**EXCEPTIONAL COMMUNICATION**

* Communication: anything people do to have influence on another person's experience. Your client will always be responding, in some way, to your words, voice tone and tempo, gestures, posture, breathing, facial expressions, etc. Be exceptional.
* Radical disruption: Some journeys place the traveler in new circumstances never before encountered. We often find that the client enters a phase of "protest behavior" or they become a pioneer. Our job is to be a confident guide into a future they design.

What’s neurology have to do with it?

* Brain-Body Highway: (Porge’s Polyvagal Theory) The Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) guides: The drive to avoid threat and secure safety (aka fight-flight-freeze response). *Neuroception* capacity to subconsciously detect safety and threat. Behavior is the tip of the iceberg – the causes are often hidden from view.

Exercise:

Write down words or phrases that describe your typical internal state when you are in a sympathetic state – like out of control, feeling unwanted, abandoned, etc. Then do the same with a description of being in a parasympathetic state – engaged, curious, connected.

Apply those to clients – ask them what’s going on internally at that moment – different language than how are you feeling

Next, answer these two questions in both states Complete the sentences and listen to your narratives – what do they evoke?

I am ……..

The world is……….

Example – I belong, I am part of vs I don’t belong, I feel alone

The world is a bright place full of opportunity vs my world is ending and terrifying

* Heart Math: Most of us have been taught in school that the heart is constantly responding to “orders” sent by the brain in the form of neural signals. However, it is not as commonly known that the heart actually sends more signals to the brain than the brain sends to the heart. The heart leads!! Moreover, these heart signals have a significant effect on brain function – influencing emotional processing as well as higher cognitive faculties such as attention, perception, memory, and problem-solving. In other words, not only does the heart respond to the brain, but the brain continuously responds to the heart. Consequently, the heart is often referred to as the “fourth lobe of the brain.”
* Your Energy Field: The heart’s electromagnetic field is several thousand times more powerful than the brain’s electromagnetic field, and it expands at least 6-8 feet beyond our body. So how you “are” affects others. The heart’s energy field is contagious!
* Gut Feeling: Science says, “Listen to your gut.” Sometimes referred to as the “second brain,” the lining of the intestines (ENT or enteric nervous system) is a vast processing system in regular communication with the brain.
* The Body as a Tuning Fork: Those who are more capable of sensing their interior feelings are often more empathetic and receptive to intuitive information.
* Coherence is the state of being in which we are most capable of hearing that deeper wisdom throughout our nervous system to guide our interactions. Through a process called “entrainment” our brain’s rhythm naturally synchronize to our heart’s rhythms rather than the other way around. This is the state of coherence …and breathing plays a significant role in how we achieve it. (<https://www.heartmath.com/science/>) Article attached.

Deep Listening

*Listening has the quality of the wizard’s alchemy.*

*It has the power to melt armor and to produce beauty in the midst of hatred.*

—Brian Muldoon

Listening for the layers of the story:

* Facts, feelings, values
  + Facts are what happened in what sequence. They are often the source of debate over what’s “true.”
  + Feelings can cycle rapidly through a story – and give you a layer of complexity about the meaning of the facts and the experience for the speaker.
  + Values tell us those elements of the story that the person holds most dear to the core of their being. When values are violated, you’re likely to see significant distress.
* Listening with your ears, heart, guts
* Strengthening your coherence

LISTENING EXERCISE:

You will be listening to one another in pairs. Take a moment and think about what you dream will be your professional legacy – what really matters to you. What you hope you can change, can contribute, can revolutionize through your work. Choose who will begin as speaker and the other will be the listener.

SPEAKER: Take three minutes to relate your aspirations, hopes – what’s important to you about your work and how you hope learning to communicate more exceptionally will help.

LISTENER: Listen as fully as you can to the layers of the story without saying a word. Allow the speaker to simply “tell their story” in their own way. Allow for moments of silence. Maintain an open heart.

* Reflect back the facts first, asking the speaker if what you picked up was accurate and if you left out any important facts
* Reflect back the feelings, once again asking the speaker if what you “heard” or “saw” or “felt in your heart” or “intuited in your guts” was accurate. Did you miss anything?
* Reflect back the values you sensed embedded in the story – and if this rings true to the speaker.

Take a moment to silently reflect. Then switch roles, with both parties reviewing the guidelines before beginning.

After both of you have been in each role, talk about what this was like for you.

We’ll debrief as a group.

Responding Skillfully

* Deepening Inquiry – Questions that Connect (help a speaker go deeper)

Inquiry is the use of open-ended questions that have no specific answer but invite an exploration that sets a path of discovery.  The purpose is to deepen the speaker’s connection to their own experience, as well as the connection between us.  This is a matter of the heart, not the head where we do problem solving and typically assume we know what the problem is.  Our use of such inquiry arises from the belief that the person (and only the person) knows what’s best for them.

 Increase understanding and empathy: “Tell me what it’s like to feel adrift…”

*    Help the speaker to deepen in his/her experience: “You mentioned feeling incredibly alone…”

*    Help the speaker, not the listener: Your questions hold no agenda but to build understanding and connection.

*    Help evoke ultimate concerns and reveal values: Help the speaker get to the “heart of the matter.”

Avoid the use of questions for:

 Satisfying your own curiosity

    Showing off your knowledge

*    Couching criticism or questioning choices

*    Demonstrating your skill as a listener

*    Analyzing or explaining the situation

*    Offering opinions

It is important to consider the impact a question will have on the speaker:  Will it open, not close their heart?  Will it interrupt the flow? Will it cause any defensiveness or send them out of their heart up into their head?

EXERCISE: In groups of four, identify a speaker and a listener. The speaker begins to tell a story that’s important to them. The three listeners take turn asking / or commenting to the speaker in an effort to help them take their story deeper … just following the speaker’s lead. With each comment or question, the speaker indicates if the question connects in such a way that they want to “continue on” with their story (go deeper), or if the question lands in a neutral way … not quite connecting, or if the comment/question misses the mark. The listeners rotate their attempts. After 5 – 8 minutes, rotate speakers.

* “Feeling Felt” (Dan Seigel) helping the client re-regulate
* Speaking directly to the “pain point”
  + Step past the words and pay attention to the emotional experience of the person – all the emotions!! Anger, fear, shame, disrespected … unloved/abandoned/alone.
  + Reflect back the emotions as clearly and accurately as you can. Validate, not battle! You may need to “wash, rinse, repeat” until the person feels truly understood.
  + We help the person “re-regulate” and engage their own pre-frontal cortex.
  + You’ll know you’ve connected and de-escalation is unfolding when you get one or more of these four typical reaction:
    - Nod head affirmatively – the “bulls eye!”
    - Verbal response “YEA! That’s exactly how I feel.”
    - Shoulders drop.
    - Big sigh.

(Mediators are teaching incarcerated people the techniques of responding to one another’s pain point to de-escalate tensions in prisons. People leave prison with mediation training, and as peacemakers to begin their next stage of life. To learn more: <https://www.prisonofpeace.org/>)

Neuro-Linquistic-Programming – Speaking the Client’s Language

* Specific skills for moving toward greater contact and rapport ...
  + Representational System predicates (visual, auditory, or kinesthetic) – reminder!
  + Awareness Wheel (Anne)
  + Pacing / Leading (to the extent that you can match another person's verbal and non-verbal behavior, you will be pacing his experience)(Anne)
* Meta-model questions

Human beings rely on language to share experience. The NLP (Neuro-Linquistic Programming) Meta Model, is an effective model for dealing with distortions in everyday language, to help people have richer experience in language, flexibility in their personal behavior and an enhanced internal personal experience.

“The language we use to describe our experience is only an approximation of our inner and outer experience. The “Meta Model” is a specific set of linguistic tools and categories that rests upon the premise that words only have meaning insofar as they are associated to internal representations or sensory experience. The Meta Model questions are designed to bridge the gap between language and sensory experience.” (From “Practical Magic” by Steve Lankton, 1980.)

The Meta Model contains three basic categories: 1) Distortions, 2) Generalizations, and 3) Deletions. There are a total of 13 such examples across these three categories. We’re going to look at the five most common.

Deletions (material that is completely left out of the sentence)

“I’m inadequate.” “To do what?”

“I’m able to cope.” “With what?” “With whom?”

“The decision was reached.” “About what?” “By whom?”

“My plans are made.” “About what?”

Referential Index Deletion (a person, place or thing is introduced without context)

“Things get me down.” “What things?”

“I understand.” “Understand about what?”

“Something should be done!” “Done about what?”

“People get me down.” “Who specifically has you down?”

Unspecified Verbs (the verb is introduced but is not clarified)

“I can deal with it.” “How will you deal with it?” (“Deal with what?”)

“It’s just what I believe.” “How do you believe specifically?” (“What is it that you believe?”)

“He just won’t love me.” “Love you in what way?”

“I’m stuck.” “How are you stuck?” (“Stuck in or about what?”)

Nominalizations (words introduced as a static noun, when in fact they represent a process)

“There is no respect here!” “Who is not respecting you?” “Not respecting you in what way?”

“She needs more strength.” “You’d like her to be stronger in what way?”

“He’ll never be decent.” “How is he behaving indecently now?”

“I’m just done.” “What part of this process are you tired of right now?

*Protest behavior often shows up as “chunking” … taking a moment in time or a temporary situation and making it a much bigger chunk, more permanent/immovable – insurmountable in their mind.*

“This entire situation is now f\*\*ked!” “Do you feel like everything right here with me is a mess?”

Modal Operators (words that constitute limits)

“I can’t do anything right.” “Anything? (said with fondness)” “What’s stopping you right now from doing what’s right?”

“I have to go!” “OK. What might happen if you stay?”

“People can’t know…” “What might happen if they do?”

“I can’t think.” “What’s preventing you?”

* From passive to active ... and chunking experience. The larger the chunks, the more stuck the client feels. "This divorce is so fucked up" vs "This divorce is fucking things up." Now we want to break it into pieces: “What part of the divorce feels the worst?” “How can we move this from disaster into some small ray of hope in even one small area?”

EXERCISE: Using Meta Model Questions to Expand Understanding

*Work in small groups of 3-4. Use the following sentences to practice using Meta Model questions with each other. Have one person be the client/or team member expressing the concern and the other group members ask questions that address distortions, generalizations, and/or deletions. The more you uncover missing information, the more skillful you are in helping your client drill down on what they’re actually thinking, feeling, experiencing, and the more flexible and capable of problems-solving for themselves! After you exhaust your search for missing information, process what the speaker learned about themselves and what the listeners learned about the issue. Move on and be sure each person gets to be the speaker and each gets to lead on asking questions. If time allows, do a second round. Practice makes better!!*

*PS: Are you in a state of “coherence”?*

*PSS: If your speaker starts to argue with you, what are you supposed to do? Did you address the* ***pain point****? See what happens!*

“My husband’s family has undermined the children. It’s like there’s no history! They are total nightmares. My children are being destroyed.”

“Collaborative Law is a farce! No one holds her feet to the fire. It’s like there are ‘no rules’ and it’s a free for all. No one’s doing anything to make this RIGHT!”

(Attorney to attorney) “What are you doing? You can’t do that. You’re violating the rules.”

“My heart’s in my toes. People expect me to just walk away from kids 50% of the time. They’re just tiny little people. They need a MOM! No one gets married and has children for this to happen. I can’t agree to any of this!”

“There is no way this is OK. I know that he and some new girlfriend will simply try to replace me with my children. They’ll think they’re the perfect new “family” – and I’ll be alone. My children are being harmed! Someone needs to stop him.”

“We keep going the same thing, over and over. She says she’ll do it differently, but doesn’t change. She never respects me, the agreements, the process. And you don’t see it.”

(Speaking to professional) “Stop him! Can’t you see what he’s doing? (turning to speak to husband) I’m sick of your smug looks, you act like your innocent, and you’re responsible for this whole thing. You think sleeping with our son’s football coach is OK??” (Good luck – how will you slow things down and unpack all of this??)

“He has no idea of what’s in the ‘best interest’ of children. He’s not competent. He’s never made a school lunch. I’m the primary parent. It’s been that way and always will be. I can’t deal with his nonsense.”

EXERCISE COMPLETED

* Working with incongruities
  + Double binds (Loyalty binds for children)
  + The statement underneath the question
  + The Hidden Shark
  + Judgment and contempt
* Flushing out the desired outcome ... the future the client truly wants
* The Oracle: Future Pacing and embedded commands...speaking of things not yet encountered...as a confident guide.