were thousands of studies that proved it. When I asked about that, I discovered that the *conversation* had ended and that none of that was "on the table" or discussable! He was not able (or would not) even entertain the idea that he even *could* be wrong or that the "healings" were not created by his interventions. And because he could not identify any mechanisms by which the so-called "healing" occurred, he went fluffy and said:

"Well there are so many kinds of energies that we don't know about."

Okay, so because we cannot eliminate that there may be some kind of energy that's doing this, we have to accept your interpretations, theories, and beliefs about it? What you believe and "know" is the only true information? To that he said:

"Well, we once thought that there was no connection between mind and body, mind and emotion, but now we do."

Really! That's very interesting! Because he had earlier quoted a story about Wayne Dyer also not believing and then being influenced by people sending certain thoughts at him from thousands of miles away (he was in California and the thought-senders were in Georgia), I asked:

"Well, it is an obvious fact that mind-and-emotion is connected within a person's body but is that really equivalent to saying that someone a thousand miles away can send 'healing thoughts' through the ether and so there has to be some kind of connection between the two, we just don't know how they are connected? Somehow that doesn't seem like sound reasoning!"

Afterwards I reflected on the fact that believing that people can heal from the distance, that there are unknown energies that some people are able to tap into and use for healing or influencing or whatever is just that— *a belief*. And when *believers* believe, the belief inevitably operates as a self-fulfilling prophecy, as a self-organizing attractor. And that means that what the believer believes will be seen and evidenced by the believer. The challenge for such a believer is to acknowledge that it is a belief (and not a fact) and then to search for evidence that would convince a person who is not a believer. If a person can do that, then there may be something to it.

What sensory based facts provide that evidence?

What mechanisms and processes are at work?

What channels of transfer are available?

What theories formulate an understanding of the variables and processes?

From that theory (or theories) what hypotheses can we propose which would be testable?

What would have to happen that would disprove the theory, that would dis-validate the theory?

Is the theory falsifiable or is it a belief that a person accepts or not-accepts?

My biggest problem with "NLP and Energy," "Energetic NLP," etc. is how this has the effect of re-defining NLP and by doing so, it changes NLP. NLP is a *communication model* by which we can *model* subjective human experience. But when someone attempts to combine something with NLP without modeling it—they end up creating a distorted version of NLP. By jamming together a disciplines (NLP) with a belief system (in this case, "energy work" or "energy healing") they change NLP. Let them *use* NLP to understand the belief system, but don't call that belief system NLP. Don't call it "Christian NLP," "Jewish NLP," "Islam NLP," "Energetic NLP," etc.

Mastery is in distinctions— and so here is an important distinction, a distinction that keeps different things separated. Model the structures and subjective experiences in a belief system, but don't jam it together with NLP. Let it be an *application* of using the NLP Communication model for modeling. To do that only creates confusion and non-sense. Conversely, if we distinguish NLP (and Neuro-

Semantics also) as models from the *applications* that we make using them, then at least we don't create such confusion.

Who knows? Perhaps there are these "unknown energies" that we can tap into and use for healing. But refusing to entertain tough questions about them, refusing to be open that one could be wrong is a form of rigid dogmatism, one that indicates a "true believer" (to use Eric Hoefffer's phrase) not an open searcher.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #58
December 3, 2012
Empowerment Series #38

MODELING ENERGY

(Part II Mysterious Fuzzy Energy)

Wow! After last week's *Neurons Meta Reflection* on "Mysterious Fuzzy Energy" I received so many emails! I think I received more than for any single article that I have posted on *Neurons* during the past 5 years. And within those emails were numerous stories, examples, ideas, and questions. So to answer some of the questions as well as some of the non-questions (questions that were implied but not stated), I have formatted the following Q & A. None of the questions or statements (or accusations!) were stated exactly as I have written them below, yet what follows does catch the essence of the inquiries.

Isn't NLP about "anything that works," and so if an energy therapy gets results or works and gives people a release on life from something blocking them, isn't that NLP?

No, definitely not! Alone that does not make it NLP! NLP is *not* just about anything that works. Plumbing works; aspirin works; traffic lights work; a clean water processing station works; and so do a hundred-thousand other things. The mere criteria of "something that works" does not make the grade for including within the field of NLP.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a communication model. It is about the operating, functioning, and "programming" of human habits (regular and systemic processing) of subjective experiences within the neurology-and-linguistic systems of a human being. There's lots of things that work that have nothing to do with the field of NLP. Many things lie outside and beyond the ken of this field. Sure, where there are human beings, we can ask about their beliefs, states of mind and body, emotions, responses, etc. That is, we can model what they do and how they do it. But that would be an *application* of the models that we call NLP, not NLP as such.

NLP is about modeling the subjective structure of experience so that we can create a process for how it works. If we model gambling or playing the lottery and find a dependable pattern for successful wins, then that does not make NLP about "winning the lottery." NLP is a communication model that developed from Transformational Grammar, General Semantics, Family Systems, Bateson's anthropology and systems work, Gestalt, etc. that is a cognitive-behavioral, constructivist model for modeling.

Why do you only accept things that you can prove empirically and not things that cannot be proved empirically?

For me it is not about “proving.” It is rather about modeling the structure of something. Most things cannot be “proved,” and the scientific attitude in research is not about proving as much as finding evidence, checking the validity of the evidence, formulating questions and hypothesis that can be tested so that one can note to what extent there is evidence for and against something.

Regarding the field of NLP, my concern is about calling something “NLP” when it is not NLP and does not fit the focus and constraints about NLP as modeling the structure of subjective experience. I really don’t care if people do Reiki, shakral energy, work with chi (qi), or anything else as a process. Each person has his and her right to do that. What I have spoken about is the inappropriateness of calling it “NLP,” trying to cram it together with NLP, all of which then mis-represents NLP. That’s what I care about.

Why do you have such disdain for people who are involved in energy work and/or for the models of energy therapies?

Well, first of all, I do not have *disdain* for people at all. I respect that each and every person can believe whatever they want and decide on the mental maps that they want to use as they move through life. Now for the so-called “models of energy therapies,” most are not models anyway. Most are belief systems and the great majority have no hypothesis to test and no way to test its premises. Most have no way for it to be falsified, that is, they cannot think of a way that it could be tested and showed that it does not work. And in that case, it is a belief system, not a model.

As a person who takes a scientific approach to things, I care about if a process is valid, how we go about establishing that validity, and if the process is replicable and not because someone is a “believer.” With regard to someone who believes in some “energy” process, I just want them to describe it specifically with some precision as a process that can be replicated. That’s all.

So you are not into the energy dimension, you just dismiss it and don’t have any interest in it, right?

No, that is not right! Actually, in Neuro-Semantics we talk a lot about energy. Right now I’m here in Hong Kong and have just completed the first part of our *Self-Actualization Psychology Training* where we spent two days on *Unleashing Vitality*. We looked in depth at the driving needs within our bodies and nervous systems that create the physical energy that is required for focused activity, passion, and contribution. We focused on the energy of a person’s metabolism, one’s mental and emotional energy of one’s state, and the sense of inspiration that arises from great meanings. Next we focused on the energy that’s involved in *Unleashing Potentials* and moving to live “in the zone,” in the flow zone of the genius state.

So yes indeed we focus on “energy,” but we don’t go after the so-called exotic and mysterious energies, but those that are more closely at hand and that we all recognize and can do something about! And as Erl Morrell-Stinson who is Reiki III certified and a Meta-Coach wrote:

“For the most part, the ambiguity of so called ‘energy work’ is unnecessary when you can get rationally explainable results more precisely, elegantly, and quickly with NS/NLP.”

Erl also asked the question: So why go fooling around with supposed and undocumented “energies” when there are dozens and dozens of very well-known things you can do to increase your energy, vitality, passion, health, well-being, etc. with Neuro-Semantics?

So is there nothing unknown or mysterious yet to be discovered? Is there no possibility of other ‘energies’ out there that you (or we) don’t know about?

Yes, of course there is! Of course there are a million things I (we) don’t know and yet to be discovered and yes, there could be additional “energies” from those that we know about that could be out there yet to be discovered. The mere fact that there are mysterious in human healing— “spontaneous remissions” and such like— that we don’t know what’s happening or how whatever is happening is occurring says that there are processes yet to be discovered.

Now one of the funny or weird or sad things that I’ve noticed about many of the people promoting “energy” therapies is that they themselves do not have that much energy. Many of them are not fit and slim and many seem to lack cardio-vascular energy for energetic exercise. The person I had the original conversation with needed to go take naps during the day of the Conference. I thought that strange especially since he had been in the UK for a couple of weeks and I just arrived in London and immediately spent the day in the NLP Leader Summit and was alert and full of energy all day. So I would think that anyone into “energy” ought to be a living example of mental, emotional, physical, interpersonal, etc. energy! Maybe that’s my thing about the importance of congruence and walking your talk.

Finally one last thing to note that also needs to be addressed and confronted— something that makes me cautious and suspicious of all of the “energy” therapies and works. I cannot express it any better than Erl did when he wrote this to me in an email:

“ Most (99%) of all the energy stuffy out there is hype, bogus, ego-driven, and a bunch of smoke and mirrors. Most energy practitioners don't have a clue as to what the hell they are doing, and are too embarrassed to admit it. They work very well on clients that are to desperate to admit that it doesn't work, who then create their own healing as an sort of "psycho-emotional cover", and attribute it to the workings of some mysterious energy.”

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #59
December 10, 2012

THE FIRST

SELF-ACTUALIZATION PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING

Seeking the Peak Trainings

Where: It was so right— we met in Hong Kong *on top of a mountain* for the first Self-Actualization Psychology Training! That mountain happens to be right in the middle of the city— and is appropriately called “Hilltop” — to wit, the Hilltop Country Club. And what a view of the surrounding city from the top! It is truly a high level *meta-venue*—above everything and just right for developing a *meta-perspective* for the group of Meta-Coaches and meta-trainers and meta-explorers who showed up to explore the unexplored territory of *Self-Actualization Psychology*.

Who: And we came from all over the planet! Those who came together to that mountaintop came from Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, USA, Belgium, Sweden, Netherlands, New Zealand, and Egypt! Neuro-Semantic Trainers came, Meta-Coaches came, and others trained in NLP and Neuro-Semantics. And we even had a couple of people who came who did not have a single bit of this background. What an experience it must have been for them! In the midst of so many radical devotees to the Neuro-Semantics of Self-Actualization! I can’t imagine what they must have thought about all these wild and crazy people from all over the world converging in Hong Kong. But none of them threw up their hands and ran off screaming in horror, so I guess it was okay.

Time: Now what we did in the ten-days of the training was cover the four Self-Actualization Trainings and experienced the “unleashing” principles and processes which, for the first-time ever, tied them all together. It was the first time for me also. And while I had imagined what it would be like, my imagination significantly differed from the reality— I had not fully imagined just how powerful, profound, transformative, and insightful the experience would be. And especially I had not imagined it for myself.

Content: The content of what we did was *Self-Actualization Psychology* and it was *Training* for the first *Diploma* given in Neuro-Semantics. What is this? It is the specific *Psychology* that describes psychologically healthy people. People who have dealt with any trauma or hurt and are now present (in the moment instead of the past), “okay” (have unconditional self-esteem), with the ego-strength to face life on its own terms, and ready to take on the challenges for growth and contribution in the future. It is the psychology that uniquely governs the field of Coaching and also has applications for training, consulting, parenting, education, leadership, etc.

More specifically, the content was practical applied Self-Actualization Psychology. That is, it not only covered academic knowledge, but more importantly *Applied Self-Actualization Psychology*. And what people experienced was equivalent of two-and-a-half semesters of information and training. So the eight-hours of nine days (72 classroom hours) will be more and in much more depth than you would get in two semesters at a University stretched over a year's time.

Curriculum: What is the curriculum that everyone learned in the *Applied Self-Actualization Psychology* of Neuro-Semantics? There are four areas for unleashing and four dimensions of self-actualization:

Biological Self-Actualization: Unleashing vitality.

Psychological Self-Actualization: Unleashing potentials.

Existential Self-Actualization: Unleashing creative problem-solving and innovating.

Sociological Self-Actualization: Unleashing leadership.

Dimensions: Now within these four dimensions of Self-Actualization Psychology are certain *peaks to seek*, that is, heights of human possibilities to identify, discover, define, experience, and actualize. What are these *peaks* that a person can seek and experience?

In Biological Self-Actualization— the Peak of Being Real, being Authentic.

In Psychological Self-Actualization — the Peak of getting into the Zone and synergizing your highest meanings (visions and values) with your best performances (competencies).

In Existential Self-Actualization— the Peak of engaging an intensely focused Creative problem-solving Coaching Conversation for innovating.

In Sociological Self-Actualization— the Peak of creating Self-Actualizing communities (families, groups, teams, companies, organizations, associations, countries).

Competencies: And there's more. From each of the dimensions of Self-Actualization Psychology there are multiple skills to be learned, practical applications for how to handle the making-real or actualizing of one's potentials. These skills range from the Need Gratification skills, Semantic Loading and Unloading skills, Assessing one's coping/ mastering of healthy need gratification, to Climbing the Meaning-Making Ladder, Detecting Meaning Constructs, Suspending Meaning, Sacrificing, Unlearning using the Crucible, Expanding Meta-Programs for Synergizing Meaning-and-Performance, Experiencing an Optimal Zone State; holding a well-formed coaching conversation about outcomes, problems, solutions, and innovations; Unleashing Your Leadership Matrix, Using the Hierarchy of Needs as a Business Model; Doing Change Management/ Leadership with the Axes of Leadership, and much more.

Benchmarks: In Self-Actualization Psychology we also have benchmarked eight features (traits, skills, characteristics) of a self-actualizing person: present, authentic, empowered, passion, creative, courage, congruence, and collaborative. This also you will not find in any University course. So where are you going to find that in an University? Which University currently teaches all of that as part of their curriculum? Well, the question is rhetorical— None of course. But it is available in the *Seeking the Peak training of Self-Actualization Psychology*.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #60
December 11, 2012
Exposing an Old Myth:
“Most communication is non-verbal.”

WORDS REALLY DO MATTER!

One of the articles on the international Neuro-Semantic website is from Dr. C. E. “Buzz” Johnson, an Optometrist, under the title, “*The 7%, 38%, 55% Myth.*” The article was first published in July, 1994 in *Anchor Point* and I was so impressed with it that I wrote to Dr. Johnson to get permission to put it on the website to correct the old myth about communication.

The myth—and it is totally a *myth*—is that only 7% of the meaning that we obtain from a person in communication comes from the words while 38% from sounds and 55% from what we see visually. From the very first time that I heard this idea by somebody in NLP, I didn’t know it was a myth, but I had a sense that it was obviously wrong-headed and even non-sense. I immediately thought about all the times I have sat in an airplane watching a movie in some language other than English and *not understanding anything about it!* I certainly was *not* understanding 93% of it from the visual images and sounds. I could tell if someone was upset or angry or loving or kind, but that was about it. I didn’t know the plot, the characters, the problems, etc.

And over the years that has become repeatedly obvious as I’ve traveled into many, many countries where I have tried to communicate with people who spoke languages other than English. I have tried to ask for simple things all to no avail, “Where is the train station?” “May I have scrambled eggs.” “Point me to the men’s room.” I have had to make childlike sounds, “Chu chu; chu chu” to get the idea of a train, but then asking where is train station?

Just listening to the sounds that people were making and watching their face and gestures, I definitely was *not* picking up 93% of the messages and meanings that they were communicating! And in reverse, when I tried to let someone know that I wanted a grilled chicken salad or a fish or how to call for a taxi, they definitely were not getting 93% of my intended messages! And even I went into panomining cars and planes and grilled chicken salad (which is a sight to see!), I could not make myself understood.

I recently tried to explain to the chef in Guangzhou China who was cooking gourmet eggs that I wanted 2 eggs, scrambled and cooked well-done and please do not cut the egg into a thousand tiny pieces (which he continued to do day after day). Impossible! I even had someone write that message on a three-by-five card, handed it to him, which he immediately took into the back area of the

kitchen trying to get someone to tell him what to do! Then he did not return with the card (!) which I tried to ask for with more panomining. All to no avail.

Words do count! Words do mean something. By words we transfer simple and complex ideas from one another and in fact, probably 80 to 90 percent of our communications are dependent on words—not the non-verbal gestures, sounds, grunts, panomines, facial expressions, etc.

In the original article by Dr. Johnson, he described Albert Mehrabian's original research, what it was about, and how it was misunderstood.

“Albert Mehrabian, Ph.D. of UCLA was the originator of the 7-38-55 theory. He speaks of it in two books, *Silent Messages* published in 1971, and *Nonverbal Communications* published in 1972. . . . From Chapter 3 of *Silent Messages* we find that the numbers 7-38-55 expressed as percentages have to do only with what he calls *the resolution of inconsistent messages* (italics added), or to put it in NLP terms, incongruencies. He states that there are very few things that can be communicated non-verbally. He initially was investigating liking/ disliking which he later generalized into feelings. In speaking with him by phone in March, 1994, he stated that his findings and inferences were not meant to be applied to normal communications. They were of very limited application.”

Now there is a video on Youtube that you can see that has similarly exploded the myth of this old mis-represented idea. It is presented by Creativity Works and titled: *Busting the Mehrabian Myth*. It is a vry good video and you can get to it by clicking the following link:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=7dboA8cag1M

Just last night here in Guangzhou, China we had 7 teams (in the Meta-Coach training) make a presentation (/skit) on various business experiences like “introducing a coaching culture into an organization,” “managing upwards,” “making a presentation Meta-Coaching in a board room for consideration,” etc. While watching, there was so many words, so much action occurring, after a couple presentations, my translator got worn out and just quit. As I continued to watch, I kind of knew what was going on but when the audience burst forth with laughter due to some exchange or conversation, I didn't have a clue. “It's funny!” I knew that. But I didn't know what was funny, how it was funny, and I couldn't have passed the funny situation on to anyone else.

Words! How amazing in their power to transfer meaning! Here's to the marvel and wonder and magic of words— linguistic symbols by which we can communicate complex ideas and messages to each other. Yes, I know that there are many people in NLP who somehow got the false idea that words are an inferior form of communication and that the best communication is behavioral. But try it and you won't get the food you want, get to the destinations that you want, or transfer the complex ideas that you want to explore.

From: L. Michael Hall
Meta Reflections 2012 #61
December 17, 2012
Empowerment Series #39

PUSHED BY DRIVES, PULLED BY MEANING — #1

The Neuro-Semantic $E = MC^2$

“Perception and meaning are contributions from the organism not from the environment ... The experience ... what it means ... is within your control to our extent that would surprise and delight you.”

(Grinder & DeLozier, *Turtles All the Way Down*, p. 209)

“What is meaningful to us causes the heart to leap.”
Wilson Colin (Biographer of Maslow)

I begin with two quotations—which offer two key ideas. First, meaning comes from within; second, meaning causes the heart to leap. Meaning comes from within because we create it. You and I are the meaning-makers. There is no meaning “out there.” It’s not an external thing that you can find in empirical reality. And when a person creates rich meaning inside, the heart leaps. This is the benchmark for meaning— does your heart leap? When did it last leap? Will it leap today?

Central to Neuro-Semantics are these two ideas. We could even say they provide a definition or description of Neuro-Semantics. *What then is Neuro-Semantics?* One short answer is that *Neuro-Semantics is the management and the embodiment of meaning*. It is a discipline in which we focus on how to act on, perform, and make real the meanings that we value and live by, and those that we want to live by. And that’s because we all live by meaning. Without meaning (that is, meaningfulness) we cannot live. Truly *living* in the sense of thriving and flourishing requires a strong and robust sense of meaning.

Do you want to be effective in life? Of course you do. So what’s the secret of effectiveness? Meaningfulness. Above and beyond whatever you do and whatever level of expertise you bring to what you do, you need to be able to find or create a sense of its meaningfulness if you want to be truly effective. That is, effectiveness in achieving any particular objective is a function of that objective holding rich meaning to and for you. Let’s call this the Neuro-Semantic formula for success:

The Neuro-Semantic $E = MC^2$

What does the Neuro-Semantic $E = MC^2$ refer to? *Effectiveness = Meaning (Competency)²*. To become effective in any given area of life, take your meanings and multiply them times your competencies (your developed skills) and then square them. Do that and you will pretty much be

able to articulate your “effectiveness.” Are you an effective coach, trainer, parent, business manager, or entrepreneur? Well, let’s see.

Step 1: What does it mean to you? And what else? And how much meaning do all of these meanings hold for you? And when you combine all of those, where would the meaningfulness level be from 0 to 10? And are there any meanings that detract from this? Any meanings that undermine the meaningfulness of your role and job?

Step 2: What are your core competencies in manifesting your richest meanings in that area? Where would you gauge yourself on those competencies from 0 to 10? What are the core competencies that you need to be effective as a coach, trainer, parent, manager, or entrepreneur? What are the supplementary skills that are also required to move beyond the basics to really succeeding in that area? Where is your level of competencies in those skills? Now imagine that you need to double all of those skills (practice them for the 10,000 hours or ten-years required for expertise) and in comparison with that— where are you?

Step 3: Now multiple all of your meanings by your competencies. This should give you a pretty good gauge for how far up the pathway of self-actualization you have moved as you have synergized meanings and performances.

In speaking about *meaning* here I am referring to the Axis of Meaning— which actually is “axes” because there are multiple axes. In the book, *Neuro-Semantics: Actualizing Meaning & Performance* (2011) I have identified a number of axes of meaning. There is the axis of *the kinds* of meanings, *the qualities* of meaning, and *the numbers* of meaning.

By contrast, *competency* refers to the Axis of Performance. And on this axis we have 13 or more kinds of performances (competencies or skills)—their quantity and their quality. These are the skills required to put into action, to embody, and to actualize what we conceptualize, believe, and understand. And perform we do— we plan, we talk, we embody, we act, we repeat, we practice, we create a discipline, and so on as we do lots of different things that enable us to “perform” the meanings.

My research and studies in Self-Actualization Psychology has led to several new formulations of the NLP model that we call Neuro-Semantics. One of them is that self-actualization is the function of the synergy or synthesis of meaning and performance. Another is this: *We are pushed by drives and pulled by meanings.*

Pushed by drives refers to the fact of our embodiment. And the fact that we are embodied in the kind of bodies that we are, these bodies require numerous gratifications in order to be healthy, alert, energized, and fully functioning. And those requirements as “needs” (or necessities) are our *drives*. They drive us toward what is required for survival (food, water, oxygen, sleep, etc.), for safety (order, stability, control over one’s choices and responses, etc.), for love and affection (connection, bonding, relating, etc.), and for a sense of value or importance within a community of people. Pushed by these drives, we then have to learn to cope with effectively gratifying the need or else. “Or else” what? Or else we will become desperate for the need, create pseudo- and toxic substitutes for them, become pathological,

and suffer all kinds of symptoms.

Pulled by meanings refers to your higher nature, a nature that transcends the animal nature and life in the jungle. Of this Maslow said that each of us have within us a drive for self-actualization and we now know that what pulls us there is our hunger for meaning. We are not only a meaning-making species, we are a meaning-dependent species. Without meaning we shrivel up and die. Without meaning we waste away and become diminished as human beings. Yet with meaning, we begin to unleash more and more of the potentials clamoring inside.

And Neuro-Semantics? Well, it's the model that informs about how to work with the dynamics or drives that push us and the meanings that pull on us. For more, contact the Neuro-Semanticist or Meta-Coach nearest you.

From: L. Michael Hall
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Empowerment Series #40

PUSHED BY DRIVES, PULLED BY MEANING — #2

When it comes to the human heart— *the human heart is designed to leap to and for meaning*. It always does. Watch someone down and out encounter a rich and robust meaning for his or her life, what do you then see? You will see that person's heart leaping with energy and vitality and meaningfulness! Meaning is that transformative.

Here's the thing—when a human being has more meaning, he or she has more vitality. And conversely, when a person has less meaning, that person has less vitality, and that means more boredom, apathy, and indifference. And where there is boredom, apathy, and indifference, human beings do not do very well. That's when they start getting into trouble and become destructive to themselves and/or to others. If we want to find the root causes of violence, crime, drug addiction, and other forms of human diminution, we could do no better than to start here.

Now if our normal states of consciousness thrills with excitement when there is an increase in meaning, just imagine what happens when there is a sudden surge of meaning, that is, an explosion or flood of meaning. What then? *Peak experiences*— that's what then happens! Then we have one of those special moments when time stands still, when we step into the Eternity of the Now, when one or more of our intentions are fully combined with our attention which is fully activated and focus on a single thing that captivates our mental-emotional-personal-and-relational engagement with life.

Here's something really weird about these joyful peak experiences, they not only occur when we are experiencing some moment of glory, wonder, delight, pleasure, triumph, celebration, etc., but they also occur in contexts that are the opposite. They also occur in the strange context of crisis, danger, and threat. It is in the crisis when valued and even sacred meanings are threatened that we discover and then rise up to protect our cherished meanings. It is in such crisis moments that all of our attention becomes singularly focused and concentrated on one objective. Our "will" is then fully activated and, as it becomes energized, we feel aroused from passivity to proactivity.

Actually, it is usually not during the times of peace and tranquility that we experience peak experiences for then our meanings are more docile and quiet. No. It is when life is turbulent and stormy, when challenges come our way in the form of problems and the situation looks bleak and unsolvable. And why do peak experiences come to us at those moments? Probably because "will" needs an object— an intense and challenging purpose. And when that happens, the experience becomes highly meaningful.

It is meaning that sharpens your appetites for life. Why? Because when you “hold an idea” in mind which you deeply interest yourself in, you begin a chemical reaction in your body and brain— one that will then create something new, that will give birth to something new. This is the creative process par excellence. Inventing, creating, and holding an exciting meaning inevitably causes your heart to leap and when you do, you leap upward into the transcendent-like state of a peak experience. And as Maslow noted, this gives you a momentary experience of the self-actualizing mind-set, attitude, and experience. And because it’s positively addictive, you will want more.

What causes this magic state and experience of the heart leaping? Part of it is caused by the process of creating and then holding a meaningful idea. That’s because when you do that, you are exercising your “will” and as you do, your “will” is becoming *intention>attention active*. On the *intention>* side, you are intending, setting a purpose, creating a desired future, and activating a self-organizing feature in your mind-body system. On the *>attention* side, you are now aligning your attentions to do service for your intentions. So together, as you internally create and hold an idea in mind, you are engaged in an effortful activity, the effort of what we call “will.”

On the *intention>* side you are asking and answering the directional questions that begins any and every human adventure: What do you want? What are you seeking to achieve? What is valuable to you? What is important and highly worthwhile of your focus and energy? All of these kind of intentionality questions deliberately awakens meanings within you. And as the meaningful increases, you not only *become*— you become *more alive*, but also *more real*. By way of contrast, the person without this lacks meaning and meaningfulness and so failing meaning the person becomes diminished and/or goes looking for substitutes.

Yet meaning must be performed. It is never enough to just create meaning or hold it in mind, *you have to live it*. You have to embody it so that it governs your sense of self, so that it becomes you, and when that happens, then all of your actions and emotions are embodying or performing the meaning. What is an emotion? It is the *feel* of meaning. What is a behavior? It is the *performance* of meaning. And except for purely mechanical reactions, everything you do from the time you get up in the morning to the time you go to bed at night is *performing some meaning*.

But what meaning? Ah, yes, that is the question? What meaning are you performing? In Neuro-Semantics we explore a person’s inner matrix of frames to answer to that question. And using the Meta-Model of Language from NLP, we distinction meaning as (1) “understanding” (what you select and identify— what is it? What you linguistically label— what do you call it? Cause-effect— how does it work?), (2) “significance” (what is its value? Do you deem it important or unimportant?), and/or (3) “intention” (what is your purpose, agenda, motivation?).

It has been said many times by many of the greatest philosophers and thinkers that human greatness lies in our ability to be greater than our conditions. Viktor Frankl described this in terms of being able to cope with a horrific context of a concentration camp through his ability to choose and live his meanings. He refused to allow his conditions to determine his meanings or his responses. And he succeeded. He not only endured the trauma of having his personal world ripped asunder, but he came out of it un-traumatized and able to live a full and effective life in contributing via his creation

of Logo-Therapy.

In a similar way, when you believe that your greatness also lies in your ability to be greater than your conditions, you wake up to the extent and greatness of your meaning-making powers. This is courage in action. It is putting yourself into a purposeful orientation. And in this way you come alive to the energy and vitality of life— your heart leaps!

From: L. Michael Hall
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PUSHED BY DRIVES, PULLED BY MEANING — #3

Because meaning is constructed and because we humans are completely free to attribute any meaning we want to anything, people can and do look for meaning in all sorts of places. And often we discover that they are able to create and find an inspiring meaning in the most unlikely places. And yet it results for them in a more effective and productive life. And when that happens, I can only rejoice with them, “That’s great!”

Recently I was in the local gym here in Colorado and a “cowboy” type (which we have a lot of here in the wild, wild west) began making fun of a person he had recently met. He mocked him because he collected bird feathers. Somehow he went along with his wife and her best friend to the house of this man. And it seems that over the years of collecting bird feather, he had converted one bedroom and then another into an extensive display of tens-of-thousands of bird feathers. “How ridiculous!” he said over and over in the men’s dressing area just opposite where I was dressing and getting ready for a workout.

“Only a sissy would do something like that” he said sarcastically and with a snare. “I could use those feathers for my ties when I go fishing in the Colorado River,” he commented. “Can you imagine a grown man collecting bird feathers?!” he asked rhetorically.

As I overheard this conversation in the locker room, I took my time typing my gym shoes on so I could hear the rest of the story. It seems that this “sissy” man turned out to be a well-known attorney here in town, very financially successful. And he got into collecting bird fathers as a way to share something with his wife because she was so passionate about the bird feathers. And now after a couple decades, he had actually become an expert in the field and is actually writing a book about the colors, symmetry, artistry, etc of the bird feathers and he uses their display rooms as a way to entertain friends and family.

After I finished dressing and headed to the cardio area, I kept thinking about what I had heard. Here was a person who had created and found something that was highly meaningful to him, something that inspired him, that focused his thoughts, that created an area of sharing with his wife, and that had created for him an area of expertise! Amazing. Bird feathers! And while I have no abiding interest in that subject and would not be interested in investing my time, mind, money, or energy into it— I can celebrate with him that he has found a vitalizing meaning that enriched his life in numerous ways. “Well done! Good for you!”

Yet the search for meaning isn't always that way. I have also recently heard some conversations that struck me as looking for meaning in all the wrong places— in getting revenge, showing up one's X, buying bigger toys than the neighbors have, in being more right (righteous, actually self-righteous than others). And that reminded me of a conversation I had with a person who volunteered during a demonstration in a training this year. Upon asking he wanted, he said "more money." Okay, great . . . why? I asked the *why of intention* several times and when we got to the edge of his mental mapping about gaining more money, it was to "finally *be* an important person." So I reflected what I heard, "So you want to gain more money, lots of money, in order that you can *be* an important person. Do I have that right?"

"Yes, with more money, then I'll be respected and I can feel confident in myself . . . and then I'll have high self-esteem. (Pause) And also then my life will have meaning, you know, be meaningful."

"Okay, so you are wanting a money-based self-esteem because as you figure out how to make lots of money that will enable you to have high self-esteem and meaning in your life. Is that right?"

"Yes, that's right!" he said as he glowed.

"So before I decide whether I'm willing to work with you on this goal, just so that I'm clear, let me ask you some questions. You are wanting a money-based self-esteem and meaningfulness of life so that with money you are okay and valuable, and without money, your self-esteem will drop? You want to make your value and worth as a person and the richness of your sense of life's meaningfulness *conditional upon* the amount of money you have in the bank? You're willing for it to be contingent upon your income and equity?"

"Well ... (he paused) ... when you put it like that, it doesn't sound very good."

"What does sound very good about it as stated in that way?"

"It sounds unecological. It sounds like I'm selling out for money."

"And?"

"Well I don't want to live life just for money or to make the meaning of life dependent on money. That's sounds crass and superficial."

"And?"

"I guess I want to figure out another way to get self-esteem and meaningfulness than money."

"Great, then I can work with you about that."

The fact is that there are inadequate ways and even toxic places to look for meaning. For someone looking for meaning in ways that hurt others or that defines human dignity in a conditional way is simply looking for meaning in all the wrong places! To seek to find or create meaning by gratifying a lower-level need (a Deficiency-need, D-need) is actually the formula for getting *stuck* in life so that you do not actualize your highest and best and do not find a healthy meaning of life. And the proof is that when you get stuck by trying to make a D-need level "the meaning of life," you will then create an addiction.

People who search for meaning in *things* also are making a mistake. The mistake is in the

assumption that meaning is an external quantity— something you can purchase, something you can buy for Christmas. Something you can get as a bonus at year's end. It is not. To find meaning you have to go within, you have to discover how you make your current meanings and how you can create a whole new level of meanings. The key is discovering *how* you make meaning and raising the quality of your meaning-making.

