

FOCUS

Linking Language, Mood and Body

In this issue I focus on the nature and power of the connections between the words we use, the moods we adopt and our physiology.

LANGUAGE

The Promise Cycle

The focus here is on the linguistic phenomenon of **promising** as the essential means of making and managing commitments.

http://www.newfieldaus.com.au/articles/Promise_Management.html

BODY

The Moving Cycle

The Moving Cycle is a process-oriented model, so it does not assume specific goals or outcomes, they are determined by the client.

<http://www.themovingcycle.com/>

MOOD

The Transition Cycle

has its roots in Transition Psychology. We are all affected by crushing waves of change sometimes 10 or 20 times in a lifetime. Some experiences will be positive and present clear opportunities, whilst others are perceived to be negative having a devastating effect on our mental health.

<http://www.eoslifework.co.uk/>

Introduction

We discovered in Vol 1.1 and 1.2 that Ontological (Integral) Coaching has a strong theoretical and scientific knowledge base to its work. It is founded on the idea that we are observers of ourselves and the world around us. How we think influences the distinctions and choices we make and the outcomes we then experience.

MSW from Birmingham (UK) commented on the first two newsletters:

“The two recent editions have had a very positive impact, although I cannot claim to have understood the methodology in precise terms. I feel that I have been afforded a glimpse of some very profound truth here. Knowing myself as I do, I now face the prospect of spending the rest of my existence agonising about the meaning of it all. What would help me personally is a case study or example highlighting the potency of both approaches.”



Thank you Martin. It is my intention to unpack the theory in future editions of the newsletter with tools, techniques and case study examples drawn from my own and other people's experience. In Volume One I wanted to get at some of the scientific and philosophical roots of the thinking behind ontological change.

For example, Quantum Physics explains how processes behave at the atomic level and how they are replicated at the molecular, neuronal, limbic, natural world and universe levels. Each level containing the behaviours of a former level and then adding new processes to allow for more successful integration. They are living systems within living systems. They are not static, but dynamic states of fluctuating formless energy, intelligence and consciousness, which are capable of creating infinite possibilities in space and time only when given form by the mind. We are only limited by our ability to think creatively and imagine the possibilities. **If we can see it we can do it.** By seeing I mean the ability to select the thoughts we decide to act on.

So, we are capable of living in a vast number of possible realities and it is our choice as the observer which one(s) we want to experience. This requires an understanding of how from all the thoughts we could pay attention to only a few make it into the physical realm through our actions. Alan Sieler in 'Coaching to the Human Soul' refers to this as "the power of the observer." An Ontological Coach can help clients create new thinking and an understanding of how they create the reality they want. By becoming a different observer and selecting different thoughts, you can change your body, your language, your moods, your beliefs, your behaviour, your relationships, etc. Life is then seen as a journey that involves exploring possibilities and creating new realities. This is the aim of all coaching conversations of course. An ontological approach however, seeks to integrate language, mood and body dimensions with mind, consciousness and thought.

In this edition of the newsletter I explore the power that conversation, emotions and physiology can have in creating the outcomes we want.

Steve Trivett Personal & Professional Change Coach

Please send your comments, complaints, contributions or compliments to: zoneinfo@changezone.co.uk



PUBLICATIONS

'The Alexander Principle'
by Wilfred Barlow. Orion
2001

This book explores a method of mind and body connection that reduces stress and muscle tension. It contains a wealth of common sense advice from which everyone can benefit.

'Getting Our Bodies Back' by
Christine Caldwell.
Shambahala 1996.

This book explores The Moving Cycle, an approach to recovery, healing and transformation based on body-centred Psychotherapy. It addresses the whole ontology of what it means to be human, honouring the natural intelligence and innate healing capacity of the body-mind. Christine creates a map of this largely uncharted territory.

'The Sourcebook of Magic' by
Mchael Hall PhD. Crown
House. 2004

This book explores 77 basic patterns of cognitive-behavioural change. It allows change leaders and coaches to guide their clients to achieve transitions. The patterns deal with self, emotions, languaging and meaning making – providing guidelines for what to do when and why, in order to change patterns of thinking and action.

The Six Linguistic Acts

Drawn from the work of Fernando Flores and John Searle

All six actions are tools arising from Speech Action Theory. You can use them to make your conversations purposeful and get commitment from others to change things for the better. These linguistic tools are therefore vital in achieving improvements in performance, leadership for change, and healthy self-esteem.

The fascinating thing is that we cannot, NOT use them. It is vital therefore that we know how to apply them well in our conversations to get others to do what we want and be successful at the game of life. They include:

- 1. Telling people how things are** - making **declarations** - writing reports - making presentations to expand other people's understanding of what is and what's possible as a precursor of change.
- 2. Getting other people to do things** - making **requests** to get a desired change in people or circumstances or outcomes.
- 3. Committing ourselves to do things** - making **promises** - accepting responsibility to do something to contribute to a desired change
- 4. Expressing feelings and attitudes** - making **assessments** - opinions, assumptions and judgements in the hope of changing others
- 5. Directing others to change** - making **assertions** - backed by data or authority to bring about a different reality or a desired future for them
- 6. Doing something to help others** - making **offers** of support in the hope that it will get them to change

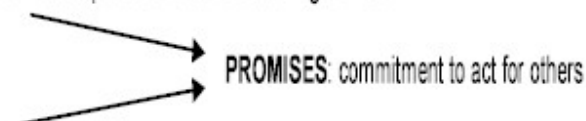
We get results through our interactions with others and this takes effective communications skills. We cannot create anything without engaging in these linguistic acts.

ASSERTIONS – deciding what is and is not factual

DECLARATIONS – statements with the force of authority behind them to bring about change



REQUESTS – attempts to have others do things for us



OFFERS – putting ourselves forward to do things for others

More <http://www.fastcompany.com/online/21/flores.html>



USEFUL WEBSITES

I am currently working on a major overhaul of my Change Zone website. As from January 2007 it will be available as an "INFOBASE" resource through my new Ontological Coaching website.

There will be more about these changes in the January 2007 edition of the newsletter which appear monthly and take on a more pragmatic style with more case studies, reader comments, book reviews and workshop opportunities.

Working with Mood State

Anthony Robins talks about the importance of mood state in a free 15 minute online video presentation. Go to: http://ted.com/tedtalks/tedtalksplayer.cfm?key=tony_robins&flashEnabled=1
NB: It's Flash enabled

Understanding Mind, Consciousness and Thought

This is the website of Sydney Banks. It contains a range of audio and video clips of his take on what he calls "The Three Principles". <http://www.sydneybanks.org/frameset.php?id=tp>

Human Responses to Change

In this article Dai Williams explores transition and its implications. <http://www.eoslifework.co.uk/futures.htm>

The Promise Cycle

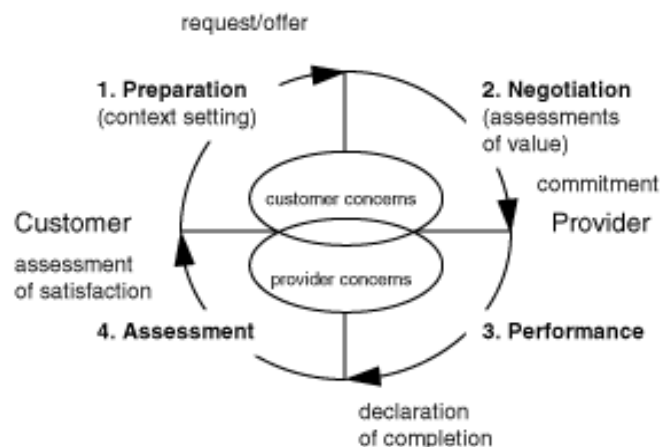
Drawn from the work of Fernando Flores. Language is not just a symbolic description of externally observed reality, it actually creates reality from the inside-out by turning our thoughts into actions.

Based on the Linguistic Acts, the Promise Cycle supports a conversation for action where there are two players - a "customer" and a "provider". The provider makes an offer or the customer makes a demand they want satisfied.

From the provider's point of view, they define themselves by the offers, commitments or promises they make and the requests they accept. Declarations or promises that are not satisfied by the time agreed will lead to a breakdown of trust and the relationship can quickly degenerate into conflict and even deeper concerns.

Applying the methods of Fernando Flores to the customer-provider relationship, can lead to a focus on their concerns in order to get agreement on the commitments that both sides need to make.

You will find an excellent article by Alan Sieler based at the Newfield College in Australia, at: http://www.newfieldaus.com.au/articles/Promise_Management.html



1. Preparation – the diagnostic stage.

The provider makes an offer or the customer makes a request. This sets the context for the relationship. *In coaching this would be the diagnostic stage.*

2. Negotiation - goal setting stage

The provider listens carefully to clarify the customer's declarations in order to establish what actions will add value. This conversation results in promises or commitment being made. *In coaching this would include the coaching agreement.*

3. Performance - co-active conversations

Once an agreement is reached there is an offer in response to a request enabling both sides to meet the conditions for satisfaction relating to time, cost, style, deadlines, etc. Trust is built when the promise has been fulfilled. *In coaching, this involves sticking to the agreement or modifying it through co-active conversations.*

The conceptual model of *The Promise Cycle* is a means of understanding and applying **essential linguistic considerations** for being continually effective in generating, making and managing commitments. It contributes to improving performance, service delivery, productivity and image.



USEFUL WEBSITES

Consciousness

This site contains a wealth of articles on the evolution of consciousness and language
<http://psycprints.ecs.soton.ac.uk/archive/00000239/>

Languaging

Languaging means word choice in usage. In this article Michael Lissack and Johan Roos explore the emerging systems of languaging. This phenomenon makes language a creator of action which has major implications for transitions that retain a sense of identity in individuals and organisations during the change process.

<http://lissack.com/writings/AMRfinal.pdf#search=%22Languaging%22>

Emotions

Meditation helps to reduce stress and also has biological benefits that improve your resilience to dis-ease. A positive emotional state impacts on your physiology and language, which in turn

<http://www.news.wisc.edu/packages/emotion/8238.html>

Meaning

When you consider just what is meant by meaning, things get complicated pretty fast. Here are a number of statements made by the theorist David Berlo

<http://www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk/MUHome/cshtml/index.html>

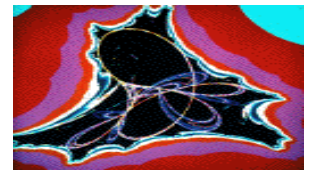
4. Assessment – the review stage

This is the most difficult stage because the 5 Linguistic or Speech Acts interact. Assertions are made but unless conclusive evidence can be provided they are merely assessments. Declarations too may have been made about specific outcomes, but when disputed they can only be assessments or judgements. The most important consideration here is the customer's assessment of satisfaction.

BREAKDOWNS

If the provider fails to deliver on the commitment, they must do three things:

- apologise
- offer compensation for th broken promise
- be open to a new request



These breakdowns often result from misunderstandings that colour relationships and cause conflict, such as bad moods and even physical symptoms of stress. I have listed a few below for you to try and avoid. These breakdowns often result from "linguistic viruses" that cause dissatisfaction, bad moods and even ill health. I have listed a few below for you to avoid . . .

1. NOT making a request. You may be reticent or fearful of asking for something. Remember, they are saying no to your request - not to you as a person. Making a request is not an imposition or admission of weakness.

2. Living with uncommunicated expectations. These are just unexpressed requests. When others do not do as we expect them to we can become disappointed, resentful and angry. The solution is to translate "shoulds" into clear requests, from which there will be less resentment and guilt.

3. Making unclear requests. It is no good just asking for support or offering to invite someone. Requests must be as precise and as detailed as possible to avoid misunderstanding. It is not an insult to the listener as good communication requires the person receiving the request to share your understanding.

4. NOT observing the mood of your requests. How others perceive you is very important. If you're perceived to be demanding or arrogant people might promise something feeling under duress, not choice.

5. Promising even though you are not clear waht was requested. This is foolish. To begin to fulfil a promise only to discover that it cannot be honoured because of a simple omission creates bad feeling and confusion.

6. NOT declining requests. Saying yes to everything is a recipe for disaster. The desire to please can lead to misery, resulting from a perpetual fear of failure, leading to anxiety, exhaustion and stess. If you fail a lot, people will feel you are not being sincere and cannot be trusted. Learn to say no if you cannot deliver by the deadline required. The stress can seriously damage your health.

7. Breaking promises without taking care. A promise builds an expectation that you will take action. If the promise is broken, the person will begin to lose trust in you and feel betrayed. Be open about problems that arise unexpectedly and clarify the reasons and consequences so that you are understood. A new promise can then be negotiated and the relationship strengthened rather than broken.

8. Treating assessments as facts. There is no truth in an assertion without evidence, as it is treated as an assessment or judgement and conflicts of interpretation often arise. We can often make assumptions believing them to be true, when infact they are assessments. You will be considered an arrogant bully if you make assertions for which there is no proof.



WAYS OF BEING

Within the Moving Cycle there are **FIVE INTENTIONS**:

- **To nurture** - affirming, accepting and loving
- **To support** - feeling held or joined within clear boundaries
- **To challenge** - accessing the truth with right thinking
- **To reflect** - feeding back what you see and what's hidden
- **To provide space** - focusing on silence and breathing

There are also **FIVE INTERVENTIONS**:

- **To repeat** - heightening awareness to investigate
- **To contrast** - considering the shadow side/ alternatives
- **To intensify** - turning up the volume/brightness
- **To specify** - providing focus to achieve clarity
- **To generalise** - applying to the whole not just parts

We are all on many Moving Cycles at any one time, each of them moving forward at their own pace, all interconnected with each other and the bigger world. It is patterned on the natural processes of the body and how it likes to operate optimally, vibrating with controlled energy.

The Moving Cycle

This technique is drawn from the work of Christine Caldwell a Somatic Therapist (using movement to influence psychological functioning)

Christine Caldwell observed that when change happens naturally, in mind and body, it follows distinct movement sequences. It's a cycle because the same thing happens again and again - albeit at a deeper and more profound level.



The underlying principle is that problems are best worked through than got round. This means working through the feelings, through the sensations, through the old limits and further into the body that is our home. This sense of "coming home" is the reason why this technique works so well.

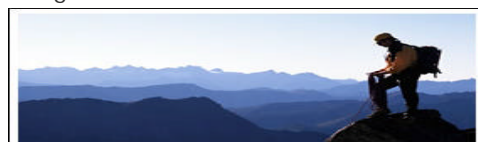
The first stage of the cycle is **AWARENESS**. You often find yourself desensitised to the point where you have lost the art of conscious awareness. This can be both a frightening and an enlivening experience as you acknowledge your feelings, not cut them off or hide them away. It's about letting out and acknowledging what you actually feel.

The second stage is called **OWNING**. This involves being ruthlessly honest about what is being experienced. This overcomes denial or the shifting of responsibility for your feelings outside yourself and onto others. This deals with blame, excuses and rationalisation that that remove your power to do what's needed. Aliveness requires you to recover sensation through focused attention (concentration) and broad attention (relaxation). It's also about getting clarity and focus into your actions so you put energy into those things that really matter to us. This also involves allowing our bodies to contain our energy and emotions so we can feel more alive inside. This makes us feel secure, appreciated and in control.

The third stage is **ACCEPTANCE**. This requires us to deal with any shame or guilt that may live in our bodies. It can literally weigh us down in excess pounds or bring tension and even illness to specific parts of our bodies. Full breathing often creates space for new sensations to emerge. Breathing into a feeling helps you take responsibility for it as an experience that you alone have generated within you. I cannot make you feel or do anything - it's your choice to respond or not.

The last phase is **ACTION**. This begins when you can sustain uncritical and loving attention to yourself. With this ability you can engage with the world in a healthy manner in which your very presence becomes a force for positive change in everything and everyone around you. You are now relating to the world in the same conscious, responsible, accepting way that you relate to yourself. Your body and your mood communicate more than your words do, so pay attention to the messages they give out.

Christine Caldwell herself comments *"What keeps us in the life limiting category is often not unresolved trauma, but simply a belief that we are not supposed to get too happy, too successful, too excited, too aroused. Our families and cultures teach us 'how much' we can be."* From 'Getting our Bodies Back' Shambahala 1996



Be yourself



FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

VOLUME ONE

This is the third newsletter in first series that is exploring the theories and principles of Ontological Coaching.

Past Editions

Vol 1.1 introduced the conceptual model of Ontological Coaching.

Vol 1.2 introduced the more inclusive model of Integral Coaching.

Vol 1.3 explored the concept of ontology as a 'way of being' focusing on language, mood and body states – the observable features of the human condition.

Future Editions

Vol 1.4 will explain our 'way of being' from a spiritual and physical perspective by linking the principles of mind, consciousness and thought.

Vol 1.5 will investigate the science that underpins ontological coaching.

Vol 1.6 will unpack my own Dynamic Change Model.

More information on past and future editions of the ChangeZone Newsletter can be found at:

<http://www.changezone.co.uk/STEVE/newsletter.html>

The Transition Cycle

Drawn from the work of Transition Psychologists such as Peter Herriot and Dai Williams. For more information visit the EOS website at:

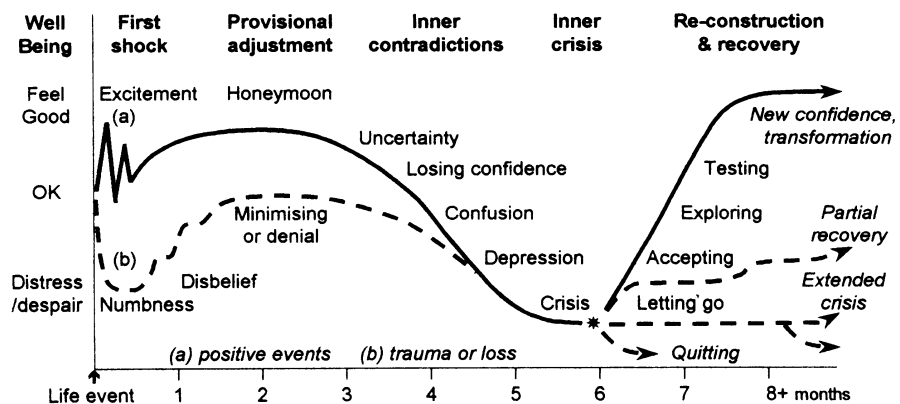
<http://www.eoslifework.co.uk/>

Everything is subject to change. Sometimes it's gradual and sometimes it's catastrophic. These waves of change can take us to the edge of chaos generating stress for individuals, organisations and communities.

Coping with stress and change raises fundamental issues for our mind, body and mood states. Leaders of change need to understand how to diagnose and deal with the ontological issues.



Human beings tend to go through several stages when they seek to adapt to stressful events in work or life generally. Research by EOS suggests that most people experience between 10 to 20 significant transitions in a lifetime, impacting negatively on people's health and wellbeing where there is insufficient internal wisdom or external support to deal with them. The diagram below shows some of the unexpected hazards and opportunities presented by major transitions.



If we could educate people about their ontology and how to manage their thoughts, emotions and physiology they would be able to deal with life's transitions and retain their mental health. This is why Ontological Coaching has such a positive impact on performance. People find renewed strength and peace through self-realisation. Just understanding that we create our reality through our thoughts puts us back in control of our "way of being".

A recent client of mine was forced to resign from his job because his co-workers took exception to his 'way of being'. He thought he was being supportive of their needs, offering them learning opportunities and projects to develop their skills and career prospects. Some of them perceived his actions as pushing them out of their comfort zones, making them feel insecure. This realisation proved devastating for my client and it induced his own insecurity and anxiety. However, what lay beneath the trauma was the economic insecurity and lack of emotional support he was experiencing many months in the past. Dealing with these deeper issues helped him through his transition.



PUBLICATIONS

'Language and the Pursuit of Happiness' by Chalmers Brothers. New Possibilities Press 2005

This book offers an ontological perspective on ways to redesign your life, relationships and results. The focus is on the Six Linguistic Acts and how the way we use language creates different realities and different outcomes.

<http://www.chalmersbrothers.com>

'Embracing Change' by Tony Buzan. BBC Books 2005

This book contains a wealth of transition tools for self-managed change from changing your thinking to visioning and mind mapping.

'Focusing' by Eugene T Gendlin. Rider 2003

This powerful technique shows you how to access your body's knowledge to dissolve personal problems by focusing on the language and deep wisdom of the body.

<http://www.focusing.org>

'Your Body Believes Every Word You Say' by Barbara Hoberman Levine. Wordswork Press 2000

Barbara's 15 year struggle with a brain tumour led her to discover "seedthoughts" and "core beliefs" that link mind and body through language. Language follows thoughts and feelings that can dis-ease the body.

Book Review

Language and the Pursuit of Happiness

by Chalmers Brothers. Published by New Possibilities Press 2005
Available from Chalmers' website: <http://www.chalmersbrothers.com>

This is an excellent book. Well written, with lots of practical examples, anecdotes and clear explanations of the power of language in creating positive and productive thought patterns. He explains how to use the "six linguistic acts" first developed by Fernando Flores. It's a compelling and potentially life transforming book. Chalmers demonstrates the power of language can make us more effective learners and successful adults, whilst retaining a real sense of balance and happiness in all we do. I was amazed at the impact language can have when I reflected on its ability to create positive action and commitment just by choosing a different thought pattern. I would say that this is an essential read for managers, leaders and politicians who want to be more effective listeners and questioners of others and better communicators to get what they want.

Change Tool – Perceptual Positions

Originally developed by John Grinder and Judith De Lozier (1987) based on Gregory Bateson's concept of "triple" description.

Most of our judgements are based on partial information based on our perceptions mind maps. When new information is compatible with your own world view you accept it. If not, it receives little or no consideration. A tool is used by NLP Practitioners to help their clients perceive situations from multiple perspectives.

The first and most natural position is your own point of view, as things happen to you. Your perception then takes place from the perspective of another person and from the position of a neutral observer.

FIRST POSITION – Self

You select from a situation the data that you think is important and you interpret it or give it meaning. You attach feelings as they arise and draw conclusions based on your beliefs. Those thoughts lead to actions. It's important not to become too self-centred.

SECOND POSITION – Other Person(s)

You put yourself in the position of the other person or group. You step into their shoes to try and think and see the world like they do. What perceptive preferences do display? Figure out what you think it is that they want. How do they see you and the situation you are perceived to be in.

THIRD POSITION – Observer

You now step outside your perceptions of self and the other(s) to note the communication behaviour between the two – How are they relating to each other? How do they look and move? Which resources and capabilities do they need? Which positive aspects could happen if they changed their communication behaviour.

This is a good technique for dissociating yourself from any stress and start to see yourself as others see you. This thinking lies behind 360° assessments where managers are commented on by their direct reports. It's important not to come across as condescending and cold. Try it for yourself on a real life relationship.

For more information go to: <http://nlpuniversitypress.com/html2/PaPo30.html>