

DR. BOB BODENHAMER TALKS ABOUT STUTTERING

BOB BODENHAMER

“If you speak fluently in just one context, you can learn to speak fluently in all contexts.”

Dr. Bob G. Bodenhamer

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ONE: ABOUT FLUENCY

I did not plan to work with people who block and stutter.

Indeed, it happened quite by accident. I have been working in Neuro-Linguistic Programmer (NLP) since 1990. In 1996 my colleague, L. Michael Hall, Ph.D., and I started developing a model called Neuro-Semantics®. Our work in this model came out of our experience in NLP and is an advancement of that model. As an NLP/NS practitioner, I have worked with hundreds of clients covering approximately three thousand hours of therapy. Working with fears, anxiety and phobias have been a major component of my work.

Some years ago, a sales seminar participant asked me if I could help people who stutter. I told him that I didn't know but I sure would be glad to give it a try. His son, a 25 or 26 year old came in for a two hour session. After one hour's work we discovered that behind his blocking and stuttering were some fears of speaking that rooted in childhood. Once he realized that he was mentally causing the stutter, he thanked me, paid me and left. Though we had two hours scheduled, we finished in one hour. As far as I know, he gained complete fluency. The key for him was his understanding that he was mentally causing the stuttering and it wasn't something physical and out of his control.

Excited about the results, I wrote up a case study of the therapy and sent it to Michael. He utilized his expertise and expanded the case study into an article entitled "Meta-Stating Stuttering" that I posted on the web site:

<http://www.neurosemantics.com/Articles/Stuttering.htm>

After posting the article, a friend of mind that I had worked with early in my practice contacted me. He had a stutter that we worked on years earlier but it hadn't helped him. After reading the article he called me and asked me if I had learned some new things. I told him that I sure had and for him to come on in. He came for a one hour session. I saw him six months later and asked him how he was doing with the stuttering. He paused briefly and replied, "I guess I have forgotten to stutter." "Well," I said, "That sure is a great thing to forget to do."

Needless to say, I was quite elated with that outcome. Then, in the spring of 2002, another breakthrough came. Linda Rounds of Indiana e-mailed me. In her search to overcome her stuttering, she had read a work by Anthony Robbins at the recommendation of John Harrison. From Anthony Robbins she learned about NLP. She searched Amazon.com for NLP books and found mine and Michael's book, *The User's Manual for the Brain*. From that work she obtained my email address and emailed me asking me if I could assist her. In just a few therapy sessions on the phone and some emails, Linda gained complete fluency. Wow, was I ever excited.

Linda and I wrote an article entitled "From Stuttering to Stability: A Case Study." John Harrison published the article in the National Stuttering Association newsletter, *Letting Go* and I posted it on our web site at:

<http://www.neurosemantics.com/Articles/Stuttering-to-Stability.htm>

This article really got a lot of attention. Since then I have worked with several people who block and stutter. One of the people that I assisted to fluency was Tim Mackesey, SLP. Can you imagine the excitement I had in being able to assist a speech pathologist who had blocked and stuttered most of his life to fluency? I was elated. Tim is now utilizing NLP/Neuro-Semantics totally in his practice when he works with people who block and stutter. Tim's office is near Atlanta Georgia. His web site is: <http://www.stuttering-specialist.com>.

Let me say up front, all have not attained fluency but many have. Importantly, out of all the people I have worked with, I have total confidence that ultimately all of them have the capacity to eventually attain fluency. This will necessitate their continuing working on their *thinking*.

How Are These People Gaining Fluency?

I have a simple theory: **“If you can speak fluently in any context, than you can learn to speak fluently in all contexts.”** You obviously already know how to talk. You don't need to re-learn how to talk. You just need to be able to access the same state of mind when you block that you access when you are speaking fluently.

From all of our research and experience with people who suffer from blocking and stuttering, we now recognize some key factors that explain why it is possible to gain more fluency and why it is possible for *you*.

Blocking and stuttering are learned behaviors.

Learned behaviors can be unlearned.

If you can speak fluently in even one context, you can speak fluently in any context. You already have the skill; it's just a matter of breaking free from the interferences.

As you can probably already tell, we believe it is your *thinking* that creates your blocking and stuttering. We do not believe that if a person is fluent consistently in certain situations and blocks in others that the problem is physical and certainly not genetic. It is a very well learned behavior that comes from childhood hurts and reinforced through years of practice. Now, in its origin, genetic influences on temperament may have contributed.

On the following page you will see the various thought patterns of a person who formerly blocked and stuttered. Her thoughts are typical of people who block and stutter. From the graphic, you will see the *learned* patterns of thought (frames of mind) that operated in those contexts where she blocked and stuttered. Does any of those frames of mind sound familiar?

TWO: MENTAL FRAMES OF A PERSON WHO FORMERLY BLOCKED AND STUTTERED

By changing some of the key meaning frames of mind, this person has gained complete fluency. We have seen it happen over and over. For simplicity, I will use the word “blocking” or “speech block” to denote both processes of blocking and stuttering.

From our experience with blocking, we believe that:

If a person can speak fluently in just one context, then that person can learn to speak fluently in all contexts.

We base this on the fact that if he can speak fluently in any one context, then that means that his mind-body system already knows how to speak fluently.∨

We believe that blocking happens in particular contexts triggered by specific events that the he has placed significant *meanings* of fear and/or anxiety. From these basic meanings, he defines his concept of his own *selfhood*.∨

∨

The meanings of fear and anxiety will also determine how he will view himself as being a *resourceful* person or not. Furthermore, whether or not he will have a healthy or unhealthy concept with his past, his present and his future (*time*) comes out of these significant meanings. In addition, how he relates to *others*; whether or not he views his *world* as a friendly or unfriendly place and his understanding of his *purpose* and *intentions* in life all come out of and are determined by the *meanings* first placed on the triggering events. ∨

We call this the Matrix Model and this book is organized based on:

- (1) the *meanings* we give both internal and external events,
- (2) our concept of *self*,
- (3) our sense of *power/resourcefulness*,
- (4) our relationship with *time*,
- (5) our relationship with *others*,
- (6) how we view the *world* we live in and
- (7) our higher *purposes/intentions*. These 7 matrices determine our world. We all have our own Matrix. The Matrix defines all of our thinking/feeling/behaving and thus determines our lives. People who block and stutter have a unique identifiable Matrix. In this book we will define how people who block and stutter think/ feel/ behave in each Matrix. Michael Hall utilized the term “matrix” from mathematics to describe the framework of our mind and then used the metaphor of the movie *The Matrix*. I am very much indebted to him for this excellent model.

Blocking is primarily a learned behavior.∨

Since it is a learned behavior, it can be unlearned.

Blocking is very similar to if not the same as, a panic or anxiety attack expressing itself in the muscles that control breathing and/or speaking. A person diagnosed as having panic attacks does not live every moment of every day inside a panic attack. Likewise, the person who blocks and stutters is not always

inside a “block”. Just like a panic attack, a “block” is triggered psychologically. And, just like a panic attack, the person has learned to react to that panic in a particular way and for the person who blocks; the panic is expressed in blocking and stuttering.

Treatment involves using the same tools of NLP and Neuro-Semantics® that we have used successfully many times with clients who suffered from anxiety and panic disorders. NLP means Neuro-Linguistic Programming. These two models, NLP and Neuro-Semantics, provide the technologies behind the materials in this book.

Although we recognize that some predispositions, like a predisposition to being sensitive or some other sensitivities, may contribute to a person’s developing a blocking habit. I do not believe that there is any question but that genetic research indicates that some people are predisposed towards certain thought-feeling-emotions. With blocking, we believe that the emotional issues get expressed in blocking and stuttering and that in turn gets reinforced through experiences like being made fun of, etc.

∨

Successful treatments, therefore, will involve primarily cognitive and not physical therapies.

How Blocking Begins – Punctuating Disfluent Speech as Stuttering

In our work with people who block, we have discovered that usually the first thing she will do is to punctuate her non-fluency as “blocking” and/or “stuttering.” This, in itself, is no problem. It is when she comes to believe that blocking is something “bad” and to be feared that the problem begins to be perpetuated.

I have yet to find a person who fell in love with their stuttering when the stuttering first began. At the onset of the blocking, she may experience difficulty speaking and then she will punctuate non-fluency as something bad. Subsequent repetitions of punctuating difficulties as bad, makes the learning groove deeper until it becomes a rut.

The knowledge that her speech is different and not “normal” usually comes from the influence of parents or other significant people who point out that there is something wrong with her speech. I have found people who block and stutter that placed the “bad” and “unacceptable” label on themselves without any knowledge of outside influences. They are in the minority.

By simply taking the child to a speech pathologist by a caring parent will inform her that there is something wrong and unacceptable to her. In every case that I have worked with, the roots of the individual’s blocking came from childhood. However, sometimes the actual blocking does not appear until adolescence or even adulthood.

These influences concerning the child’s speech so early in life really get “grooved into the child’s muscles” and are carried into adulthood. When I say “grooved into one’s muscles”, or it is “in the muscles,” I am referring to the ability of our mind-body system to learn something unconsciously. Our nervous system is located throughout our body. We have nerves “everywhere.” We believe that learnings literally become embodied into our muscle tissue (more about this in the next section). This is often referred to as “muscle memory.” Do you type? Then, if I were to ask you where the “R” key is, how will you find it? Did you go to your left index finger and move it up to the left? If so, that is an example of what we call “in the muscle” learning.

I began noticing quite early in working with people who block/stutter that they tend to feel the fears,

anxieties, etc. that are behind their blocking in the muscles that control breathing and/or speaking. From this I concluded that blocking is very similar in structure to panic attacks and anxiety attacks. The treatment for blocking is exactly the same as the treatment for panic and anxiety attacks.

Quite often, from the experience with the adults, peers, or from the conclusions they make themselves, children who block define non-fluency or disfluency as something that they wish to avoid and/or control. The blocking does not only have the negative feedback from significant adults or from within themselves, but it also has connected to it the negative emotions from what the person perceived as the painful traumatic experiences that created the non-fluency to start with.

It is also connected with feelings of helplessness in not being able to speak when required to. This leads to feelings that one is different or strange – something that children wish to avoid at all cost.

Important, when I say “trauma,” I am not necessarily meaning something terrible or tragic happened to the child. I am simply saying that the child interpreted the divorce of the parents, the lack of affection from dad, the lack of emotional support from mom, the emotional and physical abuse, etc as being most painful and threatening. The child did what all children tend to do – she personalized the external problems, then out of these experiences with the hurt installed in the muscles of breathing speaking, she began to block. This book is primarily about how to identify those painful memories and how to heal them. For fluency to become real in all contexts, these painful memories must be healed.

Embodying Negative Emotions Guess Where a Stutterer *Embodies* His or Her Emotions?

(Written with L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.)

Pivotal to my theory that blocking and stuttering is but a form of a panic attack is the theory that emotions find expression in our bodies.

Questions:

Can you get negative emotions actually *installed* in your body?

Is it actually possible to *em-body* and *in-corp-orate* negative emotional states in your muscles and nervous tissue?

Could it be that the feelings that correspond to and drive blocking and stuttering have gotten into the breathing and speaking muscles?

We raise these questions to first of all acknowledge that the end expression of blocking and stuttering is physiological. Of course, it is physiological. Yet, is it *caused* solely by physiology? Could the physiology that we see, recognize, and feel actually be the embodiment and manifestation of something that is primarily a mental-emotional state? Could it be the way the person is running his brain that ultimately creates the physiological symptoms and expressions?

What if it is through the process of habituating the typical state of mind *about* speaking, mis-speaking, and stuttering that actually drives and causes the state to become, as it were, “locked into” his body? What if the stuttering, and all the negative emotions associated with it, actually gets into his muscles?

These questions suggest a different model about how to think about the subjective experience of

stuttering and blocking, and yet one could potentially lead to more options for recovery and fluency. In saying this, we mean that it is because our mind is connected to our bodies through our central nervous system and because our mind communicates to all parts of our bodies – that the outer behavior occurs. Since the 1950s medical science and the neuro-sciences have become aware of this mind-body connection. After all, our nerve cells occur throughout every part of our bodies and receive information from all of our cortex and subcortical parts.

That *mind* can *embody* emotions is obvious in the most primitive and basic of all our mind-body functions, the Fight/Flight arousal syndrome. And as you well know, you don't have to be in actual danger to set it off. All you have to do is *think, remember, or imagine* something fearful. Then your body will oblige. It is wired to respond.

Is it any surprise then that all of our emotions can and do become embodied in certain areas of our body? Today, we even know that the patterning or habituation of response can become so incorporated that it becomes what we call “muscle memory.” That is, the muscles “remember” how to run the pattern. The neuro-pathways have “worn a groove” so to speak so that they have a readiness for certain responses.

For people who block, we find that the negative emotions are typically contained within the *chest, neck* and/or *jaw*. Check this out for yourself. Ask a person who blocks or ask yourself,

What emotions are behind and within my blocking?

Where in my body do I feel these emotions?

Where in my body do I feel the fear and anxiety as I anticipate the possibility of blocking?

What do I feel *about* these feelings?

That is what we're talking about.

In my thirteen years of work in therapy with clients, I have literally asked these questions of hundreds of people who were suffering from some unwanted thought-feeling-emotional problem. “Where in your body do you feel that emotion?” is a question that enables a person to begin to recognize *the embodiment* of emotions.

And out of those hundreds of times of asking the question, there have been very few times when I did not get an immediate and direct reply. The individuals simply told me where they felt the emotion. Often they pointed to the body parts where the emotion seems located. This is a general rule of thumb for therapists. If a person “feels” the negative emotion, they will point to the area of the body where they feel that emotion. It is in the body (the soma) and so it is psycho-somatic in nature and form.

Neuro-Science and “Muscle Memory” or “Cell Memory”

What evidence is there in the neuro-sciences which gives credence to this understanding that memories as ways of thinking and reasoning (our semantics) can find expression in various areas of the body? This theory and paradigm is obviously foundational to our belief that the major contributing factor of blocking is that those mental frames of fear and anxiety lie behind the blocking. Then, when we add to this all of the negative mental frames associated with the early psychological development of a person, no wonder we can get some very strange ideas *embodied* somatically. Then, these mental frames, when activated by the fear of blocking or stuttering will function similar to how a panic attack operates. The only difference will be in the expression occurring in those muscles surrounding breathing and

speaking.

Today, human anatomy and medical science recognizes that the nervous system is an interactive system. Today the neuro-sciences speak about auto-immune-disease, and psycho-immunology, and many other hyphenated words. There is no “mind” apart from “body,” or “body” apart from mind. Researchers today describe the brain functions and anatomy as responsive, processing, and always changing. We have a dynamic system that is alive and forever in process.

That’s why the old metaphors of the mind-body system no longer work. The mechanistic idea of steam and energy and “things” have given way to processes, systems, communication exchange, information transfer, etc. And yet how *mind* manifests itself in the *embodiment* of nervous tissue, and creates the sense of consciousness, and self-reflexive consciousness, self, identity, and internal movies of past and future events— all of this is still a mystery.

What we know is that “mind” is not a thing, but a process. We know that our mind does not have mechanical structures for "storage" of "memories" and "thoughts" that are static like what we use in a computer. There are no comparable computer chips ... there is only the constant transform of information, the exchange or transduction of energy from electromagnetic to bio-electric, to chemical to the exchange of ions at the level of molecules.

In there, everything is so completely dynamic that the only way it can be sustained is through using the higher levels of mind (our meta-cognitions) to set up beliefs that keep on thinking the same thought so that it habituates and becomes muscle memory. Of course, if we stop that process, then that memory will be changed, altered, or erased. That’s why we are such good forgetters. The things we program into our nervous system have to be constantly refreshed. And, of course, all of this also identifies processes for intervention and transformation.

Embodied Emotions

If this is true for our thinking, it is even more so for our emotions. These *somatic movements* in our body, what we call "emotions" must also be re-framed. We must also recognize that they are processes as well. They are the embodiment of our thinking, appraising, and understanding into our protoclastic tissue— nervous tissue, signals and messages of arousal, threat, safety, etc. That everything is interconnected and affects everything else is a given in the neuro-sciences today.

What does all of this mean? It means that *there is no mind-body-emotion problem because it is an interconnected system in the first place, a system that cannot be broken up*. We can only break it up linguistically as we talk about the parts. The parts do not operate singly. Of course; this includes the cortex, the hippocampus, and every other organ come into play including muscle groups.

Neuro-Scientist Susan Greenfield states, that “consciousness, memory, learning, etc. are gestalt (connected) phenomena, and not located anywhere, but everywhere.” We recognize this *process* in terms of “cell memory” or “muscle memory.” Actually, this is a misnomer for it implies that somehow the *storing* of memory in certain areas of the body. The error in this is the nominalizing (or freezing) of a process. The memories are actually the expression of a dynamic process. With blocking, the driving emotions find expression in certain muscle groups but they are not just there, they are *everywhere* but there as well.

In all of this, the modern neuro-sciences confirm our suspicion that emotions can and do find

expression in particular areas of the body. As a systemic whole, the mind-body system works together and cannot be separated.

Consider a panic attack. When a person has a panic attack, part of the diagnosis involves physical symptoms. I certainly do not believe this diagnosis is the result of some accident. It is the result of what people experience, as is the case with blocking. The DSM IV offers this description on diagnosing a panic attack:

A Panic Attack is a discrete period in which there is the sudden onset of intense apprehension, fearfulness, or terror often associated with feelings of impending doom. During these attacks, symptoms such as shortness of breath, palpitations, chest pain or discomfort, choking or smothering sensations and fear of going “crazy” or losing control are present.

Note the psychosomatic symptoms. Move the expression of those emotions to particular areas of the body controlling speaking and you have blocking. The structure is the same; the expressions are different. Reframe or heal the emotions and the physical expression disappears.

Summary

Can we get negative emotions actually *installed* in our body?

Is it actually possible to *em-body* and *in-corp-orate* negative emotional states in our muscles and nervous tissue?

Yes indeed. That, in fact, is precisely what all of our emotions have the potential to do. Repeat any emotional state (which inevitably comes along with thoughts and frames of mind within it) and it will become somatized or embodied in our very flesh.

Could it be that the feelings that correspond to and drive blocking have gotten into the breathing and speaking muscles?

Yes, of course. And because of this ongoing, dynamic process— when we *change* the thinking-and-feeling within that experience, the messages sent to the body that keeps refreshing and reinforcing the neuro-pathways change. This offers hope for recovery and transformation. No wonder the multiple forms of Cognitive-Behavioral therapy have taken the lead in the past three decades in creating the most significant change. And it is that model that we use in Neuro-Semantics as we are pioneering faster and more streamlined ways of getting to the source of the problem —the frames that determine the experience.

The First Ones

We are not the first ones to indicate that blocking has its roots in cognition (thinking). In the field of stuttering, John Harrison (1989, 2002) has provided a basic systems model using six key variables or factors involved in stuttering. He calls this system, "The Stuttering Hexagon."

The six factors that he has highlighted are: *physiological responses*, *physical behaviors*, *emotions*, *perceptions*, *beliefs*, and *intentions* He has noted that in a *system* every element is influenced by the other elements, positively or negatively.

Harrison has also noted numerous other *systemic factors* about the stuttering hexagon:

As a system, stuttering involves the entire person and is not just a speech problem.

Once operating as a system, it has a life of its own.

As a system, the stuttering system will develop default settings.

"A permanent change in your speech will happen only when you alter the various default settings around the Stuttering Hexagon."

Change a critical factor in the system, and the entire system changes.

In NLP we point out that not everyone is likely to develop a blocking system. It calls for a natural tendency for speech to stumble under stress: what Harrison calls "bobulating" because it often shows up when one is embarrassed, upset, confused or disoriented (This is effortless disfluency and is not blocking.).

To move from "bobulating" to blocking necessitates a certain way of thinking and believing, a certain way of looking at and perceiving speech, self, others, etc. It involves a specific use of fear and apprehension, a certain attitude about how to cope and respond and it involves coaching and training the muscles and breathing. The correct interaction within The Matrix will produce blocking.

What we are calling an attitude, Harrison calls a mentality.

"You have to change to another mentality; the fight should be against the stuttering mentality that creates it, not the symptoms."

This means that there is a non-blocking mentality just as there is a blocking mentality. In what follows we have used the *7 Matrices of the Mind Model*, a Neuro-Semantic model developed in 2002 that structures the NLP and NS patterns. We use this model for coaching, counseling, modeling, and neuro-semantic profiling. Accordingly, we here use it to make explicit the blocking system to provide systemic understanding of the semantics (meanings) that get into the body and nervous system (neuro-) to embody "blocking" so that it becomes part of physiology and a style of moving through the world.

Stuttering as a "Learned Behavior" – Wendell Johnson, Dave Elman and Others

Others as well have suggested that stuttering is a learned behavior. These range from linguist Wendell Johnson to Hypnotherapist Dave Elman.

Dave Elman was born May 6, 1900 in Park River, North Dakota and died on December 5, 1967. His interest in hypnosis was stimulated at an early age by his father who was an accomplished hypnotist. I understand that Mr. Elman only trained medical doctors and dentists. His interest in stuttering came from observing his father work with stutterers. Concerning stuttering he concluded, "There is no such thing as a congenital stutter. A stutter or stammer must be precipitate."

Mr. Elman then goes on to speak about the times that doctors had brought stutterers to the classes on hypnosis that he taught hoping that he could help them. He spoke of the pity he felt for these children and, even more so, the distress he felt when he met an adult who had the same problem. He said that every time he saw one of those patients,

"I felt a pang, recalling my first meeting with a stutterer when my father hypnotized a young girl in her teens and stopped her from stuttering. Then, when the hypnosis was over, she stuttered as badly as ever. I use to wonder why the problems of these people couldn't be permanently corrected. "I don't remember the first time I ever used hypnoanalysis to help a stuttering patient but, admittedly, there have been many times when I have been unable to give them permanent relief. Nevertheless, it is pleasant to remember the many who have been helped considerably."

Mr. Elman had a tremendous understanding of cognition in addition to anatomy and physiology. Obviously, by limiting his trainings to doctors and dentists and doing it quite successfully in the mid 20th century he had to be very knowledgeable and respected. At that time hypnosis was considered by many in the medical profession as *hocus pocus*. He knew that for hypnosis to work even momentarily and in many cases permanently, that the cause of stuttering could not primarily be physical or inherited. He concluded,

“It is my firm belief that every stutter has a basic, investigable cause. Over the years, I have tried to get doctors to change their attitude towards stutterers and treat the *cause* rather than the *effect*...”

Even a minor trauma can, like suggestion, be compounded by repetition. Every stutter has its beginning in a situation in which the victim reaches a point where he doesn't want to talk and yet is obliged to.

He firmly believed that blocking was caused by “traumatic situations.” It would appear that our discoveries about stuttering being primarily a learned behavior parallel Dave Elman's findings.

John Harrison provided me an article by Carl H. Scott, Ph.D. entitled *The Mind-Body-Spirit Model for People Who Stutter*. Dr. Scott who passed away in 2001 was a California State licensed and ASHA-certified speech pathologist whose degree included a special emphasis in clinical psychology. In his article Dr. Scott relates his belief that blocking is to be treated not just as a physical problem. In working with people who block, he “considers the whole person and works toward a balance in mind, body and spirit.” Dr. Scott has a “three stage” approach for therapy with people who block:

The first stage in this healing process is to guide the individual to identify the beliefs, attitudes, thoughts, feelings and behavior that may serve as obstacles in daily living and in accessing fluency.

The second stage is this therapeutic journey calls for initiating a healing process. This may involve working with his inner child, dialog or forgiveness.

The third stage of therapy is to guide the person who blocks into a healthy belief system with new and powerful positive thoughts and the ability to experience self acceptance and love. It also calls for manifesting changes in behavior.

It is obvious from his article that Dr. Scott holds very similar views with John Harrison, Dave Elman, those of us in Neuro-Semantics, and a growing field of other professionals that blocking and stuttering is primarily a learned behavior.

More and more we are recognizing that stuttering behaviors that are built on blocking are primarily a learned phenomenon and therefore primarily require cognitive (thinking) techniques to lead the people who block and stutter to fluency. That is what this book is about.

THREE – INTRODUCTION TO THE STUTTERING MATRIX

The Stuttering Matrix

How does blocking happen?

How does the brain learn to block in certain situations and not in others?

What structural components of the brain function in order to create blocking?

How do the structural components of the brain function together in order to create blocking?

Throughout this book, we will be referring to the term “Matrix.” As I have mentioned earlier, Michael Hall utilized this term from mathematics to describe the mental frameworks of our mind-body system. He also played off on it using the movie by the same name. It is a great metaphor for how our brain works. We use the term to summarize the vast numbers of “mental frames” or thinking patterns that operate primarily unconsciously.

The Matrix Model is quite simple in its basic format and will be utilized as an organizing model for this book

1. We begin with *meaning*. "What does ‘X’ event mean to you (*Meaning Matrix*)?" The seven matrices reveal “meaning” as the center and determinant of all the other matrices. What does that *meaning* say to you about:

Your concept of you as a person (*Self Matrix*)?

How you view yourself as having adequate or inadequate *resources* to live a productive life (*Power/Resource Matrix*)?

How you view your relationship to your *past*, your *present* and how you view your *future* (*Time Matrix*)?

How you *relate* to *other* people and how you allow them to exercise control, if any, over your life (*Other Matrix*)?

How you view the *world* you live in? Is it a friendly or non-friendly place (*World Matrix*)?

How your higher *purposes* affect your life in each one of the above and how you view whether or not you can live out your higher purposes in life (*Intentional/Purpose Matrix*)?

So, when we talk about the Matrix Model, that is, what we are talking about.

The Matrix Circle

For sure, you never leave home without your “Matrix” filled with all these and many more frames of mind. Your Matrix gives you your *model of the world* through which you navigate through life. If you view yourself as a person of worth with innate powers to navigate the world in which you live, you will

live your life one way. If, however, you view yourself in a negative light and with little or no power to navigate your world, you will live your life in a totally different way.

Your Matrix to a large degree determines how you live and experience life. We believe that we have seven key matrices which determine all the other matrices of our mind (beliefs, values, understandings, etc, i.e. all of our thinking patterns both conscious and unconscious). Throughout this book, we will be referring to and explaining this model. It will serve as the basis for the entire book.

Meaning is the center of all the other matrices determining all the other matrices. *Meaning* does determine all the other matrices. But, your desires, your wants, your intentions are involved in creating five of the matrices. Thus *Intention* sends your mind or directional-izes your mind to the created meanings of your concepts of *Self, Power, Time, Others* and *World*. Your “want to” or your outcome assists you in determining the meanings you give those matrices. This is mostly done totally out of conscious awareness.

The 7 Matrices of Your Neuro-Semantics

When a person who blocks anticipates an upcoming conversation, she may fear that she will block based on past experiences (*Time* Matrix). But, she does not want to repeat the past behavior of blocking (*Intention* Matrix) due to all the negative meanings that she has associated with blocking (*Meaning* Matrix). These meanings find expression in the other matrices such as, “I don’t want to appear like I am a weirdo because I block” (*Self* Matrix). Or, “I am powerless to overcome this” (*Power* Matrix). Etc.

So, in this illustration, note how the person’s defining of self is mostly determined by the meanings associated with blocking and stuttering. And, the intent or desire of not repeating past behaviors due to the meanings associated with blocking drives the meanings given to the other matrices: “I don’t want to appear like I am a weirdo because I block” (*Self* Matrix). Or, “I am powerless to overcome this” (*Power* Matrix). Etc.

States and the Matrix

It all begins with your everyday *states of consciousness*. If I were to ask you what state of mind you are presently in, you could probably answer quite readily. Since you are reading this book, you may answer, “I am in a learning state.” Or, you may say, “I am in a curious state.” Or, “I am in a state of confusion.” You tend to know what state of mind you are in at any given moment. I mean, if you are in one state when you are fluent and in a totally different state when you block, would it be of interest to you to learn how to *get out* of the “blocking state” and *get in* the “fluent state?” These are your mind-body states that you never leave home without. You are always in some state of mind or emotion (unless we are dead).

A Neuro-Linguistic State

You live inside these states. They govern your perception, communication, behavior, memory and learning and so color your life by determining how you respond to and live in your world. What determines these states? The various frames of meaning which operate at any given moment determine the state in which you live. And, it is those “frames of meaning” that determine whether you block or whether you speak fluently.

When you consider an upcoming conversation and then create an imaginary movie of you blocking during that conversation, then your body will *obey* the created movie and create a fear state out of the imaginary movie. Check yourself out. Think about an upcoming conversation with someone that you usually block when you speak to them. What do you immediately do? Do you create an imaginary picture or a movie of your seeing the person and of you blocking? The mind-body system doesn't know that the movie is imaginary. It just responds from the movie and to the meaning that you have given to the movie of the impending conversation.

In this work, I will be leading you to “go inside” and determine what frames of meaning (thoughts) create your blocking. I will then direct you to discover those frames of meaning that allow you to speak fluently. You will be provided with techniques and language patterns that will “expose” those meanings that lead to your blocking so you can change them. Techniques will be provided that will allow you to change those meanings so you will not feel compelled to hold back and block. After all, you do know how to speak fluently in some contexts so you already have those meanings installed. This book will give you several tools that will permit you to move those meaning frames to operate in all contexts of your life.

First Encounter with the Matrix

In all likelihood, you have no idea or maybe just some idea what frames of meaning you have operating that create your blocking. Usually these frames operate out of conscious awareness (in the unconscious mind). By the way, when I say “unconscious mind” I am referring to those thoughts that you are not presently aware of.

As you learn how to recognize the meanings and thought patterns (frames) that create your internal world, you are enabled to see the invisible matrices of the mind. In that way, they become visible to you – the unconscious becomes conscious. The “where did that come from” comes into awareness. Your Matrix, therefore, is your internal world of many frames – thought patterns.

You will learn that you have many frames of meaning embedded within other frames of meaning, etc. There are layers upon layers of meaning frames –

- (1) “When I make a phone call I get nervous.”
- (2) “When I get nervous I have the thought, ‘I bet I will block.’”
- (3) “Why do I always do this?”
- (4) “Why can't I stop?”
- (5) “I know I will block. I always have.”
- (6) “Let's see. What do I need to say when I make that call? What words can I use that I won't block on?” Etc. This is what we mean by meaning frames upon meaning frames – layer upon layer.

The person who blocks just keeps on layering her mind with one negative thought after negative thought until she has worked herself into a full fledged block as she makes the phone call. It is a product of all the layering of one negative thought after another. Some refer to this as “stinking thinking.” The Matrix Model separates out all these meaning frames and analyze them so changes can be made. The term used in NLP and Neuro-Semantics for the process of changing meaning is called “re-framing”. This book is about changing the meanings that you have placed around blocking to the meanings you place around fluency – “re-framing”.

It is this “layering” of frames of meaning that creates your perceptual reality. You have layers of meaning that create fluency. You have layers of meaning that create blocking. They will obviously be quite different. It is like having all the ingredients of a German Chocolate Cake out on the cabinet all neatly separated. Then, at the appropriate time and with the appropriate amount, you put them all together in the mixing bowl and all the parts (meaning frames) come together to form the whole – a yummy chocolate cake. Now, to create a pecan pie, you would use different ingredients. Likewise, you have one set of ingredients for blocking and another set of ingredients for fluency.

Do you know how to drive a car? Do you know how to ride a bicycle? You probably do. Both those skills are “grooved into your muscles” through numerous repetitions. You have a neural pathway for driving a car and you have a separate neural pathway for riding a bicycle. When riding a bicycle you do not move the muscles in the same way that you do when driving a car and vice-versa.

In your speaking you have probably learned how to be fluent and you have learned how to block. You have separate neural pathways for each experience. Different contexts trigger different neural pathways. While alone, you may trigger the neural pathway for fluency. The neural pathway for blocking is still present in your mind-body system. It is just not activated when you speak fluently. When you block, the context you are in triggers fear and anxiety of blocking and that in turn triggers the neural pathway for blocking and you block. The neural pathway for fluency is still there – it is just not activated.

Our goal will be to change the meanings around blocking so that you do not automatically activate those meanings when you are in the context of fear and anxiety. Once you have changed the meanings (re-framed) around your speech so that you do not activate the neural pathways for fear and anxiety and thus blocking but the neural pathway for fluency, then you have obtained your goal. The aim is to minimize those frames of meaning that have “locked in the block” through re-framing (the purpose of the language patterns and techniques in this book) so that you can access the neural pathways that activate fluency.

The Movie Matrix – The “Structure” of Your Frames of Meaning (Your Thoughts)

Your “state of mind” drives your behavior. That is true for every human being on the planet. You experience many states during the day. In blocking you have states of mind composed of fear and anxiety? But in fluency you have states of mind composed of calmness, focus on what you are saying (instead of how you are saying), relaxation, enjoyment, etc.

These states of mind are a product of your thinking. You think one way while blocking and another way while fluent. Since your mind-body functions as one system, as soon as you have a thought, your body responds to that thought. Well, how are thoughts constructed? Thoughts have two key components: the *movie of the mind* and the *language of the mind*.

States and their construction will be covered more fully later in chapter 3. In this section the *movie of your mind*, which is the first component of your mind-body states, will be covered. How you create various movies in your mind which drive the two states that produce blocking and fluency will find particular emphasis.

I just got off the phone with a person who blocks and stutters. He has a tremendous fear of talking to people on the phone. Of major concern are those people with whom he does business. Before he calls them, the first thing he does is to create a picture in his head of the other person answering the phone. Immediately, after he sees the picture, he starts talking to himself (the other component of our states) about his fear of losing this client.

Now, note how he first made a picture. This is what I mean by the creating of movies in your head as the first component of your states. People who block and stutter have a profound efficiency of creating horror movies in their head. Who needs Stephen King the “Master of Horror”? You can do your own movie making. And, sometimes, you scare the hell out of yourself about an upcoming conversation. You create movies of the person judging you because you block. You create movies of the other person laughing at you, etc.

It is true that as a species we process the world primarily through our five senses: what we see, hear, feel, smell and taste (**V**isual, **A**uditory, **K**inesthetic, **O**lfactory and **G**ustatory). This makes up the movie of your mind – its structure.

As you experience the external world through your five senses; what you see, hear, feel, smell and taste, you re-present your external experiences by creating a *movie* in your mind of that experience. By “re-presenting” I just simply mean that when you see something and recall it later, you will “re-present” it on the movie screen of your mind. You “map” it out with your movie.

For instance, when you create the “fear of blocking,” you probably first create a movie (it just may be a still picture) of you blocking when you converse with that person. You *re-present* that imaginary experience on the screen of your mind, your movie, with a picture or pictures. This is a strategy that I discover most people who block and stutter do just prior to a speaking engagement that usually produces a block.

In the “movie of your mind” you create the first level of meaning given to your experience and you do that, not with words, but with pictures, sounds, feelings, smells and tastes. NLP and Neuro-Semantics deals primarily with the first three: pictures (V), sounds (A) and feelings (K). Now by feelings, the reference is not to your emotions (more about emotions later); the reference is to your ability to feel – like temperature, pressure, textures, etc. This is about both external (tactile) and internal (proprioceptive) feelings.

The Steps to Movie Making An Example of Anticipatory Anxiety

You experience a stimulus that requires speaking.

Based on previous experiences of speaking to people and blocking (your external world), you create a movie (or still picture, sound and/or feeling) of the experience of blocking.

Your picture or movie interacts with your body (Mind-Body Connection) to produce a state of fear and anxiety.

This state of anxiety creates a response of blocking.

The Creation of the Linguistic State

The kinds of movies you create inside your head is of vast importance; for these movies send signals to your body to obey. When you create a mental movie in your head of blocking, guess what that almost guarantees? If you create a movie of blocking in that next conversation, it is as if your mind-body says, “OK, you want to block, I shall oblige and create a block for you.” I bet you don’t create a movie of blocking when you go to talk to the person with whom you don’t block. You probably don’t even think of blocking. You just carry on a comfortable conversation.

What kind of movies do you create inside your head when you block?

Do you create movies of you blocking?

Stuttering?

Being embarrassed?

Hesitating?

When you don’t block and stutter, what kind of movies do you create?

How do the movies differ between blocking and not blocking? These are important questions for you to ask yourself.

Associating/Dissociating

We humans can really create some horror shows inside our heads that our bodies obey with fear, anxiety, etc. Now, *inside* the movie, we find further distinctions. This *structural* truth may have major implications for blocking. When you create a movie of yourself blocking, how do you do that? Do you make the pictures big, bright, in full color and up close? Do you imagine yourself out there in the future actually blocking? When you imagine yourself blocking, you probably do not see yourself in the imaginary picture. More than likely you actually experience it by being *inside* the movie. If you are not aware of creating a movie with pictures, do you do it primarily talking to yourself? If so, what kind of voice do you use? What kind of tonality do you use?

In NLP this is called *associating* into the picture. You know you are associated when you create a picture of the past or future and you do not see yourself in the picture. You are mentally there experiencing the experience. For most people, but not all, imagining yourself associated inside a picture intensifies the emotion.

Try this. Imagine you’re in your kitchen and going to the refrigerator. Open the door of the refrigerator, then open the vegetable drawer and take out a lemon. Close the vegetable drawer and then the refrigerator door. Walk over to the cabinet and get a cutting board and a knife. Imagine cutting the lemon into halves. Imagine picking up one of the halves and cutting the half into quarters. Pick up one of the quarters and imagine sticking the quarter slice of lemon into your mouth and squeeze the slice. Imagine and feel the lemon juice squirting into your mouth. Are you salivating as if you have lemon juice in your mouth? With most people, their mouths salivate. Does yours?

This simple experience illustrates how the mind directs the body and does not differentiate between real and imaginary experiences. For some people, there will be a difference in intensity. As it represents, so it signals the body; whether the images are remembered, imagined or real time.

Now, if you create a movie in your mind of a forthcoming conversation with a person and you imagine yourself *inside* that movie blocking when you speak to that person, in all likelihood, your mind-body system will say, “OK, I will do what you tell me to do. When you are in front of that person talking, I will make sure that you block/stutter.” If you do not wish to block/stutter, you stand a much better chance of being fluent by seeing yourself (dissociated) speaking fluent with the person. And then, after you see ourselves speaking fluent with the person, you may wish to imagine yourself there in front of the person (associated) and speaking fluently, just for practice for the real thing.

Movie Qualities

We not only associate/dissociate inside our movies, we have other distinctions as well. In Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), these distinctions are called “submodalities.” Don’t worry about that term. We will call them *qualities* of the movie and list some of the key qualities as the visual, auditory and kinesthetic systems.

Qualities

At this first level of abstraction of your movies comprised of pictures, sounds and feelings; you apply meaning via the inner qualities of your movie. How do you do that? Let’s play with this. Think of a pleasant experience and see it as a movie. Notice if the movie is “close” to you? When you see the movie of that pleasant experience, do you experience the movie as being very close to your face, or far away? Is the movie in bright colors, dim colors, or is it black and white dim, and maybe dark with no color in it? Is it a big broad panoramic picture or is it small like a snap shot? Most people make their pleasant pictures up close, in color and many times panoramic. But, not everyone does it that way.

You may wish to play with the movie of the pleasant experience just for practice. If it is close to you, move it away and notice if it changes the strength of the pleasant feeling. If it is in color, make it black and white and very dim or vice versa. Does that change the feeling of the experience? We call this *structure* and it is the beginning point of learning how to *run your own brain*.

We use these qualities for encoding distinctions. “Close,” “far,” “bright,” “dim,” etc. give us a *symbolic way* of encoding higher level concepts like “real,” “unreal,” “past,” “future,” etc. Recognizing this enables us to then use these qualities as leverage points in numerous change techniques. Given that we mentally structure our experiences in these codings, these qualities provide our brains a coding system for making distinctions. We often use such symbols for the difference between various emotions (fear or courage) and between differing experiences (procrastinating or going for it).

Consider the following statements:

"I feel pretty dull today?"

"I hear you loud and clear."

"Something smells fishy about his proposal."

"I have a bright future."

These seemingly metaphorical sayings can actually enable us to track back to the individual's internal movie making in terms of her representational system (pictures, sounds, feelings) "modes" (modalities). Until the discoveries of NLP, most people treated such language as "just metaphors." Today we know better. With the insights of NLP, we know that such metaphors typically cue us about the person's internal representing of the world and so we hear such as literal descriptions of the

speaker's internal world.

Exercise

The Qualities of Blocking and “Not” Blocking – Editing Your Movies

Imagine two different experiences of speaking in the near future. In one of those experiences, you block and in the other experience you do not block.

Create a picture of the two experiences if you haven't already done so.

Take note of the visual qualities of the two different experiences. Write these down side-by-side on a piece of paper. After listing the visual qualities, list some of the key kinesthetic qualities and auditory if applicable.

Now, change the qualities of the “blocking” image to be like the qualities of the fluency picture. Use the quality of location first and distance second to begin the shift. Just move the picture of the blocking experience into the same location as the fluent experience and change the other qualities of the blocking experience into the same qualities of the fluent experience.

Play with “editing” of the movie as you experiment with the qualities to develop a more suitable experience for the formerly blocking experience.

Foreground/ Background – Qualities that Make a Powerful Difference (Edited from *Games for Mastering Fear*)

As you are learning, the qualities within your movies do matter. You can do some neat things with your mind-body states by experimenting with them. One of the most significant qualities that I have found in working with clients is the one titled *foreground/ background*. This comes from Gestalt psychology.

Exercise

Think of the next time you are likely to block. Chances are you will have a picture of the person/ situation when you block.

Note where in reference to your eyes that you see that person/situation. In all likelihood that picture will be right in front of you and it is *all that you are looking at*.

Now, what are you *not* seeing? What? Yes, what is in that picture that you are *not* seeing? You are so focused on the person or context that you are afraid will trigger your blocking that you don't see anything else. Step back from that person/context and see behind it, beside it, beyond it, etc. What else is *out* there that you were not seeing at first?

In order to “step back,” go into peripheral vision. When you focus on something to the exclusion of everything else, that is called “foveal” vision. Now, just step back, go into peripheral vision and see everything off to each side but do more. Not only look to each side, but look and see what is behind the picture of the block. Allow your eyes to go *beyond* the image of the block. What is *back there*?

In every picture, image, and movie that you are seeing, some things are in the foreground and other things are in the background. When you *foreground* problems – they become bigger and more

challenging. When you *foreground* resources – you become more skilled, competent and bold.

Consider the individual who had an image of himself as a scared little kid who froze in the presence of authority figures. When he froze he blocked. He had another image of himself as a resourceful adult who always spoke fluently. When he saw the scared little kid, guess where the adult was? The scared little kid was in the foreground and the mature fluent adult was in the background.

Foregrounding Resources

What resources would you like to foreground in the theater of your mind? How about faith, courage, relaxation, presence of mind, sense of feeling centered, sense of being whole, permission to feel more empowered, etc.?

Exercise

Look for the resources in your “fearful and anxious” sensory-rich movie of your blocking. Get one of those pictures that you normally get that creates great fear of blocking.

Now, look *behind that* or *beyond that* and notice **the resources back there**. Yes, those resources are back there and you can see them if you look close enough. The resources probably exist so far back in the background that you can just barely imagine them. You may see yourself speaking confidently and fluently with those resources *back there*. You may see confidence, calmness, courage, faith, etc.

And yet, if you allow this process to continue, you can begin even now to recognize those resources in the background... and *call them forth*. You can call them forth to the foreground.

Experiment with this process.

Note: If you are a person of religious beliefs, if you look far enough you will see God. Yes, that is right, if you will just look *far enough* back there you will see God.

As you notice those-resources, you can let the foreground of fear and anxiety of blocking fade far, far away into the background as you at the same time bring those resources to the foreground. You have your choices – you can do it slowly, gradually, in an ever-increasing fashion, or you can do it suddenly, radically, and with a jolt that all of a sudden, completely and fully lands you there.

How to Play:

This pattern is primarily written as a visual pattern. You can also do this with sounds and with feelings. You will have sounds in the foreground and other sounds in the background. You will have some feeling in the foreground and other feelings in the background. You can do it with concepts (words, self talk and voices). Some concepts will be foreground and others in the background. Some voices will be foreground and others background. For rehearsal, I prefer doing it visually but you use what works best for you.

We have the pattern below for backgrounding fear of blocking. However, it will work with many unwanted thoughts. The process of shifting background/ foreground in order to bring more resources to bear on your experiences runs as follows:

Exercise

1) Detect the Foreground/Background Structure

Get a visual image of fearing blocking. Notice what you find in the foreground. What's up front? What stands out?

Next, shift your awareness to the background against which it stands. What is "back there?"

You may need to step way back to get a clear view of what is behind and/or surrounding the fear or anxiety.

2) Become aware of your own Foregrounding/ Backgrounding Patterns

What do you typically foreground in order to fear blocking?

What do you regularly and systematically background or avoid in order to not experience the fear of blocking?

In other words, what do you "not see" that allows you to experience the fear of blocking? *What is it that you must foreground in order to block that you do not foreground when speaking fluent?* It is back there. Look!

3) Decide to Take Charge of Shifting These Images

The fact that you foreground some things and background other things simply describes an aspect of how the brain works. *Taking control* over the way you run your brain so that you learn how to foreground resources, solutions, getting things done, etc. however describes, how you can use this information for running your brain more effectively.

So check constantly on your backgrounding and foregrounding to make sure that your learned patterns work for you rather than against you.

4) Commit Yourself to Foregrounding Resources

If you know that you *can* put resourceful thoughts, beliefs, pictures, sounds, music, feelings, etc. in the foreground of your mind, then make a commitment to yourself to do so. In your mind, move up and utter a profoundly powerful "Yes!" to that resource. "I will make that picture, idea, feeling, sound, music, etc. *stand out* in my mind!"

If what *stands out is non-sense* – hurtful old pains, old fears, resentments, regrets, etc. — guess what states of mind that will evoke in you?

Will that do you any good?

5) Rapidly exchange the Background Picture to the Foreground Picture.

Once you feel strongly compelled to *get away from that old fear of blocking*, then go to the background and discover those resources.

Shift your attention to the new referents.

Swish the fear of blocking to the background and the resources of fluency to the foreground. Do it fast and repeat five times – more if needed.

Every time you think of the fear of blocking — see, hear, and feel it fading out to the background as *the new resourceful fluent* you comes rapidly into the foreground.

Language – Words *About* the Movies

So, back to theory, at the first level of *meaning* you have the qualities that are inside your pictures, sounds and feelings. However, something else is at work determining the quality of your movies – the language meanings that you give to your experience.

I The qualities you give to your movies are determined by the meanings you give to your experience. These qualities of your movies don't just happen on their own – your definition of your experience determines the qualities given the movie. Whether you see a movie as large, up close and in full color is determined by how you define and give meaning to the experience out of which you created the movie. Language then becomes the 2nd level of abstraction with your movie being the first level of abstraction.

The Higher Meanings of Language

As we go further in our study, we will learn that your brain doesn't just stop with the second level of abstraction called words or language, but the brain keeps going with the 3rd level of abstraction, the 4th level of abstraction, etc. We do this because we keep having thoughts about thoughts

- 1st Level – the movie of the experience
- 2nd Level – “I have to make that phone call and order that book.”
- 3rd Level – “I blocked the last time I called that salesman.”
- 4th Level – “He reminds me of my dad.”
- 5th Level – “I hate calling him.”
- 6th Level – “I get afraid that I will block.”
- 7th Level – “He will think I am an idiot.”
- 8th Level – “I am an idiot.”
- Etc.

The Levels of Abstraction

We sure do keep having thoughts about thoughts, don't we?

Yes we do.

And it is these meanings that we give our movies that determine the qualities of the movie. If you start talking to yourself about fearing you will block (anticipatory anxiety), you will talk yourself into a Stephen King horror movie. It is the creating of these mental frames with words that determines our problem states; for these movies interact with our body and produce the state of fully blocking. Yes, that is where you get into problems, but cheer up; this is also how you get out of problems:

I have to make that phone call and order that book.
I blocked the last time I called that salesman.
He does remind me of my dad.
I was afraid of my dad.
But, wait a minute.

He isn't my dad.
And, I am a grown adult.
I don't have to worry about being called stupid by my dad.
Goodness, dad doesn't even live in this town.
How foolish of me to act as if I am a child. That person isn't my dad.
I know how to speak without holding back.
I don't block when I talk to my dog.
I know what I will do. If I start to get anxious when I talk to him, I will just picture him as my dog. ☺
Hey, that just might work.

Yes, we do keep having thoughts about thoughts and what we say to ourselves sure does make a difference in how we feel (and talk).

Note: I know that it usually isn't just this simple. Those old horror movies are really grooved into our muscles and run unconsciously. They become so "deep" that just talking to ourselves using "positive thinking" will not instantly "fix" them. Yet, you will be surprised what you can do just by rehearsing the above type language. The brain learns through repetition and many people have achieved remarkable results by rehearsing frames of mind like the above ones. Don't despair. We have more great things coming. Read on.

Chapter Summary

Blocking, as all human behavior, can be explained, analyzed and profiled by the Matrix Model.

The Matrix Model has seven components. The first component, *meaning*, determines all the other matrices: *self*, *power/ resourcefulness*, *time*, *others/ relationships*, *world and intention/ purpose*.

All of the thinking (cognitive) components (frames of mind) that drive blocking will fit into one or more of these matrices. These will all be covered throughout this book.

All behaviors, including blocking, begin with our state(s) of mind. You live in your states. They govern your perception, communication, behavior, etc and color how you live in the world.

Your frames of mind (your matrices) determine your states.

Your states are primarily invisible when you first encounter them.

The "movies of your mind" are the first level of subjective experience. Your movies have *qualities* based on how you internally represent your pictures, sounds, feelings, smells and tastes.

A very important *quality* of the visual component of our movies is your ability to *step in* (associate) or *step out* (dissociate) of your pictures. Such movement can make a major difference to your experience.

Another extremely important *quality* of your movie is whether or not you *foreground* (bring into focus) or *background* (push into the back of our minds) the images of your mind. You want to foreground resources and background limitations.

You give meaning to your movie with *words* which are *above* or *meta* to your movies. Your word definitions determine the *quality* of your movies.

FOUR: THE MEANING MATRIX

Recently, I e-mailed one of my clients who blocks a question, “What would happen if you didn’t have fear and anxiety about blocking?” The purpose of the question was to get him out of his blocking way of thinking. I wanted him to consider some alternatives. This type questioning does a great job in “getting people out of their box” to consider other alternatives. In his e-mail response to me he listed the following:

I would be confident.

I would be centered.

I would be an equal to others.

I would be more of a risk taker – more adventuresome.

I would be positive instead of cynical.

I would stop taking the responsibility for other people’s actions, but still feel compassion for them.

I would feel the presence of God in my life on a consistent basis.

I would be joyful and loving.

I would know that however it turns out; it’s not the end of the world as long as I gave it my best effort.

I would have other interests other than work. (This client has used his work to hide from facing himself and other people.)

I would be excited about lots of stuff.

I would give more time to those people who care and love me.

I would be non-judgmental and more understanding.

I would have close friends.

I would be accepting of myself without worrying what other people think or what they would do to me.

Wow! Look at all those frames of mind that are prevented and interfered with because of the fear and anxiety around stuttering. This is a typical response and illustrates just how important “meaning” is to perception and behavior. Just changing the meaning attached to the fear and anxiety around blocking would make profound changes in this person’s life. One person on the road to fluency said, “I am removing the *meaning* from my stuttering.” To gain fluency, ultimately you will be removing and/or changing the meanings that you have associated with blocking.

Above and beyond the internal movie, are frames of meaning that influence the movie of the mind. We never just “think” – we think *about* our thinking. We direct our thinking to different objects; we edit our thinking with different kinds of thinking; etc. This describes the higher levels of our mind.

Thus, we think in more ways than just *representing* via the movies of our mind. We also think in terms of *editing* our movies. We think in terms of *directing* the movies of our mind. We do this through our use of the higher levels of our mind. From these higher levels, we can choose the qualities of our internal movies – for “up there” is where we *create* and *control* our movies. From the illustration above of all the higher level meanings my client gave the thought of not fearing blocking, imagine how that kind of thinking would edit a new movie compared to the one edited through fear and anxiety. Yes, how we think matters.

As you map things out inside your head, you generate meanings that you encode into your movies with the qualities of the visual, auditory and kinesthetic systems. The “meaning movies” interact with your body through your central nervous system and that in turn create your states. ”Meaning” is the way

you “make sense” of your world through language.

When an individual creates an image of blocking, say in the context of public speaking, the person will generate meanings of fear and anxiety associated with the image. This will, in turn, generate a state of fear and anxiety. If intense enough, the entire fight/flight or General Arousal Syndrome will kick in. Adrenaline then starts flowing. Blood flow leaves your body organs and your brain and goes to your outer extremities for fight/ flight. This response keeps you alive when under real threat; but it doesn't serve you when you live in that state all the time. Since speaking is a large part of living, then living in constant fear and anxiety *of speaking* can keep one's General Arousal Syndrome constantly activated. This is not good!

Multi-level Meaning Making

Example of Layered Meanings

With regard to your states, it is the “meanings” or frames that count most. They drive and create the layered nature of your consciousness as you layer one thought on top of another thought. When you experience a stimulus like “the need to call a customer,” you frame your understanding with meanings upon meanings and these activate your state, and that, in turn, evokes your feelings and behaviors.

In making sense of your world through meaning, you *classify* or label events so as to give them definition. In classifying an event, you give it a name. You *evaluate* these in terms of what meaning they have to and for you. You *associate* the event to embodied memories of similar events and out of this you generate ever more meaning:

You *classify* non-fluency as “blocking” (*Meaning Matrix*). Thus the behavior of blocking now has a label or a name. It becomes a “thing” of consciousness. You bring it into existence in your mind.∨

You *evaluate* it as something “bad” and to be avoided (*Meaning Matrix*). Based on previous experiences, the thing called “blocking” is evaluated as being bad and unacceptable.∨

You *associate* fear and shame with it by linking your emotional states to your experience with the world (*Meaning Matrix*). “I will block and then stutter when I call that customer. I have to *block* that!”

By layering meaning upon meaning by having thoughts about thoughts, you create a meaning-making “funnel.”

Meta-Stating the Meaning-Making Funnel

Via the central and core Meaning Matrix you create all of the other matrices in your mind (Self, Power, Time, Others, World and Intention). As you give meaning to things by associating states with experiences, by framing, classifying, evaluating, etc. you call the other matrices of the mind into existence.

What you *hold in mind* becomes your “meaning” precisely because you hold it in mind and use it as your reference structure. You hold such meanings in your mind mostly through language. *Yes, how you talk to yourself matters; it really does.* This explains language as “the structure of magic.” Thus, you have seven essential matrices that you almost never leave home without: Meaning, Self, Power, Time,

Other, World, and Intention.

It is the “meanings” or frames that count. Those higher level meanings you give the movie of your mind create the states of consciousness that drive your behavior. In Neuro-Semantics we believe that meaning drives everything. The meaning you give any experience determines all the other matrices or frames that you place around the experience. Your meanings “hold” everything else in place. Indeed, the etymology of the term “meaning” means to “hold in mind.”

Later we will be looking at reframing which is basically changing the meaning of something. When you change meaning, you change experience. As you go through the Matrix Model for creating blocking, you will come to understand that it is the *meaning* given to non-fluency that creates the matrix. The matrix of fear and anxiety drives all the other meanings of the matrix. Through the interaction with your physiology, this intense fear creates the blocking.

Indeed, no matter the behavior, it is the *meaning* given to some internal or external experience that will create the matrix that drives the behavior. So, at the root of behavior, including blocking is the *meaning* – that which is *held in mind*. So, once all those unconscious meanings that create blocking are no longer *held in mind* then that matrix becomes history and with it blocking. When those meanings are no longer held in mind, blocking and stuttering are no longer a problem. When you are fluent, you don’t hold the blocking and stuttering meanings in mind; do you? Now, the challenge is getting those meanings *out of mind* for they can sure get grooved in real deep; however, there is hope.

In every case that we have worked with or know about, the person who blocks will inevitably place the *meaning* of blocking as being something *bad* and to be *avoided*. Because it is something very bad, the person will *fear* blocking. As you shall learn, the very act of *fearing* blocking creates the blocking. By *fearing blocking, the person actually creates the matrix of meanings that guarantee the blocking*.

We will cover this Stuttering Matrix in great detail throughout this training. Let this serve as an introduction.

You must first call it into existence by giving it *meaning*. You give it meaning by:

Classifying non-fluency as blocking (*Meaning Matrix*).\

Evaluating it as something bad and to be avoided (*Meaning Matrix*).\

Associating fear and shame with it. (*Meaning Matrix*).\

Because blocking is associated with something bad and to be avoided, you will have as a higher *outcome/intention* to stop stuttering. This higher level *intention* will drive the remaining matrices:\

Not wanting to look foolish, flawed, inadequate, etc., (*Self Matrix*) you attempt to anticipate stuttering so as to prepare *to not stutter*. These fears of what stuttering means to you (*Self*) will in fact trigger the block. After you block, you then enter that grueling effort to *break through* the block which causes stuttering. \

Because you want to control blocking but cannot break the habituated behavior, you experience yourself as being out of control and totally *powerless* and unresourceful (*Power Matrix*).\

You perceive the ongoing problem as being something *permanent* (*Time Matrix*) and believe yourself *doomed* to continue the behavior. It is as if you say, “I always stutter in this situation and I always will. So I believe the past determines my future.”\

In relating to *others*, you think like this, “I will avoid any situations around people or groups that attract attention to me and will expose this weakness I have. I will try to cover up by not blocking and stuttering if I am around people so I won’t look foolish. I am afraid they will judge me.” (*Others Matrix*). As time progresses and the problem becomes habituated, the block happens first and then you struggle in an attempt to release the block – stuttering results as you try to *break through* the block.∨

With the intent of not doing anything to draw attention to yourself from the external *world*, you often avoid opportunities to speak. You attempt to avoid situations that would draw attention to yourself because you are uncomfortable around many of the people in your world (*World Matrix*).

The Second Thought Changes the First Thought, Etc.

How do all these frames of mind work to create blocking? You do not stop at the level of the movie; you give the movie meaning with words. And, you don’t even stop there; you keep on giving more meaning with more words (and sometimes another movie) about the first meaning. Michael Hall, Ph.D. calls it the *self-reflexive consciousness*. This means that you continually have thoughts about thoughts. And, as you do this, **each time you have a thought about another thought, the second thought will change the first thought.**

All of these “frames of mind” create layer upon layer of negative thinking that leads to blocking. Gregory Bateson’s classic work *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* explains how **higher levels modulate lower levels**. Each layer of thought creates another layer of meaning that informs and modulates the lower levels or the levels below it. Take the layer of frames and let the negative emotions become embodied in the chest, neck, stomach and/or jaws and you have blocking.

Thus, it is the layering of these negative frames that lead to blocking. Good news – the same mental exercises that create the blocking and stuttering are the same mental exercises that will create fluency – instead of layering negative frames, we layer with positive frames.

An Experiment with Applying Higher Levels to Lower Levels

Consider the fear-ridden thought that you will block and then stutter.

Now, access a thought of faith or courage. What do you have faith in? What are you courageous about? Step outside (dissociate from) the state of “fear” and access one of those resourceful state of “faith” or “courage” or both.

Apply the thought of faith/courage to the fear of blocking. Take the thought of faith/courage and *bring it to bear* (apply to) on the fear of blocking.

HOW TO DO IT...HOW TO APPLY ONE STATE OF MIND TO ANOTHER STATE OF MIND. THE COGNITIVE PROCESS OF META-STATING.

That sounds well and good, Bob. But “How do I apply one mental state to another mental state and actually make a change?” That is a good question and one that needs answering. In Neuro-Semantics you constantly read or hear someone say, now “apply” this resource state to the resource state. Or, how does this resource state transform and enrich that problem state as you “bring it to bear” on it?

In speaking with one of my clients during a phone consultation, he said that before he called me he was

becoming anxious about the call. He was worried that I would be thinking that he should be further along with the fluency than he was. So, again, we hear a person who blocks worried about what the other person may or may not be thinking about his or her speech.

By the way, people who block do not have a monopoly with such thinking. Take heart, you have a lot of company in the so called “normal” world. Overly caring about what others think is foundational to co-dependent dysfunctional thinking. And, in my opinion, we all have or do suffer from it to some degree or the other. It is a part of just being human. We learn this in childhood and none of us had perfect parents. And, if we had, we would have screwed it up with our own thinking.

He told me that in some areas he was having much more fluency. And, he said that when he did stutter that it wasn't as important to him as before. He was coming to the point that he was giving himself permission to stutter without feeling so bad about himself. Indeed, he said, “It is really not blocking; it is more stumbling.” Here again, we have an example of how one's speech improves once one stops identifying oneself with “how” one talks.

However, he said, in some contexts he works up a lot of anxiety over an upcoming conversation with others as with me this morning. It was around the theme of what I would be “expecting” from him as a result of our therapy and his fear that he could not or was not delivering for in some contexts he was still blocking and stuttering.

He went on to explain how that he is now able in some contexts to reframe this problem but in others, as with me, he hasn't been able to reframe it away. I asked him how he was doing it in other situations. He said that he could reframe away those old fears with the thoughts:

“I give myself permission to be vulnerable.”

“I give myself permission to feel who I am and not to think about other people's feelings. I can do this and not be selfish.”

“I am not going to judge other people by guessing what they may be thinking about me and **deprive them of knowing who I am.**” (This one is a powerful reframe for him.)

We had uncovered these resource states in previous sessions and they are proving most helpful.

Desiring to build on these resource states and to apply them to the problem at hand about his fearing my “expectations” from him, I asked him “how” he was able to apply the above frames of mind to the old fears. In Neuro-Semantics, we don't only want to tell you “what” you need to do, but more importantly, we want to tell you “how” to do it.

He explained how he would have a picture that represented the resource state right out in front of him. And, then, he would place a visual picture that represented the problem state behind the picture of the resource state. He would then bring the picture of the problem state up and into (and sometimes through) the resource state. From this procedure he could:

See the problem state “through” the eyes of the resource state and reframe it.

He could “mesh” the two together resulting in a reframe.

He could totally reframe the problem state away.

Well, what happened with the situation with me? The picture of the “anticipatory anxiety” of his fearing that he wasn't meeting my expectations was of the two of us together and his saying to himself, “Bob will think I should be further along than I am.” “Bob has helped others quicker than he has helped me.” “I am not progressing fast enough.” Etc. Does this sound familiar? That is how you work up a good state of anticipatory anxiety that once it is embodied in your gut, torso, throat and jaws as with my client, you have a full fledged block.

When he brought that image forward and meshed it with his resource image the meaning totally changed. He said, “It is just two guys talking.” Well, what about his speech? He was fluent, perfectly fluent. At the beginning our session he was having difficulty speaking – stuttering quite a bit but not really blocking. At the end of the session, he was totally fluent. He will be taking today’s learning and he will be practicing it to “install” it much deeper. For, as you know, it is one thing to speak fluent with your therapist; it is another to speak fluent with your peers. So, now is the time for practicing which he does very well with fantastic results.

Courage Applied to Fear

This is the way this particular person applied one thought-state to another thought-state (Meta-Stating). You may do it differently. Think of fearing blocking. Now, put that thought aside. Access a thought of courage and/or faith and *apply* the thought of courage and/or faith to the fear of blocking and stuttering. My client did it visually. I have a visual of the word “fear” and above that I have another visual of the word “faith.” Behind my visual of the word “faith” is a picture of Jesus who, for me, empowers the word “faith.” I then move the visual of the word “faith” down on top of the word “fear” and “faith” shatters the word “fear”. The word “fear” breaks into a thousand pieces.

Some people apply one thought to another with just the words – they *sense* that once the resource state is applied to the problem state, the problem state minimizes or disappears. Others do it kinesthetically as they will move the feeling of courage and/or faith into the location of the feeling of fear. So, you will end up with "courageous" fear or "faithful" fear. How does that change the fear?

To gain fluency, it is an absolute imperative that you learn how to *apply* one thought to another thought. This is a major key to learn how to run your own brain. When you learn how to run your own brain, you can then maintain state control. And, maintaining state control is the key to overcoming blocking. Indeed, learning how to maintain state control is the key to much in life. In the following section we will be looking at materials from the *Accessing Personal Genius* course of study (which is the basic Meta-States course).

We will be looking at some key elements in learning how to run your own brain and thereby managing your own states. Those people who block that I have assisted have become proficient at managing their own states in all contexts. They have been able to transfer those states of fluency into contexts that formerly led to blocking.

Relationship With Your “Thoughts” – What kind of relationship do you have with your thoughts?

In Neuro-Semantics we believe, indeed, we are quite convinced, that in order to create blocking one must move to a higher level and add *fear* to what the blocking may *mean*. Yes, we can become afraid of what something may *mean*. Indeed, American President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s famous statement during WWII expressed this cognitive (thinking) reality when he said, “We have nothing to fear but fear itself.” Here Roosevelt was expressing man’s ability to have *thoughts about thoughts* and to literally fear our thoughts of fear. To fear our fear is to build a fearful relationship with the thought of fear.

As a species, *we sometimes develop poor relationships with our thoughts*. Yes, you sure can have fears

about what something may mean. If you are afraid of what something may mean, will not the fear about the meaning affect your internal response to the meaning? Yes it will. That is how you create the problem but, good news, that structure is also the key to overcoming blocking.

Relationship With Your “Thoughts”

How can you fear what something may mean and create blocking? You do it the same way you create any mental problem or challenge. By fearing what blocking may mean, the multi-layers of the stuttering matrix are given birth. Of course, you recognize this as it finds expression in your body. This makes it seem so real. Should this surprise you? I don't think so. For, if I ask you, “Where in your body do you feel your emotional hurt?”

Chapter Summary

Meaning is the way you make sense of the world of language. *Meaning* is the foundation, the core, the determinant of our mind-body-meaning system.

In making sense of our world through meaning, you *classify* or label events so as to give them definition. You *evaluate* these events as to what meaning they have for you. You *associate* the event to embodied memories of similar events and out of this you generate ever more meaning.

Your *classification* called blocking is evaluated as being *bad* and to be avoided. *Associated* with blocking is fear, shame, etc.

Your brain does not stop with giving your movies one meaning, it keeps on giving more and more meanings. This process creates the other matrices and all of your other thought-feelings. This continues layering your minds with meanings after meanings. This phenomenon *locks* the created state into your neurology due to the process called Meta-Stating – all the layering of negative thoughts on top of negative thoughts multiply into a negative state that once embodied, creates blocking and stuttering.

Each time you have a thought *about* another thought; the second thought will change/ modulate/ affect the previous thought. We can anxiously fear blocking or we can courageously fear blocking. This process of layering one thought with another thought is called Meta-Stating – it works!

FIVE: State Management, Accessing Your Personal Genius

State Management

Introduction to “Accessing Your Personal Genius”

“States” – The Foundation of Meta-States

(Adopted from *Accessing Personal Genius* by L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.)

We now begin a journey of looking more closely at how our mind and body work together in producing behavior. Before there is behavior (blocking), there are states of mind and states of body (like fear and anxiety). What kind of state of mind are you in when you speak fluently? And, what state of body are you in when you block and stutter? There are major differences, aren't there?

In this section on “State Management” more information will be provided on just how the mind creates states of mind-body and how unwanted states may be changed. In order to learn how to *run your own brain and maintain desired states* you need some basic knowledge in how they work, how to recognize them, how to change them and how to utilize your new states of mind for more fluency.

As we begin looking into managing our states, there are some key principles that must be understood which will allow for appreciation of the wonderful truth – “We run our own brains.” We may think others do or circumstances do but the bottom line is that “We run our own brains.” No one else does. The question becomes, “Are you pleased with how you are running your brain?” If not, grasping the following principles will launch you into the journey of learning how to run your own brain, manage your own states and, therefore, speak more fluently in all contexts. You have already been introduced to some of the basic principles. We will review them here. So, let's enter “State Management” by studying the following principles:

1) Neuro-Linguistic states have two basic components:

Linguistics – Linguistics refers to the languages of the mind; how your mind thinks and encodes information. For instance, when speaking fluently, are your pictures in color or in black and white? Are they bright or dark? Is the sound associated with fluency loud or softer? Etc. The **language of the mind** has two components:

The first component of the language of your mind is the sensory representation systems inside your movies which consist of:

Visual: pictures, scenes, images

Auditory: sounds, noises, music

Kinesthetic: sensations, touches, tactile, proprioceptive, motor movements

Olfactory (smell), Gustatory (taste)

The second component of language is the “language meanings” that you give to your internal movies:

These are your words – sentences, linguistic structures, mathematics, music symbols, metaphors, stories, symbols

Language provides the higher level frames of mind that control/determine your movies – the qualities of them and how they affect your mind-body states. If your language frame says, “All people in authority will judge me as being inadequate because I stutter.” then that will produce an internal movie with certain qualities. If on the other hand, you come up to talk to a person that you are comfortable with and whom you do not fear will judge you, the qualities of your movie will look different from the one based on fear of judgment.

Physiology/Neurology: By physiology/neurology we refer to the functioning of your nervous system as it interacts within your body and physiology of your Central, Peripheral, and Autonomic Nervous Systems.

All behaviors are a product of these two basic components. When you block, you have a movie in your mind consisting of pictures, sounds, feelings, smells, and/or tastes. Also, in the linguistic components you will have word meanings that are controlling the movie. The linguistics (movie and words) of the block will be interacting with your *neurology* through your body. These two components interact to produce the mind-body state of a block and hence they produce the block.

2) Because Neuro-Linguistic states have two basic components, those two components provide the “Two Royal Roads” to state control:

Because your states are a product of the interaction of your internal movies and your higher level thoughts interacting with your body (physiology), then you have two basic elements involved in creating states: *your mind* (your movies and word meanings you give to your movies) and your *body*. Thus, the way you create movies and word meanings and the way you use your body both determine your mind-body states and provide the pathway to controlling your mental states. Change your movie and word meanings and you change your state. Change your body stance and you change your state. Breathing properly (from your abdomen) can be most helpful in maintaining a fluent state.

Thus, because your states are a product of mind and body interaction, you create your states from your mental-body mapping. This gives you *two royal roads* to states – two avenues that you can use to evoke or induce a state.

Internal Representations specify your state of mind – the things that you internally map out with pictures, sounds and feelings as well as the things that you say to yourself (language) – your understandings, learnings, beliefs, values, etc. that make up the representations on the theater of your mind. And because you have a choice about what to represent and how to code that representation (create the qualities of our movies), you have *representational power* – you create and edit your own movies.∪

Physiology/Neurology describe the physical state or state of body – the things that you experience in your body involving health, posture, breathing, bio-chemistry, etc. You have a physiology for blocking and you have another physiology for fluency. Note your posture and especially your breathing for both states.

Neuro-Linguistic or mind-body states are your mental-physical **response** to some **stimulus** in the world. For example, you may say, “When I am speaking on the phone, I block. When I am speaking to someone I am comfortable with, I speak fluently.” Different stimuli produce different responses; all based on how you have trained your mind-body system to respond to different stimuli. Of course, this is unconscious and usually very, very well learned – embodied in your mind-body system.

3) **State Object:** In order for a mind-body state to exist, there must be an object of attention. In primary states (i.e., fear, anger, joy, calmness, sadness, etc.) the **object** usually refers to something “**outside**” and “**beyond**” your nervous system. Obviously, during those times of fluency, the object of your state, or, you may say, the object of your attention, is quite different from the object of the state when you block and stutter.

When you are blocking, *what* do your thoughts-and-feelings refer to? What’s on your mind? When you are fluent, *what* thoughts-and-feelings do you refer to? What is on your mind when you are fluent? What do you foreground?

People who block tend to focus exclusively on themselves and their present experience of fear, anxiety, etc. Instead of focusing on the other person with whom they are communicating and the content of what they are saying, they allow the fear of stuttering to “grab” their total attention. When you are focusing on your fears and anxiety (which is usually *about* fearing the judgments of the other person), you become dissociated from the other person and their needs as well the content of what they wish to communicate.

You may say, “Now wait a minute Bob, I am focusing on the other person and how they will judge my speech. It is not myself that I am focusing on. It is the other person’s perception of how I speak.” That is absolutely true. However, let’s move up one more step above what you perceive from the other person to the *fear* of blocking. It is that level that the focus gets hung up. By allowing the fear to take over, the object of attention becomes *the fear of blocking* and then the block itself and how to break through it which produces stuttering.

On the other hand, when you speak fluently what is the object of your state of fluency? Is it fear of blocking or are you primarily focused on just enjoying the conversation with the other person? This topic will be covered more fully in the chapter on the Other Matrix. Recently, during my first session with a young lady who blocks, she related how she “could not force herself to block when she was by herself.” In inquiring about the difference between her states when she was alone and her state of blocking when speaking to certain people she said, “When I am by myself I have confidence because *no one can hurt me.*” What is a major object of her state of blocking? It is the *fear of being hurt* by other people. Because the person that triggers the object of fear is not there when she is alone, she is fluent – there is no fear. When, however, she is with most people, the controlling object of her state is the *fear of being hurt* which is triggered by her speaking to someone. She is focused on the fear *inside her* instead of focusing on the content of what she is communicating to the other person. Blocking, like most of our problems, is an *inside* job.

Exercise – Where is my focus?

Access a recent state of blocking.

While in that state, notice what is the object of your attention? What is in primary focus while you block?

Access a recent state of fluency.

While in the state of fluency, what is the object(s) of your attention? Where/what are you focusing on?

- 4) **State Awareness:** To take control of our states, you must become aware of the states and the factors that drive them. Because all states **habituate**, they drop out of conscious awareness. Now, when you are in a block, I am most certain you are aware of that state. But, what about when you speak fluently, what state are you in?

∨

Thus, you must bring your states into conscious awareness in order to start controlling them rather than your states controlling us. So, begin by noticing the quality of your state: Do you experience the state fully without any competing internal dialogue? Is it congruent with what you really want? Note the meanings you give to various states. What are the differences between your fluent state and your blocking state?

Exercise

How are the states encoded and structured?

How have you constructed your movie?

How have you languaged it.

Identify the qualities, properties, features, distinctions in the representations governing its intensity (i.e. vivid, sharp, closeness, color, movement, location, word meanings, etc.) of each state.

How do they differ based on your mental frames of mind, the emotional components, how you feel them in your body?

What does each mind-body state say about you as a person?

Are there spiritual components of each state?

- 5) **State Accessing/ Inducing:** In order to run your own brain and maintain state control, you must know how to access and induce the desired state. There are two primary ways to access a particular state:

Memory: *Remembering a state* (Recall a time when...)

Imagination: *Creating a state* (What would it look, sound, and feel like if...)

You can use the *Two Royal Roads* to state control by using your mind-and-body system to *access* previous states (memory) or states that you can imagine (imagination) to access a desired state.

Note: To get good at this requires practice. Now, you have spent years to get good at blocking. Now, you want to spend some time (I am not talking about years.) to learn how to *fly into states* of choice. The following information is fundamental to learning how to switch from one state of mind

to another:

Exercise: Accessing States of Non-Fluency/ Fluency

I believe that recalling a time when you were in a particular desired state is the best way to access a desired state. Imagination also works but not as well. The key to accessing a state is to associate into a time when you experienced that state. Remember, when you associate into a memory, you are fully there. You imagine yourself back there looking through your eyes and seeing what you saw. You imagine hearing the sounds you heard and feeling the feelings you felt. For the purpose of this exercise, you want to practice going in and out of a state of fluency and dis-fluency.

Exercise

- a) Recall a recent time when you were very fluent. Imagine yourself back there in that state of fluency. Be looking out of your eyes (Do not see yourself but what is around you including other people.). Hear through your ears all the sounds around you and detect how it felt being totally fluent now.
 - 1) Note how you are feeling being in the state of fluency.
 - 2) Note how you are talking to yourself.
 - 3) Note the qualities of your picture(s).
 - b) Now, recall a time recently when you blocked. Do the same thing. Imagine yourself back there in that state of blocking. Be looking out of your eyes (Do not see yourself but what is around you including other people.). Hear through your ears all the sounds around you and detect how it felt being totally in the block. (I bet you find it really easy to associate inside a block. You have that well learned, don't you?)
 - 1) Note how you are feeling being in the state of blocking.
 - 2) Note how you are talking to yourself.
 - 3) Note the qualities of your picture(s).
 - c) Write down the ways that the two experiences differ.
 - d) Practice going in and out of these two states – from one to the other.
- 6) **State Altering:** States do not stay the same, but forever change. Count on your states to alter, to shift, and to transform. Some people have taken the time to write down all the states they go in and out of in a given day. You may wish to do that. It will amaze you to discover just how many states you access during the day. By the way, you will discover that you are not always in a state of blocking. I mean that you don't live your entire life blocking. That simply means that your mind-body system knows how to *get out* of the state of blocking. Of course, the context in which you are in determines whether you block or not. However, you do *get out of blocking*. How simple that is, yet how so very profound. Spend some time noting how you *get out* of the blocking state into another state. How do you do that? How does your focus change? How do you talk to yourself differently? Etc.
- 7) **State Intensity and Amplification:** Our states have different intensities. Some of your blocking states will be more intense than others. Gauge each state in terms of intensity. **How much** do you experience the state? What level of

strength or weakness does the state convey? How much does it dominate your consciousness?

How much do you feel or experience blocking compared to fluency?

Need more fluency? Crank it up by increasing or intensifying the internal cinema (movie) of your mind. You have two ways to crank up the movie. First, you can intensify the mental pictures, sounds and feelings. The second way to intensify your movie is to change the way you talk to yourself (language).

It does matter how you talk to yourself. You intensify your movie (internal representation) by using empowering language, i.e., “I can speak fluently. I do it all the time.” You will experience more of the state. All states do not have the same level of intensity, so gauge for intensity level. Do you need more “juice”? What processes do you rely on for amplifying your states? How do you crank them up?

Managing states necessitates developing high level awareness of our states. This means identifying **what** state, **how much** you have that state, **its direction, focus and object**.

- 8) **State Strategy:** All behaviors are a product of an ongoing process (strategy) of pictures, sounds, feelings, smells, tastes and the higher-level word meanings that you give to the experience. If this seems a little complicated, don’t worry about it. I just wish to introduce you to how the brain moves from a stimulus to a response. Stephen Covey said that *in between stimulus and response, there is choice*. Yet for there to be choice, you need some understanding of what goes on in between the moment you receive an internal or external stimulus and when you react. This happens so fast in most cases that it is hard to believe that there is a lot of processing going on in our mind-body system in the production of behavior. How long does it take you to fly into a block?

The brain creates strategies with the movies of our mind and the words we use to describe them. Think about it, you have a strategy for creating blocking. You also have a strategy for those times when you create fluency. Your brain has learned how to do both. Since your brain has learned how to do both, the brain can learn how to utilize the same or a very similar strategy for fluency in all contexts of your life. With the blocking strategy, we will be providing you with many patterns to intervene and change that strategy so that it will not run in those contexts that did trigger blocking. Once that is complete, then you can be free to use your fluency strategy in all contexts. *You do not have to learn how to speak fluently. You already know how.*

- 9) **State/ Strategy Interrupts:** These strategies are unconscious and run automatically. However, they can change. This must be true or one would never change any behavior. You can learn how to interrupt the blocking strategy and send your brain some place else more useful. By state interrupt, we mean the stopping of any and every mind-body-emotion state that you wish to stop by jarring, interfering, sabotaging, preventing, etc. *State interrupts* refer to ways for **stopping** or **preventing** a state from functioning. √

Since all states are produced by a strategy; then you interrupt states by interrupting the strategy that did produce the behavior, so that the state producing strategy no longer runs. When you are arguing with your spouse or significant other and the phone rings and that triggers you into that “professional voice,” that is a state or strategy interrupt.

I have a suggestion for you. Give someone permission to interrupt you every time you start

blocking. Once they interrupt you, access a resource state like courage, faith, determination, calmness, etc that leads to fluency and work on speaking fluent from that resource state (When you get to the point that you can do this, you are well on your way to unconscious fluency in all contexts and you can learn to do just that). In NLP this is known as “strategy interrupt.” By constantly breaking into the strategy and not allowing it to run, you are training your brain to do something else when you experience the old triggers.

One client remarked upon first learning about state interrupts,

“I used to scream really loud inside my head to interrupt my state. I got the idea when I was reading Tony Robbins’ book, *Awakening the Giant Within*. It worked pretty well. If I was alone in the house I would scream out loud really loud. It made me laugh every time because it was so ridiculous. It served its purpose...my state was interrupted every time.”

- 10) **State Anchoring:** How many triggers are there for triggering you into a block? We call those triggers anchors. We become anchored to a certain trigger to respond in a certain way. For instance, “When I speak to someone in authority, I become fearful and I block.” The person in authority serves as an anchor for you to experience the fear of blocking. Here you want to use that mental phenomenon of the brain to serve you. You want to set up a **trigger** (sight, sound, sensation, movement, gesture, word, etc.) and link it to a state that *you want* instead of one you *don’t want* (This is also referred to as re-framing.). So, instead of the person in authority triggering fear of blocking it will trigger a resource state of fluency – “I know how to talk and I have something valuable to say so I will not block but speak fluently and I will be very calm and confident about it.”\

Anchors are set just like we learn anything – through pictures, sounds, feelings, smells, tastes and words. A picture can trigger a certain state. Consider the flag of your country. When you see it, what state does it evoke in you? Likewise, when you see or imagine a person that you usually block in front of, what state does it elicit in you? What about someone’s voice? Are you anchored to particular voices or sounds? What kind of anchors trigger your blocking? Note if they are primarily visual anchors or sound anchors (i.e. someone’s voice, etc.). The meaning you place to those anchors, determine the state those anchors elicit in you? To change your state, then the meaning you give to those anchors must be changed. Changing the meaning given a certain anchor to some other meaning is meaning reframing.

- 11) **State Dependency:** Many years ago, hypnosis came up with the idea that “all learning is state dependent.” To a large degree, your state of mind determines how well and what you learn. Once in a state, in a strong and intense state, you experience a dependency on that state for how you think, learn, remember, perceive, communicate and behave. We call this experience **State Dependency**. It means that the state has you, and feels as if it has a life of its own.

You see and experience the world in terms of that state. In this way, your neuro-linguistic states color your internal world. Blocking is a superb example of state dependency. Once you enter into a “block,” it tends to “have you,” doesn’t it? Because you are so *inside* the state of blocking, you are not only unable to *get out* of it, but it also determines your thoughts, your feelings and your behavior.

- 12) **From State Dependency to Meta-States – Self-Reflexive Consciousness:**

When you experience a powerful **state dependency** (like a block), it becomes very easy to **reflect** that state back onto another state. Much of the block is made up of fear – you “freeze.” Once you “freeze,” from fear and anxiety, you then *apply* this strong and powerful state to all your thoughts and feelings. It *dominates* your total being. It is “boss.” It is *applied* to all thinking and reasoning. It has become a meta (above, about, beyond) state for it “rules the roost.” It is *layered* on top of other states.

Now you are thinking-and-feeling (not about the world of some stimulus out there), you are thinking-and-feeling about your states (other thoughts, feelings, ideas, memories, etc.) You are now in **self-reference** to your own experience. This raises your awareness to a new level. It creates **self-reflexive consciousness**. What kind of relationship do you have with your thoughts? That is something to think about.

In creating a state of blocking, the focus of *fear* and *anxiety* around blocking become powerful states of mind into which you associate when you block. These states then become meta-states which you apply to other states. As meta-states, they *control* you when you block and stutter to the point of contaminating and controlling your very state of being. That is why this is called “blocking.” These states of fear and anxiety “block,” i.e., meta-state all other states including the very human state of speaking.

But, you can take this same self-reflexivity and let it serve you, for just as when you apply *fear* and *anxiety* of blocking to other states which *locks* you inside the block; you can instead, go to a higher resourceful state and apply it to the *fear* and *anxiety* and change the fear – maybe even eliminate it. What happens when you apply *courage* to *fear*? When you apply *faith* to *fear*, what happens?

We first introduced this concept to you in Chapter 2. It is one of the *absolute* keys to learning how to run your own brain and to maintaining your own states. The following “Basic Meta-Stating Pattern” utilizes this dynamic principle and functions as the basis of many of the patterns you will be doing through-out this book.

The Basic Meta-Stating Pattern

1. Access a resource state.

What empowering (resource) state do you want to *bring to bear on* or apply to the limiting state of the fear of blocking (or some other limiting state)? It could be courage, faith, compassion, calmness, love, harmony, etc.

A *resource* can be a thought, feeling, idea, belief, value, memory, or imagination.

2. Amplify and anchor the resource state.

Juice up the resource state and establish an anchor for it by touch, sight, sound, word, or a combination, etc. Remember that you can create an anchor by associating the resource state to a word, a feeling or a picture.

3. Apply your resource state to the fear of blocking or other limiting state.

Bring the resource *to bear onto* the fear, anxiety, etc. *Apply* your resource state to the fear

of blocking.

By doing this, you *embed* the *fear, anxiety, etc.* inside the resource state.

4. Appropriate to your life by putting into your future (Future Pacing).

Imagine having this new state of mind as you move out into your future. What will it be like acting from the resource state and not the fear when you speak?

5. Analyze the quality, health, balance (ecology) of the results for you.

Will it enhance your life to set this resource as your frame-of-reference for the limiting belief (fear, anxiety, etc.)? Would every facet of your mind-and-body agree with this?

13) **State Utilization:** This principle has much practical application. We wish to detect and then use resourceful ways of thinking-feeling, perceiving, communicating, etc. Your brain over the years has learned some very powerful states. The question is, “Are they useful and if not, where and how can you use them?”

Ask yourself, “**Where would I like to use this state?**” What would it look, sound, feel like to have this state in this or that situation? √

√

A neat thing about states is that the mind-body system does not care about the content that created the state. It only cares about the state. Because of this phenomenon, you can take the state created from one content and apply that state to some other state unrelated to the original content. For example, you may easily access a state of courage when thinking about speaking to a friend but not to a stranger. With meta-states, you can access the state of courage when speaking to a friend and *apply* that same state of courage to the context of speaking to a stranger and effect a change. It is the state of mind, and not the content of the state, that makes the difference.

14) State as Emotion

Are emotions involved in your blocking? Is that a ridiculous question? I am sure that for most, emotions are a major component of blocking. This principle is about understanding how you construct emotions. By understanding emotions, you can more easily control them rather than letting them control you.

For most people the key to both understanding and controlling emotions lies in the understanding that emotions are a product of our *evaluative judgments, beliefs, meanings, values*. If you evaluate (map, perception) your experience of the world as a good experience, you will have a positive emotion. If, on the other hand, your experience of the world does not validate your expectations, values, dreams, desire, etc., you will have a negative emotion. Your emotions have much to do with your *expectations* from the world and whether or not your experience of the world and the people in your world fulfilled your expectations.

When you *expect* love and acceptance from people in your world but; instead, you receive rejection, how does that affect your emotions? Furthermore, even if you do not in fact get rejection from others but you believe they reject you because of your blocking and stuttering, what kind of emotions does that generate and how does it affect your speech? What would happen if you did not

generate those emotions?

The Neuro-Semantics of Emotion

Just like states, emotions code your programs to help you evaluate your functioning in the world. To summarize, your emotions are *just* a product of the *evaluative difference* between your *map or perception of the world* (wants, expectations, shoulds, understandings, etc.) and your *experience of the world*. As with thoughts, emotions are constructed of pictures, sounds, feelings, smells, tastes and word meanings as are all of our constructed realities.

Importantly, because you create your emotions based on your evaluation of your experience of the world in any given moment, your emotions are always accurate to *that* moment. You had an experience. You received what you expected and you felt good about it. Or, you had an experience and you did not receive what you wanted so you felt bad about it. Therefore, as to *that* experience, your emotions were accurate to your evaluation of that experience.

However, when we take emotions from one experience and color other experiences from that emotional experience, we can easily get into trouble. We are taking the emotional state from one experience and coloring or meta-stating other experiences with those same emotions. For instance, when you were a child blocking and stuttering, you probably experienced a lot of teasing from your peers. And, of course, you evaluated that as a horrible experience.

The problem develops when you bring those very same emotions into adulthood and color most of the people in your world with that or those earlier experiences. How many adults tease and make fun of you like your school peers did? Now, be realistic. Careful that you don't mind read and end up judging that others are judging you when in fact they are not judging you. So much of blocking is caused when the person fears the judgments of others over how he or she speaks. This fear often times has deep roots in those painful emotional experiences of the past that become connected to speech through the embodiment of those negative emotions in those muscles controlling breathing and speaking.

Emotion: The Difference Between Model and Experience

So, to be able to put your emotions into proper perspective and to control them can have profound effect on whether or not you block and stutter. The following exercise will provide further explanation.

Exercise: “Emotions Are Just Signals” Pattern

1. Recognize that “emotions” are just signals.

As you have learned, the *motions* that you feel in your body (the somatic responses) arise from your *evaluations* (hence, e-motions). You evaluate things between your **model of the world**

(internal mapping) and your **experience of the world**. The *difference* between these is *registered* in your mind-body system as an “emotion.” This means an emotion is an information signal about the difference between model (your mental map) and experience.

2. Access a “just witnessing” state to one of the major emotions around your blocking.

Take a deep breath and step back (You may wish to visually dissociate.) to just observe that emotion. Know that this negative emotion came from your evaluation of your model of the world and your then current experience of the world. Answer these questions:

What did you expect at that time? What are your standards for making your evaluations? \n What did you experience? How did you perceive it? What factors influenced your perceptions when you gave birth to that emotion?

3. Recognize the triggers in the event/s of the world that evoke this response

In the presence, what has to happen for you to experience this emotion? What triggers those emotions in the now? \n

What contextual factors also influence this? What was going on in your life when you created this emotion? Are those events still going on? Are they true to fact – accurate to what is *really* out there?

4. Say to yourself – “It’s *just* an emotion.”

Use your most resourceful voice. “I am more than my emotions. I e-mote. I experience emotions, but I *am not* merely my emotions.” To be able to separate your identity from your emotions is a vital step towards learning how to run your own brain.

If it’s just an experience – what information do you know that will help you to use that information for greater effectiveness? \n

Refuse to “take counsel of your emotions” as if they were a final arbitrator, as if they were a report card on your standing, status, destiny, etc. Rather, decide to *learn* from your emotions as signals and messages about relationship between your maps and the world.

What’s the most effective response to this particular experiencedifference?

5) Design engineer a new meta-stating structure.

Go inside and give yourself permission, congruently with a strong and resourceful voice that reframes – changes the meaning of the emotion(s), and notice how that settles.

Examples:

“I give myself permission to feel fear because it allows me to recognize things that are a true threat to me and to take appropriate action early.”

“I give myself permission to feel the tender emotions because it makes me more fully human.”

6. Meta-State the negative emotion with a powerful resource.

Discover some resourceful states that you could use in applying (meta-stating) to the emotions which would minimize or eliminate the power of that negative un-useful emotion.√

You may wish to consider this menu list of resourceful states: calmness, courage, faith, being centered, etc.

Access each and amplify fully, then *apply* to the negative emotion that you do not want: calm fear; courageous fear; apply faith to fear; centered fear, etc.

7. Quality control the permission and add needed reframes (new and useful meanings).

Imagine fully and completely moving into your tomorrows with this new meaning on the negative emotion. Does any part of you object to letting this operate as your primary style in dealing with this emotion? If so, go back to step 5.

8. Put into your future and install.

Would you like this to be how you move through the world?

Meta-Stating allows us to texture emotional states that you might experience as “negative” so as to refine and qualify them in new and exciting ways.

Texturing Fear and Anxiety from a Higher State of Mind

15) State Extending / State Containment

You can both *extend* and *contain* states – these properties of neuro-linguistic states enable you to take the thoughts-feelings of one state and contaminate other experiences with that state. When you have a state of fearing blocking and stuttering and that leads into an actual block then you both extend and contaminate other states with the state of fear.

Due to the intensity of that state of fear, it over flows into other mind-body states such as the desire to be calm, relaxed and fluent and contaminates them. This will in turn create the actual block. The state of “fear” has contaminated the other resourceful states through the process of meta-stating. You have applied “fear” to “calm and relaxed.” And when this happens, the state of fear being more intense than the states of calm and relax overwhelms them. Indeed, in a full fledge “blocking,” could you not say that it has “taken over” the entire mind-body state? It has become “boss.”

You can also build **boundaries** and **barriers** around a state so as to disconnect from other states. A state can become so intense, that it functions on its own without any influence from other states. (Taken to the extreme, this creates multiple personalities.) In the process of blocking, you so associate into this state that it functions without any interference from other states. Indeed, in a state where you experience a full fledge block, the blocking becomes quite difficult to “penetrate” with other states. But, take heart, they are penetrable.

For example, when you get a thought in your mind of having to speak to an authority figure and

then you jump up a level and *fear the thought* of speaking to an authority figure your fear is not about the authority figure. Your fear is *about* a thought. That is meta-stating and it can be your blessing or your curse.

The good news is that in various contexts, if used appropriately, both phenomena provide new resources. Because states can contaminate other states, you can take a resourceful state and let it “contaminate” an unresourceful state. As you know, we call that meta-stating. Likewise, you can take a resourceful state and so associate into it and frame it so it is “yours” that you build barriers around it with empowering meta-level structures. In doing so, you can then have access to this state in any context.

Consider that once you develop a state of “courageous fluency;” you will no doubt like to build barriers around it so that no matter the context in which you find yourself; you can speak fluently without any contaminations from fear, anxiety, etc. You build barriers around a state primarily with language. Why do you want to be fluent? Just answering this question will give you *reasons* for fluency. These reasons provide higher level structures that can effectively be used to *lock* fluency in.

Changing Meaning by Reframing

How Reframing Works

NLP offers some basic tools for changing meaning. This section deals primarily with changing meaning (conscious reframing). By “conscious reframing” we are referring to changing meaning on your own and with your own will. When it comes to blocking, changing it consciously is quite a challenge. However, conscious reframing can be most powerful when practiced and installed in the muscles. There are numerous people who blocked who have gained complete fluency consciously. It can happen. Later we will provide a technique for installing a desired principle into one’s muscles.

Meanings work in powerful ways. Whenever you change the meaning of an experience, you change your response. It's inevitable. If in *framing* (thinking, giving meaning), you create a mental context by which to think about something, then in *re-framing*, you attach a new meaning. This leads to a new response, a new experience, and a new behavior. The content remains the same but *another piece of meaning* is put around it (a higher frame or state, hence meta-state). Reframing is like saying, “A does not equal B. A equals C and that is far better.”

Consider this statement – “People will judge me as being an inadequate person if I block.” Now change that thought to “If people judge me as being inadequate if I block, that is their problem. My adequacy comes from how I view my sense of self-worth from within myself and not from what others may or may not think of me.” This is an example of reframing. Reframing that affects changes in meaning obviously is the basis of all change. Therefore, as we say in the Matrix Model, “Meaning is the determinant of all the matrices (mental frames) of our lives.”

We have two basic ways to reframe meaning:

Content/ Meaning reframing involves giving the experience (or behavior) new meanings; so that,

while everything remains the same externally, the behavior now means, suggests, or implies something new and different. (The earlier statement about changing the meaning of someone judging you as being inadequate for blocking is an example of content/ meaning reframing.)\

Context reframing involves finding a new context where the experience could be useful. An example of context reframing would be – “Where could this *fear* that I have around blocking be useful?” “Well, if I am in physical danger of losing my life, that fear could serve me but I sure don’t need that kind of fear when speaking.”

Framing

Frames critically determine our meanings and responses. The frame that you put around any behavior strongly impacts how you think about it, consider it, and respond to it. In running your own brain and managing your own state, you will want to develop the ability to shift the frames that you place around things.

Content Reframing:

“What else could this mean?”

Content Reframing takes the form of: “This is X — No, it is Z and Z is far better.”

Context Reframing

“Where would this be really useful and valuable?”

Content Reframing

Since changed meanings lead to new responses, when you change the meaning (or significance) of something you alter the way you respond to it. “What would happen if you absolutely did not care if you blocked and stuttered?” The response usually is something like this, “Well, I wouldn’t stutter.” This question simply asks the person to change the meaning of blocking as something bad, feared and to be avoided to something not all that significant. We can say this with certainty – those who overcome blocking cease giving so much negative meanings to those times when they do block or even stammer a little bit. Everyone has those times of stammering.

John Harrison has pointed out the difference between stammering, stuttering and blocking. We agree that there is a difference and a big one. (In Europe what we Americans call “stuttering” is called “stammering.”) However, we encourage you to begin consciously working on ceasing to give so much meaning to disfluency. You will note from the stuttering matrix and the case studies the huge numbers of negative frames coming off the meanings of stuttering as bad, to be feared and to be avoided and “blocked.” This kind of meaning attached to blocking guarantees blocking.

A content or meaning reframe are the same that basically says, “X doesn’t mean Y, it means Z and that is better.” A good question to ask yourself to come up with a meaning reframe for yourself or for someone else to generate a meaning reframe is “What else could this mean that would be useful?” For example, a content reframe could change the belief “If I block, I am weak.” To “If I block, that isn’t the end it is the beginning for I am making progress with my speech and that takes strength.”

Context Reframing:

Context reframing asks the question, "In what context would this behavior or response be useful?"

Bateson (1972) stated that "All meaning is context dependent." This statement has found its way into the NLP community as one of the key presuppositions or beliefs of NLP. What does he mean by this? He simply means that external to a context, nothing has meaning within itself. Meaning is always established when one thing is related to another thing and that is always in some context.

I am typing this book on my laptop computer. In this context my laptop computer has the meaning of being a word processor. However, my laptop computer has absolutely no meaning until a meaning making machine called a human brain comes up and gives it meaning. And, the meaning I give it presently will be determined by how I am using it – its relationship to me in the context of what I am doing with it. When I am using it to access my E-mail, it has another meaning. When I use it to balance my checkbook, it has another meaning.

At a recent Meta-NLP training, one of the participants was having a difficult time understanding what context reframing meant. We were in Grand Junction, Colorado and forest fires were raging in the state (2002). I asked him to get a picture of anything. He did. I inquired, "What do you see?" He said I see a meadow with flowers and a forest of trees at the edge of the meadow." I asked, "And, what does that mean to you?" He said, "Peace, quiet and harmony." I directed, "Now, take that same picture. Keep the content the same and put it in the middle of one of the raging forest fires nearby." His facial features changed as did his breathing as he visually moved the picture of the meadow into a raging forest fire. I inquired, "And, what does that same meadow mean now?" He replied immediately, "Destruction." In the example the content remained the same but in changing the context to the forest fire the meaning changed.

Some years ago my wife and I were driving to the mountains of North Carolina to visit my father. It is about a two hour drive and, at that time, we took a country road that went by some dairy farms. It was in the spring time and we had the windows of the car rolled down to enjoy the spring breeze. As we drove by a dairy farm, from the cow manure came waves of aroma wafting into the car. My wife pinched her nose with her fingers and exclaimed, "Sheeeew that stinks!" I said, "To you it stinks. To the farmer it is money." Same pile of cow manure but in different contexts it has totally different meanings. In relation to my wife's sensitive nose the manure was just a horrible odor. In relation to the farmer's business, it was just a byproduct of making a living for his family. We have designed the following exercise to assist in changing the meanings that drive blocking and stuttering:

Conscious Reframing

The Art of Giving Experiences New Meanings

1) Identify a behavior you wish to change the meaning.

Is there any part of yourself that you don't yet appreciate? Identify a behavior around your blocking that you would like to change.

Menu list: any behavior or response that you make (an emotional response, a habit response, etc.). An example could be, "When I make a telephone call, I block."

Identify specifically this part of you and give it a name – what is this part? What would you call it? Is it a fear part? A stubborn part? An overly sensitive part? An angry part?

2) Engage the part and “chunk up” to its higher positive purpose.

To enter into communication with this part of yourself, quiet yourself and notice the "thoughts" that flitter through your mind – the visual, auditory and kinesthetic components of your movie that come to you when you make the following statements or pose the following questions.

"I have this part of me that does this specific behavior, what are you trying to do for me that's positive? What is your purpose for me?"

Keep asking this question and step outside (going meta) until you find a meaning that you find acceptable.

"And by doing that, what is that to do for me that is positive? And by seeking to accomplish that, what value is that to have for me?"

An example of engaging and chunking up on a part:

Bob, “What is the purpose of the part of you that blocks your speech?”

PWBS, “To protect me.”

Bob, “To protect you from what?”

PWBS, “To protect me from being hurt.”

Bob, “And when you are not being hurt, what does not being hurt give you that is of more value or more important?”

PWBS, “It keeps me safe.”

Bob, “Great, so the purpose of blocking is to keep you safe?”

PWBS, “Yes, that is correct.”

Bob, “And by being safe, what does that give you that is more positive and important?”

PWBS, “It gives me security.”

Bob, “Oh, so the purpose of blocking is to keep you safe and secure?” (**Note:** We have “chunked up” to a very high positive intent of blocking. Obviously, blocking doesn’t keep one more safe and secure so we need to *reframe* blocking and find a better and more healthier way to keep the person safe and secure. These answers are typical for the higher purpose of blocking.)

3) Identify the frame of the behavior.

Notice the movie the meaning is within, as well as any belief frame.

How is it represented? What images, sounds and sensations?

What are the qualities of the movie?

What beliefs run this behavior? What do they mean to you? And if that's true, what do you believe about that?

Keep recycling until you obtain enough of the frame-of-reference for this behavior/ emotion that you can describe it accurately to someone.

4) Chunk down to more specifics.

How could you alter this frame-of-reference so that it will better serve you?
What quality change would effectively alter your frame representation?

5) Context Reframe.

In what context would this behavior/ emotion be highly valuable and useful to you as a person?
Where would you like to keep this achievement?
What would you see, hear or feel that would let you know to use it?

6) Content Reframe.

How is this behavior, emotion, habit valuable to you?
What can you appreciate about yourself for being able to generate this response?
What does this response say about you as a person?

7) Integrate.

Is there any objection in using this new context or content reframe, or altering the representation in your conscious thinking about this behavior?
Give yourself permission to consciously use these new frames.

8) Test.

Now think about the part of you that generates the behavior. What happens? What do you feel?

Changing Meaning With the “Miracle Pattern”

The ‘Miracle Question’ was developed by Steve de Shazer, popularized in Brief Therapy. We use it here to *step aside* and *out of* the problem space, so that we can do a *different kind of thinking*. This empowers us to engage in solution-oriented thinking. This pattern allows us to construct a new perspective from outside the *frame* you are living in. From “out there” you can devise new meanings, knowing that all meaning is a constructed reality; and therefore, subject to reconstruction or re-framing.

"Let's imagine that tonight while you were sleeping that a miracle happened and in the morning you woke up and all the fear and anxiety around your blocking and stuttering were magically gone. How would your thinking change and how would your life be different? Yet, because you were asleep, you don't know and cannot know that it happened or how it happened. How will you discover that a miracle happened? How will your loved ones know? What will be different? What will you notice?"

How to Play with the Pattern

1) Identify a problem (Think of some limiting belief, fear, etc. around blocking).

What prevents you from getting on the highway of life and living in a vital, happy, and ferocious way? What holds you back? Make a list of all of the words and beliefs that arise. Or,

think about some *problem* that you don't like. Use the sentence stem:

'I don't like _____',

(authority figures, being out of control, public speaking, making phone calls, etc.)

Or, 'The *issue/problem* that really rattles me is... _____',

2) Identify your beliefs-about-beliefs.

What do you believe *about* that problem? What meanings do you give to it?

3) Sketch out the higher level meaning structure of the experience.

And what do you believe about that? And what do you believe about that? Etc.

[Fully identify the higher level belief structure using a separate sheet of paper.]

4) Run an ecology-check state about those beliefs.

Does this kind of thinking-feeling about that help? Make things better? Empower you as a person? Have you had enough of that?

5) Imagining the night of the miracle.

Close your eyes. Imagine its night and you've gone to bed. Suppose that tonight something special happens... a miracle happens... and tomorrow you will wake up thinking-and-feeling in a completely different way... Take your time to do this thoroughly and vividly.

What thoughts-feelings, beliefs, and states do you need to explode into tomorrow with grace, power, love, passion, confidence?

What state would this state presuppose?

What supporting meanings/ beliefs would empower this? How would you represent this?

When you are ready... I want you to open your eyes, move to this other chair... move to the chair of the day after the miracle...

6) Describe the day after...

If this was indeed the day after the miracle, how would you know? What would be different?

Describe this day after the miracle. Who would be the first to know? What would that person notice?

[Describe fully... accessing the states and beliefs.]

What belief would support this? What values?

7) Confirm and future pace.

Do you like this? Do you want to keep this? Imagine your future with it.

Creating a Miracle

Meta-No-Ing And Meta-Yes-Ing Changing Meaning by Changing Beliefs

What is the difference between a thought and a belief?

Can you hold a thought in your mind that you don't believe?

How do you change a thought into a belief?

How do you turn a belief back into a mere thought?

How many things have you formerly believed true but you no longer believe to be true?

How were you able to change a belief into something that you no longer believe to be true?

Can you hold a thought in your mind that you don't believe? Sure you can. I can hold the thought that the sun will come up in the west in the morning but I don't believe it. I can hold a thought that when I die I will be worth a billion dollars but I sure don't believe it. Well, what distinguishes a thought from a belief? Actually, it is quite simple. A belief is merely a thought that you have said "yes" to.

When you say "yes" to a thought, you meta-state the thought with a confirming "yes." The meta-stating effect of the "yes" that is *brought to bear* on the thought converts the thought from a mere thought into a belief. Of course, this may take a great deal of repetition. Meta-stating a mere "thought" with a confirmation (a confirmation state) creates a new gestalt, a "belief." – which then operates as a command to the nervous system. We then feel sure about the thought. The "feeling sure" about the belief makes it seem real.

If saying "yes" to a thought makes a belief out of the thought, how do you convert a belief back into a mere thought? You probably guessed correctly – you convert a belief back into a mere thought by saying "no" to the belief. Again, this may take some repetition. But, guess what? It works! I have had more than one person state, "It can't be that simple!" Well, basically it is. I really do believe that the foundation of all behavior change lies basically in saying "no" to what you don't want and "yes" to what you do want – and doing that is changing meaning and changing meaning is reframing.

How many beliefs did you use to hold that you no longer hold? I use to believe that Santa Claus came down the chimney but I don't believe that anymore. Gradually and painfully I gathered enough evidence to say "no" to that belief. Now note that I said, "I gathered enough evidence." Basically you change a belief into a thought by saying "no" to it, but usually, there are a lot of reasons and other frames of mind behind the saying "no." We usually just don't do it though we can. Behind our "no's" and our "yes's" are other frames of minds. This brings us to "frames by implication."

Meta-Stating a Thought into a belief

Frames by Implication

Behind or above our yes's and our no's (and any other thought) are many other frames of mind – usually unconscious. The reflexivity of mind never stops but continues forever... the "infinite regress." You constantly have thoughts about thoughts. This "infinite regress" over the years has layered your mind with frames of mind innumerable. Even when you seem to just be working with a level or two, you implicate additional frames. This is where many of our outside of conscious frames reside. In the *Accessing Personal Genius* training, we have formulated a series of questions that will elicit many of these key frames. We provide these in the following section. As you read the following section, be aware that each one of the following frames represents key meta-level structures of most experiences. They are not all present in every experience. They will vary as to importance in each experience. The list is not complete for there are more frames, yet, these represent the key frames of mind that make up subjective experience.

Meta-Questions for Teasing Out Meta-Structures and Meta-Frames

All higher-levels in our mind are made up of the same stuff that you have at the primary level. You use your see-hear-feel representations and words to build up meanings at the higher-levels – the matrices of our mind. The following set of questions in various categories offer lots of ways to explore and elicit the higher-level structures. As you use these, remember the different categories are *not* different things - they are just *other ways* of expressing the same thing, the higher frame. In asking the questions, you are going a long way in discovering the *structure* of the person's state of mind – a very important exercise.

After eliciting the meaning frames of mind around your blocking, “step back” from them and ask yourself, “Which ones do I need to change the meanings of? What meanings do I give to blocking that actually makes the blocking worse?”

1. **Meanings:** the ideas that you keep holding in mind.
 - What does this mean to you?
 - What else does it mean to you?
 - How much meaning does it hold for you?
2. **Beliefs:** the ideas that you affirm, validate, and confirm.
 - What do you believe about that?
 - How much do you value that belief?
 - Do you have any beliefs about that belief?
 - How have you confirmed that belief?
 - How strong is that confirmation?
3. **Values:** the ideas that you value, treat as important and significant, esteem.
 - How is that important to you?
 - What do you believe about that value?
 - Why is that important or valuable to you?
4. **Identity:** the ideas you build up about our self – the ideas you use in self-defining.
 - Does this affect your self-definition or identity?
 - How does it affect the way you think about yourself?
 - What does this say about how you perceive yourself?
5. **Aboutness:** the ideas you have *about* other ideas.
 - What do you think about that?
 - What do you feel about that?
 - What comes to mind when you entertain that thought?
6. **Principles:** the ideas that you treat as guidelines, laws, settled conclusions.
 - What principles do you hold about that?
 - I understand _____ ('what' about 'that')?
 - How does this idea work?
7. **Decisions:** the ideas that you separate and cut off (*cision*) from other ideas or choices so that you say 'Yes' to some and 'No' to others.
 - What decisions drive this?
 - So what will you do?
 - How would you complete the phrase, I will _____ ('what')?

Or, if you use, I choose _____?
Or, I feel _____.?

8. **Intentions:** the ideas you have about your motive, intent, desire, and wants.
What is your purpose in this?
What is your intent in this?
What do you get from that?
And when you get that (as you want it), what will that get for you?
Why is that valuable to you?
9. **Outcome:** the ideas you have about goals, outcomes, and desired ends.
How do you want to see this turn out?
What do you want from this?
What consequences do you hope will come from this?
10. **Understandings:** the ideas you have that stand under you as mental support for your world.
What do you understand about that?
What knowledge do you have about this?
11. **Expectations:** the ideas you have about what you anticipate will happen.
So what are you expecting?
Where did you learn to expect that?
12. **Paradigms, Models, Schemas:** the ideas you have that come together as more complex mappings about things.
What paradigm (model, schema) drives and informs this?
What paradigm are you relying on in your understandings?
13. **Metaphors, Non-Linguistic Symbols:** the ideas that you form in non-linguistic ways.
What is this like?
If this was a color, what color would it be?
If this was an animal, what animal would it be?
What would this sound like, if you put it to music?
If you made up a poem or story about this, what would you say?
14. **Realizations:** The ideas you suddenly develop as new insights, understandings, Eureka experiences.
How does it feel to realize this?
When you realize this, what do you think?
Now that you know, what do you want to do?
Now that you are aware of this, what comes to mind?
15. **Permissions:** The ideas regarding allowing an experience versus being tabooed.
What happens when you give yourself permission to experience X?
As you give yourself permission for this, notice what happens.
How well does it settle?
How many more times will you need to give yourself permission?

Questions for Teasing Out Meta-Frames

Back to the “Meta-Yes/No” Pattern

Once you have discovered some **limiting beliefs** that you want to get out of your head and neurology so that they no longer operate as your **programming**, you can use this Meta-State pattern for changing limiting beliefs. It will give you a clear, quick, and effective way to deframe the old unenhancing beliefs and to install the empowering beliefs that support your commitment to success.

Preparation: Ecology for this pattern has to occur before you begin the pattern. Make sure you have a top-notch idea that you want to confirm.

What enhancing and empowering beliefs would you really like to have running in your mind and emotions? Which belief stands in your way?

How does this belief sabotage you or undermine your effectiveness?

Have you had enough of it? Or do you need more pain?

What empowering belief would you like to have in its place?

Meta-stating a limiting “belief” enables us to de-commission old programs.

Meta-Stating & De-Commissioning Limiting Beliefs

How to Play with the Pattern:

1) Get a ‘NO’ - Access a good strong ‘No!’

Think of something that every fiber in your body can say ‘No!’ to in a way that is fully congruent.

Say that ‘No!’ again and again until you notice and snapshot it on the inside.

Anchor your ‘No!’ with your hand gestures. Feel it. Hear your voice of ‘No!’

Examples: Would you push a little child in front of a speeding bus, just for the fun of it?

Would you eat a bowl of dirty filthy worms, when you have delicious food available?

2) Meta ‘No!’ the limiting belief.

Feel all of this powerful ‘No!’ fully as you think about that stupid, useless, limiting belief (suggestion: “I am afraid I will block.”).

And you can keep on saying *No!* to that limiting belief until you begin to feel that it no longer has any power to run your programs, or that it has no more room in your presence or in your mind.

And how many more times, with what voice, tone, gesturing, do you need to totally disconfirm that old belief, so that you know deep inside yourself that it will no longer run your programs?

3) Access a strong and robust ‘Yes!’

Think about something that every fiber of your being says ‘Yes!’ to without any question or doubt. (suggestion: “I can speak with calmness and clarity.”)

Notice your ‘Yes!’ Notice the neurology and feeling of your ‘Yes!’ Notice the voice of ‘Yes!’

Gesture the ‘Yes!’ with your hands and body.

Amplify this ‘Yes!’

4) Meta ‘Yes!’ the enhancing belief.

And feeling that ‘Yes!’ even more fully, utter it repeatedly to the empowering belief that you want.

Do you want this? ‘Yes!’ Really?

How many more times do you need to say ‘Yes!’ right now, in order to feel that you have fully welcomed it into your presence?

5) YES the ‘Yes!’ repeatedly and put into the future.

This is only an exercise. Do you want to keep this!

You really want this?

Would this improve your life?

Would it be valuable to you?

**Changing Meaning by Changing our Reactions
Meta-Stating Fears**

Discussed in an earlier chapter, we believe that meaning drives everything. It is the meaning you place on both external events and especially on internal experiences that create your blocking and stuttering. It is the meaning that “holds in place” the structure of your subjective experience. The two common meanings (and the two most important) given to disfluency that create blocking are stuttering are:

Fear of what others may think of me.

Fear of what blocking and stuttering will say about me as a person.

Note: these fears are not primarily *about* something that is a real physical threat to you. The fears are *about* what others may think and what that will mean about your definition of yourself. It is all a part of thinking (cognition). It is all an “inside” job. Therefore, gaining fluency will be largely determined by changing these meanings to more realistic and resourceful meanings. Since blocking is an “inside” job, fluency is also an “inside” job.

When you block, you are reacting to the meanings that you give to both the possibility and the fact of blocking and stuttering. The reaction is not to a “thing” but to an abstract meaning. Have you ever stumbled over a “fear?” Have you ever stumbled over a “meaning?” No, because they only exist in your head and are not real.

Now, because, fear is an “inside” job and only exists internally as a constructed reality, you can de-construct it and re-construct more useful meanings. The following pattern utilizes the Meta-State Model in installing new, more useful meanings to our fears.

1) Decide to fully and completely learn the distinction between Map & Territory.

Decide to take a great and incredible step toward sanity and resourcefulness the day you fully realize that you never deal with “reality” directly, but always and only *indirectly – through your mental movie maps and meanings*. Whatever you say or think about anything is “just a map” –

an internal representation of your perception of the particular event that you are focused on. To know this is to lighten up and quit being so serious about the symbols that you entertain in your head.

The good news is that whatever *relationship* you've developed in regard to fear, you learned it. And if you learned it, you can unlearn it as you learn a much more effective frame game. The good news is that your way of relating to fear has developed from how you have mapped your experiences and understandings. Repeatedly throughout this book we will say,

"It's just a map; it is just internal representations and words; it's not real; it's not the territory 'out there' that you are dealing with..."

By "territory" we refer to the world outside your thinking. What is *out there* in the world is the "territory" This understanding is crucial. Sure it is "real" in your mind and body. That's what we mean by our mind-body states, that is, by our "neuro-linguistic" states of consciousness. Once you create the mental software in your head *about* something, it becomes your way of thinking-and-feeling about that thing; your map. And whatever you *map* inside your head, then governs your body and emotions. So "inside," it is "real." Yet that "reality" is only as real as you believe it to be.

Your internal "reality" or perception is entirely governed by how you map out your perception with your internal representation system.

So since perception is a constructed reality through our representational maps, this is *the ticket for taking full control over mind-body states*. If you think or believe (a map itself!) that the outside world "makes" you think and feel as you do; you thereby give up your personal power, choice, freedom, responsibility, and personal resourcefulness. Then you'll never learn how to run your own brain.

Your experience with fear and anxiety are really just a game ... and it flows from, and makes sense by the thoughts (frames) that you have in your head. That's the good news because it invites you to journey into the domain of truly **Mastering All Fears**.

2) Decide to fully and completely use your neurology as a human being rather than an animal.

"No more blind, unconscious *reactions* for me. I shall take full responsibility for my thinking, feeling, speaking and behaving. These are my responses. No one 'made' me think, feel, speak, or act as I did. They might have invited me, but I accepted the invitation. And if I can do that, I can also turn down invitations to feel fear, operate from fear and take counsel of my fears."

3) Decide to fully run your own brain and to manage all of the higher levels of your mind.

"I shall learn the Meta-States model of Neuro-Semantics and any other effective model in order to take charge of all of the higher levels of my mind as it layers level upon level of thoughts and ideas. I shall access my higher level states and use them to *slay the dragons of fear and anxiety*."

4) I shall stubbornly refuse to take counsel of my fears. Instead, I shall take counsel of my values, empowering beliefs, and desired outcomes.

“Taking counsel of my fears is just a bad habit. Some fears I’ll respect and hold myself back from acting foolishly; other fears I’ll respect as signals of all ideas that no longer serve me and boldly face down from my resourcefulness, confidence, and greater understandings.”

5) I shall access my highest resources of confidence, faith, hope, joy, love and courage, etc.

“As I treat fears as messages and check them out for accuracy, I shall live primarily from an empowered state of knowing my self, my values, and from a bold and courageous vision of what I want to do with my life.”

6) Create a new “gestalt” of confidence, faith, hope, joy, love and courage (You may wish to choose your own states that, once brought to bear on fear, will eliminate the fear of blocking and stuttering.).

- a. Access your state of fear and anxiety about blocking and stuttering.
- b. Access each resourceful state one at a time. Remember a time when you were very confident. Associate into the memory. Go be there seeing out of your eyes, hearing with your ears and feeling that confidence all through you.
- c. Once you access the state of confidence, *bring it to bear* on the fear and anxiety of blocking and stuttering. *Apply* confidence to fear and anxiety.
- d. Repeat this process with faith, hope, joy, love and courage (or your own menu list of resource states).
- e. Repeat this over and over even after you leave the training; saying “yes” to the new “gestalt” that you are creating around *not fearing* blocking and stuttering.

**Change Meaning by Changing Language
It really does matter how you language yourself.**

We have looked at the *structure* of our perception by focusing on the cinema of our minds and the internal qualities of our movies. We have looked at and experienced what happens when you change how you meta-state your perceptions by bringing higher level thoughts to bear on lower level thoughts. Now let’s look “inside” the language of stuttering itself. What do I mean by the “language of stuttering?” It is the language of the matrices that I refer to. Look for the language frames that create stuttering. We have questions (The Meta-Model of Language) that effectively challenge the structure of language. These questions take the language and put it out in front of us where you can look at it with a magnifying glass and challenge its appropriateness for our lives.

Presently we are working with the meanings you have given to blocking and stuttering. As you go through the book, you will be discovering even more language structures within the other matrices. Use the following questions to challenge those frames as well.

Tearing Apart the Language of Blocking

Let’s explore the stuttering and blocking that you experience. For the purpose of fully understanding

the actual mechanisms involved, let's get really curious as you find out how you do it so regularly, systematically, and methodically. Have your partner ask you the following questions (From the Meta-Model of Language¹) in the context of blocking:

When do you block? When do you *not* block?

Where do you do this? Where do you not?

How do you do the *process* of blocking? What do you see, hear, feel and how do you talk to yourself in order to create the block?

What do you do with your breath? How does your breathing change?

How does your face change from fluency to blocking and stuttering?

Do you have any taboos or prohibitions activated prior to stuttering or blocking?

What thoughts are driving the experience?

What are the thoughts in the back of the mind about that?

Do you have any memories that contributed to your blocking and stuttering?

Are those events now present in your life or are they old and presently irrelevant?

Do you have any imaginations about what blocking will lead to? \

What fearful apprehensions?

Do those imaginations and fears serve you? If not, what will?

What is the speed of your talk? How fast or slow?

Have you given yourself permission to slow down and speak slow or do you feel a need to “get it out” quickly for the other person?

What if you didn't care about what the other person thought of your speech?

What would happen if you didn't care about how you spoke but focused on the content of what you wish to communicate instead? \

Note: The Meta-Model of Language is the core model of all NLP. Yes, all of NLP is based on this model. Therefore, if you wish to proceed further in your study of this model, read L. Michael Hall's book, *Communication Magic: Exploring the Structure and Meaning of Language*. This book presents the most recent work on the subject. I highly recommend it for two purposes: You learn how to challenge your own thinking and you learn how to challenge the thinking of others.

Changing Meaning by Removing the Fear The “Fast Phobia Cure”

This NLP pattern can dramatically assist us in running our own brain so that you will move to a more resourceful and productive state. Behind blocking will inevitably be found fear. The “Fast Phobia Cure” is especially designed to remove the visual images of the movie that creates fear. Running your own brain in order to be more resourceful remains one of the basic outcomes of NLP. The “Fast Phobia Cure” pattern provides a powerful way to actively and deliberately bring about the changes you want.

The “Fast Phobia Cure” specifically offers a way to deal with painful memory scenes from the past that need to be dealt with and to do so in a way that doesn't re-traumatize. It also offers a way to switch off those that you don't need to see and relive. You probably have some memories of a teacher embarrassing you before a class or a parent shaming you because of your speech. This pattern provides a way to “take the juice” out of such memories.

Dealing With Old Unpleasant Memories

When many people think about unpleasant things that happened long ago, their brain says, "Play it

again!" And so they do. They play a full-color, three-dimensional movie of the old movie and then feel really bad. If that doesn't seem particularly useful for you, the following offers you a change method.

You can change that and gain control over what happens in your brain and put an end to being a prisoner of your own brain. As you learn to direct your own mental processes, you can use your brain in directed ways like a director of your own internal movies. If you can bring back old horrible memories into your mind, you can also bring back good, resourceful, confidence generating movies.

The key to change begins by discovering what you do inside your head. As you then begin altering the elements of that internal behavior you begin changing how you experience things.

1) Step back from your painful memories.

Begin with a "negative" thought that sets off painful emotional reactions. Pick a "thought" of a memory that "rattles your cage" so much so that you can't even "think" of it in a calm and rational way. One of those created movies that you create to anticipate blocking may work really well. Another good source is from those memories of the past where you were made fun of or shamed for your blocking. \

Imagine yourself sitting in a movie theater. Upon the movie screen in the theater, put a black-and-white snapshot (still) of the younger you just prior to that fearful, hurtful, or traumatic situation.

Good. This represents the scene immediately prior to the fearful memory. Now sit back and look at the snapshot of the younger you. Do so with the awareness that you have taken a spectator's position to that younger you.

As this enables you to gain "psychological distance" from the old pain, take the spectator position so that you can *begin to learn* from that old memory.

2) Step back from the "you" watching the movie.

Imagine floating out of your body as you watch that *snapshot* on the screen. Imagine floating all the way to the back of the theater and up into the projection booth. Place an imaginary piece of Plexiglas in the viewing window in front of you. From this new point-of-view, notice the back of your head in the theater seat sitting there watching the snapshot of the *younger you* on the screen.

If at any time you begin to feel uncomfortable, then just put your hands on the Plexiglas in front of you and remind yourself to feel safe and secure in the control booth.

Feel the calmness of this sense of distance.

3) Let the old memory play out as you watch it from the projection booth.

From the projection booth, observe yourself watching the *younger you* on the movies screen as you let the initial snapshot turn into a black-and-white movie which you then watch until it plays out to the end.

Watch it to the end. Then watch some more. Let it play out beyond the end to a time when that *younger you* felt safe and okay again.

As the trauma scene disappears, see that in a state of safety and pleasure — a scene of comfort.

If you have to fast forward several years to a scene of comfort, do that. Fast forward to any event... When you get to that place, freeze frame the picture.

4) Step into the movie and rewind.

Now, step into the end of the movie at the *scene of comfort*. Step into it and experience it fully. See everything around you in color as it was then.

In just a moment, you are going to do something very weird. So let me tell you about it first.

Rewind the movie from this *scene of comfort backwards* to the initial snapshot before the beginning of the trauma, and to do so really fast, super fast, so fast that occurs in a second, maybe two. Now you have seen movies or videos run backwards haven't you? Good. Well this one is going to rewind at high speeds but with this difference, you are going to be **inside** it. \

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So from that vantage point, you will see a fusion of sights and a jumbling of sounds as everything zooms back to the beginning. When you experience the fast rewinding, all the people and their actions go backwards. They walk and talk backwards. You walk and talk in reverse. Everything happens in reverse, like rewinding a movie.\

Ready? Okay, associate into the *comfort scene* at the end of the movie, feel all of those feelings of comfort, okay-ness, joy, relaxation, whatever is there. Do so fully and completely.

Now push the rewind button. Zoouooooommmmm! Go all the way back to the beginning. It only takes a second or two to do that fast rewind.

Good. Clear the screen of your mind. How did that feel... rewinding from inside the movie? Weird huh?

5) Repeat the process five times.

Having arrived back to the *snapshot* at the beginning, clear the screen in your mind. Open your eyes and look around. Breathe!

Let's do this again. Begin at the *scene of comfort* at the end again, and *as soon as* you step it, feel, see, and hear it fully... rewind the movie... do it even faster this time.

Good. Repeat four more times. Of course, as you do this over and over your brain will become more and more proficient and the rewind will go faster and faster until the rewind takes only a second each time. Zoommmmm!

Test results.

Okay, let's break state.

Now, recall that original memory of the trauma and try really hard to see if you can get the feelings back. Try as hard as you can to step into the scene and feel the full weight of the emotions.

Chapter Summary

We have listed 16 key principles for managing our own states in gaining fluency.

There are two primary ways of reframing – changing context and changing meaning.

The primary difference between a thought and a belief is that a belief is a thought that you have said “yes” to. So, to change a belief back into a thought, you primarily say “no” to the thought.

SIX: THE SELF MATRIX

Meaning: The Creator of “Beingness”

Chapter 3 explained that it is within the Meaning Matrix that ideas are created – the ideas of meaning that are *held in mind*. These meanings drive the mind-body system. Your Meaning Matrix pervades your life. Your “meanings” around your concept of your “self” create who you “are.” Change these meanings and you will change your life. How else can the process of reframing be so powerful? It is because *meaning* is so important that reframing works so well.

In most instances the Meaning Matrix operates under the surface of the conscious mind – in your unconscious mind. It lurks in the background of your mind and you rarely even think of it. Because of its pervasive and out-of-conscious functioning, many are not even aware that these meanings lurk back there. And if they do, they believe that they are unchangeable. Our research and clinical work has convinced me that these meanings can change.

When you have an experience, you classify that experience; you link thoughts and feelings to it and you evaluate it. Take a moment now, look at something and think about it and notice what happens as you automatically start defining its meaning to you. As an example, I am typing this on my laptop computer. As soon as I look at it I classify it as a computer. Then I link my thoughts and feelings about how grateful I am for it.

I well remember the old typewriter. I wasn’t the best typist. My wife took a week’s vacation to type my doctoral project dissertation. If one error was made on one page, that page had to be re-typed. We were not allowed to use “white out.” (If you don’t know what white out is, then you have much to be grateful for – the computer and word processing. White out was a white liquid that was used to cover over mistakes.) Now, in light of that, I evaluate my computer and my word processor as being a most valuable tool for me to accomplish what I want to do with the remainder of my life. Producing and writing new materials are high on my priority list. This computer most certainly has significant meaning to me for it is a tool for me to fulfill what I believe is a major purpose of my life. Note how I am already jumping into some higher level frames. We always do that - brains cannot avoid putting meanings to objects and experiences.

A key ingredient in blocking is the meaning people who block give to their sense of *self* due to the blocking. A large number of mental frames relate to how people who block identify their sense of self. Indeed, in working therapeutically with people who block, I have come to appreciate the importance of this matrix. Changing your concept of self as it relates to blocking can have profound affect in leading you towards fluency.

The Concept of “Self”

You were not born with a concept of self. It developed as your cognitive ability developed. Your concept of self was first formalized by your caregivers who named you and began to relate to you as a separate self from others. Your caregivers related to you as a person with a name. At first you had no

idea what that meant because as a small child you had not yet developed the cognitive ability of abstracting – having thoughts about thoughts. You relied on your caregivers to define who you were.

Because you were still a child without any perceptual filters (beliefs, values, understandings, etc.), what you received from them went right into your unconscious mind and were imprinted without any critical thinking on your part. You did not filter any of the information for you had not yet developed any filters (beliefs, values, understandings, etc.). The information went right in as if it were straight from “god.” True, you were able to “feel” and your emotional states at the time of developing your sense of self were part of the imprints. However, you had absolutely no ability to filter critically the incoming information. That proved both a blessing and a curse.

The problem of blocking stems from your thinking remaining “childish” in nature. You still make your meaning making maps (in reference to blocking) from a less developed or mature style. Please don’t get angry with me. As we go along you will have a deeper understanding of what I mean by “childish thinking.” Also, these learnings, because they were learned in childhood, are highly unconscious and difficult to control consciously.

The same is true for practically all emotional problems that adults have. Practically all issues that I deal with therapeutically with clients come from thinking patterns learned in childhood. This is universal. The fact remains, however, when you allow other people to determine your concept of self, you are indeed thinking in a “childish” way for you are not using your mature mind to really step outside your childish mind and to step inside your adult mind to analyze critically what others may or may not think of you.

Later we will study further the Other Matrix, but now in the Self Matrix we must take a serious look at how much of your concept of self is actually something you allow others to determine for you. With people who block, we have discovered that typically the self definition they received from others is actually their mind reading that the other person will view them as weird, dumb, different, mentally retarded, etc. The individual does this, assuming the other person is thinking about and judging them, without even asking them. So, in their fear of being judged by others, you, in fact, unfairly judge others.

You are always “more.”

Alfred Korzybski said that to identify ourselves with anything is the grounds for *unsanity*. Yes, the word is *unsanity* and not insanity. He recognized the impossibility of identifying the human being with any particular thing – be the thing tangible or intangible.

I love the statement, “No matter what you think you are you are more.” If you don’t believe this, think of one concept that you typically use to identify your sense of self based on blocking. Now, once you get a thought about who you are as a person who blocks, ask yourself this question, “True, at times I think of myself that way, but I am more than that. What am I that is more than that? And what am I that is even more than that?” Keep up the process and note the answers your unconscious mind provides you.

In order to have a sense of self, the person must be able to *think about* “self” and that requires abstracting – going higher, going meta, stepping outside, etc. As time progresses and you learned how to abstract, you began thinking about him your “self” in terms of:

Who am I?

What am I?

What is my nature, purpose, destiny, value, etc.?

Am I loved?

Am I valued and treated with dignity?

As you went through the process of maturation, you conceptualized the kind of being you perceive yourself as being. As you become more and more *self-aware*, you also received thought-feeling states, from others about yourself. In this way you consciously began to construct your Self Matrix, layering in thoughts and feelings about these ideas.

From self-awareness, you create multiple maps about self. Your “self” matrix involves many facets of your thoughts-and-feelings. It includes your sense of self in self-esteem, self-confidence, social self, sense of self in the presence of others, self definition, and identifications. And this is just the beginning. With almost any other facet of self, you create yet another “self.”

Self-Confidence

Self-Esteem

Self-Efficacy

Self-Definition

Self-Presentation

Social Self

Cultural Self

Work/ Career Self

Ethical Self

Relational Self

The Matrix Model: The 7 Matrices of Neuro-Semantics and the Construction of Meaning says this about self concept:

How we map our “self” through our internal representations, of course, determines everything. If we feel and think of ourselves as valuable and worthwhile, we’ll experience a healthy and vital self matrix. If we contempt and despise ourselves, we will experience an impoverished matrix. When this Matrix is not well-developed, we easily and automatically personalize and put our ego (sense of self) out “on the line” when anything undesirable happens. We may even become so other-referent that we will seek to become okay or to feel safe by getting others to validate us (more about the Other Matrix later).

It is in this matrix that we map and give meaning to our inner “sense of self” in all of its multiple dimensions. Yet whether that mapping and framing works for us or against us is determined by whether our self concept is well-formed or ill-formed. We have multiple concepts about persons, human nature, or our self that can be defined in ways that undermine our resourcefulness. Part of the process of working with the Self Matrix and empowering it so that we map a “self” that we can live from involves finding those ill-formed concepts and developing a better relationship to those ideas: value, worth, dignity, loveability, responsibility, acceptance, etc.

A healthy Self Matrix is the difference between feeling worthy, valuable, respectable, and loveable in contrast to seeking to experience things in the world to obtain these experiences. With a healthy Self matrix we can celebrate ourselves and value ourselves without putting our *self* on the line with the activities that we engage in. It allows us to separate person from behavior, self-esteem from self-confidence.

The meanings we map about our concepts of *self* make all the difference in the world whether we move through the world trying to become somebody or whether our life in the world is an expression of our somebody-ness. In the first case, we put our ego or self-esteem “on the line” with almost everything that happens. We identify and personalize almost everything that happens, especially the negative and unpleasant. This makes us reactive, defensive, and thin-skinned. What is the problem here? Not the person, but the frames that map the self as inadequate, conditionally valuable, and unworthy.

When we map our self as inherently and innately valuable, worthwhile, lovable, and having dignity, as a member of the human race, as a somebody, and with nothing to prove, but everything to experience; we are freed to be and become, to explore and enjoy and to choose to only identify with the things that enable us to become more than we presently are. This mapping allows us to explore our potentials, to be open and responsive, to be caring and loving in relationships, to be non-defensive about mistakes, fallibility, and vulnerability, and to be creative with our skills and passions. When the ego is not on the line, there’s nothing to prove. This mapping allows us to get ego out of the way which frees up lots of our mental-and-emotional energy which we can invest in others, develop our talents, and contribute creatively.

A healthy mapping of Self allows us to feel free and secure enough to open our ego boundaries to others. This is the structure of intimacy. It takes a lot of independence and self-esteem to become inter-dependent in an adult way.

“Thingification” or “Nominalization” One’s Concept of “Self”

How do negative concepts of self become so ingrained and so powerful that they can literally determine how a person speaks? In order for these concepts to become so powerful, they must become “real” to you. You will come to think of these “words” as being *real* and unavoidable.

The first step in making them “real” is to take a concept, a structure, and make a “thing” out of it. “Bob, what in the world do you mean when you encourage us not to make *a thing* out of a concept?” Well, based on what we have learned in the earlier chapters, all concepts, perceptions, thoughts, frames, etc are just internal representation (the movies of our mind) coupled with the word meanings that we give these movies. We learned that the movies and the words are not “real” but are in fact mental abstractions. They only have the reality we give them.

We learned that just as the movies of our mind have structure (qualities, submodalities), so do the word meanings that we give them have structure. In NLP we call the structure of the language the Meta-Model of Language. In order to make a concept, a thought or a frame real, we utilize one of these Meta-Model structures by turning the images and the words of our mind into a “thing.” All of our concepts are a product of a “process.” When a person says, “I am flawed.” She has in fact taken a process of how she maps out the world inside her head and *frozen* that process with one word “flawed” and then gone a level above it and *identified* herself with this one word. In NLP this is called *nominalizing*.

Nominalizing means that we have taken a process, a verb, and frozen it by calling it a noun. If you

don't believe we do this, think of a concept of "self" that you use in defining yourself because you block. Below I have listed the ones from a case study:

- "I am flawed."
- "I am foolish."
- "I am inadequate."
- "I am a 'stutterer.'"
- "I am worthless."
- "I am insecure."
- "I am timid."
- "I am anxious."
- "I am tense."
- "I am shamed."
- "I am not enough."
- "I pity myself."
- "I am a poor performer."
- "I am not a good communicator."
- "I am an embarrassment."

Choose one of the nouns that you have used to define yourself as a person who blocks. Now, ask yourself this question, "How am I doing the process of identifying myself as flawed, worthless, timid, etc. What am I doing inside my head in order to define myself that way? What am I seeing, hearing, feeling and how am I talking to myself in order to create such a concept of myself?" Answering these questions will "denominalize" the noun that you have identified yourself as a person who blocks. You will take the thought that you have frozen and "thingified" by making a noun out of it and turn it back into a process.

Now, all nouns are not nominalizations but all nominalizations are nouns. A good way to tell if a noun is a nominalization is to ask yourself this question:

Can I put _____ in a wheelbarrow?

If you cannot, it is probably a nominalization. Another way to determine if the noun is a nominalization is to say, "an ongoing _____" and put the noun in the blank. If it makes sense, it is probably a nominalization. For instance, "an ongoing flaw," "an ongoing worthlessness," "an ongoing stutterer," "an ongoing timidity," "an ongoing anxiety," "an ongoing shame," etc all make sense and therefore, these words are nominalizations.

Thus, when you take processes and freeze them into nouns, you give them a sense of *reality* and this sense is even more real once, through habituation, you get them "grooved" into your very muscles. They have come to "feel" real and for many people, all they need is to "feel" something and then they will define it as real. Of course, we know that feelings like the other sensory mappings are constructed abstractions.

The second way we make these concepts so real is that we layer one after another of them on top of each other. Earlier we learned that when one thought is applied to another thought, that the second thought will modulate/ change the first thought. And, importantly, when you layer very similar

thoughts on top of each other and continually repeat these year after year, you have a gestalting effect. By gestalting, we mean that the result is “greater than the sum of the parts.” So, when you layer one negative concept of self on top of another, on top of another; you have a *multiplying* effect that will result in your creating a very nasty sense of *self*.

Now, by layering these thoughts one on top of another one year after year, they get *into the muscle* and feel real and are therefore real to you. The person who blocks embodies these frames in the muscles of breathing and speaking which creates the blocking. Who can deny the reality of that?

But there is good news. Both the nominalization and the layering are all processes or structure. Neuro-Semantics provide the tools for accessing these unconscious thought patterns whereby self is labeled and brings them to consciousness. By bringing them to consciousness, the journey has begun to get them out of the muscles. Once brought to consciousness, we have the tools for the individual to change the meanings of *self* to meanings that will serve them much better and lead to fluency. We will now begin to utilize some NLP/NS patterns that will assist you in re-defining your concept of *self*.

SEVEN: Patterns for Re-Defining “Self”

Perceptual Positions for Developing Flexibility of Consciousness

Meta-Stating Acceptance, Appreciation and Esteem for Self

The Swish Pattern: Swish to “the Me” for whom a Given Context or Task is No Problem

The Drop-Down-Through to Rise Up Pattern

Creating a New “Self” Narrative

1) Perceptual Positions for Developing Flexibility of Consciousness

The realization that humans operate from five basic ways of looking at experience offers tremendous potential in managing your own states and enhancing your communication. NLP first offered three positions. We have expanded them to five positions. We refer to these as being the first, second, third, fourth and fifth perceptual positions and explain them in *The User’s Manual for the Brain*. I have modified that material especially for people who block.

First Position

When you associate into your own body, you live in **first position**. This permits you to look at the world from your own viewpoint. In the first position, you do not take into account anyone else's position. You simply think, "How does this conversation or communication affect me?"

First position is the normal and healthy position of seeing, hearing, and feeling from inside your self. It is the position needed in order to speak with authenticity, to present yourself, your thoughts, feelings, and responses congruently, to disclose, listen, inquire, and be present with another. When you visually recall a memory and do not see yourself in the picture, you are associated into that memory – you are “inside” that memory looking through your eyes, hearing the sounds and feeling the feelings as if there.

Second Position

When you are in second position, you are “walking in the other person's shoes.” You take into consideration how a communication or event would look, feel and sound from another person's point of view. In the second position, you imagine yourself entering the other person's body. In this position you imagine looking at yourself through their eyes. Second position is to understand, feel with, experience empathy for and see things from another’s point of view. Here you’ll feel in accord with the other and have a strong sense of his or her perspective.

What do you look like, sound like and what feelings do you get from the other person's viewpoint? In

the second position you develop the ability in experiencing empathy. This position allows flexibility when involved in conflict with someone. From the second position you can appreciate how they feel about your conversation and behavior. Build rapport before going second position. And, by going second position, notice how the rapport deepens. Second position offers an extremely valuable model in deepening rapport.

Third Position

When you *distance* yourself from an event, you more than likely do it by going to the third position. Third position offers a way of dissociating or gaining distance from the entire event or conversation. In the third position you become an independent observer. Third position allows you to operate from the position of objectivity. Ask yourself, "How would this conversation or event look to someone totally uninvolved?" Imagine yourself being out of your body and off to the side of the conversation between you and the other person. You can see both yourself and the other person.

The third position allows you to step back, to gain a sense of distance, to observe, to witness, to feel neutral and to appreciate both positions fully. You know you are in third position when you recall a memory and see yourself in the memory. If you see yourself in the memory, you are "outside" yourself and this allows you to give yourself *distance* from that memory if you so choose. Whereas first position intensifies the feelings (for most people), third position diminishes the feelings as you can distance yourself from the memory.

Fourth Position

Dilts (1990) specified the Fourth Perceptual Position in his book *Changing Belief Systems with NLP*. He defined the Fourth Position as "we" – from the perspective of the system. Many refer to it as the "Systems" Position. In this position, we have "associated in the perspective of the whole system." To take fourth position, step aside and adopt the perspective of the whole system so that you can there consider what would contribute to the best interest of the system.

In the fourth position, everyone in the system is taken into account. A question to ask is, "What are my place, responsibility and position in this system? A linguistic format for this position goes: "If we consider our common goals..." The fourth position (Systems Position) allows us to understand the contexts (cultural, linguistic, business, family, etc.) that influence all of the larger systems and contexts of our world.

In using this for myself, I have modified it somewhat. Dilt's model calls for associating into the system. I first associate into the system and then go to the third position to view objectively my position in relation to others in the team. Then I go second position to each person in the team and then back to the associated systems position. I rotate back and forth through these positions as I deem necessary. I have found this most useful as have other clients that I have coached.

Fifth Position

Marilyn Atkinson (1997) in an unpublished manuscript entitled "Five Central Ideas" suggests another perceptual position – "a universal perceptual position." This results from applying the generalizations like all, always, everyone, etc to our perspective. Doing so "springboards us to the valuable idea of a universal perceptual position." (p. 24). This provides the widest and largest level perspective of all.

By taking this meta-position to everything, we can then learn to take on multiple perceptual positions and even change rapidly between them. Doing so increases our flexibility of consciousness so that we don't get stuck in any one position.

I love the fifth position for therapeutic purposes. For people who hold spiritual beliefs, their fifth position is ultimately in their spiritual place. I am a Christian. So, when I go to fifth position, I view myself as being with Jesus. I am way "up there" with Him looking down on myself way down here. If you hold spiritual beliefs, imagine yourself leaving your body and going up and being with God or whatever you call this concept. Once you get up there and see yourself down here, how does that affect your speech? Going "up there" is most relaxing and calming to many people. It is better than Prozac for many people.

None of these positions offer a superior position to the other. Each position has equal importance. The wise communicator knows how to move at will from one position to the other.

Getting "Stuck" in One Perceptual Position

Just think what would happen if you got stuck in any one position – it does matter where you live. A person stuck in first position would find herself an *egotist*. Do you know anyone who lives in first position? A person stuck in second position would live constantly over-influenced by other people's views. In my NLP classes, after I explain the second position, and how those who live in second position tend to let the state of others *determine* their state, I say, "Second position functions as the position of *co-dependency*." Just about every time I do this, sighs come from students as they realize what and how they have caused themselves to allow others to control their states.

People who block have a tendency to go into the other person's mind and guess what they are thinking of them. Then, from this guess, which is most often negative, they "block" in order not to fulfill what they guessed the other person thinks of them. Get out of that person's mind-body. We only go there when we need information from their viewpoint or for developing deeper rapport through empathy. We don't go there to mind-read and to give that person permission to control our states.

A person stuck in third position would become *detached* and *unfeeling*. Others perceive these people as "cold hearted." Indeed, I have found that those who live in third position find themselves as the loners of the world. Many, but not all, also will have the characteristics of the person who lives in a world of words. These people provide society its thinkers and philosophers. Living life detached permits a person to analyze objectively.

Everyone moves from one position to the other. For most, *moving* from one position to another flows with everyday life. The ability to move from one to the other, either consciously or unconsciously, permits one to act with wisdom and respond appropriately. By moving among the five perceptual positions, you will add richness and choice to your conversations.

Stuck in a Perceptual Position

1st Position – Selfish, sociopathic perspective

2nd Position – Co-dependency

3rd Position – Cold, over-rational, “computer” mode

4th Position – “Company Man”

5th Position – “So heavenly minded that you are of no earthly good.”

Exercise: Perceptual Positions

Recall the last major time you blocked when in the presence of another person.

First Position – Associate into your body (first position) by seeing what you saw, hearing what you heard, and feeling what you felt. Do you still feel the same negative emotions you felt then? You probably will.

Second Position – Now, imagine yourself floating out of your body and floating into the body of the person you were talking with. Look through their eyes at yourself. Notice how you looked during that block. How do you appear to the other person? How do you feel as you look at yourself?

For most people who block, a major part of the problem of blocking is placing way too much emphasis upon what other people *may* think; so you will probably find this second position easy to do. However, it is important that you view it from the other person’s *true* perspective and not what *you think* they are thinking. Are they *really* judging you as you think they are?

Third Position – Now, imagine yourself dissociated from the total event. Move yourself off to the side where you can see both yourself and the person as you block. How do you view the situation from this dissociated position? As you look at both yourself and the other person, did you really have a justifiable reason to be all tense and fearful? Was your tension justifiable? Was the person really a threat to you? Or, did you just *imagine* that the person was a threat?

Fourth Position – If the content of this time of blocking involved other people, view the experience from the perspective of your position within the context of the total team, family, etc. What do you learn from the fourth position (Systems Position)?

Fifth Position – Now move to the fifth position way out in the universe, all the way out with God if you have that belief. Viewing the experience of blocking from this position, how does the situation change from that position? How do you feel? Do you feel more relaxed and calm being *way out there*?

If you believe in God or some Universal Being, how do you feel being in the presence of God? What happens to the tension, fear, anxiety, etc in your chest, neck, throat and/or jaw being in the presence of deity? Had you gone to this position during that block, what would have happened?

Note: Many who have overcome blocking have found the 5th Position extremely helpful. They learn how to go there at will through consistent practice. In the 5th position most people are very relaxed and calm which provides the proper state for fluency. If you find this “visually” difficult to do, mark out each position on the floor and go to each position “sensing” what each position would “feel” like.

2) Meta-States Self Acceptance, Appreciation and Esteem for Self

Here is a basic meta-state process for self-esteeming – something many people who block (and a lot of other people) desperately need. Use it to establish a solid core for centering yourself, for setting a frame of high value and worth for your self, and for operating with high self-esteem – even in the face of dignity-denying or threatening experiences.

As you look at the “Self” Matrix you quickly realize how many who block can have very low opinions of their sense of self. Moving from dis-fluency to fluency requires that you stop identifying your sense of self with just a particular speech pattern and begin to accept, appreciate and esteem yourself not as a human “doing” but as a human “being.” This pattern is specifically designed for that purpose and has proven quite effective with hundreds of clients and training participants. It has been field tested all over the world. What would happen to your speech if you did not identify your sense of *self* with your blocking and accepted yourself as a worthwhile person?

WELCOMING

We begin with a continuum of “**welcoming**.” We move from the basic state of *accepting* a sense of “self” to a more firmer *appreciating* our “self” to the more fuller *standing in awe* or *esteeming* our “self esteem”.

Acceptance, Appreciation & Awe/ Esteem Pattern

1) Access the 3 “A” resource states: Acceptance, Appreciation, and Awe.

Access each state by using a small and simple referent so that you can access the feeling of the state fully and discreetly.

A) *Acceptance* – Think of something that you just *accept*.

B) *Appreciation* – Think of something you really *appreciate*.

C) *Awe* – Think of something you stand in *awe* of.

2) Amplify each state and *apply individually to your concept of your self*.

Amplify *each state* until you have a robust enough state to then apply to your sense of *self*.

You may wish to amplify by changing the qualities of it – make it more colorful, bigger, and brighter, etc.

Use positive and empowering language as well in creating a strong sense of *acceptance*, *appreciation* and *awe/ esteem*.

Bring each resource *to bear* upon self: *accept* yourself, *appreciate* yourself and *esteem* yourself. Do each one at a time. Repeat if needed.

You should end up with a very strong and centered sense of yourself.

3) Discover a needed context for esteeming.

Choose one of those contexts where your self-esteem goes into the gutter and the blocking are particularly pronounced.

Or think of an event wherein you feel tempted to self-contempt, self-question, self-doubt, and/or self-dislike yourself? In what context would you prefer a more resourceful response?

4) Apply your powerful self-esteeming state (the resulting state from #2) to the needy state elicited in #3.

Apply and notice how it transforms the old context.

Are you ready to self-respect yourself - no matter what?

5) Imaginatively put into your future.

Imagine moving through life in the weeks and months to come with this.

Do you like this? How will this affect the way you speak?

Notice how doing this will limit how much power you allow others to have over your sense of self. Esteeming yourself eliminates caring so much what others think about how you talk.

6) Does any part of you disagree with this new concept of your self?

If so, welcome that thought into consciousness. Find its purpose for you and obtain its permission to let you think enough about yourself so that you will not allow what you *think* others may think of you to control how you speak.

3) The Swish Pattern

The Swish Pattern directionalizes the brain. You will recall that we utilized this pattern earlier with the section on foregrounding and backgrounding. In *swishing* our brain we move the unwanted picture off into the background while we move the desired picture to the foreground.

It uses the natural tendency that everyone has, namely to avoid unpleasantness and to move toward pleasantness. We do this by setting up a positive picture and linking it to a situation or thought that troubles us. When we have a better choice, we will move in that direction. This pattern presents a way to teach our brain where to go. (After all, brains need to be told where to go!) Linking the old picture to the new one and allowing that *desired one* to get brighter and more compelling literally sets up a direction for your brain to go. And when you directionalize your brain, your behavior has a very strong tendency to go in the same direction.

The Swish Pattern affects a rewiring (as it were) of your old responses and wires in new responses to the same old triggers. This makes it very powerful since it puts you in charge of your responses. This makes this pattern very generative. It doesn't merely substitute a new behavior – it creates a new direction. By using a self-image, you are making that your direction. You will be moving toward the kind of person you want to become; which will therefore, propel you in that direction. If you see yourself being a person with different qualities, that new person can generate many new specific

possibilities.

As you use the Swish Pattern, be fully associated in the old pattern so that you are pulled toward the new outcome picture of the resourceful you. It's preferable to close your eyes during the process and open them between steps. Do what works best for you.

Consciously design swishes for yourself so that you set up a direction for your brain and emotions and speech and behavior to go. Allow yourself by this swishing to be drawn toward that image of "you" that's more valued, esteemed, loved, competent, happy, energetic, kind, etc. For people who block, the natural tendency is to send the brain to seeing oneself experiencing blocking in the very next conversation. Here we want to train the brain to go to the "fluent" you – the "you" for whom blocking is no problem.

NLP concentrates on how the brain works neuro-linguistically. To that end, we focus on tracking down where a brain goes since *where* a brain goes and *what* it represents will evoke various states and experiences. The Swish Patterns enables you to put an end to a lot of the internal mental torture and to tell your brain where to go.

The Swish Pattern is an especially generative pattern since it enables you to program your brain to go in a certain direction. By getting the process started, the brain continues the process *generating* new responses. It's effective for conquering a habit, gaining habit control, improving self-image, developing new confidences, creating new motivations, and getting over old automatic responses and reactions. This pattern works best by having someone coach you through the steps.

The Swish Pattern

1) Identify experience to be changed.

For this exercise, first get the picture that you normally get of fearing that you will block in your very next conversation. We want this picture associated. If when you first get the picture you are seeing yourself in the picture, we want you to be in the picture – associate in the picture not seeing yourself but what is around you.

What do you see just before you block? What do you see, hear, and feel that initiates your fear/anxiety of blocking? Get detail pictures, sounds, feelings of the moment. Obtain a detailed description of the problem state and create a picture of you being in it.

2) Identify the internal movie (representation) of this experience.

Get as full a representation of your blocking state as possible. The trigger for blocking is called the *cue picture* (sound/ sensation). To the extent that you don't know what sets it off, to that extent you have been on automatic pilot and the pattern operates as an ingrained habit. You first need to make conscious this old process that has dropped out of consciousness. When do you typically do this? Go through the motions of creating that fear of blocking.

As you identify and/or create this cue picture, get in touch with what you see (hear/ sense) that initiates the habit. Discover what sounds, feelings are within that picture. Test the qualities (submodalities) of the picture: brightness, distance, color, etc. Take a snapshot of this picture. Which

qualities can you change that will make for the greatest change; i.e., when you send the picture further away does that make more difference in how you feel about the memory then if you change the size of the picture? What happens when you make the picture larger? Smaller? In focus? Out of focus?

This cue picture is what sets you off. It already functions like a button which triggers your response of fearing blocking. It's already swishing your brain to a very unresourceful state. What we're going to do is utilize this same dynamic mental mechanism to send your brain to a new resource picture. Instead of that cue picture triggering your brain to go to "fear", how about letting that cue picture send your brain to "calm"? To "courage"?

Kinesthetically, you'll find that your feelings of compulsion trigger feelings of urgency within you. The question you'll need to answer is: how do I create that feeling within me? How do I already swish myself from one state of consciousness to another?

3) Develop a desired outcome picture.

There are contexts in your life when you speak fluently.

When do you speak fluently?

What would be the value of moving that you for whom fluency is no problem into all contexts of your life?

What difference would it make to you as a person? What would it mean about you?

What would your self-image of the fluent you in all contexts look, sound and feel like?

Your verbal answers to these questions do not really matter. What matters? Creating your answers in terms of sensory based images, sounds, and sensations. Create a picture of the *new you* – the *you* that would be *you* if you no longer had this problem of blocking.

Do you like this new picture? Do you find it compelling? Attractive?

Does it draw you toward it? Have you edited the image of this desired self completely so that it pulls you towards it?

Keep adjusting this image until you have one that is really attractive to you and one that strongly draws you. Add in qualities of confidence, assertiveness, power, kindness, etc. Making this picture something you really like and that really attracts you is giving you a new compulsion.

4) Link the two representations.

Beginning with *the cue picture* of the fear of blocking. Make it big and bright.

Into the lower left corner of that picture put a small, dark image of the second picture – *the new you for whom the fear of blocking is "no problem."*

Do you have it? Have you embedded that *desired picture* into the *cue picture*? Good.

[At this point, you will be entertaining two pictures in your mind. You are mainly seeing the world from out of your own eyes in the cue picture and seeing that most resourceful you in the tiny dot of a picture in the lower left corner. You are fully associated in the first picture and dissociated in the second.]

5) Swishing the pictures.

Now, take the large bright picture of you fearing blocking and quickly make it small and dark. At the same time, make the small dark image of the fluent you large and bright. Do this very quickly. Remember, the brain learns fast. As your coach assists you in swishing the image, it is good for the coach to make a swiiisshhhing sound to assist the change. Clear the screen. Repeat this procedure at least five times.

Let the picture of the new fluent you for whom blocking is no problem swish in and completely cover the screen of your mind. Juice it up so that it is there in 3-D and coded in the ways that your brain knows is "real, compelling, and attractive." You will do all of this very quickly, in less than a second.

6) Swish five times.

Have you finished? Good. Now close your eyes and blank out the screen. Or, open your eyes and look around.

Now, let's do it again. Go back to the linked pictures and repeat this process five more times. Clear your mental screen after each swish.

7) Test.

Good. Now let's test this to see if it works. After all, that's the important thing.

I want you to just allow yourself to think about the triggering cue picture that used to set you off and put you into a state of fearing blocking. Got it?

Notice what happens.

As you think about that old trigger, does your brain now immediately go to the new picture of the "you" for whom blocking is no problem?

Good. That means you're done. You have successfully swished your brain so that it now has made a link. It now knows where to go.

8) Swishing the images using size and distance.

If size and brightness do not work, distance could provide for the change.

Make the cue picture of the fear of blocking associated and big and bright right in front of you. (Be in the picture. Do not see yourself just see the other events as if there.)

Place a small, dark and dissociated picture of the "you" for whom blocking is no problem out on the horizon. (In the resourceful picture, see yourself having the resource.)

Zoom the cue picture of the fear of blocking out on the horizon making it smaller and dimmer as it goes until it becomes a small black dot way out on the horizon.

At the same time, zoom in with the desired behavior of the you for whom blocking is no problem from the horizon. As the new you comes in make it bigger and brighter filling up the space where the old fearful you was. Make it 3D and very appealing.

Do this real fast. Repeat five or six times faster and faster and test.

P.S. – “Present State” of Blocking

D.S. – “Desired State” of Fluency

4) The Drop-Down Through to Rise Up Pattern Meta-Stating by Dropping-Down Through Painful Experiences

At last count, there are over 140 Neuro-Semantic patterns. With that many, which is the best? That is a difficult question to answer, for some work better than others on an individual basis. And, many are especially designed for specific issues. Indeed, one of the major benefits of The Matrix Model is that it provides not only a diagnostic tool but it also provides a way for us to know which techniques to use on what problem.

However, if I were to point out one pattern that works the best in most contexts it would be this pattern. Indeed, I have been using it for eight years and have had more successes with it than any other single pattern. About three years ago, we advanced the pattern by adding some Meta-States distinctions to it. I am indebted to Tad James for first introducing me to this pattern. I am introducing the pattern here with the Self Matrix. However, it can also be utilized in all the other matrices. Indeed, this pattern is quite effective with any cognitive/ emotional problem wherein one experiences a negative feeling. Just associate one into the negative feelings and run the pattern. By the way, it is also quite simple in structure and that sure does help.

Without question, it has been the single most effective pattern that I have used with people who block. Blocking is by definition physical in symptoms (but not in causation). This pattern associates the person into the negative emotion and keeps them there as they *drop down through* all the mental frames that lie beneath the problem state. As such, it works like an internal search as one searches within the unconscious frames of mind that create the structure of the problem state. It provides a very quick way to uncover the unconscious linguistic structure of the problem. From there, it also provides the tools to bring resources *to bear* on the problem frame and to heal them.

Before we cover the pattern itself, I will provide a dialogue I recently had with a client. At a very early age this individual had experienced the divorce of his parents. Later one parent remarried. The step-parent was extremely jealous of him and indeed seemed to work hard at showing favoritism towards his own children. He would shame my client at every opportunity. This went on for years. During these critical years, my client’s blocking grew worse and worse. He had wrapped his *shame based* personality around his blocking. I will call this person Joe for illustration. Our dialogue went like this:

Case Study

“Joe, so you felt a lot of shame from the way your step-dad treated you?”

“Yes.”

“Where do you feel this shame in your body?”

“It is in my chest.”

“Now, Joe, I want you to just imagine yourself dropping down through that shame in your chest. And, as you drop down through that, what thought or feeling is underneath that?”

“Anger. There is one mad little boy there.”

“That is great. “Now, Joe, I want you to just imagine yourself dropping down through that anger. And, as you drop down through that, what thought or feeling is underneath that anger?”

“More anger.”

“That is great. “Now, Joe, I want you to just imagine yourself dropping down through that more anger. And, as you drop down through that, what thought or feeling is underneath that?”

“Sadness.”

“Now, I want you to just imagine yourself dropping down through that sadness. And, as you drop down through that, what thought or feeling is underneath the sadness?”

“Never a free kid.”

“Good Joe. Now just continue dropping down through that being never a free kid and what is underneath that?”

“Nervous. Timid. I was always nervous and timid as a kid.”

“And underneath being a nervous and timid kid, what is underneath that?”

“Scared. He scared the shit out of me!”

“You are doing really well, Joe. Just drop down through that and what thought or feeling is underneath that thought of your step-dad scaring the shit out of you?”

“Sadness.”

“And, continuing on down, what thought or feeling is underneath the sadness?”

“Agitation.”

“Good Joe. And what is underneath agitation?” Joe pauses.

“Nothing. There is nothing else there.”

“That is great Joe. Now, just imagine yourself opening up that nothingness and imagine yourself dropping down through that and what is out the other side of that nothingness?”

“I don’t care. There is the thought that I don’t care about all that stuff.”

“Wow! Joe. That is fantastic. Now, just drop down through the ‘I don’t care.’ and what thought or

feeling is underneath 'I don't care.'?"

"Strength. I feel strength."

"Great. And what is underneath strength?"

"There is that part of me that I mentioned earlier to you that loves me. It is the part that I sense of my loving myself."

"Yes, you mentioned to me earlier that you always sense that you had a part of you that truly loved yourself and that you just had trouble accessing it. Well we know where it is, don't we? And what is there underneath the part that loves you?"

"Resilience. I see the sun. I have a picture of the sun and it is warm and calm. I feel safe here."

"I am wondering Joe, what does this state of being in the sun mean to you?"

"It is God. He is here." (Joe was speaking in complete fluency and indeed had been since he dropped down through and out the other side of the nothingness. Most people who block do once they reach this point.)

"That is great Joe. Now what we want to do is to really get this state anchored in so you can *fly there* anytime you want to. Those who have come to master their blocking have been able to get this state so locked in and so familiar that they could just go there at will. It usually takes some weeks of practicing but you will get there. So just note what you see, hear and feel and put a word or a phrase to it so that you can recall this state anytime you want to. If you fear a block coming on, you can just think of or see the sun and go there."

"Now, Joe you are doing really well. Being there now in the sun light feeling that warmth; having that sense of strength, resilience, safety and calm I want you to take that state and apply it to the shame from your step dad. How does this transform and enrich shame?"

"It evaporates it."

"And once it is evaporated, what state takes its place?"

"Healthy. I feel healthy."

"That is great Joe. Now having the state of strength, resilience, safety and calm I want you to take that state and apply it to the anger. What happens to anger in the presence of strength, resilience, safety and calm?"

"It evaporates it. But I can still feel a little bit of it. I see one mad little boy."

"That is OK Joe. Now, if you take that picture of the mad little boy and move him inside the sunshine, what happens to him?"

"Oh, he is playing and doing what little boys should be doing. He is having fun."

“Fantastic. Now having the state of strength, resilience, safety and calm I want you to take that state and apply it to the sadness. What happens to sadness in the presence of strength, resilience, safety and calm?”

“It evaporates it. The sadness is gone. It is now joy.”

I continued this same pattern of questioning Joe as Joe took his resource state and applied it to each of the negative frames one at a time. This is the meta-stating addition that we have added to the original Drop-Down Through Pattern. Did this move Joe to complete fluency? No, but it sure provided an excellent piece for the total therapy and now that Joe knows how to do the Drop Down Through Pattern, he can do it on himself. We continued to utilize this pattern throughout his therapy.

The Pattern

1) Identify the experience and emotion you want to transform.

What do you feel just before you block?

What feelings/ emotions are behind your blocking?

What emotions or experiences is there that undermine your success as a speaker that you would like to eliminate?

2) Step into that experience.

Associate fully into that experience.

If you are aware of a particular experience that you would like to work on; be there present in that memory looking through your eyes, hearing what you heard and feeling what you felt then, now

Where do you feel this in your body?

What does it feel like?

How intensely are you experiencing this emotion?

Good, just be there with it for a moment, noticing ... just noticing it fully... knowing that it is just an emotion and that you are so much more than any emotion...

3) Drop down through the experience.

This may feel strange, but you do know what it feels like when you *drop* ... so feeling that feeling of *dropping*, just drop down through that experience until you drop down underneath that feeling...

What thought-feeling or emotion lies underneath that emotion?

And now just imagine dropping down through that feeling.

[Use the language and terms that the person gives you.]

And what thought-feeling comes to you as you imagine yourself dropping down through that one?

[Keep repeating this dropping-down through process until the person comes to “nothing...” That is, to no feelings ... to a void or emptiness.]

4) Confirm the emptiness and move to the “other side” wherein your resource states lie.

Just experience that “nothingness” or “void” for a moment. Good.

Now let that nothingness open up and imagine yourself dropping through and out the other side of the nothingness.

What are you experiencing when you come out the other side of the nothingness? What or whom do you see? What resource states are there?

As you go into your higher resource states, anchor these states in.

You want to be able to recall these states at will. By going to the “bottom,” you come to your 5th Position that we covered in the Perceptual Positions section. This is your highest resource state.

[Repeat this several times ... to a second, third, or fourth resource state.]

Note: Sometimes people will not experience the void, the nothingness. They will drop right on down through the negative frames and right into the positive resources. At other times they may just pause briefly as they make the switch from the negative frames to the positive frames.

5) Associate into your resource state (5th Position) and *apply* that resource state to each problem state

Use each resource state to *apply to* each problem state.

And when you feel X about Y (resource state to problem state), how does that transform things?

And when you even more fully feel X – what other transformations occur?

Validate and solidify: just stay right here in this X resource and as you experience it fully, what happens to the first problem state (#1)?

When you *feel this* (fire anchor for each resource) ... what else happens to those old problem states?

6) Test

Let’s see what now happens when you try, and I want you to really try to see if you can get back the problem state that we started with.

When you try to do that, what happens?

Do you like this?

Would you like to take this into your future – into all of your tomorrows and into all your relationships?

Note: Sometimes people will reach a point near or at the “void” where they say things such as, “That is it. There is nothing else.” Or, “I am at the bottom. There is nothing else below. I can’t go any further.”

If this happens to you, visualize what the position of being “stuck” looks like to you. Then just imagine opening up whatever is blocking you from proceeding and drop down through that.” If you do not have a visual but just a “feeling” of being stuck at the bottom, just imagine what it would feel like by dropping down through that and out the other side.

One client reached the bottom and said, “I am standing on a two inch thick steel plate.” I invited the client to imagine taking a cutting torch and cutting through the steel plate and then drop on down through. That worked. Use your creativity in getting down through and out the other side.

5) Creating a New “Self” Narrative

Edited from original model by L. Michel Hall, Ph.D.

"Narrative is the guardian of time."
(Ricoeur)

1) Discover your story.

What story have you lived in up until now that has contributed to your blocking?

Who gave you that story? Where did you get it?

Is it part of your cultural story, racial story, religious story, family story, etc.?

How much of the story did you personally buy or create?

Tell about the theme of your life and listen to your narrative story.

What kind of narrating do you do?

Do you tell a story of victimhood or survival, of failing or winning, of connecting or disconnecting, of being loved or rejected, etc.?

We all tell stories. And the *stories* we tell about "the events of our lives" can transform and heal or traumatize and destroy. The stories we tell summarize the "days" of our lives. We use various scripts, plots, and themes to frame things. The narrative (story), as a linguistic form is not without importance. It anchors a meta-level belief system which can keep us in distress, limit our choices, or create an empowering meta-state.

∨

What is the story of your life in one word? Menu: Failure, Victim, Hero, etc.

Yet when we use a one-word or a short phrase to generalize the meaning of "time," we can create some very limited maps.

In *Narrative Therapy*, White and Epston (1990) describe our lives as *stories*. *We live stories* and often we need to "de-story" and re-story our lives. We stop telling ourselves the old story and tell ourselves new stories. Do you need to re-story your narrative?

Since personality arises from our use of "time," and since narrative tends to operate as a large-level linguistic structure that guards "time" and structures "time" (the events we've experienced), we invite you to explore your "time" narratives. Use one of the following *sentence stems* and complete 5 to 10 sentences. This invites you to generate some of your current and operational linguistic time-lining "programs."

a. "Up until now the story of my life has comprised a story of ..."

(Prompts include: a victim, a failure, bad luck, stress, rejection, ease, success, liked by lots of people, etc.)

b. "If I described the plot that the narrative of my life has enacted..."

(A tragedy, a drama, a soap-operate, the lone ranger, etc.).

c. Say aloud, "Up until now... I have thought, believed, felt, acted..."

Then fully describe and express what has characterized some facet of how you have responded mentally, conceptually, emotionally, verbally, behaviorally, etc.

2) Step aside from the story for awareness and ecology.

Evaluate the usefulness, productivity, value, emotional enjoyment, etc. of your *story*.

Would you recommend living in that story to anyone else?

How well has this narrative served you? What doesn't work very well or feel very well about that story?

Do you need *a new narrative*?

Do you feel stuck simply because you do not know of *anything else* that you could possibly say about your experiences than what you have already said?

Go above "time" so that you can think *about* the days of your life from there and recode the happenings that occurred *in* time, sometimes prior to "the time" and from "within" the time.

Narrative Time as Linear:

The episodic dimension of a narrative draws *narrative time* in the direction of a linear representation of "time" by using the linguistic structure of "then, and then..." This describes the simplest form of narrating which results in a *story*. It is in this way that you *narrate your life* by sequencing and punctuating events. Yet in doing so you selectively pick and choose events, delete other events, and punctuate them in various ways so that you create a strategy and a meta-structure of meaning via your narrating.

Linear time reckoning results in stories. Such narratives function as "the guardian of our time" (Riceour).

The power of a story is that it encodes events in a large level format so that it becomes difficult to change. When you create a narrative or story, you impose a structure on a set of events that enables you to group them together in various ways. It provides rules for eliminating other stories as having any relevance in your mind.

3) Make up a new story that would be more empowering.

Once you have identified the "past" linguistically in this way, then complete the statement,

"But from this day on... I will increasingly develop into more of a person who..."

Just for fun, make up a wild and woolly story. Use your pretender to its fullest capacity! What positive and bright "sparkling moments" have you experienced that has not fit into your dominant story?

What unique outcomes that seem at odds with your problem-saturated story would you have liked to have grown into your dominant story?

How would that have played out?

What story would you have wished to have lived?

Who do you know that you admire and appreciate?

What story do they tell themselves about their self, others, the world, etc.?

4) Externalize the old story to tear it apart (de-frame it).

Narrative Therapy's social constructionism highlights that our stories are constructions that we have built and *internalized*. We have internalized the messages offered by our culture, family, and friends. We have taken experiences, problems, emotions, etc. and told a story that went, "I

am X...” In NLP, internalizing shows up linguistically as nominalizations (a process turned into a thing; a verb into a noun) and identifications.

Now it’s time to **externalize** what you have internalized. You can now tell *externalizing stories* to de-construct the old narrative. This separates you as a person from your behavior. You are always more than any particular behavior.

“*The ‘anxieties’ and ‘fears’ have had a long history in sneaking up and tempting me to give way to them.*”

“Yes, *misjudging has* lured me into treating others as enemies, but now that I have turned the light on *misjudging*, I have caught many of its tricks.”

Think of a “problem” that you have experienced frequently (an emotion, behavior, circumstance, linguistic label) and externalize it.

Story: An eight year old boy constantly wetted his bed. His mother introduced him to the counselor as her “little bed wetter” (internalized story of identity). He didn't do it intentionally; it seemed to sneak up on him when he wasn't suspecting it.

“So have you ever stood up to Sneaky Pee and refused to let him get you in trouble?”

Yes, he had stood up to Sneaky Pee.

The counselor engaged in some cheer-leading about that. The boy began taking some pride of his resistance!

“Let's figure out some sneaky ways we can do it to this Sneaky Pee!”

Externalizing empowers you to tell a whole new story about the events you have come through in “time.” It creates a new narrative.

5) Counter-example the un-storied to create a new narrative.

Finding the un-storied narrative in your life (NLP, *counter-examples*). Find *exceptions*. Find *unique outcomes* that identify “sparkling events” to seed a new narrative. Ask *how questions*.

“How did you do that?”

How did you not fall into anxiety and fear, but just kept at it?

How did you resist losing your calmness, and communicating with your boss anyway?

How did you not discount yourself in that instance?

How did you prevent things from getting even worse with all of that happening?

6) Step into the new story to thicken its plot.

Via your imagination, fully and completely step into the re-story and experience it fully in all of the sensory systems. Anchor it. Enrich it with details and find audiences to perform it before.

Telling a new story isn't enough. You have to *thicken the plot*. To do that use questions about sequences of behaviors to *link the past, present, and future together* and to thereby create a narrative of drama and action. Asking questions that presuppose enhancing responses enables you in assisting other people in re-narrating their lives.

“*How long have you cared about improving your speech and becoming more self-confident?*”

Have you had any times when you felt that way?

Why did you choose to prefer to live your life that way?" List the many reasons for becoming fluent.

The first question identifies resources, the second question invites you to access historical events, and the third encourages you to justify, explain, and build up reasons for it. Such questioning encourages people to "thicken the plot" of their preferred life's plot (Freedman and Combs, 1996). *Future pace your discoveries*: imagine moving out into tomorrow living out this new story of your life

Chapter Summary

You are not born with a concept of "self." It develops as your cognitive ability develops. Often times your concept of "self" becomes attached to a behavior especially when that behavior started earlier in your life. That is what happens to a lot of people who block – their concept of "self" gets attached to a human *doing* "stuttering" rather than being human *being*.

The good news is – *Whatever you think you are; you are always more*. You just need to learn that. Your concept of "self" is so vitally important because it determines how you live your life. For people who block and who identify themselves with being weird, stupid, and inadequate, etc. because they stutter, their entire life will be affected.

The therapy involved in overcoming blocking often means a completely new re-wiring of your sense of "self."

Because a person *intentionally* does not want to identify herself as being inadequate, weird, etc., she will fear blocking and will attempt *not* to do it. This in fact creates blocking.

When you identify yourself with any thought or behavior, you make a *thing* out of the behavior. You have changed a verb into a noun. You then move from *doing* stuttering to *being* inadequate, weird, etc. Changing your concept of "self" from one that doesn't serve you to one that does serve you requires the *stopping* of identifying with a behavior that you don't like (blocking) and creating a new *identity* that serves you. You thus create a *thing* that serves you.

Building a healthy self image will permit you to focus on *what* you are saying rather than *how* you are saying what you are saying which will give you fluency.

EIGHT The Power/Resource Matrix

Power and Resourcefulness “Am I a ‘Can Do’ Person?”

People who block tend to view themselves as incapable of speaking fluently in the world. Most, but not all, are fluent when by themselves or with a pet. But once they leave the safety of not having to communicate with others and move out into the world where they must communicate to survive, they lose their sense of power and resourcefulness to speak fluently. By themselves, fluency is normal, but out in the world they lose the ability and resourcefulness to speak normally and naturally.

Regrettably, the person who blocks has very little encouragement from past history about her having the power to become fluent in all contexts. She has little encouragement about the very real possibility of transferring the “power” and “resources” of speaking fluent from being by herself to speaking fluent in the outside world. Indeed, the purpose of this book is to teach you that the same power and resources that allow for fluency when alone can be transferred to speaking fluently when in the accompaniment of others.

Michael Hall says of this matrix:

Indeed, after the Self matrix, the next most important one is the Power or Resource Matrix. This has to do with our sense of power to respond to the world. What can I do? What skills and resources can I develop? What are my aptitudes and capacities? How can I develop my potentials? The sense of power or resourcefulness makes all the difference in the world between living with a weak response style and a strong one. It’s the difference between learned helplessness and learned optimism, between reactivity and passivity and assertive proactivity. A healthy Power Matrix enables us to feel self-efficacy (the ability to affect change in one’s self) and to take ownership of our life. It’s the foundation for persistence, determination, resiliency, passion, and proactivity.

In this, the second matrix of your sense of power or resourcefulness you come very close to your sense of self. The Power Matrix determines whether or not you believe that you have a sense of power and resourcefulness in affecting positive change in your sense of selfhood. This refers to the sense of being efficient in handling things, in trusting your mind-emotion system to recognize reality and to think effectively in defining and solving problems. The Power Matrix bespeaks of your sense and confidence in yourself as human *doer* and *achiever*. It defines your sense of power and resourcefulness both in your private and public lives. This matrix answers such questions as:

What can I do?

What skills and resources can I develop?

What abilities, aptitudes and capacities do I have to handle this situation?

How can I best develop my potentials?

How can I best cope with the world as it is presented to me?

Can I master myself, run my own brain, control my states and plan my future?

Intentional/Outcome Frames

As you began mapping out your concept of self around blocking, you will map whether or not you believe that you have resources and power to handle things.

Can I handle this speech challenge?

Can I manage my own mind and emotions around blocking?

Can I take effective action in the world and be successful with this challenge?

What can I do to fix this?

How can I control everything?

Can I find anyone to assist me in learning how to regain fluency?

In the attempt to exercise power over blocking, the person obviously desires to speak fluently in all contexts. With the goal of speaking fluently “out in the world,” the individual sets outcome/intentional frames of mind similar to the following:

I am going to try to control this?

I am going to try to control every word that comes out of my mouth.

I need to change.

I must not block.

I have to catch this.

I will do that by becoming very self aware of my speech.

I have to try really hard not to block or I will look foolish.

How much of your blocking is about fearing speaking and not so much about how you talk? Give this some thought. The answer will vary from person to person. Go back to when you first started blocking – probably as a child. Did you unconsciously think, “I don’t want to express myself for I may be wrong or I may be rejected if I do?”

In working with people who block, I believe that many people block because they feared what the results of their speech would be both on themselves and on others. Later the blocking became more pronounced as the person worked so hard to *break through* the block. With continued hurts and pain around the blocking, those emotions coupled with the fear and anxiety of blocking, first become habituated in the brain (emotional association) and then associated *into* the muscles that create the block."

While inside a block, you don’t speak at all, and when you do speak, you stutter worse in order to break through the block. Because you want to control stuttering but cannot break the deeply entrenched habit, you will experience yourself as being out of control and totally *powerless* and *unresourceful*. Thus, the following meanings will be of the type that people will place on this loss of control, loss of power and loss of resourcefulness when blocking:\

John Harrison, editor of The National Stuttering Association’s newsletter, *Letting GO*, is also a *former* person who stuttered. I first introduced you to him in the Introduction as the author of “The Stuttering Hexagon.” John has an article entitled “Anatomy of a Block” that exquisitely illustrates how a person often feels a total loss of power and resourcefulness especially during blocking. John has graciously given me permission to share his article with you. I have re-produced the first part of his article below.

You can read the entire article at –
(<http://www.mankato.msus.edu/dept/comdis/kuster/Infostuttering/Harrison/anatofblock.html>)

One day back in the spring of 1982 I walked into a camera shop on 24th street near where I live in San Francisco to pick up some prints. The clerk, a pretty young girl, was at the other end of the counter, and when I came in, she strolled over to wait on me.

"What's your name?" she asked.

That question used to throw me into a panic, because I always blocked on my name. Always. But by 1982 stuttering was no longer an issue. I never thought about it. I liked talking to people, and never worried about speech, because my blocks had all but disappeared.

I started to say "Harrison", and suddenly found myself in a panic; I was locked up and totally blocked. All the old, familiar feelings had come back. I could feel my heart pounding. So I stopped, took a breath, allowed myself to settle down, and while the woman stared at me, collected myself enough to say "Harrison."

I walked out of the store with my prints, feeling frazzled and totally mystified. Where in the world had that block come from? Why had I suddenly fallen into the old pattern? Stuttering was the furthest thing from my mind when I walked in. I never thought about stuttering any more, because it never happened, so I knew it wasn't a fear of stuttering that caused me to block. At that point I did what I had always done in previous years when stuttering was a problem. I began playing the event over and over in my mind, trying to notice as much detail as possible to see if I could spot any clues, something that would explain what was going on.

"Where was the woman when I walked in?" I asked myself.

Let's see. I pictured the layout of the store. I had come in and stood at the cash register. The woman was at the other end of the counter talking to someone.

"Who was the other person? Anything significant in that?"

It was a guy.

"And what did he look like?" Hmmmmm. Oh yeah, he was a biker. Tough looking. Had tattoos on his arms and was wearing a Levi's vest.

"What else did you notice?"

Well, the two of them seemed to like talking to each other. The guy appeared very much taken with the girl.

"How did he seem to you?"

Scary looking. Reminded me of the tough guys on the block when I was a kid. I remember those guys. They lived in the next town. They all had mean looking eyes, and they petrified me.

"How did you respond to people like him when you were a kid?"

Well, if I were on the street when several tough guys passed by, I would make myself invisible so they couldn't see me and hassle me. I'd suck all my energy in. I'd blend into the background. I'd look like a tree, or a bush, or a brick wall. No energy would radiate from me until they had passed. Nothing.

"Did you have any other feelings or observations about the biker in the store?"

I guess I felt like I'd interrupted an important conversation, because the two of them were getting on so well together.

"How did that make you feel?"

I reviewed the scene once more, trying to recall how I felt. How did I feel? I really concentrated, and a malaise swept across me. Then it came to me. I was worried that he'd be irked because the girl had left him to wait on me.

"So what was your response in such situations when you were a kid?"

I'd hold back. I didn't want to stand out. I didn't want to seem too strong or too assertive.

"Because...."

Because it would put me in danger. The guy might give me trouble, so I didn't want him to see" me.

"So in the camera store you...."

Right. I slipped back into the old program. I held back. I blocked my energy. I tried to make myself invisible, just like in the old days.

Here John clearly explains from a personal standpoint how something can trigger an old memory that mentally-and-emotionally sent him back to his childhood. Ceasing being an adult with adult resources, John says, "The memories triggered a fight or flight reaction that I managed by holding back (blocking) my feelings and pushing the thoughts out of awareness."

No longer responding as an adult, John responded out of those old childhood memories of powerlessness. In that camera shop when that clerk asked John his name in the presence of that tough looking biker, John unconsciously flew back in time and regressed into the kid "petrified" by the "tough guys on the block." So, John the grown man became *powerless* as a little kid before the block bullies.

Developing a sense of power and resourcefulness is absolutely essential in overcoming blocking. Seligman researched "Learned Helplessness," and "Learned Optimism." His work speaks clearly about how a person develops learned helplessness in becoming a victim of the blocking rather than taking control and becoming optimistic about overcoming the behaviour.

The 3 "P's" of Learned Helplessness:

Personal: People who block tend to personalize their disfluency. They tend to identify with the badness of their speech. This was also evident in the Self Matrix. It is as if the individual thinks, "As I speak, so I am." \

Pervasive: From making the disfluency about their sense of self, it then moves to color other areas of their life. It becomes about everything; it affects every part of their life. I hear so many sad stories of how people who block have chosen not to go for advanced education; spending hours and hours studying a thesaurus for substitute words for words blocked on; not to ask someone out for a date; not to apply for advancement at work, etc. all because of how they speak. It is heart breaking to hear how this one issue can so permeate and determine ones life. \

Permanent: Regrettably, based on years of failed attempts at gaining fluency, many develop the belief that it will last forever. "I have done this since I was a child; I have tried everything; I have spent thousands of dollars and I still stutter." It is no wonder that they tend to develop a sense of helplessness about the problem.

Learned Optimism reverses these 3 “P’s” –

Not Personal: The belief, “It is not about me, I am more than what happens to me” begins to permeate the thinking of a person who begins to gain more fluency.∨

Not Pervasive: “It is about how I talk and nothing else. It is not about anything else.” “I absolutely refuse to allow this disfluency to colour my entire life. It is about how I speak and I am in the process of improving that. That is all it is about, period.”∨

Not Permanent: “It has been a problem in my life. It has been a real challenge but it is a *learned behaviour* and I am going to unlearn it.” “I can speak fluently when I am by myself and I can speak fluently when speaking to my dog. That means that I can learn to speak fluently in all situations.”∨

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“My mind-body system knows how to speak fluently so I don’t need to relearn how to talk. I already know how. I just need to learn how to let go of the fear and anxiety that drives my blocking so that I can transfer my ability to speak fluently in all situations and contexts and I am going to do that.”

When you make things **personal**, let them **pervade** other areas of your life and believe they are **permanent**, you *pee* all over yourself, don’t you? So when we speak of moving to fluency, the ability to access the resources necessary to speak fluently in all contexts and to know that you have the power to do this are absolutely essential.

Being in “Control”

I assign “Loss of Control” at the top of the list of meanings for the Power Matrix. I do that for a reason for it has been my experience that the issue of control is paramount to a person who blocks. Michael asks the following questions about the relevancy of *control* to this matrix:

What have you mapped in terms of your abilities, skills, potentials, capabilities, etc.?

Does it give you a sense of ability, power and control or does it undermine such?

Do you have a sense of *control* in life, power over your own life, your own mind, body and emotions?

Do you feel like the driver of your own bus or a passenger in the back going for a ride?

How have you mapped the sense of “control?”

Did you grow up in an environment that was safe, secure, and that gradually allowed you to take more and more control over your life?

Exercise

Take just a moment and reflect on each one of those questions in relation to your blocking.

How do I perceive my ability of speaking fluently in all situations?

Do the pictures, feelings, sounds and the way I talk to myself about blocking give me a sense of power and control over blocking or do they undermine it?

Do I have a sense of control over my own life, my own mind-body-emotions?

Do I feel like I am driving my own “speech bus” or do I feel like I am riding in the back seat and someone else is at the wheel?

What type environment did I grow up in? Did I grow up in a safe, secure and encouraging environment

that gradually gave me more and more control in my life? Or, did I grow up in an environment that was *out of control* and I determined as a child that I was going to try controlling everything in my environment? Or, did I determine that life is so out of control that there is no use of even trying?

I have heard these statements from people who block that I have worked with:

Client #1

“I was never adequate enough for my mother.”
“My dad drank every night and he came home drunk.”
“I was never good enough.”

Client #2

“I grew up all alone. As a child I felt I was on the ‘outside.’”
“In school I never ‘fit in.’”
“I got teased a lot.”

Client #3

“My parents constantly fought.”
“My mother treated me like her husband.”
“My mother would ‘hand me a carrot and then pull it away.’”
“My father was gone a lot.”
“My parents were ashamed of my stuttering.”
“My parents were fast talkers, i.e., ‘you got to get it out.’”

Client #4

“To show emotions in my home was a sign of weakness.”
“When I block, I revealed more weakness.”
“My parents divorced when I was five years old.”
“I only saw my dad on the weekends. He was a workaholic and was gone a lot.”
“I always wanted to impress my dad so he would love me.”
“I have to be *perfect*.”

Client #5

“My parents got divorced when I was six months old.”
“I saw my father on the weekends.”
“He remarried and his second wife had two children from her previous marriage. Her daughter was the same age as me.”
“My stepmother hated me because I was a pretty little girl.”
“She was incredibly sarcastic and nasty.”
“I couldn’t tell my father because ‘I had to please him and make him happy.’”
“I didn’t want to lose his love.”
“He would ignore me when I visited and would leave me with ‘those people.’”
“I was full of ‘shame, anger, sadness, fear and agitation.’”
“Later mom started meeting with a group of people and she left me alone. “

“I was so ‘alone.’”

“Mom then became very critical of me.”

The above came directly from five clients that I have recently worked with. Needless to say, the above experiences are not conducive to creating a sense of power and resourcefulness in one’s life. *I believe that it is mental frames of the matrices like these that are emotionally embodied and expressed in the muscles controlling breathing and speech that serve as the primary cause of blocking.*

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Growing up in a family where the environment is chaotic and unpredictable, will in many cases lead a person in creating perceptual maps of being powerless. He will often grow up with a sense of being out of control. He may become a control freak trying to control everything and everyone around him. This is because as a child his life was out of control so control became a high priority. His experience of the world was very negative and he developed a sense of helplessness and powerlessness. The more negative his experience of the world the more powerless and helpless he felt.

In many cases, those who have been overwhelmed with pain in childhood, and even adulthood, give control over to others. They just tend to give up. They become indecisive, weak, hesitant and very fragile emotionally.

Activating the Power Matrix

Well, is there any hope? Yes, fortunately as the co-founder of NLP, Richard Bandler, said, “It is never too late to have a happy childhood.”

As with the negative mental frames around the Self Matrix, so with the negative mental frames around the Power Matrix, they can be brought to conscious awareness for reframing and re-imprinting. Michael makes the following suggestions:

It doesn’t take much to activate this matrix – anything that challenges us will do it, anything that calls upon us to respond. This includes family and cultural pressures, personal hopes and dreams, desires, etc. Sometimes any and every stimulus in our life can elicit this matrix and invite us to *do* something in response to some trigger. In this, most of us are reactive in this matrix, rather than proactive. When things happen, we react. We react rather than mindfully respond.

As you map more detailed plans and strategies for when and where to be active, how to act, the right reasons to act, etc., you build up a strategy for being proactive and taking appropriate responsibility. This introduces us into a very new and different way of life.

How can we create that?

We can do so by beginning to create the meaning frames which will validate the very idea of becoming empowered, taking effective action, investing our time and trouble and effort into something that we care about, resisting the path of least resistance, etc. These are the meaning frames that allow us to operate with a healthy respect toward power and resourcefulness.

We can also start from the state of acceptance of our fallibility recognizing that we cannot and

will not become all-powerful or skilled in everything. Nor do we need to. All of us are incompetent about a great many things. Those who focus on *what they can't do* only make themselves needlessly miserable as they create maps of their own impoverishment and then access states of regret, remorse, emptiness, etc.

To create a more enhancing map is to decide to focus on what we care about, to play to our strengths, to find and cultivate our aptitudes and gifts. By so specializing in what we can do and what we can develop even more skill in, we develop confidence in ourselves about an area of competency. This gives us the basis for feeling good and enjoying something that we can become passionate about.

Do childhood memories about certain incompetencies still bother you? Then as you realize that children are supposed to be incompetent and unskilled, you can let those old feelings go as you also let go any maps that you have used that personalized such childish incompetence or made it permanent. Those maps can and will just fade from your mind as you turn your focus to what you can do.

The following exercises are specifically designed for you to “reclaim your power.” *Whom or what are you giving your power to?* What do you need to do to reclaim it? Your mind-body-emotion system knows how to speak fluently. You have the *power* and the *resources* to speak fluently – that is a given. We shall now learn how to transfer that *power* for fluency to other areas of your life.

You are already beginning your journey of reclaiming your power by reading this book; by practicing the patterns; by moving beyond the norm of ineffective treatments. You have and are experiencing challenges that call upon you to respond to the innate need to communicate effectively. You are refusing to give in to powerlessness and helplessness. You are taking responsibility for your own life and speech. You are refusing to play the *blame game* by blaming others for your blocking. You are taking your power back by taking full responsibility for your speech challenges. Your brain and body created the behavior and your brain and body will change the behavior.

You are determined to learn how to create meaning frames that will empower you in taking effective action at not only treating the symptom of blocking, but more importantly, to treat the primary cause – those unconscious thought patterns that are well grooved in (habituated, integrated) your muscles. These are those old haunting memories that you learned long ago and that no longer serve you. You are choosing not to focus on those painful childhood memories. You know that you don't live there any longer. You long ago moved out of that house. You long ago left that school where your peers made fun of you. You are choosing instead to focus on your adult resources and experiences.

Let the journey begin!

Patterns for Re-Claiming Your Power

The Stress Fight/ Flight/ Freeze Pattern – A “Self-Help” Pattern in Overcoming Blocking

Meta-Stating Your Power Zone

Meta-Stating Strength, Confidence, Courage, Etc.

Modeling Optimism

Meta-Stating Courage

1) The Stress Fight/ Flight/ Freeze Pattern A “Self-Help” Pattern in Overcoming Blocking

What is the Fight/Flight or General Arousal Syndrome?

How is this neuro-physiological phenomena tied in with blocking?

Why is it so hard to overcome a block when you are in one?

How does the Fight/Flight Syndrome help explain the difficulty in overcoming a “block?”

If I can “fly into a block,” can I learn how to “fly into a calm”?

After submitting this pattern to Robert Strong of New Zealand for review, he highlighted the word “Freeze” in the title and wrote back:

I’m glad you’ve added this Bob; to me, that’s what holding back/blocking is. One is not running away externally or fighting externally (exempting muscle contortions) but alternating between running away internally and fighting internally, and ‘locked’ (frozen) in the middle of the two: **‘Frozen’ between consciously wanting to speak and unconsciously wanting to hold back.** Another analogy of being ‘locked’ is like a Kenwood mixer speed control. The speed control works by a centrifugal mechanism that is continually changing directions, making and breaking contact to turn the power on and off to the motor as it speeds up and slows down. This constant back and fro makes the motor appear to be running at a constant (frozen) speed.

Robert is correct. It is like the proverbial mule that starved to death between the two hay stacks. He couldn't decide which one to eat from. It is like running with one foot on the gas pedal and the other one on the brake? In the process you get nowhere but you burn out. Just think how much energy you expend trying *not* to block.

I ran these remarks by another person who blocks and she wrote back:

What Robert says about wanting to speak and wanting to hold back at the same time is right on. That is the crux of John Harrison’s thoughts on stuttering apart from the stuttering hexagon. Like you said, it is like putting on the brakes but wanting to go forward at the same time. Divided intentions cause all kinds of things like stuttering – not being able to go to the bathroom in public; not singing on key in front of someone; not being able to hit the target; forgetting your speech in front of an audience; trying to quit a bad habit, and on and on. It is all the same thing.

Importantly, as long as one stays in the middle, one will never get out of that “frozen moment.” One must go *higher* and access higher resources and bring those *to bear* on the problem. You have to go higher to solve the problem for one never solves the problem by remaining *inside* the problem. This section introduces you to the *how* of doing just that.

Any context that the person defines as being stressful usually triggers blocking. Importantly, situations

defined as being extremely stressful can easily trigger the fight/ flight response known as the General Arousal Syndrome. I recently worked with a client from the McGuire Program. He had good results with the McGuire Program but was still blocking in the work place. In talking with him, he said that the McGuire program referred to a block as a “chest freezer.” Now, when that happens, the General Arousal Syndrome has “cranked up.”

Fear and stress come into play as we think and interpret things in fearful and stressful ways. When the fear and stress are intense enough, our animalistic instincts take over. When we sense danger, threat, fear, insecurity, etc, these messages send signals to the cerebral cortex (the *higher mind*) which then passes them on to the thalamus. The amygdala also comes into play. The amygdala is an almond-shaped neuro structure at the base of the brain and is involved in producing and responding to nonverbal signs of anger, avoidance, defensiveness, and fear. These in turn activate the fight/ flight syndrome known also as the General Arousal Syndrome. As this triggers the General Arousal Syndrome, everything inside of us shouts to do what is necessary to survive. The time has come to fight or flee.

For the person, an intense blocking has all the symptoms of someone who’s General Arousal Syndrome has activated totally and completely. More than one person has given me the metaphor of viewing themselves as a “deer looking into the headlights” of an automobile about to hit them when describing blocking. Now, when experiencing a block that severe, which is common, the General Arousal Syndrome has activated and the person is in a full fledged panic attack.

Blood is withdrawn from the brain and stomach and sent to the larger muscle groups; adrenalin is released into the blood; the heart beats faster; breathing becomes rapid and intense; the eyes dilate; the individual starts perspiring; the fats, cholesterol and sugar in the blood stream increase; the stomach secretes more acid; the immune system slows down, and thinking shifts to a more black-and-white, survivalist mode. Is it any wonder that many have erroneously defined the cause of blocking as being physical? It sure seems “real” for one *feels* so intensely.

One person after reading this stated, “You bet, that is when the devil takes over. That is what people who block think; ‘SOMETHING’ uncontrollable takes over. And I’m sure what you are stating here IS that ‘something’.” Yes, that is what I mean. There is no outside “force” that takes over, it just seems that way. It is all an “inside job.”

The fact that a severe block activates the General Arousal Syndrome also explains why it is so difficult to access a resource state when in one. The entire mind-body system screams either for one to fight or to flee. With neither a possibility in most cases, one just remains there in the block attempting to burst through it with stuttering.

When our fight/ flight syndrome has activated, it is as if *thinking* is impossible. Because we feel so intensely the fear/threat, our primitive instincts take over and what little thinking if any goes on it is *either* fight or *flee*. There seems to be no other choice available for we are functioning more from the lower parts (more primitive) areas of our brain and much less from the cerebral cortex.

Earlier we studied about state dependency and being *inside* a state. We are now discovering a powerful example of that concept. For, when one is so inside a block that the General Arousal Syndrome has activated, one is totally inside that state.

However, there is good news. With proper therapy and practice, one can eventually move from the

primitive mind (thalamus, amygdala, the limbic system) to the *higher mind* (cerebral cortex) and *apply* reason and logic to those fearful situations. Instead of coming off of fears learned in childhood, one is able to apply the *higher mind* of the adult to those contexts that did trigger blocking.

Power/Resource Matrix

When are so *inside* a block that you have activated the General Arousal Syndrome, you will no doubt view yourself as totally *powerless* and *un-resourceful*. How could you do otherwise? Also, when you typically gets so *inside* a block that you activate the General Arousal Syndrome, you will probably need individual therapy plus time for practice in overcoming the blocking. Yet, there is hope – much hope. More and more people who block and stutter are learning how to get “out of the block.”

You can do much on your own. All of the patterns in this book are about “how” to remain *out* of the block. You must get *out* of your primitive mind and activate *your higher mind*. On our web site, you will find an article entitled “Overcoming Blocking: A Testimony.” The article is located at:

http://www.neurosemantics.com/Stuttering/testimony_stephen.htm

I worked with this person therapeutically. The author wrote:

“In the drop-down through technique we established a strong reference point and we took each negative feeling to this reference point. I am a visual type of person and, like Bob and some of his other clients, I hold strong religious beliefs. With Bob’s guidance we established a very strong reference point (resource) that combined both these characteristics and we took each negative feeling to this sacred for me place. They were all neutralized (meta-stated) in insignificant nuisances that had no impact on me anymore.”

Here the author describes how he has learned to move out of the fear and to higher resource states. So, speaking technically, he was able to move out of his *primitive mind* that activated the fight/flight response which created the block and go mentally to his higher resource states which for him were religious. He moved from his *primitive mind* to thinking from his cerebral cortex wherein he accessed his higher spiritual resources.

Generally, once we enter into the stress state, state-dependency takes over so that we are not in a good place to learn new patterns. Not at that moment. State dependency means that all of our *communication, behavior, perception, memory, and learning* are governed by a given state at a particular time. For the person, the state is expressed in the blocking. The state (whether anger, fear, anxiety, etc.) controls what we see, how we think, what we feel, our memories, behaviors, communications. As state dependency takes over, it takes some time for all of the neuro-transmitters, adrenalin, and autonomic nervous system activation to run their course.

Michael Hall says, “The time to learn state management skills, of course, is **not** during the stress storm. Learning navigation skills when a ship is tossing and turning in the open sea in the midst of 40 foot waves is a bit late in the game.”

The primary secret of stress management for you is to learn how to avoid sending the “*danger!*” message when you face a physical threat. This takes some doing. It means learning to run your own brain and to take charge of the higher levels of meanings that you have given to things. It means learning how to stop reacting to circumstances involving communication as if they are a real threat. Instead, it means that you learn to respond more realistically from you *adult* mind of being under

control. Your adult mind is your “higher mind.” Your blocking mind is your “lower mind” – the mind controlled by childhood hurts around blocking and stuttering.

It means that the person stops defining speaking as if it is a life threatening experience. It means that the person no longer chooses to give others control over one’s life. It means loving and honoring oneself no matter how one speaks. It means that one learns that speaking is just that – it is just talking. The fact is that no one has ever died from blocking. “Is it really necessary to attach so much fear to speaking that you activate the General Arousal Syndrome?” Are you *really* in a life threatening situation?

I sent this section to several people who block for feedback. One of them sent this response to my above statement:

I think the real fear is that they are NOT going to die. If they died then they would not have to live out the shame and humiliation. They are not in a life threatening situation but they are in a self-esteem threatening situation. What is more painful, being totally humiliated or dying? At least dying ends your misery but being humiliated seems never to end and it is a real threat...that is why it kicks the fight/flight syndrome into action. Seriously, death is easy compared to living a life of humiliation. Sounds weird but ask PWS how many times they wished they were dead. It is not the fear of death that activates the fight/flight mechanism it is the fear of humiliation. Does this make sense?

It is always good to get feedback, isn’t it? My point is this: emotions are just that – emotions. They only have the power we give them. My encouragement to you is that there is hope – much hope for you to overcome this problem. That is *why* we are working so hard to develop a model that works much of the time in leading people to more fluency. In our work, we focus on encouraging you to *welcome* your emotions. When the fight/ flight syndrome fires from your chest *freezing up*, let that be a signal for you to engage your *determination* in overcoming this problem. The fact that you are reading this tells me that you are already doing just that. Read on.

Accessing the higher levels of your mind enables you to manage stress more effectively. This allows you to simply eliminate your perception of “stress” in the first place. And when stress goes, so will unnecessary experiences of fear and anger. When that happens, you simply do not get recruited to stress yourself. When you learn to put new meanings (reframing) to old triggers for blocking, you learn how to manage the meanings you give and the frames you set when you face those contexts that did trigger blocking.

The Stress Management Pattern involves managing your energy over time to work more efficiently and restore your sense of power and resourcefulness. It involves learning to recognize the bodily symptoms of stress, to accept such as just the functioning of your body, to breathe more fully and deeply, to relax tight muscles, to stretch, and to use yoga exercises to train the body for calmness.

How to Play the Game of Masterful Relaxed Alertness

How can you become truly masterful in coping and handling the demands, challenges, threats, fears, etc. of communicating at work and at home so that you don’t stress out about these things? How can you avoid the fear/ anxiety emotions that set off blocking?

1) Step 1: Recognize the presence of stress.

Because you cannot control or effectively manage anything *outside-of-your-awareness*, you first must welcome in those contexts that trigger the stress that activates the blocking. So, first grant yourself permission to notice those times and to notice the presence of stress and its symptoms in your life. Take an inventory of those circumstances that create the stress that initiates the blocking.

Now, notice what it does to your mind-body system. Begin with your body. At the primary level, *stress* usually shows up in the body of the person as tightness in the throat, chest and/or jaws. Muscles tense in those areas. Those areas also become inflexible. What happens to you when you are blocking?

Enter into the tension and tightness and let it teach you. Quiet yourself and establish communication with that part of you responsible for causing the tightness and tension. You might ask the tightness in your neck or in your chest:

“What message do you have for me?”

“If you were to speak to me, what would you say?”

“Is the tightness/tension more physical or more mental?”

“Is it both physical and mental?”

“What is the purpose of this *tense or tight part* for you?”

2) Step 2: Specify your stress strategy.

There is order and structure to how you *stress yourself*. How do you do it? Begin with those contexts that trigger you’re going into the state of stress.

“What induces a stress experience in you?” (“What contexts? With what people specifically? With what groups? etc.”)

“When it comes to speaking, what situations do you fear the most?”

“What do you say to yourself that increases the stress and intensifies the block?”

“How do you express these thoughts in your mind?”

“What tonality, volume, voice, etc. do you use?”

“What are the qualities of your pictures when you *stress*? Are the pictures up close, big and bright? Are the sounds loud or soft? Where do they come from? Are they from outside your body? Are they from the right side or the left side?”

Stress is a forerunner of fear. It triggers fear. Fear triggers blocking. It, as all thinking, has an internal dynamic structure. The magic of stress doesn’t just occur without some *spell* being cast. So how do you do it? What *stress language* do you use to create the fear that drives the block? Name your poison!

“I *have to get it out!*”

“If I stutter, they will think I am dumb.”

“*Why* can’t I talk like everybody else?”

“I hate it when I stutter.”

Cognitive Distortions:

What *thinking patterns* do you use to crank up your stress? This answer will provide you with more information about the set-up of your blocking. You will begin to learn what thinking patterns make the blocking more exaggerated and sick. Here are some of them (cognitive distortions):

Personalizing – Interpreting events as “about me.”

Awfulizing and Catastrophizing – Interpreting events in the most extreme negative ways possible.

Emotionalizing – Interpreting the presence and meaning of “emotions” as the ultimate source of information.

Minimizing or Discounting – Interpreting to make of lesser importance.

Maximizing or Exaggerating – Interpreting things to make them of greater importance.

All or Nothing Thinking – Interpreting things as if there are only polar choices and nothing in between.

Perfectionism – Interpreting things as if “It is not good enough,” “It could be better.”

Carefully review the above cognitive distortions. Persons who block have a tendency to interpret their world in several of those unhealthy ways of thinking. Mark those that apply to you. Then ask yourself the question, “What would happen to my blocking if I refused to do that anymore?”

Physical Elements:

What *physical elements* add to your stress or prevent you from operating from calmness?

Shallow breathing

Tight throat and jaws

Poor posture

Contracted abdomen

Lack of focus: constant eye shifting

Tightening and holding neck or jaw muscles

Ask yourself:

How can I alter my physiology so that it serves me better?

How can I breathe in a calmer way? (Breathe from your abdomen.)

How can I use my posture to relax my chest, neck and jaws?

Knowing how you create the block allows for you to develop ways for messing it up. You will be able to prevent the block from working automatically. Instead of it *running you*, you will be able to *run* it. Now you can play around with it so that it can begin to serve you well. To flush out the higher mental frames that create the stress that creates the block ask:

Qualities of the image:

What qualities characterize my stress?

What are the qualities of the pictures, sounds and feelings of my image of stress? Are my pictures of it close in, big and bright?

Are the sounds loud?

Where in my body do I feel the stress?

What tone of voice can I use in my self-talk?

Higher mental frames that create stress:

Which of the following kinds of thinking/ believing describe me?

I must perform, achieve and produce!
I have to be perfect.
I must be in control at all times.
I have to get it out.
I have to be liked and approved.
They will think I am not normal if I stutter.
How do I compare with X?
I must speak fluently.
You can't trust others. They always judge you by how you speak.
I should not be frustrated or disappointed. It's not fair.

Typically, you will find that these are higher frames that create the stress games that we play. They set us up for *pressures and needs*: the need for achievement, approval, control, competition, perfection, impatience, anger.

Does your stress have a feeling of *anger* in it?
Does impatience contribute to your stress?
How much does the desire to speak *fluently* contribute to your stress?
Or perhaps you have competitive, must-be-better than stress?
Do you experience stress as a make-or-break feeling?
How much do you have your identity and self-definition wrapped up in speaking fluently, achievement, approval, control, etc.?

When you think and believe in toxic ways, thinking that your very *being* is dependent upon what others think, the job you hold, status symbols, etc., you create *fire breathing dragons* that can consume a lot of psychic energy.

3) Step 3: Practice flying into calm.

Can you fly into fear and anxiety that create a block? People who block have learned to do that extremely well. Most people can “fly into a rage.” Can you? As a matter of fact, I have never met a person who couldn't “fly into a rage” at a moment's notice. Can you fly into a fear – a fearful state of worry, dread, and anxiety? Sure you can. Well, if you can do either of these, then you have all the neurological equipment you need for “*flying into a calm.*”

Flying into a calm gives you the ability to access a state of *instant calm* in a moments notice. Indeed, to learn how to *fly into a calm* in those moments that did trigger blocking, would eliminate the problem of stuttering, wouldn't it?

Actually, you already can do it. I know you can. After all, you have observed people or you may have a “telephone voice.” You know the scenario. They're in the living room or kitchen and having an intense argument with a loved one. They're saying things that they would never say to a stranger. They save those kinds of things for the people that they love most. It's their way of testing to see if they will keep on loving them if they do *this* to them! So they really get into state. They raise their voice. They feel really, really angry, upset, frustrated ... and then the phone rings.

They take a breath, and then calmly and politely answer it. “Hello...”
They answer it with a calm and even professional “telephone voice!”
See, people can fly into a calm!

Creating a “Calm State”

To develop your “*Flying into a Calm*” skills, you only need to practice this skill, orchestrate it so that it becomes stronger, more powerful, and so that you have ready access to it in a split second. It’s already a resource; you only need to develop it further to put it at your complete disposal.

OK, I admit that for a person who blocks, it may not be as simple as that in those extreme contexts where you go into a panic when it is time to speak. However, let’s not pass off this process too lightly. You may be surprised at what you can do. For sure, you have nothing to lose but some time practicing. It certainly won’t cost you any money to practice.

First, *amplify* a state of *calm*. Think about a time when you really demonstrated the power of your telephone voice. Be there again, seeing what you saw, hearing what you heard, and totally feeling what you felt.

What enabled you to step out of the angry and yelling state to the calm and cool state where you said, “Hello!”? What ideas, beliefs, values, decisions, etc. empowered that response? Why didn’t you answer the phone with your angry voice? Why didn’t you yell at the person calling in?

Your answers to these questions will help you flush out the “flying into a calm” mental frames of references that actually work in your life. As you make these clear, amplify them, give yourself even *more reasons* for doing this and then set up a trigger (or anchor) so that you can *step back into this place of mind and emotion* whenever you so choose. State your ideas, beliefs, values, decisions, etc about flying into a calm in powerful terminology that works for you:

“I know how to fly into a calm for I have done it before.”

“I am not a child. I can *choose* to run my own brain.”

“I absolutely refuse to let my fear of what others may think of my speech create fear and anxiety in me guaranteeing my blocking.”

“I can go to *my place of comfort and relaxation* in the split second of a thought.”

Consider:

What would be a good symbol of total calmness?

What sound, sight, and sensation would remind me of this state?

Let such be your anchor as you connect that symbol to that state.

Now *practice stepping into it*, setting that link to some trigger, breaking state, and then using the trigger to *step back* into that place where you manage your emotions.

4) Step 4: Texture your game of flying into a calm.

Access your best representation of a *confidently relaxed state*. The best way to do this is to recall a time when you were really relaxed in a calm and centered way. Imagine going to that place and be there totally (associate into that moment). See what you saw in that moment; hear what you heard and feel what you felt being there totally and completely. Recall it fully, so that you can access this state and then connect it to a word, picture, or sensation; so that, when you recall that, it will put you back into that calm state. We call this *anchoring* which is just a trigger that recalls the state through associating the trigger word, picture, etc with the desired state that you would like to enter.

You may wish to amplify the state by making the pictures more vivid; by making the sounds more explicit; by talking to yourself in a calm relaxing way using words that totally and completely relax you.

After you have fully accessed, amplified, and anchored that primary resource state – step back from it and examine it:

What is the nature and quality (pictures, sounds, feelings) of your relaxed state?

What qualities and factors make up this state?

What other qualities would you like to edit into this state?

Frequently, while the *relaxed state* some people access is appropriate for a sunny day on the beach, it really is not for the workplace or those times that typically trigger blocking. Typically such ideas have led some to jump to an unfounded conclusion, “Well, I cannot use calmness or relaxation there.” Then we never again consider relaxation as a possible resource.

What if you tempered and textured your relaxed state so that it had *the kind of alertness*, mindfulness, readiness, etc. that would make you even more resourceful when you typically block?

What if you qualified it with the kind of qualities, resources, and distinctions that would give you the kind of mastery you need in those times that typically trigger blocking?

This describes what is meant by framing and reframing. This also shows how a higher level state (or meta-state) differs from a primary state. In primary states of relaxation, you will feel relaxed. Your muscles are limp, your breathing becomes easy, calmness and comfort dominate your mind and everything feels at ease. It's a great state. But hardly the state you must have in overcoming a block. You need a special kind of relaxed/calm state for such occasions. You need a higher level state of mind characterized by:

Relaxed alertness

Calm confidence in our ability to speak fluently

Relaxed attentiveness in listening fully to the other person and not being concerned with whether or not he/she may be judging how you speak

The relaxed energy of readiness and eagerness to speak calmly and with confidence knowing that your mind-body system knows how to do just that.

Accepting the frustrations of everyday life and not judging your sense of *self* should you in fact slide into a block once in awhile.

Ask yourself:

What *kind* of relaxation do I need or want to speak fluently in all contexts?

How do I want to feel calm and confident and relaxed whenever I speak?

What kind of a relaxed mind and emotions do I want or need in a given situation?

What are the mental frames of mind that I want to layer my mind with in developing my core relaxed state? \

These mental frames of mind will *texture* your state of relaxation. Repeat them until they coalesce into this core state of relaxation. Build yourself a menu list of mental frames (thoughts) that through constant repetition you create a most useful state of calmness and relaxation.

5) Step 5: Practice accessing your relaxed core state.

In the book *Instant Relaxation* Michael Hall, Ph.D. and Debra Lederer speak about accessing your “Relaxed Core Self.” This refers to feeling relaxed with your sense of self, to feel confident, assured and centered. These kinds of mental frames of mind structure a state of mind that will enable you to operate from a sense of safety and security. This prevents the “*Danger! Threat! and Overload!*” messages from triggering you into a block. Won’t that be nice? This is exactly what is needed in order to speak confidently and fluently in all contexts and not just in those perceived “safe” moments.

When you have this kind of centered sense of self, then you will have a platform of comfort and security from which you can go forth to the adventures of life. This state will provide balance and energy to your life that will allow for fluency in *all* contexts.

This state also becomes a state for rejuvenation. You will shuttle out to a challenge, and then you retreat to your relaxation zone for recuperation and rejuvenation of your strength. You move out to perform as an achiever, and then we move back in to just *be* and enjoy yourself as a normal person.

How can this be done? Simple. Here’s an induction written by Michael in our book *Games for Mastering Fear*:

Imagine what it would look like, sound like, and feel like to completely and thoroughly access your own relaxed core state and make it your game. Float back in your imagination to capture bits and pieces of anything that will enrich your editing of such a self-image and begin allowing these pieces to come together to create a powerful sense of a core self; relaxed, confident, assured ... comfortable in your own skin, breathing fully and completely, taking charge of your thinking, emoting, speaking, and behaving... Just imagine what that would feel like and how that would transform your life....

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... and when you have edited it to your liking, and it feels compelling, step into it and be there. And enjoy it... so that you experience it as a joyful relaxed core state. And now as you *translate it from mind to muscle* (See “Mind to Muscle Pattern in Chapter VIII), imagine breathing with this and seeing out of the eyes of your core relaxed state. Hear the voice of this state – speaking with a calm confidence that radiates a sense of your inner power.

Are all of your parts aligned with this?

Does any part of you object to living this way?

Would you like this as your way of being in the world?

6) Step 6: Keep refining and texturing your relaxed core state.

Because of the mind’s ability to layer one thought upon another thought – to texture and enrich one

thought with another thought – this process does not end with the first design engineering of this highly resourceful state. With the tools for *running your own brains*, you can now maintain a creative attitude about all of the other resources that you can find and incorporate in that *relaxed core state*.

For instance, why not add a big dose of *healthy humor* to the mix? The ability to lighten up, to *not* take your self or others so seriously, to enjoy people and experiences tremendously enriches relaxation. How many times have you become extremely fearful of a speaking moment when it was totally unnecessary? You became so fearful that you would block, and that the other person would judge you as being less than human and it was totally unnecessary. The person you were speaking to would in no way judge you like that and you know it. Yet, you did the judging of yourself and not the other person. Well, what about just stepping *outside* that and see how ridiculous such thinking is and laugh at your *childish* behavior.

We can explode most fears by using the humor power of exaggeration. Exaggerate the fear until it begins to become ridiculous. Then exaggerate it some more. Eventually it becomes funny and then your humorous perspective enables you to operate in a more human and delightful way.

Or, how about *appreciation*? What if you moved through the world with an appreciation of things, people, and experiences? Instead of *fearing* what other people may think of your speech, *appreciate* that most will listen patiently to you. *Appreciate* that you can not only speak, but you can in some contexts speak fluently which means you can learn how to speak fluently in all contexts. I know some mute people who would love to have those abilities. How would that *texture the quality of your stress*?

Magnanimity would be another resource. It would enable you to operate from a sense of a having a big-heart and thereby prevent you from becoming mentally ruffled. How would that enhance your life?

Then there is *openness to reality, flexibility, forgiveness, playfulness, balance*, and the list goes on and on. Create your own list of mental frames of mind that will enhance your *core state of relaxation*. Practice, practice, practice building that state so that you can learn to *fly into a calm* instead of flying into a *block*.

2) Meta-Stating Your Power Zone

Meta-Stating Power Zone Ownership

This is a pattern for recognizing and owning the very core “powers” or functions of your mind-body system. Doing this establishes the basis for personal empowerment, responsibility, and proactivity. People who block possess a very strong tendency to let other people determine their state of mind. By worrying about what others may or may not think of you blocking, you give other people permission to determine your state. And, as often is the case, you end up giving them your power.

Just think, one moment you are alone at home speaking fluently. The next moment you are in public blocking. What happens? Many times it is about worrying what “they will think.” This pattern will assist you in owning your four powers of *thinking, feeling, speaking* and *behaving* while *pushing* other’s opinions away from you by *allowing* them to have their powers. By giving them permission to own their powers as you own yours, you refuse to let them control your powers via your mind-reading any judgment they may or may not bring to bear on you. *In your fear of them judging you, you judge them and in the process, give your power away.*

The Pattern:

1) Access a full experience of each of your “Four Central Powers.”

You have two *private inner powers*:

Thinking: representing, believing, valuing, understanding, reasoning, etc.

Feeling: embodying (somatizing), valuing, etc.

You have two *public and outer powers*:

Speaking: languaging, using and manipulating symbols, asserting, etc.

Behaving: acting, responding, relating, etc.

Just notice these powers as you “step into them” fully. Think about you as a *thinking* person and be inside that thought. Be aware of your ability to *feel* and step inside that. Think about your self as a person who can *speak fluently* and be inside that. Become aware of you as a person who has *behaviors* and step inside that thought. Access them so that you begin to feel these powers. Use your hands to mime out these powers in your own personal “space” to create your *Circle of Power* and influence and responsibility.

2) Access and amplify the resource state of ownership.

Has there ever been a time, maybe during childhood, when you said “***Mine!***” fully and completely? Think about such a time. Be there. Feel what it’s like when you strongly sense that something is yours, when every fiber in your being says, “***Mine!***” Keep it small and simple, such as: “My hand!” “My eye.” “My cat.” “My toothbrush.”

3) Access the states of acceptance and appreciation of “mine!”

Imagine a reference that allows you to fully and completely feel a sense of *acceptance*... when you just welcomed and acknowledged something... like a rainy day, or the traffic.

Now feel this **acceptance about** what you **own** as yours.

Recall a reference that enables you to feel a warm sense of *appreciation* for something, when you see value and delight in something. Feel that **appreciation about** this sense of **ownership**.

4) Amplify these states until your neurology radiates.

Amplify your sense of *ownership*, then *acceptance*, then *appreciation* and *apply* them to your power zone: “I *own* my power zone.” “I *accept* that this is my power zone.” “I *appreciate* my power zone.”

Let your words emerge as you language it effectively. “This is my *zone* of power. I am totally responsible for my *responses* of mind, emotion, speech and behavior.”

5) **Imagine pushing other people’s judgments on how you speak away from you.**

As you own your own powers, give other people permission to own their own powers without you judging what they may or may not think of how you speak.

“I absolutely refuse to let what others may or may not think of my speech determine how I speak.”

Visualize yourself pushing them away. Stand up and go through the motions of moving them outside the boundaries of your life so they cannot bring judgment to bear on how you speak.

6) **Run the Meta-No/ Meta-Yes Pattern on the results. (See Chapter 3)**

Say “**No**” to what others may think, feel, say or behave towards your speech.

Say “**Yes**” to owning your own thinking, feeling, speaking and behaving.”

“It is my speech, I own it. I take responsibility for it. I have the power to speak fluently. I absolutely refuse to allow others to control my states about my speech. Yes!”

7) **Future Pace.**

Imagine in the weeks and months to come, moving through the world with this frame of mind about your zone of response... power...

3) **Meta-Stating Strength, Confidence, Courage, Etc.**

Design: To use the meta-stating process to bring more of a sense of strength and vitality that is especially applicable to everyday experiences of speaking. Enlist a friend to guide you through this pattern.

The Pattern

1) **Access a strength state – a full 3-D movie of a time when you felt very strong.**

Fully recall or imagine being in a place where you feel absolutely strong and capable – a state of fluency. As you do, see what you saw, hear what you heard and totally feel what you felt. As you access this resourceful state, amplify it until you reach a peak with it — then make sure that you have it fully stabilized and anchored kinesthetically so that you can step into —

the body of strength

the arms and hands and body posture of strength

the eyes and facial expression of strength

the breathing and voice of strength

2) **Set this state as your frame-of-reference for the next few minutes.**

Continue to see and hear what you see and hear that elicits your *strength state* and as you do I’m going to ask you a series of confirmation questions about this wonderful state.

Do you like this experience? *(Yes!)*
Would you like to have lots of access to this state? *(Yes!)*
Would it serve you well to be able to “fly into this state” at will? *(Yes!)*
So you do like it and want it? *(Yes!)*
Really? *(Yes!)*
Nay, you don’t! *(Yes I do!)*

Continue to confirm and validate and get a *Yes!* — a Meta-Yes, to this state.

Check for total permission: Do you have permission to feel strong and capable like this? If there are any objections, answer them and keep reframing the permission request until you get a strong and definitive *Yes!* This establishes the frame.

3) Embed as you hold your strength state.

Now, holding on fully to the intensity of this state in a constant way, and only to the extent that you can feel this fully, where in life or to what trigger would you really like to feel this? Choose a time when you usually block.

What thought-feelings around blocking would benefit from your bringing a state of strength to? Get a picture that represents it.

Think of that time of blocking as a tiny, tiny little picture — the size of a dot in the middle of what you see and hear while you’re in your *strength state*.

As you think about *where* and *toward what* you want to have more strength of speech, open up the picture of that thought-feeling around blocking but *only at the rate and speed* that you can continue to hold the feeling of strength of speech constant ... or as you notice it increasing... as you open up that picture.

As you continue to see those times, places, events, people, words, tones, and whatever it *was* that *use to rob* you of this resource of strength, open up that movie as a sub-movie to your *much larger and bigger movie of strength* ... and notice what happens to the old movie of blocking as you *embed it in this resource* ... notice how it transforms and begins to yield to the higher governing influence of your state of strength and capability. And stay with those good feelings until you have programmed your brain to *go here* ever time that old trigger occurs and to *feel all of the power and resourcefulness of this higher and bigger movie*.

4) Confirm the embedding of your new strength state in the context of blocking.

Do you like this? *(Yes!)*
Does every part of you like this way of responding to those events? *(Yes!)*
So you’d like to keep this resource with you for the rest of your life? *(Yes!)*

Okay, so as you imagine yourself taking this frame of your strength state into tomorrow at work and in other contexts... see it, hear it, feel it ... and do you still like this? *(Yes!)*
And do you fully know that you can embed all kinds of problematic feelings and states inside of higher resources? *(Yes!)*

4) Modelling “Optimism”

Being optimistic about gaining fluency is obviously crucial to gaining fluency. For some people who block, it is crucial to hold out hope that there really is hope for gaining fluency. Regrettably, many people who block have been erroneously taught that there is no “cure” for blocking. I have chosen not to quote some of the authorities that I have read who say as much. I believe that this knowledge is

already wide spread in the speech pathology community. A key drive for my writing this book is to encourage you to discard those old teachings and begin a journey that holds much hope for you to gain fluency.

What makes up the dynamic state that we label “optimism?” This pattern also works best by enlisting a friend to guide you through the steps.

1) Elements of optimism

Seligman’s “Learned Helplessness,” and “Learned Optimism” research.

The 3 “P’s” (The ones that cause you to “pee” on yourself.) – (See Chapter 5)

Personal: Any and all bad things that happen are about me.

Pervasive: It’s about everything; it affects every part of me.

Permanent: It will last forever.

Learned optimism reverses these 3 “P’s” –

Not Personal: It is not about me. I am *more* than what happens to me.

Not Pervasive: It is about my speech in particular. It is about that alone.

Not Permanent: It is for the past only; and therefore, it is not forever.

The bare-bones structure of “optimism” –

1) Access a state of “not me!”

Think about anything that you clearly recognize and know is “not me” – like blocking.

Are you sure that this is *not* you? [Yes!] How do you know?

Make a clear movie of “me” so fully that you can distinguish the “not me”.

Fill up your *space of me* with your values and visions – the *real* you apart from the *behaviour* of blocking.

Establish a sense of boundary between self (real me) and not-self (blocking).

2) Form a vigorous and robust “me” and connect it to a specific time and place.

Think about an event (i.e., a context that you block regularly) that you find negative, hurtful, upsetting, undesired, etc. and from the fullness and richness of all your values and visions ... discover when and where it happened.

Discover what that event is *about*? What was that *all about*? – “I may think it is about how I speak but is that all? What else is my blocking in this context about?”

Now, with conviction and firmness say to yourself,

“It is about that particular time and it is not forever.”

“It is about (What you discovered.); it is not about everything.”

3) Access the thoughts (frames of mind) that are implied in this and add resources to those frames of mind that give them more *power*.

I have the choice to interpret it this way or that way.

I can use my intentionality to run my own brain, be true to my own values and visions.

Add other resources like energy, feeling good, etc.

4) Set firmly in place with strong agreement.

Are you fully aligned with this? Do you like this?

Does it empower you as a person?

Does it enhance your life?

Will you opt to think this way and use this as your frame?

5) Cycle through until you sense a strong level of optimism emerging.

Check and see. Has a sense of optimism yet emerged for you when you think about this?

6) Test and future pace

Commission your executive mind to take full and complete responsibility for this.

“I give my executive mind (my most “adult” higher mind) permission to take charge and when I am in those contexts to remind me who I really am and what resources I have access to.”

5) Meta-Stating Courage Pattern

Obviously, to overcome blocking, one must build up a strong sense of courage in order to overcome the fears. This pattern guides you in design engineering an empowered state of courage. The components of "courage" may vary depending upon how each person has created his/her structure of "courage." (Enlist a friend to guide you through this pattern.)

Pattern:

1) Access some state of thinking-and-feeling in which you *fear* something that brings on a block and you “know” that it isn’t a “reasonable” fear and regarding which, you want to respond with courage.

Examples: talking on the phone, speaking to an authority figure, speaking to a stranger, fear of blocking on certain letters or words, etc.

2) Flush out your current mental frames and meta-states about that *fear*.

How do you think and/or feel about that fear of that?

What do you believe about this fear? Is it a reasonable or irrational fear?

How well does this serve you?

Have you had enough of this old fear dominating your life?

3) Design engineer some higher level state, resource, belief, etc. that would allow your state of *courage* to become highly empowered.

Experiment with such resources as boldness, passion, faith, compelling outcome, etc.

Bring these higher level states of mind-emotion *to bear on* the lower abstractions to see what new configuration arises.

Suggestions for empowering courage – You have many ways by which you can build this empowering meta-level experience. It all depends on the specific state-on-state arrangement that you put together:

Joyous excitement in spite of fear

Boldness to take risks in reaching objective

Overwhelming sense of one's desired outcome to be fluent

Not-caring a fig for what others say or think while moving forward

Rejecting concern about embarrassment as irrelevant

Now play around with this meta-level construct of courage to *bring other states to bear on it* (meta-stating). Try them on. Discover for yourself how the meta-frame organizes, modulates, and drives the lower primary state:

Empowering Courage

(The first parenthesis () identifies a higher level state to bring to interface with the lower state.)

4) Check out the overall configuration that results.

Did you get courage from “bold about fear”?

5) Keep recycling through this meta-stating and design engineering process until the whole gestalt emerges.

Example:

Suppose you want a gestalt of noble-ferocious courage about making telephone calls. You may spend two or three days building up “ferocious courage.” First access a state of being absolutely ferocious and then *bring that to bear* on the state of “courage.” Practice making phone calls as you hold this state in mind.

After rehearsing a state of “ferocious courage,” then move to building a state of “noble-ferocious courage.” Access a state of being “noble.” Once you access that state, *bring “noble” to bear* on the state of “ferocious courage.” As you build that state, hold that state in mind and practice making phone calls.

One client had a real problem of calling business and asking information about products. As he progressed through the therapy, he would spend time each day just calling local business asking them about certain products. Of course he wasn’t interested in purchasing the product; he just wished to install the newly developed fluency states. Today that client is fluent.

Chapter Summary

Probably next to the Self Matrix the Power/Resource Matrix is the next most important one. The Power Matrix has to do with our sense of *power* and *resourcefulness* in dealing with the world. In the context of blocking, you will often view yourself as totally powerless over blocking. Because you will want to *stop* blocking (Intention Matrix), you will view yourself as being out of *control* and totally powerless.

A desire to maintain *Control* appears to be a major issue with many who block. If this is true for you then, “What would happen if you controlled your need to control?”

Seligman researched *learned helplessness*. He sums it up with these three categories: *personal*, *pervasive* and *permanent*. This applies to the person who blocks for they tend to *personalize* blocking

(Self Matrix), let it *pervade* other areas of life (Power Matrix) and believe it is *permanent* (Time Matrix.).

Learned optimism reverses this – blocking is *not* personal; it is *not* pervasive; and it is *not* permanent. When the person allows the perceived judgments of others (Other Matrix), to determine his feelings about himself, then that person has given his power away to other people. Having a sense of *power* and *resourcefulness* is a product of learned behavior. Therefore, we can learn to *get more of it!*

NINE: THE TIME MATRIX

Time Orientation and Blocking

Have you ever walked out the door of your home and stumbled over a hunk of “time”? Can you put “time” inside a wheelbarrow? “Time” is another one of those concepts that begins as a process but we language it into a “thing.” We convert a verb into a noun. Therefore, “*time*” is *not real outside the realm of thought*. You cannot smell it; you cannot touch it; you cannot hear it; it is a *construct* of the human mind and has only the meaning and reality that you choose to give it.

So, if “time” isn’t real and doesn’t exist “out there,” what does exist out there that leads to a concept of “time”? The answer is *events*. Events exist out there and it is from these events that we create this thing we call “time”.

When did you last block? In answering that question, you will no doubt send your brain to an “event” of a block that recently happened. And, by comparing that event to the present moment, you call into being this thing called “time” by stating when you last blocked. It was in the “past” time. “Time” happens because we can hold events in our mind and compare “when” those events happened to the present moment and to future imagined events. “Time” describes which movies we are playing in our mental theater. Are we playing events that have happened, are happening, or will happen?

It Matters Where We Place Our Attention.

Past, present or future – which one of those time orientations receives most of your attention? Where do you spend most of your time focusing your thinking – the *past*, the *present* or the *future*? Most of us have a preference. Some focus primarily on past events, some focus primarily in the present and others focus primarily on the future. This has major implication for how we live our lives.

Consider a recent client whose blocking problem dated back to childhood. This client is now retired. In discussing the origin of her blocking, I found out that as a child her relationship with her mother had a profound affect on her blocking and indeed her life. There are key thoughts (frames) around her blocking. Where is she focusing most of her attention? Here we have a woman in retirement still focusing her attention on childhood memories. Indeed, much of psychotherapy has to do with getting the person to move out of childhood painful memories to the joy of the present and the hope for the future.

In the session, I discovered that she not only focuses there, but mentally, she lives there as she associates inside those painful memories. Of course, all of this is unconscious. If it were conscious memories only, we could “fix” them. But, because they are “in the muscle,” they operate behind the scenes controlling one’s thought-feelings. In the case of blocking, they express themselves in those muscles surrounding speech. When it comes time for her to speak, all the anguish from the past fires up and by settling in her neck, chest and throat, she blocks. “It is like a rope around my neck choking me,” she explained. While in a block, she is having a classic panic attack. Instead of being a mature adult, she suddenly feels herself as a helpless little girl again desperately wanting her mother’s love.

This story doesn't have a happy ending. During the therapy sessions, she learned of many more painful memories that contributed to her blocking. She stopped the therapy session stating that she "had no idea that there was so much stuff behind her blocking." Since she was now retired, gaining fluency was not as important to her as it had been during her career.

Focusing on the Pain of the Past

People who block tend to live very much inside these past hurtful memories. When I say they very much live inside past hurtful memories, I am referring to those contexts that trigger the blocking. When the individual is in a context where speech is fluent, the person is not inside past memories. It only happens when some internal or external trigger "sends that person back" to those hurtful memories. That is when the individual moves from being an adult to becoming a child as she unconsciously goes back to those times of hurt and pain that created the blocking.

John Burton, Ed.D, addresses how *time* and our perception of it affect learning. In his recently released book *States of Equilibrium: Ascending the Levels of Human Development*, he states in the first chapter which is about how we humans learn:

Sometimes we misinterpret the cues in the environment and choose a response file that is not appropriate for the situation. When we misunderstand someone, for example, and take a comment out of context we may end up responding ineffectively. What one person calls aggressive another may have placed in the passive file. And so it remains, the map is not the territory. As Korzybski (1933, 1994) stated, we make maps or representations in our mind of the external world. But these maps become subjected to our limited awareness and misinterpretations of the external world. The result is that our internal map inaccurately represents the external world to some degree; the map is not the territory (external world).

The idea that previous learning determines current responses relates to B.F. Skinner's (1974) learning theory. Skinner states that we are simply a collection of response tendencies with various stimuli dictating to us. He claimed that people just respond to familiar cues in the environment in repetitive ways depending on their reinforcement history. They respond to the same cues in the same old way due to conditioning. I wonder if history repeats itself because people look to the past to decide how to respond in the present. If a current situation resembles an old situation, then the person just responds out of habit.

What would happen if we looked into our desired future to decide how to respond to our present? This would result in a person being outcome directed. When a person plans his future, this plan usually works out best by working from a clearly formed future outcome. A well-formed outcome naturally prescribes states and behaviors consistent with its successful completion...

John is ingenious with hypnotic language. Utilizing this skill, he asks an important question:

When you think about what you used to know, compared to what you know now, what new knowings do you now have? And when you think about what you do not yet know and look into your future, knowing then what you want to know now, what do you now know and how will you use it?

“Time” plays an important role in the mind of the person who blocks. The meanings you give about your understanding of *time* powerfully influence a great many of your emotions. And so often, your understanding of time becomes your enemy instead of your friend. Instead of thinking of time as something to simply recognize and embrace, you fight against it because of your experiences of the past and your fears of the future. The past means embarrassment, humiliation, abandonment, guilt, shame, etc. The present means more of the same and the future offers little hope. The belief frame, “I have always blocked and I always will block” can prove to be a challenge to dislodge.

So many people who block, when they do look to the future it is with what in psychology is called *anticipatory anxiety*. They anticipate blocking which almost certainly guarantees that they will block. And/or they plan ahead as to what to say; what words to choose that stand the least amount of chance of blocking on. Indeed, one word summarizes their concept of the future – *anxiety*. In the attempt to *not* block, fear and anxiety are triggered and they *block* their speech. Instead of hope and excitement there is nothing but more fear and anxiety.

Our relationship to time matters immensely. Michael Hall, Ph.D. states (2002):

There’s an *intelligence* (or lack thereof) to our relationship to these temporal (time) concepts. Healthy IQ and EQ (Emotional Quotient) relates to time in several ways. If we are able to live in the now with an eye on the future while using our past experiences for learning, we have a great strategy for our use of “time.” If we are able to sequence activities and to plan for our tomorrows, as well as to get lost in time when we are with loved ones, clients, children, etc., then we also have an excellent relationship to time. If we are able to step into a highly focused state where we can get lost in the moment so much that “time” goes away, then we have a way of really giving our creativity a chance to grow and develop. A well-formed time-line allows us to experience an overall sense of perspective about our entire life which, in turn, supports us in maintaining emotional well-being and balance.

Desires for the Future – Intention

Realizing their experiences in the past of blocking, the person obviously does not want to block so they set outcomes for themselves (Outcome/ Intentional Frames) similar to the following:

I am not going to repeat the past.

I am not going to make a fool of myself with my speech anymore.

If I block any emotion in this moment, it will give me more control.

I’m afraid this will be permanent so I will try hard to not block (Fear and anxiety intensifies the block as the person struggles to breakthrough the block which results in more stuttering.)

Many people focus on their past experiences of blocking and believe that because they have tried so many ways of conquering it but have failed, they believe that it is permanent.

Because the person has had such negative and horrific experiences in the past, they will place meanings about “time” around blocking from “I am doomed.” to “I got to fix this thing now.” Each person will have his own meanings around time. Some that we have heard are:

I am afraid my blocking is permanent.

I feel doomed to live in this cage the remainder of my life.

It has always been this way. No one can help me.

I am not making progress. It is useless. I give up.

I have to do something. I can't live with this forever.

I have to get it done, now.

I can't take my time to say what I want to say (sense of being rushed).

To pause is a sign of weakness. I got to get it out now!

Your Time-Line

Your *relationship* with your mental constructs about time has a lot to do with your personality and how you choose to live your life. Question: how do you know the difference between past memories and future dreams? How do you distinguish the past from the present and the present from the future? We discuss this thoroughly in our book *The User's Manual for the Brain* and our book *Adventures with Time-Lines*. The following paragraphs come primarily from *The User's Manual for the Brain*.

The brain must do something or we could not separate events in our lives. One clue lies in the very way we talk about time:

"I see it in front of me."

"I am stuck back there and I can't get out."

"I look forward to seeing you."

"It is no longer a problem to me; I have put it behind me."

Such statements are spatial metaphors about the concept of time and offer a description about how we make sense of "concepts" by using metaphors. The spatial metaphor for time enables us to "locate" time in relation to our bodies in space.

Try this experiment. Think of something you do on a regular basis. You may wish to think of driving to work or brushing your teeth. Remember a time about five years ago that you did this. Of course, you probably cannot recall a specific time. However, imagine a time five years ago when you probably performed that activity. Now, remember doing this same thing two years ago. Once you have done that, recall doing this thing last week. OK, good. Imagine doing the same thing in the present. Now, imagine doing it next week, two years hence and then five years from now.

As you recalled and imagined doing this thing, you probably had a series of pictures in your mind. As you look at those pictures again, what differences do you notice in the qualities of the picture (that is, the qualities and features of your movies.)?

Where do you see each picture in your field of vision?

Does each picture appear in color or black and white?

Does each picture have movement or not?

Does each picture appear as a 3D or flat picture?

Do you see yourself in each picture or do you look through your own eyes?

Does each picture have a frame around it or do they appear as a panoramic image?

How bright do the pictures appear? Does the brightness get brighter or darker the further back in time you go?

How far off do you see each picture?

As you look at each picture, how do they vary as far as focus?

The way we code time allows our brains to conceptually distinguish the "past" from the "present" and

the "future." It also allows us to know how long ago in the past that memory belongs. And, we can also distinguish the past from the present, and the past from the future, and also know how far that future is into the future. We are not usually consciously aware of doing this. Your unconscious mind remembers the location of your memories.

"When you woke up this morning, how did you know to be you?" We know because we have a collection of memories that when we look in a mirror, we compare what we see with the past memories of what we look like and we say, "Yes, that's me." We call this collection of memories the Time-Line.

In Time-Lining, the location of the pictures provides a crucial component. Most people code and store "time" in a linear manner. In listing the qualities/ submodalities of your Time-Line, did you notice the importance of location? This speaks about the spatial metaphor that you use for "time." Coding "time" using location is the brain's primary way of representing time sequentially.

Because of the spatial metaphor of a line for "time," we primarily use the visual factor of *location* in our coding and storing of "time." We code chronological distance in time in terms of size and/or distance. Brightness and intensity also indicate other aspects of time. We have "faded memories," a "dim or murky past," or a "bright future."

Patterns for Re-Defining “Time”

John Burton states (2002):

Blindly re-enacting the past to create a new outcome will not bring the outcome we seek. The spilt milk over which we cry has long since evaporated. The solution to our past always resides in our present and in knowing that the future holds a new present awaiting us.

The patterns for resolving all of our issues, and not just issues surrounding the Time Matrix, involve learning to live in the *now* with a focus on a brighter *future*. The following patterns are designed especially to assist you in developing a healthy attitude towards *time*. You want to learn from the past, but once you learn, you wish to let the hurt go. You want to be able to “stay out” of those hurtful memories of the past so that they do not negatively influence your present in the form of blocking.

Patterns for Re-Defining “Time”

Time Line “Qualities” (Submodalities)

Through Time/ In Time – It matters.

Meta-Stating a “New Decision” in Time – “The Decision Destroyer”

Letting Go of a Past Negative Emotion

1) Time-line qualities (The cinematic features of our movies that make them work)

- 1) **Pick an example activity like going to work, brushing your teeth, eating lunch, etc.**
- 2) **Think of several specific instances in which you did this activity.** (If you have difficulty eliciting specific memories, then simply imagine when you did these particular activities.)
 - a. a year ago
 - b. a week ago
 - c. yesterday
 - d. today
 - e. tomorrow
 - f. next week
 - g. next year

- 3) **Identify the varying qualities of each of the memories.** For this exercise, check all three major representational systems (pictures, sounds and feelings). Pay close attention to such things as each picture's location, associated/dissociated, distance, size, clarity, internal dialogue, etc.

You will have some way that you internally access these pictures in order to tell one from the other, since the content remains the same. How do you know one picture comes from the past, another from the present and another from the future? How do you know the difference between the far past and the near past?

- 4) **Think about similarities and differences. Compare the qualities of the past, present and future.**
- 5) **Experiment with your personal time sorts to see how that changes experiences.** Suppose you associate into your past memories and dissociated in your future pictures, what would happen if you reversed these? Or, suppose your future appears on the left and your past appears on the right, what would happen if you reversed these? What effect does switching a picture make? Play with other features and qualities of how you represent the memories. **When you finish experimenting, put everything back as it originally appeared.** If, however, you have made a shift that you like and is ecological for you, just leave the shift alone and let it settle in.

2) Through Time/ In Time

Did your images for the past, present and future all appear in front of you? If they did you function as a "Through Time" person. Your Time-Line stretches from right to left or it may be up and down, or even be at an angle or a "V" shape. Any combination may occur. The pictures comprising your Time-Line, however, will all appear somewhere out in front of you. A "Through Time" person usually operates in the Western mode of time. If you locate some of your Time-Line images behind you, so that the line passes through your body, then you probably operate in the Eastern mode of time, as an "In Time" person.

In Time/ Through Time

Your Time-Line affects our personality. (See Hall & Bodenhamer, *Figuring Out People: Design Engineering with Meta-Programs*, 1997-2000.) As mentioned earlier, your Time-Line may go in any direction. The Time-Line may appear as a straight line or it may appear as a spiral or a loop. You may be primarily Through Time or In Time. Through Time people usually dissociate from their memories. They see themselves in their memories. Because all of their Time-Line lies in front of them, time often has high value. These people have difficulty in wasting time. A Through Time person will want to get their money's worth.

You may be familiar with the Myers-Briggs♠ psychological instrument. A Through Time person scores as a Judger on the Myers Briggs♠. A Through Time Judger loves organization. He will do things step by step. He loves procedure. Time operates always at the conscious level. You can count on Through Time people to show up on time for an appointment. He will carry pocket calendars and love them. He loves goals and sets them regularly. He needs closure. A Through Time person will say, "Let's decide *now* and keep on keeping on."

An In Time person compares to the perceiver on the Myers Briggs. Remember, if any part of a person's Time-Line is behind them, she functions as In Time. An In Time person usually has her past pictures behind her. On the other hand, a Through Time person sees his past in front of him (usually to the left). Because of that the past may haunt him more than it does an In Time person. Each one has its own value. An In Time person has difficulty, however, in letting go of emotions. She lives "inside" or associated to the emotions.

Unlike the Through Time person, the In Time person has a tendency to associate into her memories. She looks through her own eyes at the past. Because of this, she feels the past as if it happens *now*. So, when blocking, she operates from an In-Time perspective. She unconsciously lives associated in past hurts that have locked in the block. Time-Lining is a godsend for an In Time person. For, Time-Lining allows her to dissociate from her past, reframe her problem and let go of the emotions.

On the Myers Briggs, the In Time person tests out as a perceiver. Organization is not a characteristic of an In Time person. A perceiver lives in the *now*. She lives for and enjoys the moment. Because an In Time person lives in the *now*, she makes a great lover. Time does not seem very important to her. On-the-other-hand, a Through Time person has difficulty living in the *now*. He has his past and his future as well as the *now* always present. Remember, a Through Time person's Time-Line always exists totally in front of him.

An In Time person is always present and desires to enjoy it, *now*. A favorite expression of an In Time person could be heard to say: "Be here *now*." Living in a constant state of association, In Time people may have a different problem each week. An In Time person can recall and re-experience any memory or state she wishes whenever she wishes. In Time people have difficulty punching a time clock and being on time for appointments. Because she lives so in the moment, she may forget the next appointment. As to organizers and to-do lists, she will give it low importance. Oh, she may use them to make a living, but don't expect her to like them. As a perceiver, she functions opposite the judger. The In Time person does not want immediate closure; she wishes to keep her options open. In Time people adjust to life as life presents itself.

Can one function from both Through Time and In Time characteristics? Yes, most definitely. You may display behavior of both in different contexts. The purpose of NLP increases choice. Some people operate healthily in both modes of time.

3) Meta-Stating A New Decision in "Time" "The Decision Destroyer"

The numbers indicate five key positions involved in Time-Lining.

Position 1 lies just above the present on the Time-Line.

Position 2 lies directly above the root cause or the event that triggered the problem.

Position 3 refers to the position above your Time-Line, approximately fifteen minutes before the root cause or the event trigger.

Position 4 indicates your associating into the event.

Position 5 is on the time-line about 15 minutes before the event.

In working with people who block, as with the vast majority of those people whom I have seen, they still suffer from old limiting decisions. "The Decision Destroyer" works to undo false, unuseful, and toxic mappings from past events that are no longer needed. You can re-code an old decision and update it.

The Pattern:

Identify your Time-Line.

Think of some simple activity that you did this morning, then think about it last week, last year, 2 years ago, 5 years ago ... next week, next month, next year, 2 years from now, 5 years from now.

Where do you locate these memories and imagination?

What kind of a configuration do you have these in: a line, circle, drawer, roll-a-dex, etc.?

Differences in pictures, sounds, feelings?

Float above your sense of “time” and draw a Time-Line.

Now float back to a specific memory and then float forward and beyond the present and into your future.

Identify a decision, belief, experience, etc. in your history (Position #4) in which you experience some hurtful, ugly things and made some very un-useful maps that have contributed to your blocking such as a peer making fun of you.

A limiting decision about who you are because you stutter

A limiting belief about your capabilities or lack thereof because you stutter

A limiting hurt that you can still feel bad about such as a peer making fun of you in school

Access, anchor, and amplify some resources.

Come back to the present and identify resources.

What resourceful adult states, ideas, understandings, beliefs, decisions, etc. would have transformed that old experience had you had access to them at that time?

Associate into those resources and anchor.

You may choose to associate into them one at a time and “stack” the anchor on the same spot. (By stacking an anchor we are referring to your associating into several instances of having a resource and anchoring those resources on the same place.)

Float up and then back on your Time-Line to 15 minutes before the event (Position #3).

Being above and before the event of the limiting decision and seeing that moment below you and in front of you, if there should be any negative emotion still remaining from that moment, just *let it go* now.

Some like imagining on the end of their fingers and toes water faucets and they just open up those water faucets and let those negative emotions go.

Drop down onto your Time-Line just before the event and be in Position 5. Fire the anchor for the resource state.

While holding the resource anchor, come forward associated on your Time-Line and re-live that old experience but this time with the added resources ... and as you do, allow the resources to totally transform everything.

Once you have re-lived and re-imprinted that old experience, come forward up your Time-Line to the present re-imprinting any other old decision.

If there are other times when you made a limiting decision that you would love to re-decision, take these same resources to just before you made that decision and come forward re-imprinting that old decision with these new resources – relive each painful memory with these newly added resources.

And as you do that notice as you re-imprint that old decision what new and resourceful decision just emerges.

Future pace and check ecology

Take these added resources out into the future with the *new decisions* that you have now made.

Notice how your future will now be not operating off those old limiting decisions.

4) Letting Go of a Past Negative Emotion – Time-Lining

The following pattern has proven most effective in letting go of a negative emotion installed in the past. The model as presented here comes from Tad James' Time-Line Therapy® of Advanced Neuro-Dynamics.

Negative emotions weigh like millstones around our necks. They rob us of energy that we could more productively use in any other pursuits. Time-Lining will help us solve the problems of negative emotions rapidly and effectively. The following procedures will work with any negative emotion including depression, guilt, shame, and fear from the past, grief and sadness.

Experiencing Your Time-Line: Letting Go Of Negative Emotions

The best way to learn Time-Lining as with any NLP technique involves experiencing it. As with most patterns, this pattern works best by having someone coach you through the steps so you can focus on working the process.

The Pattern

- 1) **Think of a former hurtful memory related to your blocking that still has negative emotions when you recall it.** This could be a memory of a teacher, parent or someone making fun of your speech. It could be a memory of embarrassment related to your speech.
- 2) **Discover the root cause:** Ask your self, "If I knew the root cause of the negative emotion which when I disconnect from it will cause the negative emotion to disappear, when would that have been?"
- 3) **Once you get the root cause, float up above your Time-Line. Once above your Time-Line, go back into the past towards the root cause of the negative emotion.**

Say to your self, "Allow your unconscious mind to take you back to the root cause of the negative emotion." Stop when you get close to it but not quite to it. Float back remaining above your Time-Line. From this position you can see the event which presents the root cause of the negative emotion directly below you.

4) Associate into the negative event (Position 4).

Once positioned directly over the event, float down into the event and associate into your body.

Do this, "Just drop down into that event looking through your own eyes, hearing what you heard during that experience feeling what you felt during that time."

What emotions do you feel? Make a list of all the emotions that you experience. In testing, use this list to make sure all the emotions go flat.

Why float down into Position 4? Why associate into the experience? You will get better results if you experience these emotions just before you disconnect from them. One moment you experience all the pain and hurt from the root cause of the negative experience. The next moment those

emotions disappear.

5) Float out of Position 4 and above your Time-Line. Preserve what you have learned from the experience.

"You may have learned something from this experience, haven't you?" If so, "In that special place in your mind where you preserve such learnings, preserve what you have learned from this experience." Now I am presupposing that there is a special place in the mind to preserve such learnings. The mind will accept this description and create such a "special place."

This procedure works well as a reframe. Why preserve learnings? Even in the most severe trauma or abuse case, you usually learn something helpful. Suppose you experienced a rape (I have discovered several people who block whose primary contributing factor were sexual abuse including rape.). Preserving the learnings would keep you on guard for future threatening situations. You would not want her to have to go through rape again to learn the signs of another possible rape.

6) Float back fifteen minutes before the event to Position 3 and look forward to the present.

"Remaining above your Time-Line, I want you to float back to about fifteen minutes before the event."
"Do you see the event below and in front of you?"

"Now where are all those emotions? Have all of those emotions that were there disappeared too?" (You may wish to use the metaphor of the water faucets in the earlier Time-Lining exercise.)

Some times it may take you a few moments to let the emotions go. You are actually re-framing the negative emotion as you bring present adult resources to bear on the problem. Take all the time you need to complete the process.

"Now let those emotions flow right out of you." Name the negative emotions that you elicited earlier (Step #4) as you let them go.

7) Floating back to Position 2. Associate into Position 4 by dropping back down into the original hurtful memory.

"Are you experiencing any of the negative emotions?" Make sure the emotions have flattened out. By that I mean that you no longer experiences any of the previous felt negative emotions when associated into Position 4.

If you cannot experience any negative emotions, you have almost completed the therapy.

If there are still negative emotions, repeat the process beginning at the first of the pattern searching for an earlier experience.

If you cannot find an earlier event, ask if any part of you objects to letting go all of these emotions. If so, welcome that part and seek out its highest purpose and check for a healthier way to meet its objectives without hanging on to these negative emotions.

8) Float out of Position 4 and above your Time-Line. Come forward above the Time-Line.

"I want you to come forward above your Time-Line but only as fast as you can allow all the other events between then and *now* with similar emotions to **LET GO**. Pay particular attention to these events. And, just before you get to them, should you experience any negative emotions from that experience, let your coach know and your coach will assist you in letting them go just as you have on the previous memories."

9) Future pace by associating into an imaginary time in the future.

Choose a time that would have previously triggered the negative emotions and created the block.

Float above the Time-Line and out into the future. Float down into that event fully associated and test to make sure there are no more negative emotions.

Chapter Summary

“Time” is a conceptual reality. You have never stumbled over a hunk of “time,” have you?

“Time” is another one of those *nominalizations* where we take a process (verb) and make a noun (thing) out of it.

Our relationship with this concept or thought is of utmost importance. Is “time” your friend or enemy? How does “time” affect your blocking? Do you believe your blocking is permanent or temporary?

Do you focus more on the past, present or future? It does make a difference. If you focus either consciously or unconsciously on the past and *primarily* only on the *pain* of the past, then that creates a lot of pain and ultimately depression.

Our research indicates that blocking is a product of unconsciously *going back* and living in those past stressful memories that created the blocking.

The *fix* to blocking involves your coming into the *present*; disconnecting from the pain of the *past* with a very healthy look towards the *future*.

We all have a Time-Line(s). If any part of your Time-Line passes through your body you are known as being “In-Time.” If all of your Time-Line is out in front of you, you are known as a Through Time person. In-Time people are not too aware of “time” whereas Through-Time people are.

TEN: THE OTHER MATRIX

Introduction

Recently I e-mailed this question to a new client, who had a problem of blocking when he was delivering a public speech, “What is there about public speaking that triggers tension and fear of speaking?” He replied,

“The fact that there are tens of people all staring at me and expecting me to deliver a perfectly fluent speech in a short amount of time is the problem. All of the pressure/tension/fear comes from those expectations. The more I try to speak like a non-stutterer, the tighter my throat gets. I think that if every person in this world stuttered and stuttering was the norm, I might actually enjoy public speaking.”

Later in my e-mail I asked him, “If you absolutely did not care what other people thought of your speech, what would happen to your speech?” He replied,

“I would think that my speech would improve greatly. It is really hard to say for sure how my speech would be in that situation because we don't live in a society where people do not care or notice if someone stutters. However, I am positive that there would be no nervousness or anxiety before a speaking situation.”

To my directions, “Begin comparing and contrasting your state of mind between when you are alone and when you stutter. What are the differences? What are you seeing, hearing, feeling and how are you talking to yourself differently between fluency and stuttering?” He explained,

“When I am alone, I couldn't care less if I stutter or not. Consequently, there is no anxiety, nervousness, or tightness in my chest/throat. There is no need to anticipate or mentally prepare for a speaking situation *where I have a chance to humiliate myself*. Therefore, every sound comes out perfectly. When I stutter, I always find myself rehearsing in my mind the exact words I am going to say because I may need to substitute some trouble words. There is always an anxiety and fear of what will happen when I stutter or block. *How will the audience react? Will they laugh or look uncomfortable watching me strain to get the words out? Will I be a failure in their eyes?*” (italics mine)

Does this sound familiar? Note his very first statement: “The fact that there are tens of people all staring at me and expecting me to deliver a perfectly fluent speech... All of the pressure/tension fear comes from those expectations.” His very first statement goes right to one of the central problems of blocking – fear of what others may think about one's speech. Note that this person said that his expectations of a fluent speech are a “fact.” That doesn't leave any room for exceptions. Of course, he was mind-reading the expectations of the audience. How did he know this? Did he go and ask each one individually?

In his last paragraph, I have italicized some key statements. Note his fear of his humiliating himself; his fear of them laughing at him; his fear of them being uncomfortable if he can't get the words out. These are all very common fears. This all boils down to fearing what others may think of one's speech.

The following transcript came from a recent session. I will call her Sally. \

Sally had a feeling of great tightness around her throat when she spoke to other people. This tightness was especially strong when she was in a social situation.

“So, Sally, when you are in a social situation, you really feel tightness around your throat?”

“Yes.”

“And what does the tightness mean to you?”

“Terror!”

“So, behind the tightness is terror?”

“Yes, oh, yes. I am terrified of speaking to other people. Whenever I am in a social situation and even think of speaking, I become terrified.”

“Does speaking to other people have any other meanings to you?”

“I want to remain invisible. I don’t want anyone to see me.”

“What are you terrified of Sally?”

“I am afraid I will stutter.”

“So, when you speak to other people you become terrified that you will stutter and you want to be invisible? What is there about speaking to other people that causes you to choose to be terrified of stuttering and want to be invisible?”

“Everyone will be uncomfortable. They will not want to talk to me. They may not like me.”

“Oh, I see. So you are afraid that the other people will become uncomfortable with your stuttering and because of their being uncomfortable, they will not want to talk to you?”

“Yes, that is correct.”

“Tell me, how do you know that they may not like you?”

“Stuttering sounds bad. Everybody knows that. And, people judge you by how you look and how you talk?”

“Oh, they do? **Everyone** judges you by how you look and how you talk?”

“Of course. Sure they do.”

“Have you asked them? How many people have told you that in the last few years?”

“Well, I haven’t asked everyone, but everybody knows you are judged by how you look and how you talk.” (Sally was adamant about holding onto that belief of other people judging her primarily by how she talked.)

“Sally, how come you want to be invisible? How long have you wanted to be invisible?”

“I have wanted to be invisible ever since I was a little girl.”

“What was that about? How come you wanted to be invisible as a little girl?”

“As a little girl, I was afraid to open my mouth or mother would get mad. She was always critical of me. She never complimented me. Mother was a witch. She looked like a witch. I can see her face now.”

“You were afraid to speak or your mother would get mad? She even looked like a witch?”

“Yes, I can see her face now.”

“What do you feel when you see your mothers’ face?”

“I feel that tightening around my throat. It is like a rope choking me.”

“So, you were afraid to speak up in your home and you wanted to be invisible?”

“Yes, mom and dad fought all the time. I remember momma with a knife trying to kill dad. They were running around and dad begged her to put the knife away. I was afraid momma would kill me. I wanted to be invisible.”

“You have a movie in your mind of your mother trying to kill your dad and you were afraid she would kill you?”

“Yes, and it terrified me.”

“So, we sure know where much of that terror comes from. Where do you feel that terror in your body?”

“In my jaw.”

I believe you have enough information now to know where Sally learned to be fearful of speaking. Growing up in that terribly dysfunctional family, Sally learned that to survive; it was best for her to remain quiet and invisible. Not mentioned above were comments about her father. Her dad also was critical of her. She never could be good enough for him. From her mother and father, Sally learned to be fearful of the judgments of other people.

Important, note where Sally embodied the emotions from the childhood trauma. She experienced those negative emotions in her throat and in her jaw. Thus, blocking was created in an attempt to remain invisible and not avoid judgment. (As of this writing Sally has let those fears go and she is speaking with much more fluency.)

Without question, the fear of the judgment of others drives a lot of blocking. *Every person that I know who overcame blocking was able to reach the point where what others may or may not think of how he/she spoke did not matter.* They became confident enough within themselves that the former fearing the judgment of others became of no concern. Note, my comment – they become so confident within *themselves* that they give up the fear of being judged by others. In order to let the fear of judgment go, one must have a healthy self-esteem, self-respect, self-confidence, etc. The Self Matrix must become healthy in order to let the fear of others judging one go.

The “Other Matrix” asks the question, “What kind of internal mapping do you create about your relationship with people?” Speaking generally, the Other Matrix defines how you define your relationship with other people in your circle of influence. Are you comfortable with other people? Does your relationship with others change from context to context? Are you more comfortable around people you feel “safe” with? How do you feel when you relate to an authority figure? Are you more comfortable with males or females or does it matter? As with all meaning, our relationship with others is context dependent – it can change from person to person.

Creating Blocking from the “Other” Matrix

In relating to *others*, the person thinks: “I will avoid any situations around people or groups that will attract attention to me and expose this weakness.” “I will try to cover up or block the stuttering, if I am around people, so I won’t look foolish.” “If I try to communicate I will probably stutter and they will laugh at me. I don’t want them to laugh at me and think that I am less than they are.”

Desires/outcomes/intentions in relation to others

I am not going to attract attention.

I am not going to let others see my vulnerabilities.

I will not give others the chance to laugh at me.

I will not let them see me struggle.

I will avoid any situations around people or groups that will expose this weakness.

I will try to cover the stuttering up.

Because of the above desires, the person who blocks draws conclusions about blocking as:

It is not OK to block.

I am fearful of being rejected.

Others expect me to speak fluently.

They don’t want me to pause. They want me to “spit it out.”

If I pause, that shows I am weak.

If I pause, they will think I do not know what I am talking about.

I can’t measure up to their expectations.

If they don’t validate me it will hurt. And, how can they validate me if I block.

I had rather be invisible than to block. I feel so isolated.

If I block, I will not ever find someone to marry me.

I always feel “less than” because of my blocking.

I look foolish.

People judge you by how you talk.

People validate or determine my worth by how I talk.

What people say about me becomes the truth.

People judge the content of what I am saying.

I must protect myself from being hurt by others.

I must conceal my emotions.

I am doing something “bad” to them if I block.

Developmental Theories

How do we develop such limiting beliefs about our relationship with others? We do believe that they are primarily learned beliefs. When we come into this world, we obviously are totally dependent on caregivers to provide our needs. We have to have caregivers for our very survival. We have no sense of “self.” We are bound to mom for our very survival and as such we have neither boundaries nor ego. Only later will we learn what it means to be a separate entity unto ourselves with our own sense of self.

As we grow we develop our own sense of who we are, separate from a caregiver. However, in order to mature into a healthy adult, we must have a “secure” environment and experience unconditional love by bonding with our parents in those early years. Without that, we grow up like Sally, feeling isolated and fearful of other people. Sally learned that adults were dangerous and were to be avoided. Thus, she

felt a need to be “invisible.” Had Sally had a loving and accepting mother, supported by a loving and supportive father, Sally would not have feared social settings so much. *And, Sally, in all likelihood, would not have grown up blocking.* Remember where she embodied those negative emotions from the lack of bonding and unconditional love – in her throat and jaw.

The “Other Matrix” is extremely important for understanding many of our problem states, for they root primarily in childhood memories. Because of this, I have enlisted the assistance of John Burton, Ed. D. I wish to spend some time in exploring theories about how and when we learn to relate to others from Developmental Psychology. Dr. Burton is an authority in Developmental Psychology. The following information has come from his wisdom and is written mainly by him:

Several theories in psychology include concepts that describe the degree of a person’s self-directedness; how much one relies on self versus others to determine one’s own thoughts, emotions and behaviors. In this case, two of these theories are human development theories and the third is what is known as the “locus of control” concept.

Loevinger

The first reference described here draws from the human development theory of Jane Loevinger (1976). In Loevinger’s theory, the ego acts as a device within a person that moderates between one’s impulses and environmental influences. The strength of the ego determines how much a person is able to override impulses and not react in a “knee-jerk” fashion to the environment. If this sounds Freudian, it is. In the Matrix terminology, we are here equating ego with the Self Matrix.

You could think of the ego as a sort of meta-state that oversees, modifies and directs behavior. You might also think of the ego as our sense of self, values and beliefs. As your ego develops over time, you think for yourself rather than acting on impulse but, at birth through most of your childhood, your ego was not developed enough to play a significant role in modifying your impulses.

Loevinger envisions people developing in a stage-wise progression through the lifespan. While not everyone develops to the same degree, generally, as we grow through adolescence and young adulthood, we gradually develop a more sophisticated ego. This ego then acts to increasingly rely on our internal resources rather than just reacting to the environment. The particular pivot point in Loevinger’s theory at which this ego gains independence is known as the “self-aware stage.” The stage just before the self-aware stage is known as the “conformist” stage of development.

The conformist stage of development is characterized by a strong need to blend in with the masses and hide any individual differences. The conformist believes that individual differences are bad. The conformist takes behavioral cues almost exclusively from the environment. In earlier stages of development before the conformist stage, the motto is “how can you please me?” At the conformist stage, the motto is “How can I please you?”

The conformist makes decisions based on an all-consuming need to gain acceptance and approval from others. Opinions from others, real or anticipated, rule the conformist’s decision making. This mentality sets up great fears and an absence of self-reliance. An adversarial relationship develops between the individual and the environment. An underlying tug of war ensues that involves reliance versus denial of self.

Dr. Burton believes that much underlying anger at self and others sits just below the conscious mind at this level of development, followed by a great need to blame. I agree with him and have discovered that underneath the fear of what others will think of dysfluency often lies anger at how the person who stutters was treated by parents or significant adults.

Moving to the level of development just beyond the conformist, the self-aware level, the individual recognizes and begins to value differences between people. These differences get expressed at the self-aware level, rather than suppressed as with the conformist level. A greater reliance on self as the source of decision making begins now. *The self-aware person better defines his own values and beliefs. His valuation is unique to himself and is not dependent on the voice of others.*

Once the person who stutters becomes self-aware with the internal locus of control, than that person is well on the road to fluency if not already there. Having “self-awareness” empowers the person to not to care what others may or may not think of how he or she speaks. And, in this not caring about what other people think lays the key to removing the fears and anxieties that drive blocking.

Erikson

Another theory of human development also places the issues of self-determined behavior in a central position. The human development theory by Erik Erikson (1963) identifies three particularly influential stages in forming *self-reliance versus dependence on others*. The first of these three stages is the one that begins at birth and covers roughly the first year of life.

This first stage of development consists of a challenge known as *trust versus mistrust*. During this stage, the person makes a monumental decision about whether or not others can be trusted. Based on whether or not the environment provides early nurturing and sustenance in a safe and dependable way, the child decides if other people can be trusted. If the newborn’s needs are met, then others are accepted as trustworthy. However, if the newborn’s needs are frustrated or met inconsistently, or the newborn experiences neglect or abuse, then others are believed to be *not* trustworthy. Trust serves as the foundation for all future relationships, determining the degree of emotional closeness that can develop between people. You can imagine the implications and influence of this foundational stage.

Erikson’s second stage of development that strongly influences emotional independence is the stage of *autonomy versus doubt and shame*. This second stage of development spans roughly from 18 months of age through 36 months of age. The child attempts to negotiate and balance an increasing need to explore the environment and exert a will. This need meets up with parental control. Ideally, the child gets a sort of supervised and encouraged increased range of behavior and broadens her physical abilities in quality and quantity. The child can then develop a sense of autonomy or increasing self-sufficiency. But if parents squelch this innate need to explore and expand, then the child begins to feel *doubt about self and shame about these natural needs*.

The next stage of development identified by Erikson also plays a crucial role in gaining a sense of independence is known as *initiative versus guilt*. This stage spans from about age three to about age six. During this stage the child learns to identify her own personal needs and figure out how to meet these needs. The challenge is finding the balance between meeting her needs while considering the needs of others. The child, with parental and extended family help, develops an ability to take initiative in meeting her own needs and a sense of competence now that the previous stage allowed her to identify his own needs.

The potential problem that can occur at this stage happens when the parents or significant others squelch the child and suggest the child feel guilty for either having a need or for pursuing the need. The result is a *guilty* feeling child who either knows she has needs but is not allowed to meet them, or a child who has so severely disconnected from herself that she does not now know her needs. She must then let others dictate her behavior to her in order to avoid further guilt. Dr. Burton believes this is the stage at which co-dependency develops.

Consider Sally whom you met in the first of this chapter. Sally was never allowed to have needs. If she expressed needs for herself or anything for that matter, her mother would tell her to shut up. Sally explained:

“As a little girl, I was afraid to open my mouth or mother would get mad. She was always critical of me. She never complimented me. Mother was a witch. She looked like a witch. I can see her face now.”

Add to this that Sally could never be good enough for her father. No wonder Sally grew up letting others control her state. Now, Sally is an extreme case but one that well exemplifies what I have found with so many people who block – allowing the fear of what others may think of one’s speech to create enormous fear and anxiety that gets expressed in blocking. Sally also had what is called a “shame based personality.” She was never allowed to develop a will of her own. Everything revolved around satisfying the needs of her mother. So, she had no sense of autonomy but only self-doubt and shame.

Julian Rotter

The third theory addressing the degree of self-directedness comes from the British Psychologist, Julian Rotter (1966). In the 1960’s, Rotter developed a concept he termed *locus of control*. The *locus of control* refers to the location where a person believes the influencing forces in life originate. Rotter identified a continuum of *locus of control* stretching from *internal to external*.

Internal locus of control exists when a person believes he is the *master of his own fate*. Resources within the individual determine thoughts, emotions and behaviors as well as responses to events. The person believing in internal locus of control sees himself as solely responsible for his own choices, as he also realizes he has choices. This person views consequences in life as resulting from individual effort and skill. This person tends to utilize assertiveness skills when dealing with others.

A person with an internal locus of control views himself as being in control and does not let others determine his state. I have never found a person who blocks with an internal locus of control in the contexts that triggered blocking. Now, in some contexts, the person would have an internal locus of control, but in those wherein he blocked regularly, the locus of control went external.

An external locus of control exists when a person believes that the environment determines fate. Consequences in life are believed to result from forces outside of the individual’s control. Here the individual does not rely on his internal resources, rather defers to and feels helpless toward others and the environment. This person tends toward passiveness or a passive-aggressive style when dealing with others. This describes much of the behavior of the person who blocks.

Patterns For Re-Defining How We Relate To “Others”

Fearing what others may think drives us into many unresourceful states. What would happen if you no longer cared what others thought of you? Not fearing what others thought of us would make dramatic

improvement in how we behave. Of course, I am not referring to not caring about valuable feedback. We want that but we don't want to *personalize* the criticisms we receive.

Again, I wish to emphasize the “in the muscle” reality of most of the beliefs that surround our deep problem states. This reality has led many to believe that some cognitive emotional problems like blocking are caused by physical defects. We do not believe that. We do believe that the problem thought patterns that drive this behavior are unconscious – in the muscle and in one's behaviors. As such they are often quite difficult to “fix.” One needs tools to access these unconscious thought patterns to heal them. The following patterns are designed to do that.

Patterns for Re-Defining How We Relate to “Others”:

Meta-Model Questions

Establishing Good Boundaries Pattern

The Power-Zone Pattern With the “Responsibility To/For” Pattern

1) Meta-Model Questions

Applying Critical Thinking To *How I Perceive The Judgments Of Others*

Chapter one introduced you to critical thinking in how you language your perception. These questions come from the *first model of NLP* called *The Meta-Model of Language*. Let's do an exploration of how you relate to *others* and how you give them permission to have *rent free space* inside your head. What does it mean to allow them to have “rent free space inside my head?” I mean that when you *perceive* that they are judging “you” by how you talk, then you are giving them “rent free space” inside your head. By *guessing* what judgments they may or may not be making about you, you are in fact *mind-reading* that person. You do not know whether or not they are judging you in most cases unless you ask them.

When you *anticipate judgment* from them, you are mind-reading them. The questions of the Meta-Model challenge this type thinking. These questions force you *outside* that kind of thinking and lead you to consider other ways of perceiving. For the purpose of fully understanding the actual mechanisms involved, let's curiously find out how you do it so regularly, systematically, and methodically. Have your partner ask you the following questions in the context of pre-judging the judgments of others:

When do other people judge you?

Where do they judge you? Where do they not judge you?

How do you know they are judging you? Are you absolutely certain that they are judging you?

How do you do the process of mind-reading that they are judging you? What do you see, hear, feel and how do you talk to yourself in order to create the fear of their judging you?

What do you do with your breath? How does your breathing change?

How do your facial features change from when you perceive that people are judging you to those times that you do not perceive people are judging you?

What thoughts are driving the experience of fearing that others are judging you?

What are the thoughts in the back of the mind about that? And what thought is behind that? Etc. Keep asking the back-of-the-mind question until there are no other thoughts or questions there.

Do you have any memories that contribute to fearing that others are judging you?

Are those events now present in your life or are they old and presently irrelevant?

Do you have any imaginations about what others judging you will lead to? What fearful apprehensions?

Do those imaginations and fears serve you? If not, what will?

What if you didn't care about what the other person thought of your speech?

What would happen if you didn't care about *how* you spoke and what others may or may not think of your speech but focused on the *content* of the conversation instead? What stops you from doing that?

2) Good Boundaries Pattern

We experience "co-dependent" relating when we become overly involved with others and assume responsibility for things that we should leave to them. Because co-dependency involves poor ego-boundaries and the failure to assume proper responsibility, people who get into this style of thinking-and-feeling typically lack a good boundary development. The Boundary Pattern enables us to set personal boundaries which leads to a greater sense of personal power, security, and centeredness.

Co-dependent behavior usually expresses itself in not giving other people permission to have their own thoughts and their own feelings. When we mind-read what others think about us, we are refusing to let them own their own thoughts and feelings and are therefore assuming a responsibility for their thought-feelings that is not ours to own. The following frames come from my notes with clients. These mental frames were around and drove their blocking and they are very typical:

"If I make everybody happy, then I stay out of trouble."

"I am only worth what other people think of me."

"Someday I would like to have my own convictions and not worry about what others think of me."

"I have to 'get it out quick' to please the other person."

"If I accept and operate from my own authority, others will abandon me or it will end up in a fight."

"If I please him, he will love me."

"They have control over you. They determine your worth."

"I feel like a piece of shit. I have no power. They are going to come and kill me. I am alone and abandoned."

"I feel guilty because I am not pleasing her (his spiritual leader). It is like I need mother's approval to connect with God. I have made a mother out of her."

"If I had value I would be accepted."

"I am not acceptable."

"I feel totally devalued."

"I am afraid to speak freely because I will be judged."

"They won't believe me if I speak."

"Everybody is better than me. I am always apologizing for myself."

"I have to take on other people's stuff."

"I don't want them to be mad at me."

"They will look at me and they will judge me."

"I fear blocking. I create images of people judging me for blocking."

"I can never give enough."

"I am afraid I will let them down."

A clear pattern with these mental frames is that the individual has not been able to differentiate between herself and the other person. She has given too much power over to the other person and, by

not having proper boundaries; she has given the other person permission to control her state of mind. Much of this has to do with “guessing” or mind-reading what the other person may or may not be thinking-feeling. By drawing proper boundaries between herself and the other person, she will give them permission to have their thought-feelings as she will own her thoughts and feelings.

This pattern provides an addition to the Power Zone Pattern. Both work in assisting us in setting those boundaries between ourselves and others so that we can operate from a proper framework of “responsibility to” and “responsibility for.” A mental healthy person knows that her sense of self-worth comes from the inside and not from others.

The Pattern

L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.

1) Identify a boundary problem

What problems do you experience which arise from the lack of good, solid, and firm boundaries? How much does this contribute to your blocking?

For example, you might feel responsible for how another feels, you rescue them from the problems they create for themselves or worry more about something in another's life than they do, etc.

"Boundaries," refer to ego-boundaries that give us a sense of "me" in contradistinction to "other."

Within the "boundary" we experience our values, beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and sense of identity.

∨

2) Create a sense of “self” space and its boundaries.

Using your physical sense of your territorial "space," imagine it and feel it moving out to eighteen inches or two feet as a literal space all around you. This is your power zone.∨

Begin filling up this space with qualities, thoughts, feelings, resources, values, etc. that belong uniquely to you (i.e. assertiveness, confidence, dignity, love, trustworthy, etc.). Do this with pictures, sounds or kinesthetically move the resources into your “self” space.∨

Anchor it with a color, word, or object.

3) Solidify the boundary.

At the end of your personal space imagine an invisible boundary.

You might imagine it as a force field as in Star Trek, or a Plexiglas, or a boundary form that provides a separate sense of "me" apart from and different than everybody out there.

Fully experience this individuation from first person and anchor it.

4) Take second position.

Step out of yourself momentarily as you take second position with someone who values you and respects your boundaries. From their eyes, see the “you” with good boundaries.

Hear them validating and appreciating these boundaries.

Notice anything that you might need to make the resource even better.

5) Reassume first position.

Identify, amplify, and validate every personal value, belief, and understanding that makes you distinct from other people.

Future pace this way of orienting yourself in the world.√

6) Trouble-shoot.

Imagine meeting someone who does not respect your boundaries and who talks and acts in ways in vain to get through your boundaries.

See them trying while your resourceful “self” expresses the thoughts that keep the boundaries up and in good shape.√

7) Check ecology and future pace.

Imagine using these boundaries as you move into your future. "And you can now imagine how it would feel to move out into the world with this..."

3) The Power-Zone Pattern with Responsibility To/ For

Adopted from L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.

The Pattern:

Note: This is the same pattern we learned in Chapter 3 but with the “Responsibility To/ For” step added (Step #7). I will list the steps and refer the reader back to the pattern in Chapter 3 for a full explanation of each step.

1) Access a full experience of your “Four Central Powers.”

2) Access and amplify the resource state of ownership.

3) Access the states of acceptance and appreciation of “mine!”

4) Amplify these states until your neurology radiates and apply to your power zone.

5) Imagine pushing other people’s judgments on how you speak away from you.

6) Run the Meta-No/ Meta-Yes Pattern

7) Take ownership of Power Zone and distinguish responsibility “To” and “For” other people.

Note: Responsibility “for” establishes personal “accountability.” The word “responsibility” refers to one’s “ability to respond.” It means to have power to act, to exercise influence, to

control things, etc. This establishes what you are responsible “for.” Taking full responsibility for your blocking is essential for you to gain control of it.

Ask yourself the question, “*Do I realistically have power over someone else’s four powers?*” Or, are they and they alone responsible for how they think, feel, speak and behave? Obviously, just as you are to “own” your four powers, give other people the privilege and responsibility to own their powers. *Stop* trying to do that for them by *guessing* or *mind-reading* what they may or may not think of your speech.

We are all responsible *only* “for” ourselves and what occurs within ourselves. We are responsible “to” others in how we behave towards them but *never* are we responsible *for* how they speak and behave towards us. My mother used to say, “You make your bed, you must sleep in it.” That is an old Appalachian mountain saying for personal responsibility. By being responsible *to* others, we create healthy relationships. Thinking one is responsible *for* them creates co-depending relationships. There is a big difference between the two.

Michael Hall summarizes:

You are responsible *for* your thoughts (beliefs, understanding, values, etc.), your emotions (feelings, moods, states), your words (language, speech, speaking patterns), and your behaviors (actions, reactions, commitments, etc.). Generally speaking, then your “responsibility for” *ends at your nose*.

Please understand, as long as you *blame* other people for judging how you speak and behave, you will, in all likelihood, *never* overcome the problem. For, as long as you consciously or unconsciously allow the fear of their judgments to drive your undesired behavior, you will never take full responsibility for it. Once you take full responsibility for it (own you’re speaking/ behaving), you are well on your way towards recovery.

Responsible “For/ To” Pattern

- a) While inside your power bubble, notice how you feel when you say, "I am response-able *for* my thoughts, feelings, speech, and behavior."∪
"Response-ability *for* is my accountability."∪

Notice how well this settles.

How many more time do you need to say this until it settles well?

Are there any objections to it in the back of your mind?

- b) Now say, "I am response-able *to* others but never *for* what others think, feel, say or do."

"Response-able *to* others is *relationship* with others."∪

Notice how this settles.

Check if there are any objections.∪

- c) Now say, "**I have set the boundary of my power zone bubble as the line between responsibility “to” and “for.” Say “Yes” to that.**∪

8) Future Pace.

Chapter Summary

Every person that I know who overcame blocking was able to reach the point where what others may or may not think of how he/ she spoke did not matter. The person came to the point that what others thought or said was taken as feedback *only* and was not received as a judgment on the individual's personhood.

In order for you to reach the point where you do not fear the judgments of others, you must first develop a strong sense of your own personal worth from your inner resources. Having this strong "Self" Matrix gives you the "Power" and "Resourcefulness" necessary to "push away" the judgments of others.

When you so fear the judgments of others that the fear drives you to block, then you can know that this problem developed in your childhood. Developmental Psychology supports the view that when your *locus of control* is from outside yourself (other people), then you have learned that in childhood.

Because giving others permission to determine your states (external *locus of control*) is a learned behavior, it can be unlearned.

Many of the patterns in this book will assist you in taking control of your own thoughts/ feelings and speaking/ behaving and allowing others to have their own thoughts/ feelings and speaking/ behaving. Doing so will eliminate the fear and anxiety around fearing the judgments of others about how you speak.

There is a tremendous difference being responsible *to* other people and responsibility *for* other people. For many people who block moving from being responsible *for* others to being responsible *to* others results in more and more fluency for the fear of their judgments disappears.

ELEVEN: THE WORLD MATRIX

Case Study #1

One of my clients, I will call him Joe, has a business that involves renting out apartments and town houses. When he talks to a prospective tenant, he tends to go into a panic and block. During my first telephone conversation with him he said,

“I have to produce. I have to produce. I have to rent these units. It is my responsibility. If I don’t rent these units, I will not have any income. I will become bankrupt. I will be *out in the streets!* Everything in my life is *out of control!*”

Joe has these immense fears even though he has adequate financial resources; so that, in reality he doesn’t have to continue working. Yet, these fears are so ingrained that they over-ride all adult reasoning.

Later inquiry revealed that he viewed his *world* as a place of immense competition. Joe’s grandparents immigrated to the US from a country that had experienced tremendous horrors. His people had undergone massive persecution. These fears had been passed down from generation to generation and were deeply embedded in him. Joe views the world as a place to be feared. Joe’s motto is “One must remain vigilant at all times lest someone take advantage of you, and even kill you.” In Joe’s world, everyone is out to get him.

Coupled with these experiences was Joe’s growing up in a terribly dysfunctional family. Joe’s mother and father fought constantly. Joe’s father came from a very violent family and as a younger man his father fought professionally. He was physically violent with both Joe and his brother. Through all this, Joe developed a belief, “If I raise my hand, I will be slaughtered. I don’t have any ‘power.’”

His father also deeply ingrained into Joe the belief, “You *have got* to get on your own and *take care of business*. You *have to*.” Joe took this to mean, “I have no support and I got to do it on my own.” His dad taught him, “The door is wide going in and narrow coming out.” By that he meant that it is easy to get in a bad situation, but very hard to get out of it. Coming from this domineering and violent father, Joe took these beliefs to heart. The *world* to Joe was not a friendly warm place, but an enemy that one constantly battled in order to survive.

Joe stated that his mother was “a very mean person.” She was “always making fun of people and putting them down.” As with all children, Joe personalized this by thinking, “I can’t live up to this positive image. If I do anything wrong, then I will be made fun of.” Joe summarized his world, “I lived my life being on edge waiting for the other shoe to drop.” He viewed his world as a mean, terrible, fearful and violent place and he was powerless in dealing with it. Take all these emotions that Joe experienced and embody them in the chest, throat and jaws and you have a block.

Interestingly, on one occasion Joe exclaimed, “The little kid (himself as a child) is getting back at his parents by being obstinate by stuttering. Everything else in my life is *out of control* so I will show them that I can control my speech by stuttering and they can’t do anything about it. When I stutter, I embarrass them.”

When we grow up in a violent, insecure, fearful, etc. world, we will tend to generalize that the entire world is like the one we grew up in. I have found it quite common for people who block to view the world as a place where “people are out to get them.” Obviously this ties in with the Other Matrix. Several of my clients speak with great fear about how “people are watching me to take advantage of me.” To such people, the world is an unfriendly place and they have few resources to deal with it. These mental frames usually spring from having a childhood like Joe.

Case Study #2

Sam had stuttered since a small child. He grew up in a nation that was under attack from a neighboring more powerful nation. If this wasn’t bad enough, Sam grew up in a home where his parents constantly

fought. He had clear memories of being in his bedroom listening to his parents fighting. Their fighting and the insecurities around that had a more profound affect on Sam than did his memories of hearing bombs explode. That says something about the importance of growing up in a secure environment.

Sam developed such beliefs as:

“There is no meaning to life. The more I achieve; the less I feel fulfilled.”

“Marriage is the end of love because it creates a miserable life.”

“No one can have enough girls.” (If marriage is the end of love, how could one settle down with one girl?)

“The only way one can find fulfillment is to die.”

“People who are happy are kidding themselves.”

“Nothing will make me happy.”

“Life is ‘exile.’”

“People who are nice are not real.”

“People who are ugly and mean are real.”

With his view of the world he lived in, Sam had some real challenges. Coming out of his fear of the world, Sam was constantly on guard. “People are watching me. They are watching to catch me in a weak moment so that they can take advantage of me. I have to be constantly on guard to make sure that they don’t hurt me.” Sam’s belief, that other people were out to “get him,” is an extreme example of how people who block view other people as always judging their blocking. Like Joe, his motto was: “One must remain vigilant at all times less someone take advantage of you and even kill you.” Sam took that to extremes. I have found Joe and Sam’s experiences and beliefs about the world quite common among people who block though maybe somewhat heightened.

Description

When we are speaking about the World Matrix, we are referring to the “external world.” It refers to all that is “outside” you. It is the “territory” in which you live your life. Your “internal” world is your “mental map” and your “external” world is your “territory.” Confusing the two can be quite problematic. We will deal more with that concept shortly. Your World Matrix concerns itself with your concepts, beliefs, ideas, etc. about what is “out there.” For Joe and Sam, “out there” wasn’t pleasant. “Out there” meant “danger,” “fear,” “insecurity,” etc. Likewise, for many people who block, it means basically the same thing. Note, if you viewed the world as basically a friendly place and a place that you had all the resources you needed to navigate it without any problem, would you still block?

The way we internally map out our world is a product of how we view our sense of self, others and our resourcefulness in the world. I have mentioned that this matrix is closely tied to the Other Matrix. It is also closely tied to the Self Matrix, for if one views oneself as competent, resourceful, strong, respectful, etc.; one will have little problem navigating the world. Fear will have no place in this person’s thinking. Because there is no fear, there will be no blocking. Also, the Power/Resource Matrix also determines how we map out our world. They are all tied together.

Intentions/Outcomes

The person who blocks will have **Desires/ Intentions/ Outcomes in Relation to the World** similar to the following:

I will not be found without resources to survive.

People are out to get me. I will live my life always on guard.

I do not want people to see me in my weakness or they will take advantage of me.

Life is out of control. I will never again get out of control.

I will not do anything that will draw attention to me in my work, career, etc.

I will avoid speaking situations that will attract attention to me.

I will try to be successful by avoiding all opportunities to speak.

Because of the above desires about the world they live in, they will draw conclusions about blocking such as:

I should be doing better.

I got to do something.

I got to get it done.

“The whole issue revolves around ‘caring how I talk.’”

I won’t succeed.

I am out of control. I got to get control.

I’ve got to keep my guard up.

Ego-Strength

“Ego-strength” in psychology refers to our “cognitive-strength.” A person who has the ability to effectively adjust to, and respond to, whatever reality the world gives them, is a person with a healthy ego-strength. Michael Hall says of ego-strength (2002),

“This refers to the ability to look at what *is*, at what exists, without blinking, without closing our eyes, without becoming superstitious and falling into magical thinking and without being overwhelmed. With ego-strength we are able to handle frustration, stress, and unpleasant facets of life with our internal and external resources.”

A person who has a healthy ego-strength faces the world *as it is* without flinching; knowing he/she has the needed resources to meet the challenge that comes. A person with weak ego-strength will be highly threatened by any real or perceived threats from the world. A highly threatening experience either real or imagined will put this person into the fight/ flight mode and panic will result. For the person who blocks, this is expressed in blocking.

When our mental map of the world is fearful, limiting, impoverished, childish, anxious, weak and unresourceful, etc., the world becomes a fearful and dangerous place. We do not believe that we have the needed capabilities to live in the world as a complete and happy person. As with Joe and Sam, when we have low ego-strength; when we view ourselves as unworthy; when we do not believe we have the needed resources to navigate the world, we are to look in our childhood for the causes. Neuro-Semantics offers the tools to do that and to bring healing to those childhood memories.

Over the past 12 years, I have had the privilege of working with more than 700 clients in a therapeutic setting. Sometimes, it seemed that I just could not assist some of them. The person would just keep resorting back to the same old sick frames. I would do the re-imprinting work on the old hurtful memories. I would use every technique and language pattern I knew in attempting to assist them into a more resourceful state. I would teach them how to access their resource states and empower them. Yet, in spite of many sessions and many hours, they would resort back to the old way of thinking. Many would just seem to “give up.”

It appeared that they did not have the mental strength and the determination to go forward with what they learned. I asked Michael Hall about it. I said, it is as if they do not have the “cognitive strength” to do the work and I don’t have an explanation. He replied, “Yes, in psychology it is called a low ‘ego-strength.’” Well, how do you fix it? With those who have determination, with some of the meta-stating patterns, we can assist them. I especially like the one we covered in Chapter 4: “Meta-Stating

Acceptance, Appreciation and Esteem for Self.” Even with such patterns, unless the person has what I call, “the want to;” I have been unable to assist them. The “New Behavior Generator” in this section will also give assistance in building up ego-strength. All the patterns that deal with enhancing our self-image and our sense of power and resourcefulness will greatly enhance our ego-strength.

Patterns for Re-Defining Our “World”

The World Matrix ties closely with our Self, Power and Other Matrices. As such, all the patterns covered in those three matrices will apply to how we view our world. To change our view of the world from a place to be feared to being a place to enjoy, our concept of self must change. When we develop a concept of our self that issues into a sense of power and resourcefulness we will neither be fearful of the world or the people in it.

New Behavior Generator

Distinguishing Between the “Map” and the “Territory”

The “Mind-to-Muscle Pattern

1) The New Behavior Generator Pattern

(From L. Michael Hall, Ph.D. and Barbara Belnap, MSW in *Sourcebook of Magic* (1999)

When we do not know how to do *something*, we need to learn a new pattern, model, or process that will, stepbystep, enable us to discover the formula. Do we know how to take criticism well and to use it constructively? Do we know how to motivate ourselves? If we don't have a strategy for something, we won't be able to do it. Did you receive a program for resolving conflicts respectfully? For gathering high quality information? For speaking affirmatively and showing affection? If not, you may simply need to learn or invent such a strategy.

Strategy development occurs whenever and wherever learning occurs. For, by learning, we become trained to organize and sequence representations so that they build up various skills.

As we construct these strategies (or parts), we describe them in terms of *what they do*, their **function**, rather than in terms of how they do it, their behavior. In other words, we build parts to *achieve outcomes*. With every strategy we learn, we essentially install a part within ourselves to pull off certain behavioral outcomes. Do you have an assertive part? A forgiving part? A creative part? Of course, the tricky bit lies in creating parts that won't interfere detrimentally with other parts and outcomes.

The Pattern

1) **Identify a part or function that you need.** What specific outcome do you want? Do you want to build a courageous part that you need in order to become more fluent? Or do you want to build a part to handle conflict positively? Or do you want to build a part to handle rejection resourcefully? Etc. Utilizing a friend to coach you will be most helpful with this pattern.

- 2) **Access and anchor the components that make up this part.** When have you had this behavior? How does it feel when you relive this situation and experience the desired aspects in all representational systems? Anchor each component piece of this new behavior.
- 3) **Create a movie scenario within the imagination.** What is it like when you create a detailed set of images of yourself engaging in this new behavior? Create a movie of this behavior and then sit back to observe the whole sequence. Do you like it?
- 4) **Ecological check.** *Go* inside and ask, "Does any part of me object to this new behavior? Does any part object to making this movie a reality?" When you check in all representational systems (VAK and languaged thoughts) for objecting parts, what do you find? If you sense an objection, have the signal intensify for "Yes", and decrease for "No", or use finger signals.
- 5) **Satisfy all objections.** If you discover any objections, use the information to reedit the movie to reframe the objections. Do another ecological check. Continue this process until you find no objections. It becomes important to redefine and satisfy all objections, since in this process we build a new motivational part.
- 6) **Experience the movie.** What is it like when you step inside the image and go through the sequences in an associated state? As you then experience yourself successfully engaging in the new behaviors, what self-anchor can you set up for this state and feeling?
- 7) **Program it into your unconscious.** Ask your unconscious mind, \
 - “Will you analyze the fantasy you have created and pull from it the essential ingredients of the program you want to have inside me?”
 - “Will you use this information to build a part and give it a dynamic expression?”
 - “Will you get what you need to know from the imagined imagery to build a part of me that can do this exquisitely and easily, and at every moment that it needs to be done?”
- 8) **Test and future pace.** Make sure the part is accessible and responds appropriately. Future pace by seeing yourself use this part effectively.

2) The Map Is “Not” the Territory

People who make mental changes believe that “the map is not the territory” or “the menu is not the meal;” and they believe it is their map and their map alone that they operate from. This is another way of saying that our perception is not reality. It is only our perception of it. However, because it is our perception (our internal representation and conceptual meanings) it is what we operate from. It doesn’t matter how accurately it maps (perceive) our present reality. We will operate from our perceptions as governed by our higher-level frames of mind.

This means:

Those who change recognize the value of re-creating their map (perception) that accurately, as far as symbolically possible, maps the present moment. We are a “symbolic class of life.” We do that with our representational system and words acting as “symbols” from our experience of our world through our five senses. But, these are just symbols about our world. They are not the world. We get into trouble when we confuse the two and label our “symbols” as being “real.” We also create trouble for ourselves when we think that they are a totally accurate map of our world. When we consciously or

unconsciously operate from frames of mind that we learned in childhood, we certainly are not operating from a map that even comes close to accurately mapping out the adult world we now live in. This is the root of most problems, if not all of them.

Those who change their thinking by recognizing that their map is not the territory will eliminate the problem of cause-effect in their lives. What does this mean? It means that the individual who understands and accepts that their internal map/perception is not, and cannot be, the territory (the external world) will stop the foolishness of believing other people control his or her mind without his or her permission. *No one can make you believe or feel anything you choose not to believe or feel.*

They recognize that the words and images inside their heads are not “real” in the sense that they are absolute or unchangeable. They are changeable. They are just “symbols” of the external world. We have instruments that will detect the nerve cells and the neuro-transmitters that allow one nerve cell to communicate with another nerve cell. However, can neuro-science go inside the brain and find/measure a picture, a sound, a feeling or a word? No, they are “abstractions” of the mind. Our conceptual states are generated at the moment of thought and then they disappear until we think the thought again. *Because the images and word meanings inside our head are not “real” in the sense that they are set in concrete, they only have the reality we give them.*

Because of the utter importance of understanding that the “map” is not the “territory,” we will use a fantastic pattern that Michael Hall developed entitled “Mind-to-Muscle to install this *belief* into our muscles. This will require some repetition for installation.

3) Mind-To-Muscle Pattern

From *Accessing Personal Genius Training Manual*/L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.

Mind-to-muscling: We can turn highly informative and insightful principles and concepts into **neurological patterns**, encoded in muscle memory. This happens when we learn to type. From the original learning of considerable time and trouble to get the muscle coordination imprinted into our fingers, practice eventually *incorporates* the learnings *into the very fabric of our muscles*. We then lose awareness of the concepts, the muscles run the programs. The concepts are embodied in terms of “muscle memory.” This translates *principle into muscle*. Since this holds true for expertise and mastery in all fields, from sports, mathematics, teaching, to surgery, selling, and public relations, we can begin with a *principle* – a concept, understanding, awareness, belief, etc., and translate it down into muscle so that it becomes embodied there.

Mind to Muscle Case Study

Roberto of Miami, as a 27 year old male, had experienced blocking since he was nine years old. During our first few hours of therapy, Roberto’s father stood out as the main contributor to Roberto’s problem. The fear of his father drove his anxieties that were behind his blocking.

As I was questioning Roberto during our fourth session about how it was in his home as a child when he desired to express his feelings; Roberto replied, “I was never allowed to express my feelings. I was made to believe that my feelings were not ‘legitimate.’ I have always thought that my father lay at the root of my problems. Deep inside I always knew that dad was at the root of my blocking.”

I kept on going with this thought when Roberto interrupted. Roberto inquired, “Did you notice?” I inquired,

“Notice what?” Roberto continued, “When I was telling you about my thoughts concerning dad’s being at the root of my blocking, I was fluent. I felt a ‘lightness’ in my chest and I was totally fluent.” “Yes, that is correct Roberto, you were totally fluent.”

I picked up on this thought and explained to Roberto that when a child is not permitted to express honest emotion, that can cause great harm in adulthood. Then I inquired, “And, Roberto, *what does it mean* to you that you felt that ‘lightness’ in your chest when you were expressing honest emotions and beliefs about your father’s role in your blocking?”

Roberto, “It means that the feeling is right.” Further inquiry revealed that to Roberto, experiencing that ‘lightness’ in his chest when he was discussing his honest feelings about his father’s role in his blocking, let him know that his feelings were right all along and that his father was the one in the wrong. Roberto summarized it when he said, “My feelings are valid.”

So, picking up on Roberto’s principal that “His feelings were valid,” I proceeded to lead him in incorporating this principal into his very muscles. The fear of his father being incorporated into his muscles drove his blocking. Roberto’s ability to honestly express his feelings about his father and getting the affirmation from the internal feeling of lightness, provided an extremely valuable resource in Roberto’s gaining fluency. I proceeded with the “Mind to Muscle Pattern” to get the process going where Roberto could install this resource state into his muscles.

The principal to incorporate into my muscles – The principal that I wanted to lead Roberto in installing in his muscles was, “*My feelings are valid.*”

Describing the principle as a belief – “So, Roberto, what do you believe about your ‘feelings being valid?’” Roberto, “*I believe that my feelings are valid.*”

Re-formatting the belief as a decision – “And, Roberto, what will holding the belief that your feelings are valid lead to in your life? What will you decide to do?” “*I am going to apply it. I am going to be conscious of it all the time.*”

Rephrasing the belief and decision as an emotional state/experience – “How do you feel about that, Roberto?” “*It makes me feel like I have some control of myself. I have a ‘feeling of control.’*”

Turning the emotions into actions that express the belief and decision – “And with that ‘feeling of control,’ how will you be changing your behavior?” “*I will be conscious of it all the time, especially when the validity of my feelings is being challenged especially with my father. This will certainly give me a lot more ‘hope’ – that’s for sure!*”

Stepping into the action and letting the higher levels of the mind spiral downwards – I led Roberto to repeat the above thought-feelings several times. He wrote them down to continue processing. The purpose is to take these thoughts and to continue rehearsing them in one’s mind over and over and putting them into practice so that they become habituated.

Mind to Muscle Pattern A Case Study

The Pattern

1) Identify a principle (concept, understanding) you want incorporated into your muscles.

What concept or principle do you want to put into your neurology and commission to run your programs? (Suggestions: “The Map is not the territory.” “I know how to speak fluently; therefore, I can speak fluently in all situations.” You may select the new part from the New Behavior Generator.)

Describe your conceptual understanding.

What do you know or understand or believe about this that you want to set as a frame in your mind?

State it in a clear, succinct, and compelling way as you finish the statement, **“I understand...”**

2) Describe the principle as a belief.

Do you believe this? Would you like to believe it?

If you really, really believed that, would that make a big difference in your life?

State the concept by putting it as a belief saying, **“I believe...”**

Now state it as if you really did believe it. Notice what you’re feeling as you say that again.

3) Reformat the belief as a decision.

Are you doing to do it? Would you like to live by that belief? [Yes.] You would? [Yes.] Really? [Yes.]

Will you act on this and make it your program for being?

Then state it as a decision as you finish this statement, **“From this day forward, I will...”**

Or, “I want... I choose ... it is time to...”

4) Rephrase the belief and decision as an emotional state or experience.

State the belief decision again noticing what you would feel if you fully believed it.

What would you feel if you were fully believing this empowering belief and decision and living them?

Be with those emotions... let them grow and extend.

Put your feelings into words: **“I feel ... I experience... because I will ... because I believe...”**

5) Turn the emotions into actions to express the belief and decision.

“The one thing that I will do today as an expression of these feelings, to make this belief decision real is...”

And what one thing will you do tomorrow? And the day after that?

6) Step into the action and let the higher levels of your mind spiral.

As you fully imagine carrying out that one thing you will do today... seeing, hearing and feeling it; you are doing this because you believe what?

Because you’ve decided what?

Because you feel what?

And you will do what other thing?

Because you understand what?

Because you feel what?

Because you’ve decided what?

Because you believe what?

And what other thing will you do?

Chapter Summary

When we are speaking about the World Matrix, we are referring to the “external world.” It refers to all that is “outside.” Your World Matrix concerns itself with your concepts, beliefs, ideas, etc. about what is “out there.” \

The World Matrix refers to the “territory” in which you live your life. Your “internal” world is your

“mental map” and your “external” world is your “territory.” \

Confusing the “map” (our internal world) with the territory (the external world) leads to a lot of problems. When we as adult live from old painful childhood memories, we confuse “map” and “territory.” For example, suppose you, as do many people who block, fear the judgment of others and you learned to fear others as a child. To continue doing that in adulthood is to live in the present world (the territory) with the map of a child. This confuses “map” and “territory.” \

To view the world and the people in it as an unfriendly place describes the behavior of many people who block. Tied in with the Other Matrix, this kind of thinking leads one to believe that the “world” is out to get them. “I’ve got to be on guard. Everybody is out to get me. People will take advantage of you.” This kind of thinking generates a lot of fears and anxiety; and when those emotions are embodied in the proper places in the body, you have blocking. \

Three key steps towards fluency are to

- (1) Develop a very healthy concept of ones self (Self Matrix);
- (2) Do not allow what other people may or may not think of how you talk bother you (Other Matrix);
- (3) and know that you have the resources (Power Matrix) necessary to live successfully in the world (World Matrix).

TWELVE: THE INTENTION/PURPOSE MATRIX

Introduction

You have already been introduced to the Intentional Matrix. Remember that in every matrix, behind each one, there dwells higher intentions. We illustrate this phenomenon in Table 9:1 on the following page.

We believe that the people who block have higher intentions, as do we all, which drive all the other matrices. These higher intentions are in the unconscious mind – most of us are not even aware that they are there. Well, what do you mean Bob that we have higher intentions?

Case Study #1

Recently, a new client e-mailed me, whom I will call Roger. In answer to my question about what lay behind his blocking, Roger replied that most of his blocking was around stress at work. He summarized:

“I am afraid of looking silly.”

“I am afraid of people who know more than me.”

“I am afraid of people who control my destiny.”

“I am afraid of making a mistake.”

“I am afraid of being questioned. They may ask me questions about subject matter that I am not very knowledgeable of.”

“I am afraid of a “meeting situation” where I might stutter.”

“I am afraid of suddenly and unexpectedly being asked a question.”

As you read those statements, detect the higher intentions/purposes behind them. The very first one is “I am afraid of looking silly.” The statement itself gives us the first level intention – not looking silly is important to him. Early in the first session, I began to inquire of Roger some of the higher level intentions behind his fears at work. When I inquired as to what his fears were *about* at work, he replied:

“He (supervisor) knows more than me.”

“He may be short with me.”

“He may not want to speak to me.”

“He may think that I am interrupting him.”

“I may not like his reaction to me.”

Note that even though this information provides higher intentions, they do not give me as high of an intention as I want. An NLP premise states that “All behavior has behind it a positive intent.” What? You mean that someone who abuses a child has a positive intent? Yes, it does not matter how perverse it may be. When we say that “All behavior has behind it a positive intent,” we mean that for that person during that time in his life with the resources that person had available to him at that time; the behavior had a positive intent. This is not about what is right and what is wrong. It is about a positive intent for the person. An example would be that for the child molester, it may be a sick way to give or receive

love.

With Roger, I “chunked” the intention a little higher. I wanted to go further until I got a positive intent. It didn’t take long at all. For when I asked Roger, “Roger, what is your purpose in fearing that your supervisor may know more than you? Or, that he may be short with you and that he may not wish to speak with you?”

Roger: “I need his approval.”

Bob: “And what is your purpose in needing his approval?”

“I need to know that I am achieving.”

“And what is the purpose in knowing that you are achieving?”

“I need to be liked and when I am achieving, people will like me.”

I could have “chunked” higher, but at that moment in the session, I didn’t go any higher. It was our first session. I knew that the fears that drove Roger’s blocking were about his need for approval. He has a strong need for approval. Fearing that he will not get that, especially because he blocks; he creates an even greater block from the fear and this, in turn, creates the stuttering as he attempts to break through the blocking.

So Roger’s higher desire/ intent/ purpose of getting approval and being liked, created a great deal of fear because of his blocking. In describing how he experienced this fear in his body, Roger said, “I have an incredible feeling of holding back – physically and emotionally. I have physical tension in my thorax and in my abdomen.” To summarize, because Roger had a higher intention of needing approval, he greatly feared that he would not get it because he blocked. He embodied this fear in his thorax and abdomen which, in turn, greatly increased the blocking.

Some Higher Intentional Frames Can Cause More Trouble.

Question: Did Roger’s behavior of blocking get him approval? No, it did not. Indeed, it got him more fear and the feeling of having less approval. Herein lies something very important. You will notice in Table 9:1 under the row where we have listed the intentions for each matrix that we have – “Attempted solutions that make the problem worse.”

This is the paradox. *When we are operating from usually unconscious emotional hurt, our behavior will not get for us what we really want – our higher intent.* Consider Roger’s feelings of stress at work, it triggered fear – fear of looking silly; fear of making a mistakes, etc. The emotion behind the stress was fear and the fear drove him. *He wanted approval but the fear triggered blocking and that sure did not give Roger a sense of approval. It gave him just the opposite.*

Case Study #2

Brad (fictitious name) had blocked since he was a little boy. If you want to talk about courage, Brad had it. Indeed, I have discovered that most people who block have much courage. He went into a profession that required a great deal of public speaking. Though it was tough for him, Brad did his

best to live his life according to his highest purposes. He did this in spite of his blocking. He was determined to find a solution. In his research he learned about NLP, and from there located me through the book *The User's Manual for the Brain*. I have created a graphic listing the higher intentions of Brad. From this example you will see what happens when you keep asking for the higher purposes – chunking up higher and higher. A simple way to get higher purposes is to simply ask, “What is the purpose of that?” When you get an answer ask, “And what is that purpose of (Name the purpose the person just gave you.)” If you keep going, you will get up into “spiritual” type purposes as Brad did. In the graphic below, I have his higher intentions listed in ascending order – from the bottom to the top. Some additional questions to elicit higher purposes are:

What is your intent?

Why is that important to you?

By having that (name the purpose), what does that give you that is even more important?

As you look at Brad's higher intentional mental frames you may ask, “Well, how in the world can his higher intentions be “warmth,” “contentment,” “total acceptance,” “no judgment” and all the way up to “God” and he still block? Great question. Note the lower intentions: “anxiety,” “fear,” “inadequacy,” “more fear” and “wanting to hide.”

Because these hurtful frames, anxiety, fear, inadequacy, etc., are most often learned in childhood and “grooved into” our very muscles, we operate from them and not from our higher intentions. They functionally operate meta (*above, beyond*) to all other mental frames. And, because they are more powerful – they modulate and control all other mental frames. That is why operating from these “lower ones” cause us problems – they are incongruent (not in line with) our higher intentions and purposes. Utilizing them in our thinking drives us into behavior that does not support our higher desires for ourselves. Later in this chapter, I will present you with a model for aligning your higher intentions with our attentions/behaviors.

The *anxiety, fear, inadequacy, etc.* were those negative emotional frames that were behind and triggered Brad's block. As we “chunked up” to Brad's higher intention, we discovered that *up there* were the higher concepts of *contentment, warmth, acceptance* and *faith in God*. Now, did the *fear* and *anxiety* that drove Brad's blocking get Brad what he wanted – *contentment, warmth, feelings of acceptance* and *being in God's presence*? No, of course not.

As with Roger, we see how Brad's lower level fears and anxieties that drove his blocking never get what they want – and they never will. This is true no matter how a problem is expressed. The problem may be expressed in alcoholism or drug addiction. It may be expressed in workaholism, money, power or a strong drive for recognition. It doesn't matter, these low level behaviors will never get their higher positive intent and that is why they are problem behaviors to the person.

A Word from a “Former” Workaholic

You know what happens to someone addicted to drugs and alcohol. Workaholism, love of money, love of power, etc. are not as obvious a problem for society because society often praises such behavior. I can tell you about workaholism. In my childhood I felt like my dad didn't love me as much as he did my two siblings. However, I discovered very early that if I worked hard and excelled, dad would give me attention. If I made an “A” on my report card, he would give me a dollar. Now, to a mountain boy who may go six months and not see a dollar that was a lot of money and it carried the meaning – “Wow, dad does love me.”

Later, in my adult life as a minister this translated into neglecting my wife and my health in order to work

hard and get a lot of attention. If we had children, I would have neglected them, because I would have been out taking care of everybody else's family while neglecting my own. If someone called me at 3:00 AM and said, "Dr. Bodenhamer, could you come to the hospital? I just admitted my husband." Even if it could wait until the morning, I would not hesitate to go. Why? Because an unconscious part of my mind said, "If I don't go, they may get mad at me." Or, "If I don't go, they may not love me." I bet you are not surprised when I tell you that at the age of 46 I found myself burned out both mentally and physically. That is a high price to pay to learn a hard lesson. But I learned the lesson.

The person who is pursuing money neglects his family and his health. The person pursuing power does the same thing. In all cases, they are operating from those mental frames of mind coming off of childhood hurts; and, it will result in more pain and they *will never* obtain the higher positive intent. The secret is to discover those higher purposes/ intents and find healthier ways to attain them.

Back to Brad

Meta-Stating Away Fear and Anxiety

Question: What would happen if Brad took "contentment, warmth, acceptance and his faith in God and *brought them to bear* or applied them to the anxiety and fear?" If you get into a state of contentment and apply that state of contentment to anxiety and fear, what happens? If you access a strong state of warmth and acceptance and apply that to anxiety and fear, how does warmth and contentment transform and enrich anxiety and fear? If you have a strong belief in a loving all powerful God and you apply that belief to old anxieties and fears, what happens to the anxiety and fear?

When Brad learned how to do that, his blocking disappeared and it has remained out of his life. One year later he is totally confident that he no longer is a person who blocks. Indeed, he recently told me that he does not permit the thought of blocking to enter his head. Now, that is living by his higher intentions.

The Intentional Matrix Summarized

Concerning the Intentional Matrix, Michael Hall states (2002):

The Intentional matrix addresses our sense of direction, goals, reasons, motivation, and intention. It is from this matrix that we create meanings about the purpose of things and our own purposes. From here we develop and experience our motives and motivations for living and our moment to moment agendas and aims. We can elicit this matrix by asking:

What are you seeking to accomplish?
What do you want?
What's your purpose or agenda?
What are you living for?
Why is that important to you?
Why do you want that?
Why do you give yourself to that?
What do you hope to obtain by getting that?

Intention relates not only to what we value, think important, and meaningful but also to what we

intend to do about the things we notice, feel, and experience. This matrix arises, as do the other matrices, from the Meaning Matrix. In everything we do, we have intentions. We want something to happen or to stop happening. We seek to accomplish something. We seek to accomplish something of value for ourselves. We develop our agenda that makes up our motives and motivation. This is the matrix that answers the “*Why*” questions. *Why* do we want that? *Why* is that important? These enable us to create intentions for each matrix.

Meta-Stating Intentions

In Neuro-Semantics we recognize that every ‘thought’ has two levels or dimensions.

What we *represent* on the screen of our mind (our movies) and what’s *in our immediate perception* through the language *about* our movies are what’s *on our mind*. That’s **attention** – that is what we are paying *attention to* or what we are focusing on. Our *attention* is our perception *about* what we are focusing on. For example, when you are standing in front of someone and you fear their judgments about your speech that is your *attention*.

Yet, above and beyond that, we have other thoughts - thoughts *in the back of our mind*, *higher thoughts* about such. That’s **intention**. **Content** refers to what’s on our mind ... what is before us. Then we have other thoughts - the thoughts in the back of our mind *about* the first thought (meta-state levels). Behind fearing the judgments of the person you are speaking to are higher levels of mind that are totally out of conscious awareness. For example, behind fearing the other person’s judgments, you will have higher levels of mind such as: “I don’t want to look like a fool. I want to present myself as a fluently capable person.” That is *intention* – those higher levels of mind out of conscious awareness.

This means that *thinking* involves thoughts in the front of the mind (*attentions*) and thoughts *in the back of the mind* (higher level intentions). We have thoughts layered behind or above our thoughts. Every thought has an *agenda, motivation, or intention*, and so we can discern this *two-layered nature* of thought in terms of intention and attention. This comes from Rollo May in his 1969 book, *Love & Will*.

1) Thought’s attentional content (What you are focusing your attention on?) gives you your primary level focus.

What’s on your mind?

What are you thinking about?

What are you *representing*?

In what way?

2) Thought’s intentional drive gives us our outcome or intentionality and moves us up into the meta-levels of awareness

Why are you thinking that?

What’s your motivation, agenda, or intention behind that thought?

What thought lurks back there in the shadows of your mind about X?

Our thought-feeling states are then driven by two dynamics: **Intention and Attention**.

Attention directs us to primary state content – the world outside, our territory that we are focusing on. **Intention** directs us to meta-level frames and desired outcomes, that is, to the positive intentions behind or above experience. We experience the attention as *overt* and the intention as *covert*. Brad didn’t know consciously about his higher intention as we discovered that *up there* were the higher intentions of *contentment, warmth, acceptance* and *faith in God*.

When the **attended** concept, construction, or set of representations of your mental map do *not* work in terms of inducing you into a resourceful state, so that it allows you to move on in life, etc., then you truly need to strengthen your intentions, and then align your attentions with those highest intentions. Brad was able to *align his attention* (speaking) with his higher level *attention* of operating from his faith in God.

How do we do this? By making a meta-move to our higher intentions or outcomes. Doing that allows us to take *an intentional stance* in life, a stance that will serve us well to enhance us with more choices. We do this by *giving ourselves permission* to **create and live in the new attention**, to get out of our ‘comfort zone’, and to let the **new intention** become a **higher level attractor**. As we do so, we give it opportunity to become a self-organizing attractor in our mind-body system. When Brad *applied* his faith in God to fear and anxiety, they disappeared and fluency came. We intend the new attention, because as Michael Hall says, “Energy flows where attention goes as determined by the higher frame.”

Patterns for Aligning Higher Intention/Purposes With Our Attention/Behavior

I have been doing NLP/NS therapy for 14 years. I have seen hundreds of clients, and I have learned one very important thing – for people to receive their outcome and to *keep* it their higher intentions/purposes (their greater good) must be aligned with what they are focusing on and what they are doing. Most of us know better than we do. In doing therapy, a major outcome is to assist the client in accessing necessary resources so that they can obtain what they want without so many interferences from “in the muscle” or unconscious drives that drive them to do what they don’t want to do – like blocking.

We want our “higher intentions” aligned with our “lower behaviors” (attention).

The Drop-Down Through Pattern (A Review With Case Study)

Meta-Stating an Intentional Stance for “Fluency”

Meta-Alignment – Aligning Higher Frames

The Drop-Down Through – Aligning Attention with Intention Case Study #1 Continued (Roger)

Chapter 4 presented “The Drop-Down Through to Rise Up Pattern – Meta-stating by dropping-down through painful experiences.” This is my favorite pattern. It is my favorite for several reasons.

First, it is simple to learn and to use.

Second, it elicits the higher unconscious mental frames more effectively than any other pattern that I use.

Third, it not only uncovers the painful unconscious mental frames, but it also uncovers the person’s

highest frames to be used for healing. It does this via a kinesthetic (feeling) search inside a person's matrix.

Fourth, using the Meta-States Model, it provides means to heal and re-imprint the painful memories.

Fifth, and most important, it is the most effective pattern that I have ever used. As a rule, it provides for very deep and long lasting healing.

It is especially effective in working with people who block. Blocking is, by nature, physical responses. When you are blocking, you are very associated in the feelings of that blocking, usually fear and anxiety. By simply associating into the state of blocking and doing the Drop-Down Through, you accomplish the five things I have listed in the bullet points above that makes this pattern so effective.

My second session with Roger dramatically demonstrates the effectiveness of the Drop-Down Through Pattern for eliciting all the higher frames all the way to the highest. Once we get to the higher intentional frames the focus becomes how to align the higher intentions with the lower attentions. The alignment is accomplished when we bring the higher level resource states to bear on each one of the negative frames.

Roger mentioned how "totally helpless" he had felt two days prior to our second session. He was talking to one of his peers and he experienced a terrible block. This peer is someone that Roger appreciates dearly. Roger was especially embarrassed when he started blocking. He went into a "total helpless" state. I associated him into that moment and into the state of helplessness. As we "Dropped-Down Through," you can see in the ascending or descending order of elicitation the numerous frames that were supporting that feeling of helplessness that created the block:

He felt totally helpless and the feelings were located in his torso – his throat and diaphragm.

I just can't speak; I can't do it!

I don't want to be here. This is painful.

I want to be away.

I want to be somebody else.

I feel shame.

I feel sorry that he has to listen to me stutter.

I don't like myself – I am wasting his time.

I feel bad about myself – I feel guilty that I have a speech problem.

Why does this shit have to happen to me?

Why has God done this to me?

Why do I deserve this?

What have I done wrong?

Why is this my fault?

I must have done something wrong.

I blame myself.

I don't like myself because I am not good enough. (I have flash backs of myself as a little boy. In doing this pattern, numerous times you will discover that one goes back on one's time-line uncovering memories of earlier years. It is a "time regression" in many cases.)

It is not nice not to like one self.

People make me conscious of my speech and that proves: "I am not good enough." "I am different." "I don't want to be different."

I am totally out of control – helpless.

What will my parents think of me?

I am worried because I want my parent's approval and how can they approve someone who stutters?

I want them to love me and they can't love someone who stutters.
I want to be the same as all my friends. (Roger knew no one else who blocked and stuttered. Only in adulthood did he learn that many people stutter.)
I want my children to be good enough so I can love them. (Roger had a great worry that they would stutter. This thought brought tears to Roger because of his thinking as a child that one had to be fluent in order to be good.)
I judge myself every day mainly by how fluent I have been.
Good equals fluent and bad equals blocking.
I did not want to be different. I wanted to be like my friends. I was always "isolated" and felt different.
I want to be accepted and loved – to fit in. I still have that desire now as an adult.
I have an "incredible desire" to be like everyone else.
As I young boy I asked, "Why me?"
He recalled doing a recitation in church as a lad, and he felt good because his mother expected him to.
He thought she would "love him" for doing the recitation.
I feel sad and I feel dumb now. I can't remember feeling loved by my mother.
My mom didn't love me because I stutter and I am different.
I don't want to be different.
I am in a helpless state.
I am going to ride my bike. There is nothing I can do. (He started feeling OK riding his bike off by himself saying to himself, "There is nothing I can do.")
"What the hell; there is nothing I can do."
I feel OK because I don't have to speak riding off on my bicycle.
"I like myself."
I feel good about myself. (I see our house and our yard.)
I enjoy being here.
I am still not fluent though as a five year old.
Pause (This was the place of the "nothingness" or the void.)
I feel "free!"
I feel a "release!" "I feel I am being released from stuttering."
I can be released from stuttering.
I feel a strong "release."

We stopped here because this was probably Roger's highest resource, or close to it. Our session had gone for 2.5 hours, and he was really feeling good. We wrapped up the session. Roger taped our session. I taught him how to take the state of "freedom and release" and bring it to bear on each negative frame beginning at the top and coming down, i.e. "How does having 'freedom and release' transform and enrich that feeling of helplessness?" "How does 'freedom and release' transform and enrich the thought, 'I just can't do it. I just can't talk?'" I encouraged Roger to do this on each subsequent negative frame. This meta-stating process *aligns* ones higher intent (freedom and release for Roger) to ones attention (speaking fluently). And, it does it very well.

You will note that Roger had many, many negative frames. You will not always find that many. However, this is not unusual. Just stand back and look at all this hurt, layers upon layers of hurtful thoughts and feelings. Is it any wonder that Roger blocks when all of this is embodied in his throat and diaphragm? I explained to Roger that when something triggered a block, he ceased being a resourceful adult and became "little Roger" with all that pain and all that history of hurt surrounding his blocking.

On several of these, Roger was quite shocked because he thought that he had gotten over those issues years ago. This case with Roger illustrates quite well why this pattern is so useful. It is an excellent

pattern for uncovering those hurtful frames that must be healed before ones higher intentions can be aligned with ones attention/behavior (fluency).

Following this second session, Roger e-mailed me, “I have had much improvement since our consultation. Things I couldn’t do before are now within my comfort zone, again.” He cancelled the next appointment believing that he was well on his way of regaining his fluency. We did not have time during that session to complete the therapy in healing up all those negative frames. But, by just *uncovering* them, Roger was able to do the healing himself. It is quite amazing how once we learn the *negative thought-frames* that we have behind our behaviors, how we can apply adult resources to them and move out of them aligning our present life with our higher intentions. Those old patterns learned in childhood, no longer serve us. Once they are *uncovered*, then we can make changes as Roger did. He taped the entire session so he had access to all his unconscious thoughts driving his stuttering.

2) Meta-Stating an Intentional Stance for “Fluency”

‘The most successful people know *what* they want and *why* they want it.’
(David Plotkin)

1) How is fluency important to you?

Note: Obviously fluency is important to everyone. However, what we want to elicit is *your* meanings of the importance of fluency. To some degree, each person’s answers will be different.

How is fluency significant for you?

How is it valuable to you?

Identify the value of fluency in various contexts: family, work, social gatherings, etc.

How is it meaningful? In what way?

What else is important about that?

How many other answers can you identify about the importance of fluency?

2) Move up the higher-levels ... one at a time. Take each separate answer from #1 and move up to higher levels from each value of fluency.

So fluency is important to you because of these things. And *how* is this important to you?

What’s important by having this?

What is important about that outcome?

And what’s even more important than that?

And when you get that fully and completely and in just the way you want it, what’s even more important?

[Continue this until you flush out and detect all of the higher values.]

3) Step into the higher value states of importance so that you feel them fully.

That must be important to you? [Yes.] So, just welcome in the good feelings that these meanings and significances invite, and just be with those higher-level feelings for a bit.

Do you like that? [Yes.]

Let those feelings grow and intensify as you recognize that this is your *highest intentional stance*. This is what you are all about... isn't it? Enjoy this awareness.

4) Bring the higher states/ frames of mind down and out.

“Having these higher feelings in mind... fully... imagine this intentional stance getting into your eyes, into your body, ... into your way of being in the world... and imagine moving out into life tomorrow with them... and as you do ... and as you engage in speaking in all the various contexts of your life, notice how the higher frames transform it... and take all of this into tomorrow and into all of your tomorrows...”

5) Commission your executive mind to take ownership of this.

There's a part of your mind that makes decisions, that chooses the pathway that you want to go. You know about that part. It is that part of your mind that has directed you into making some great decisions in the past.

“Will that highest executive part of your mind take full responsibility to ‘be of this mind’ about this activity and to remind you to see the world this way?”

Imagine using this as *the basis of your inner life*, your way of being in the world. Do you like that?

6) Invite other resources.

Would you like to bring any other resource to this intentional stance?

Would playfulness enrich it? Persistent? Passion?

What other resources do you have access to that will enhance and enrich your ability to speak fluent?

Bring those in and allow them to become part of the powerful state driving you towards fluency.

3) Meta-Alignment – Aligning Higher Frames(L. Michael Hall, Ph.D. *Accessing Personal Genius* Training Manual)

Are you *aligned* in all of your higher levels of thinking and emoting, regarding a given task?

Do you have any *parts* organized to sabotage your success?

The following pattern provides you with a way to align and utilize meta-level structures (Meta-States) to generate an overall sense (gestalt) of integration, congruency, wholeness, and well-being. (This pattern has been adapted from Dilts' Neuro-logical Levels.)

Do this just standing and talking about each level, or spatially anchor each level by backing up from the primary state behavior.

The Pattern

1) Identify a primary state sensory-based experience wherein you want more alignment.

Is there any behavior that you would like to perform with more personal alignment, congruency, and integrity? What activity do you engage in that's very important to you, but which sometimes lacks the full range of congruency, power, and focus that you would like to have? Make a list. (Suggestion: Align your speaking, your *attention*, with who you know you are at

your core being, your *intention*.)

Describe this behavior, activity, or experience in sensory-based terms. Describe from a video-camera perspective. (behavior)

Where do you do this? (environment) Where not? When? When not?

2) Identify the primary state (P-S) mental-emotional skills and abilities which enable you to do this. (Capability)

How do you know *how to* do this? Can you pull this off?

How do you do that? Describe it briefly.

What strategy or strategies do you employ in doing this?

3) Identify the meta-levels of beliefs and values that support and empower this. (Beliefs/ Values)

Why do you engage in this? Why do you believe this is important?

What are some empowering beliefs that support this behavior?

4) Identify the meta-state of identity which emerges for you. (Identity)

When you do this, does it affect your identity? Who are you, when you engage in this?

What does engaging in this behavior say about your identity?

5) Identify the meta-state of purpose & destiny that then arises. (Vision, Mission, Spirit)

Does this fit into your overall sense of destiny and purpose? How does it?

What's your highest intention in doing this?

6) Identify the decision that supports this.

Have you decided to do this? You will? You have said 'Yes!' to this?

7) Describe these meta-Levels of meaning with a metaphor or story.

What is this like? Let a metaphor or story encapsulate this matrix of your mind.

As it emerges ...notice its sounds, colors, shapes, music, light, etc.

8) Bring the higher levels down to the primary state behavior to let it all integrate.

As you even more fully step into all of this awareness, experience it completely, snapshot it and honor it. Let it enrich all of your levels... and now imagine bringing this back down the levels, letting it coalesce into the lower levels to enrich them. How do you now experience the behavior, environment, and so on, when you bring this higher level with you? And you can bring each of these levels, in turn, to bear upon your everyday states, can you not?

*If you spatially anchored each meta-state, go back to the highest level of metaphor and step from there to the next one and the next, gathering up the resources, and bring it down to the behavior. Repeat 3 times until it flows as a *walk of integration*.*

David Lock's Experience – Meta-Stating an Intentional Stance for “Fluency”

During the writing of this chapter, I sent it around as an attached file for those on our e-mail list to review the chapter. Later David Lock of Melbourne Australia made the following post to the E-mail list. I am including it here with David's permission. He does an excellent job expressing the practicality of the materials in this chapter.

Let me share with you my experiences of working through the exercises; which I share only in the hope that it inspires others to read Bob's article and do the same.\

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I discovered that I hold back as I want to fit in; if I continue I might stand out, if I stand out I might do something wrong. If I do something wrong, I might get told off (note the childhood associations). I don't want this due to a sense of self-protection.\

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The blocking serves a purpose; the positive intention behind it all is self-protection. But self-protection is still animalistic, humans have that capacity to rise above that and operate from a higher intentional perspective. So what is above that for me? Well, for me living congruently with the essence of my being, being true to my spirit, my soul, is higher. What Oprah might describe as "honoring your spirit," to me includes self-expression, honesty, sharing and giving freely, love and courage.\

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Let's deconstruct what is happening. By stopping at self-protection, I am subconsciously doing what I believe overall is best for me, yet it is actually the very thing that prevents me achieving my ultimate objective.\

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Self-protection for me is only a middle level imperative, yet it is still serving as functionally meta to my lower primary state. I have the opportunity to consciously recognize my highest level imperative, thereby outframe and so rise above the need to block. In fact I'm providing myself with a strong incentive to let go. I can then bring the resourceful state associated with living congruently with my highest objectives to bear on my lower primary state and keep transforming my hexagon until it is transformed by default.\

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Let me share my thinking and action that followed. I reinforced to myself how stopping short at self-protection prevents me from 'honoring my spirit'. I'm censoring and editing my behavior (verses self-expression: I try to hide the fact that I stutter by avoidances (verses being honest!); I don't contribute and share if I'm worried about being dysfluent (verses sharing and giving); I can be prone to hate myself if I consider I have embarrassed myself (verses love); and finally holding back is cowardly (verses the courage of living by a higher level intentional purpose in the face of what may otherwise be an environmentally induced attentional focus on primary desires.)\

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How can I symbolize "honoring my spirit"? I have this image of a shining light, symbolic of the universal nature of my highest intentions. Now what happens to the need for self-protection in the presence of the shining light - the need falls away; what happens to being told off - I just get a strong sense of my Power Zone where my higher level intentions are like universal truths greater than me or any individual (self-expression – like feeding a starving person is unquestionably the only option); what about standing out - I get a sense that that's OK, not in an egotistical way but in a strong resourceful way, like hearing someone who is self-assured and centered is enjoyable; and what about holding back - well quite simply if I did that I would not be "honoring my spirit".\

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Now what identity would I have by living in a way that "honors my spirit", abiding by my highest level intentions? I get a sense of being an adult, being a man (contrast this with the childlike associations I have with my blocking behavior). I get a sense of dignity and being strong (not forceful or aggressive, more a strength of character, a deep reservoir of resources and experiences). An image of myself in this state comes to mind; I feel broad across the chest, my posture straightens, I'm introducing myself to others (previously a feared situation) talking to them, smiling, laughing, totally calm, content, satisfied, happy - life is good!\

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Time to Meta-Yes! Meta-No! Stepping in this image seeing the world through these eyes, living life with this level of resourcefulness - do I really want this? Yes! Am I sure?

YES!

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I think I really want to live in the primary state of the old unresourceful me, the "me" that blocks and hold

backs; that can't move beyond a petty self-interest of self-protection - a perpetual child! No! Am I sure? Absolutely. I'm going to take the resourceful you away, you can't have it. Too bad now that I have this resourcefulness I'm not going back! (I've reached threshold) OK then. How do I know you deserve to keep it, how are you going to keep it?\

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I'm going to meta-state into resourcefulness by anchoring into the “me” with the big smile and broad chest :-), powered by this shining light within and around me. I'm going to let go and express myself freely because this is what we are all on this planet to do! I'm going to tolerate minor blocks along the way. I know that these behaviors and physiology from old frames have just been mind-to-muscled for so long that it will take time to learn new more appropriate responses in those times that I still might associate with stress. I will stay resourceful and continue to allow my self-expression to flow.\

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How do I feel? I just feel an over-whelming desire to let go; like that's the only way; like I've given myself permission to open the floodgates and talk, talk, talk and talk! Like if I block that that is no longer an excuse to hold back (and since I hold back by blocking this thing kind of takes care of itself). Feels great!\

Chapter Summary

The Intentional Matrix addresses our sense of direction, goals, reasons, motivation, and intention.

It is from this Matrix that we create meanings about the purpose of things and our own purposes.\

In every matrix, behind each one, there live higher intentions.\

These higher intentions are in the unconscious mind – most of us are not even aware that they exist. We just operate off of them.

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A very important NLP premise is that “Every behavior has a positive intent.” \

Problem behaviors are problems because the behavior does not get us what we really want at the higher intentional level. For example, the higher intent of fearing what other people may think about our stuttering is probably *protection* – protection from being hurt. When that happens, the fear causes more blocking which does not protect us from being hurt.\

Intention relates not only to what we value, (what we think important, and meaningful) but also to what we *intend to do* about the things we notice, feel, and experience. \

This matrix arises, as do the other matrices, from the Meaning Matrix. In everything we do, we have intentions. We want something to happen or to stop happening.

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Mental health (including fluency) is a whole lot about aligning our higher intentions with our behavior.\