

FIGURING OUT PEOPLE

Design Engineering with Meta-Programs

*Deepening Understanding of People For Better
Rapport, Relationship, and Influence*

META-PROGRAMS FOR FIGURING OUT
PEOPLE *by* **Bobby G. Bodenhamer, D.Min. and L.
Michael Hall, Ph.D.**

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FIGURING OUT PEOPLE

(DESIGN ENGINEERING WITH META-PROGRAMS)

DR. BOB BODENHAMER

L. MICHAEL HALL, Ph.D

1. BOOK REVIEW BY JUDITH PEARSON, PH.D.

Figuring Out People

Design Engineering with Meta-Programs

Reviewed By **Judith Pearson, Ph.D.**

In almost every area of life, whether business, personal relationships, family, children, etc., getting along well with others plays an important role. It plays as important a role as does intelligence, skill, aptitude, etc. in succeeding. And “getting along well” with people, in part, necessitates some ability in figuring people out. (p. 25)

Figuring Out People, by Dr. L. Michael Hall and Dr. Bob Bodenhamer, is the quintessential text on meta-programs. It constitutes an excellent reference manual for NLP practitioners who want to widen their knowledge-base on this topic.

According to Wyatt Woodsmall, who wrote the foreword, “Meta-programs are probably the greatest contribution the field of NLP has made to understanding human differences.” Figuring Out People is the greatest contribution the field of NLP has made to understanding meta-programs. Meta-programs describe constructs about behavioral, cognitive, and emotional processes that reveal how people sort and process information, make decisions, carry out plans, and relate to others and to the world around them.

Meta-programs describe characteristics that make each human being a unique and individual self throughout time. Figuring Out People is not, however, about how people “are” in terms of static traits, but about how people function in given contexts.

Metaprograms reveal one's model of the world that creates his or her inner reality.

Background

Leslie Cameron Bandler introduced the concept of meta-programs, basing her observations on individual distinctions in the context of therapy with her clients. She began presenting her observations in NLP training programs. Roger Bailey and Ross Steward later applied the concept to human behavior in business activities.

In the 1980s Roger Bailey developed the Language and Behavior (LAB) profile, a questionnaire that elicits 14 predominant meta-programs, divided into two categories: Motivation Traits and Working Traits. Wyatt Woodsmall integrated meta-programs with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, as described in *Time Line Therapy and the Basis of Personality* (Meta Publications, 1988).

Edward Reese and Dan Bagley applied metaprograms to sales in *Beyond Selling: How to Maximize Your Personal Influence* (Meta Publications, 1988). Shelle Rose Charvet wrote *Words That Change Minds* (Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1995) to explain how an understanding of meta-programs can increase one's influence in occupational settings.

Figuring Out People expands on these existing works. This book breaks new ground by identifying several new meta-program distinctions and by grouping meta-programs into five categories: Mental, Emotional, Volitional, Response, and Meta Meta-Programs.

While it would be impossible to create a definitive list of meta-programs, or even an all-purpose classification system, Bodenhamer and Hall have gone beyond the call of duty to define 51 meta-programs in this book.

Content

Figuring Out People consists of three parts. The first part is an introduction to the concept of meta-programs. The second part describes the 51 metaprograms, divided among the five categories. The third part describes design engineering with meta-programs.

In Part I, “Introduction,” the authors describe meta-programs as “distinctions of consciousness” and “processes of mind” that provide operational frameworks for how people sort and perceive sensory inputs, and how they process thoughts and feelings. The usefulness of any metaprogram depends on the task at hand and what one wants to accomplish. Meta-programs do not explain; they describe. Some meta-programs act as “drivers” of the mind, operating consistently across contexts, while other “non-driver” meta-programs allow for flexibility and shifting across contexts.

When we combine meta-programs with mental strategies, we have, as a result, the process we commonly call personality. Thus, meta-programs provide a model for figuring out people. *As soon as we do figure out people, another problem arises. After we discover just how different they think, feel, value, choose, act, etc. we have to handle our differences.*

Learning to recognize how others differ from us comprises step one.

Step two involves learning how to accept, appreciate, and validate those differences....

Then comes step three, utilizing those differences in such a way that we don't let them get in the way of communicating and relating. (p. 25)

Understanding another's meta-programs allows us to identify his or her map of reality, so that we can pace that reality, and more profoundly motivate, understand, persuade, and relate. The authors put forth six presuppositions for working with meta-programs:

- 1) Meta-programs create a general direction for consciousness.
- 2) They are conceptually dependent.
- 3) Each one operates on continuum.
- 4) They operate in a “state dependent” way.
- 5) Meta-programs are not true or false, or moral or immoral, or good or bad.
- 6) They change over time and context.

We can learn to recognize meta-programs by maintaining sensory awareness of others' behaviors and expressions, attending to linguistic markers, developing a comprehensive knowledge of meta-program patterns, and gathering our impressions from a calm state of observation. A familiarity with meta-programs can help reduce interpersonal conflicts, increase appreciation of human differences, enhance communication flexibility, facilitate empathy and rapport, and lend accuracy to our predictions about human behavior.

In Part II, “The Meta-Programs,” Hall and Bodenhamer describe the 51 meta-programs and the five categories. Here are few examples of metaprograms in each category:

Mental meta-programs deal with how people process information. Examples are:

Chunk Size (General/Specific; Global/Detail)
Relationship Sort (Matching/Mismatching; Sameness/Difference)
Information Gathering Style (Uptime/Downtime)

Emotional meta-programs describe how cognitive processes affect emotions. Examples are:

Stress Response Pattern (Passivity/Aggression/Dissociated)
Frame of Reference Sort (Internal/External; Self/Other)
Convincer or Believability Sort (Looks, Sounds, or Feels Right; Makes sense)

Volitional meta-programs have to do with the attention of consciousness or conation. This terms refers to choosing, willing, and intending. Examples are:

Conation Choice in Adapting (Options/Procedures)
Adaptation Sort (Judging/Perceiving, Controlling/Floating)
Reason Sort of Modal Operators (Necessity/Possibility)

Response meta-programs refer to the products or outputs of states of consciousness.

Examples are: Rejuvenation of Battery Sort (Extrovert/Introvert/Ambivert)
Affiliation and Management Sort (Independent/Team player/Manager)
Work Preference Sort (Things/Systems/People/Information)

Meta meta-programs are those meta-programs that occur at a level meta to other meta-programs. They describe how people process information about primary experiences and states. Examples are:

Temper to Instruction Sort (Strong-will/Compliant)
Self-esteem Sort (Conditional/Unconditional)
“Time” Experience (In time/Through time)

For each meta-program, the authors provide a description that explains the concept, gives guidelines for elicitation and identification, discusses the personality traits found on the continuum, addresses possible origins of the traits, and makes suggestions for further reading.

An example from the text is “Philosophical Direction,” a mental metaprogram.

The meta-program distinctions are Why and How. Those with a Why orientation think about causation, source, and origins, while those with a How orientation think about use, function, direction, and destiny.

Why people sort for the philosophical past, based on the assumption that “If I can understand where something came from, I can gain mastery over it.”

They tend to get stuck in mentally reliving trauma, because they keep looping back to it, asking “why?”

How people sort for purpose and maintain a solution focus, by asking “How can I respond to, or use, this?” A Why person tends toward philosophical approaches, while a How person tends toward pragmatic approaches. Why and How orientations are usually acquired from one’s parents and teachers. Trauma may encourage people to search for causation and reasons.

Part III, covers “Utilization: Design Engineering with Meta-Programs.” The authors explain that meta-programs function as frame-of-reference contexts for thinking, not only in terms of the environment, but also in the roles we play. Use global thinking, and you become a philosopher. Use detailed thinking and take on the role of scientist. Your thinking context will induce you into certain roles. Conversely, the roles you have played can create your meta-programs. The way people describe their histories reveals their meta-programs.

We can expand our personal frames-of-reference by modeling another’s meta-programs, or by renovating our own stories from the perspective of meta-programs other than our own. We can change meta-programs by studying their origins from a meta position above the time line or by reimprinting significant emotional events of the past.

When we become adept at identifying meta-programs in others, we can conduct profiling. Profiling people according to their meta-programs is useful in understanding another’s skills and where they fit in, as well as predicting how they may respond to given circumstances. With profiling, we can begin to theoretically construct the combinations of meta-programs that make up certain diagnostic categories. The authors provide an easy-to-use checklist (which readers can copy) for profiling.

After figuring out a person’s meta-programs, comes the task of using that

information for effective communication and rapport-building, as well as strategic leveraging. Leveraging means identifying driver meta-programs which, if shifted, cause everything else to shift as well. The driver metaprograms are those with the most pervasive impact on personality and behavior.

When we know another's meta-programs, we can confront them in a way that best allows them to receive the information. We can understand how they arrive at their self-esteem. We can access the values that will draw them toward self-improvement. We can predict whether they will match or mismatch advice and instructions. Such information is of value to supervisors, teachers, therapists, and those in leadership positions.

The authors provide a fascinating table describing the non-verbal behaviors that possibly indicate each meta-program distinction. For example, with the Scenario Thinking meta-program, Pessimists may tend to shake their heads, and their eye accessing could be kinesthetic (down and to the right). Optimists may tend to nod their heads, smile, lean forward, and eye access visually. The authors caution that these descriptions are speculative and not yet validated by research. It is still best to calibrate each individual.

Meta-programs become meta-states when they lend meanings to primary emotional states. This can happen because meta-programs determine what kinds of information we attend to, the meanings we attach to the information, and the way we represent the information internally, which induces us into corresponding states. Thus, some meta-programs function as states that create and maintain other states.

...the procedure person not only sorts for "step-by-step processes," but also values such and believes in the importance of such, etc. To get him or her to shift to "options" might, in fact violate some of the person's beliefs and values. It would interrupt and contradict some of their most frequently experienced "states." Thus, to the extent that we have over-valued and/or over-used a particular metaprogram, we will develop a tendency to view everything through that particular filter. (p. 230)

Figuring Out People is written in an articulate manner. It is effectively organized for easy access to the main concepts and the individual metaprograms.

An excellent glossary, an index, and a comprehensive bibliography make this book a highly usable reference for research, training, and clinical

applications.

Authors

Drs. L. Michael Hall and Bob Bodenhamer are well-known to the readers of Anchor Point. They are two of the most prolific authors on the NLP scene today, consistently expanding the limits of what we know about changing human states.

These two masterful theoreticians are accomplished authors, known for their integrity, creativity, dedication to detail, and conscientious research. They have co-authored and published three other books: 1) Mind-Lines: Lines for Changing Minds (1998), 2) Time Lining: Advanced Time Line Principles (1997), and 3) Patterns for Renewing the Mind (1996).

L. Michael Hall, has Masters' degrees in Psychology, Human Resources, and Biblical Language and Literature, with a doctorate in Cognitive Behavioral Psychology. He is a Master Practitioner and Trainer of NLP (trained under Richard Bandler). A frequent contributor to NLP journals, such as NLP World, NLP Connection, and Anchor Point, Michael writes about how to integrate NLP with cognitive psychology. He publishes Metamorphosis – The Journal. Since 1985 he has published 16 books (including those mentioned above) such as NLP: Going Meta to Logical Levels (1997), The Spirit of NLP (1997), and Languaging: How Language works Psychotherapeutically (1996).

Bob G. Bodenhamer has an education in Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, and Ministry. He is a Master Practitioner and Trainer of NLP. He directs NLP of Gastonia, North Carolina, maintains a private practice, and teaches NLP at Gaston College in Gastonia, North Carolina. He is also serves as pastor of a mission church, Christ Fellowship Community Church in Gastonia, NC.

Conclusion

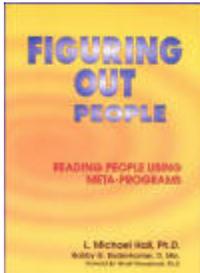
Figuring Out People invites us to enhance our abilities to recognize metaprograms, so that we can understand another's basis for operating in the world.

As we increase our understandings of others, we can improve rapport, and expand our ability to guide and influence them. We can validate others in meaningful ways. A familiarity with meta-programs expands our possibilities for relating to the world around us, while giving us

additional perspectives on the complexity and diversity of what we often refer to as “human nature.”

This cognitive model of how people manage consciousness provides us with not only a reason why we so frequently seem to live in different worlds — but also how we come do to so. It also offers a beacon light of insight about what we can do about it. As men and women who inevitably map out and construct the realities we live in, we structure our conceptual worlds, then habituate those structures into our “meta-programs.” But no law exists that demands that we always, and only, structure information this way. We can choose to use different perceiving patterns. We can choose to create and live in different worlds! (p. 24).

Judith E. Pearson, Ph.D.



Figuring Out People: Design Engineering With Meta-Programs (1997b - 2000). Discover how to read people like a book. *Figuring Out People* offers the reader insights into how to understand your spouse, children, friends, employees, employer, customer, etc. Drawing from numerous areas of human research (NLP, Cognitive Psychology, Perceptual Psychology and Developmental Psychology), it distills them down into meaningful "patterns" that the reader can easily apply to figuring out anyone.

Why people do things will become as obvious as the nose on their face. Our publisher says, "Bodenhamer and Hall focus on not what people are, but exactly how they function! We are challenged to understand how people function, and change our behavior accordingly to communicate successfully. Only when we have discovered this, can we respect and communicate with those with whom we live. An essential read for all!!!!" For our NLP readers, from your NLP training and reading, you know the first 13 meta-programs. Now expand your understanding to include 51 meta-programs along with several new cutting-edge distinctions. Preface by Wyatt Woodsmall, Ph.D (\$35.00 & \$5 S&H). Paperback-291 pages. Published 1997 & 2000 by Crown House Publishers in Wales, UK.

"By Human Engineering I mean the science and art of directing

the energies and capacities of human beings to the advancement of human weal. (p. 1) Production is essentially a task for engineers; it essentially depends upon the discovery and the application of natural laws, including the laws of human nature. Human Engineering will embody the theory and practice--the science and art-- of all engineering branches united by a common aim--the understanding and welfare of mankind. (p.6-7)The task of engineering science is not only to know, but to know how. (11)" (Korzybski, 1921)

FOREWORD

Figuring Out People: Design Engineering With Meta-Programs fills a serious void in the literature of Neuro-Linguistic Programming. Meta-programs allow us to understand human behavior and human differences, and even more important, they reveal to us how we may vary our own behaviors and communications to become more successful in relating to and changing our own, and other people's, behaviors and models of the world.

Meta-programs are probably the greatest contribution the field of NLP has made to understanding human differences. Only by understanding and appreciating human differences can we begin to respect and support other people whose models of the world differ dramatically from our own. Only by understanding human differences can we begin to replace animosity with understanding and antagonism with compassion. Only once we realize that other people are not just behaving the way that they do in order to spite us, but because that is their fundamental pattern can we begin to replace conflict with cooperation. Unfortunately until recently there has been very little written in the field of NLP on this highly important area. I am excited about the authors' outstanding contribution to this area which lies at the heart of NLP.

I was already interested in the general area of human typology when I began my NLP training in 1981. I was trained and certified in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and had learned the Enneagram Personality Model from the Arica Institute before I came to NLP. I inquired curiously to see if NLP has similar

personality models and felt excited to find that it did.

I first learned meta-programs in 1982 from my NLP teachers Anne Linden and Frank Stass. I also had the good fortune to attend Roger Bailey's training on his IPU Profile. I then learned the Clare Graves Value Model (1984) from Chris Cowen and Don Beck. I was excited about all of these powerful models to explain human similarities and differences and took every opportunity that I could to tell others about them.

Anthony Robbins was one of the first people I taught them to. I met Tony at a modeling training of John Grinder's in September of 1983. I got Tony involved in a modeling project that I was engaged in on pistol shooting for the US Army. As Tony and I became friends, I taught him all of the NLP Master Practitioner patterns including meta-programs and values. Later, I assisted Tony in teaching his first NLP Professional Certification Training (Feb. 1985).

During the Second Certification Training (Sept. 1985), we added a Master Professional Track. There in Colorado, I taught both meta-programs and values and met my three most senior students: Marvin Oka, Richard Diehl, and Tad James. Next, I taught a NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner Training in Honolulu, Hawaii to a class that consisted of Tad and Ardie James, Marvin Oka, and Richard Diehl. Soon all of these people felt as excited as I did about the Myers-Briggs, meta-programs, and the Graves Values Model.

Tad and Ardie began to use meta-programs in their business with excellent results. This led to the collaboration between the James' and myself to develop the Meta Programs and Values Inventory and the material on meta-programs and values that was published in *Time Line Therapy and the Basis of Personality*. My wife Marilynne and I have spent the last decade applying meta-programs and values in business, performance enhancement, and therapy. Marilynne and I have recently finished a book on the application of meta-programs in business, *People Pattern Power*, and a book on the applications of values to society.

I find it very gratifying to see Michael Hall and Bobby Bodenhamer--who are two people who I helped to train--become as excited as I am about meta-programs. It is even more gratifying to me that they have accepted my admonitions: "NLP does not end with John Grinder and Richard Bandler" and, "It is up to all of us to further advance the field." They have accomplished this in this excellent book.

The authors have immersed themselves in NLP and meta-programs and also in general-semantics and the latest developments in cognitive psychology and therapy. It is refreshing to find that the authors are not just cocooned in the field of NLP, and that they have extensively studied the origins of NLP in general-semantics as well as other disciplines that bear on NLP and its application in the real world.

I have had the privilege of knowing both authors for several years and one thing that has impressed me about both of them is their integrity, their compassion, and their dedication to applying and expanding NLP into areas of the world where it has not traveled previously. This has not come easy. Both have made major sacrifices to pursue their interests in NLP. While all too often readers may assume that somehow books just happen, they don't. Nor is this book an accident. It has resulted from long, hard work and study and a great deal of sacrifice and dedication to the field of NLP on the part of both of its authors. For this they deserve our gratitude and thanks.

Figuring Out People is unique in several ways. First, it explains the origins of meta-programs and places them in the larger context of human growth and change. Secondly, it provides an in depth discussion of meta-programs. And thirdly, it expands on the field of meta-programs and makes a significant new contribution to the field. I will briefly touch of each on these points.

Figuring Out People has an excellent discussion on the origin and history of the development of meta-programs in NLP. It also places some very important frames around meta-programs. NLP essentially involves a process of "de-nominalization" and the authors begin their study by denominalizing both "personality"

and "meta-programs." They make the crucial point that meta-programs deal not with what people *are*, but with how they *function*.

Figuring Out People presents an excellent typology of meta-programs. You can classify people in many different ways. The critical question remains, "Is the classification useful?" We only have 5-to-9 chunks of attention, and with 51 meta-programs to be considered, it would be easy to get lost. The authors help us to avoid overload by chunking meta-programs into five categories (i.e. mental, emotional, volitional, external response, and meta). This approach provides both a valuable contribution to the typology of meta-programs themselves and a very useful map to help us sort out these powerful patterns. For each of the 51 meta-programs they have provided valuable information on how to elicit and apply. The appendices to the book are extremely helpful, and I suggest that the reader familiarize himself with them at the beginning, since they serve as an excellent guide to the text. Also they are invaluable for future reference in eliciting and utilizing meta-programs.

Perhaps the most exciting part of *Figuring Out People* is the major contribution that it makes to the development and expansion of meta-programs. I have already mentioned the significant contribution that the authors make in their new typology for meta-programs. This book also covers more meta-programs in more depth than any other book in NLP. Its value does not just stop there, however. Its virtues are not just *expansiveness and comprehensiveness*. Perhaps its greatest virtue lies in the creative insights of the authors into the subject of meta-programs in general and into each of the meta-programs in particular.

The authors challenge us to both understand and apply. And they continually give new avenues for further exploration and study. This makes this book so valuable. It is truly *generative* and will lead to the further development, explication, and utilization of even more patterns as we strive to understand and apply its insights. This is perhaps its greatest contribution.

Wyatt L. Woodsmall, Ph.D.

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