



Coaching resources from www.bobski.com

The “4-Tuple” model of consciousness, applied to ski coaching.

[This technical note, through an introduction to trans-derivational search lays the groundwork for later reference to Complex Equivalence]

PART I.

Effective coaching is only possible when the coach has a real understanding of, and connection with, the client’s experiences and their modes of experiencing those experiences. Coaching is totally unlike “instructing”, it is not the coach’s job to “teach” the pupil; it is the coach’s job to act as the catalyst which facilitates the pupil to reach into their own rich and varied experience, and to assist them in organising that experience to the betterment of whatever it is they are desirous of changing.

In order to be able to do this, it is necessary for the coach to have available some paradigm of experience which enables a deep understanding of their pupil’s “world”; to facilitate in other words, “seeing the world through their pupil’s eyes”, “feeling the world as the pupil feels it”, and listening to the pupil’s world in the same way the pupil does.

It is a coach’s job to facilitate change, in the full knowledge that the only world we can change is our own. The coach cannot “teach” better skiing to a pupil; there is no such thing as teaching, only learning. So our job is to manage the coach/pupil relationship to facilitate the pupil’s bringing-about of the changes they want.

This cannot be done unless we understand the pupils’ experiences, and perhaps more importantly *how the pupil experiences those experiences*, **what** s/he experiences. It is a primary preoccupation of Neuro Linguistic Programming to understand these processes and to enable practitioners to connect with them. To be effective you *must* meet the pupil in their model of the world.

In the 1970’s Drs. Richard Bandler and John Grinder founded N.L.P. by modelling experiential representation. One of their first discoveries was that *any* experience is too complex for the subject of the experience to be fully aware of the experience in consciousness. There is simply too much going on. The mind is fully capable of taking in the whole experience, but the brain – the conscious – is not, and will represent the experience through processes which sequester large sections of it. In consciousness, the subject may only be aware of the experience, especially in retrospect, through only one sensory channel.

Grinder and Bandler set out to create a model of experience – a visual representation of it. What they came up with is the 4-tuple. The general form of the 4-tuple is

$$\langle V, K, A_t, O \rangle$$

where V = Visual

K = Kinaesthetic

A_t = Auditory tonal

O = Olfactory

In other words the model is positing that a person’s experience at any specific moment in time, can be adequately and efficiently represented and understood for most communication purposes by a de-

scription of their experience of their world in terms of inputs from their world via the visual, touch, sound and smell senses.

An example given in their book “Patterns of the hypnotic techniques of Milton H. Erickson MD vol. II” describes *you* at this very moment, as you read this. If we assume you are on your own, comfortably seated, and do not read aloud to yourself, then your current experience is described by the model thus :

<V= whatever you're seeing (words, room etc)/ K=the feel of the chair, whether you are warm or cool etc./ A_t=∅ / O= the room's smell, flowers in the jar etc.>

In this instance the A_t variable is null, because the assumption is that the room is quiet and no sounds are impinging upon you from your environment. Provided that each variable is fully described, then this model defines the subject's (your) present-moment experience. Note however, that in this particular example it is only *externally generated* sensory inputs which are described.

It is obvious however that our **total** experience at any given moment in time, is not only a resultant of externally-generated inputs. Our minds are working continuously, and we generate *within ourselves*, very powerful internally generated experiences which strongly influence our *perception* of what we normally consider to be “reality” or “truth”. Whether it is “reality” (if there is such a thing), or not, is very doubtful indeed.

Rather, what we do with our experiences is to create out of them a “map” of the “territory” we are in. We do not, you will note, experience the territory, we experience the map. NLP is hugely pre-occupied with learning how to distinguish the map from the territory. It is imperative if you wish to be a truly effective

ski teacher or indeed any other kind of teacher, and particularly if you wish to *coach* – that you understand deeply within you, that *your* map of the world is very different from that of everyone else, and that if you attempt to make contact with your pupil, from *your* perspective, you are likely to fail.

This happens constantly. The proof is the number of skiers who have found instruction to be of only very limited utility, and often both very disappointing and de-motivating. A skiing example of two very different “maps” of what most people would consider to be a clearly “objective”, “factual”, or “real” world, is the case of two skiers standing atop, say, a steep and hard-packed red run. One skier opines that this is “really steep and dangerous”, the other that “it's a piece of cake, really nice, let's go”.

Here we have one apparently objective situation, one “reality” if you like, but two completely different “maps”. Who is right? They both are. There are as many “true, realities” as there are people. The ultimate objective however is not just to appreciate that your client's experience of the world is different to your own, it is to learn how to prise-out and how to understand how your client experiences what they experience. It is **very** unlikely that they will be able to tell you more than a tiny fraction of their total experience, from their current-moment consciousness.. So you will need to learn how to do the necessary detective work.

In the next technical note I will develop the 4-tuple as a descriptor of the *total* experience.

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