

GETTING INTO A  
RESOURCEFUL STATE OF MIND

NLP MODELLING PROJECT FOR  
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PRACTITIONER TRAINING

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6 May 1997

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1. ABSTRACT

Congratulations.

You've just taken a very positive step towards improving your ability to create a resourceful state of mind at any time.

That state could be relaxed, calm, motivated perhaps for a presentation that you will give. Sympathy, patience and reassurance for a troubled child. Confidence for a forthcoming job interview. It could be a friendly and humorous state for an evening out with new people.

Whatever is the right state of mind for the occasion this project will help you to draw down the resources that you need at will.

So just what will happen when you do ?

You'll start achieving much more. Friends and colleagues will think of you "differently". Relationships will grow with others. You will find that you develop a positive attitude, become more effective at work and find that problems turn into personal challenges that are manageable and appealing.

How you feel about yourself and your abilities is extremely important. If you feel good about your abilities then this project will help reinforce and extend that confidence.

If, like many, you've lacked confidence about your abilities then it is important that you know that you are not stuck with those feelings. The steps set out in Section 4 will give you the key that unlocks your potential to create any resourceful state that you would like.

To make that easy for you this project is set out in a special way. Let's take a quick look at the menu so that you can select the ingredients that interest you most.

If you would like to read and understand how the modelling project was carried out then Section 2 will interest you. Section 3 reviews the detailed results of the exercise. These results form the basis of the entire project.

If you are keen to begin the journey immediately and discover the gains of creating a resourceful state of mind then move straight to Section 4.

Using the key steps that are clearly set out you'll discover exactly how to create a resourceful state of mind at will. You may even find that you keep returning to these key steps as you develop the skills and find out how useful it is to call upon any resourceful state of mind that you like.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 The Subject

Sara Ball has an ability to maintain and create positive states of mind at will. It is a particular talent that I realised at an early stage in our friendship.

Despite having demanding roles as a senior manager within a High Street retailing Company and as a wife and parent, Sara always manages to have a positive outlook and to be attentive and genuinely interested even in the face of competing interests for her time and attention.

Having spoken to her husband Greg and other mutual friends this was obviously a talent that she used in relationships with others. I decided to find out more and to use this skill as the subject matter for this project.

### 2.2 The Approach

Sara readily agreed to be the subject of my project and was also keen to find out exactly what it was that she found simple and others found so elusive. She also was curious about the NLP course and was interested to know a little more about the project itself.

We had two interviews each of about 90 minutes. Both were audio taped. I also took brief written notes as pointers for future questions or reminders on points that I felt it would be worthwhile to return to.

To prepare for both interviews 1:

- Jotted down the key questions raised by the TOTE model and outcome elicitation on a card to form the structure of the discussion;
- Tabbed my NLP course notes to allow easy and quick reference during questioning; and
- Briefed Sara on the telephone beforehand on the purpose of the exercise and the time that we should allow in each case.

The outcomes that I set for each interview were for us both to enjoy the exercise and for me to fully understand the beliefs and strategies that underpinned the behaviour to the extent that I could:

- "Lest drive the new behaviour;

- Identify critical steps in the process; and
- Tell others how do this in "plain English".

### 2.3 The First Interview

At the first interview, we explored the range of situations that Sara finds the ability to create resourceful states of mind to be most useful. This helped:

- Pin down the circumstances in which Sara used this ability to greatest effect;
- Gather as much information as possible about the skill; and
- Identify the tangible benefits for others if they adopted the same approach.

We also established that Sara was happy to share her skill and that she too was keen to find out more about this ability that she had "not given a second thought about" until my enquiry.

For the remainder of the interview I asked Sara to re-experience specific situations which gave a good example of this ability in practice. We then spent the majority of the time available breaking down her thoughts and actions which, at that time, did not appear to follow any clear logical sequence.

However, later listening to the audio tape did much to help me unravel the strings that tied the behaviour together.

### 2.4 The Second Interview

The purposes of the second interview were to:

- Review the information gathered;
- Fill in the gaps which I had not covered in the first interview; and
- Discuss any thoughts that Sara had had in the interim.

These, I felt, would enable me to complete the modelling exercise having drafted my report and (hesitantly) test driven the new skill in two situations at work.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1 Ecology

At the outset Sara confirmed that she was happy to share her thoughts on the skill and was interested in understanding the factors that culminate in her being able to call upon a resourceful state. This was my ecology check.

My enquiry was met with a clear signal to proceed by a nod of the head, smile and eyes widening together with an affirmative "yes". An outcome that I set for myself at that time was to recognise that congruency sign as a useful means to cross check my understanding of the process with her later in the interview.

Throughout the interview I paid careful attention to her physiology and sought to maintain rapport by broadly matching body and verbal language.

#### 3.2 Context

Sara uses this skill in a wide range of environments and situations. We therefore agreed to focus on work as perhaps the best example of eliciting the information that would help us both understand her objectives, strategy and actions.

I then asked Sara to re-experience a specific situation in which she used this skill at work. Immediately her eyes focused straight ahead and, with a deep inhale of breath, her shoulders and head moved slightly back and her back straightened. Her hands were gently clasped in front on the table between us.

I calibrated this physiology and asked she step back inside her shoes at that time to ensure that she was fully associated.

#### 3.3 Outcomes

A keen desire to achieve positive response from others and to feel good about that interaction are the driving forces behind Sara's behaviour. These are her principal outcomes in any personal interaction and can be best achieved when she is in a positive and appropriate state of mind.

Her strategy is therefore underpinned by a motivation to move towards this goal of positive expectation. It shapes her entire approach to creating and managing states of mind.

### 3.4 Evidence

The sensory evidence that lets Sara know that she is achieving these outcomes is twofold. First, she feels an assurance and a deep rooted confidence inside which manifests itself in the upper torso as a "full rounded feeling". At that time in the interview Sara's head also lent back slightly raising the chin.

She sat more upright in the chair and with eyes continuing to focus straight ahead and shoulders set back. Her breathing also deepened. Running through the exercise revealed more specific evidence of achieving the shift of mind state.

### 3.5 Actions

There is a clear sequence of events that help Sara create a resourceful state of mind. The meta model questions were particularly useful in information gathering and understanding her initial thoughts and comments.

First she recreates a past experience or event in which she felt good and had the desired state.

When asked how she does this it was clear from Sara's response that she engages the three main senses - visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. It was also clear that Sara chunks down at this stage to get as much detail as possible so that she can relive the experience.

With eyes open and staring ahead Sara explained that she saw clearly the past event (Vi) which was in colour. The picture was big and bright and immediately in front of her face. The picture was not static and moved slightly slower than real life.

She could also hear voices of people and herself at that time (Ai). These were just audible to her although there was little more information about the submodalities that I could elicit. Finally, Sara has a strong feeling in the central chest area from the base of the neck down to the lower ribs which she described as one that she associated with anticipation (Ki).

The time taken for Sara to recreate this experience fully was less than ten seconds. This indicated that a critical part of the process was the deliberate combination of these modalities which, for her, made for highly efficient recall of past experiences.

Self belief was the key to success for Sara. Knowing that she could take action to create different states of mind was pivotal to the entire process. This, in turn, fed her capability to carry out the process.

Sara did not have any explicit anchors to base and recall the stimulated experience. The memory was sufficiently intense and immediate for her to revel in that experience without specifically needing to associate the peak feelings with an external signal such as an access word or physical movement of part of her body. Equally, Sara did not often need to repeat the process to secure the desired state.

Different environments or varying the states of mind did not influence the sequence of steps nor Sara's ability to call upon and use this skill. She operates at a high logical level centred on beliefs. The environment and behavioural levels did not carry anything like the same leverage on her abilities.

Impressed by the apparent ease and simplicity of Sara's approach and results I decided to run the pattern in two instances at work. Both involved individuals that I had hitherto perceived to be difficult. They therefore represented good opportunities to rehearse the process to change my state of mind from apprehension to positive expectation.

The keys to achieving a successful shift I found to be preparation in private so that I was unhurried in running through the process and in anchoring the peak experience by visual, auditory and kinaesthetic signals. As I become better at recall then it will be possible to rely on firing fewer anchors. The process will also speed up. On both occasions it took about five minutes to elicit the positive expectation.

At the second interview I took the opportunity to second position Sara to help enhance my ability to use the three senses.

### 3.6 Contingency

So, what happens when the resourceful state is elusive ? Sara's fall back position is to call upon a calm focus that provides two things:

- An appropriate state of mind in 90% of situations in itself, and
- A catalyst to achieving the more resourceful state.

Remembering such a situation Sara recalled feeling a tension at the back of the neck where the spine joins the head (Ki). This led to a tightening of the shoulder muscles which distracted her from directing her thoughts more positively and channelling her energies in the desired way.

Sara's strategy to combat this feeling and to get back on track is twofold.

First, she pays attention to her internal voice (Ai). Sara brings to the surface subconscious comments that, for her, induce stress and initiate the tension in

the shoulders and neck. These comments include "I'm nervous about this" and "I can't do that".

These comments are revealed by closing her eyes and breathing deeply for up to one minute although five to ten deep intakes of breath are usually all that is needed. Sara imagines that there is a balloon inside her stomach that needs inflating to help the deep breathing process.

She then thinks about hearing these comments which are met by her smiling and saying phrases like "I can hear you" and "You can't talk behind my back" (Ae).

Second, she physically changes position and preferably the immediate environment. Walks around the garden at home, trips to the local supermarket and outside the office were the three preferred options that were mentioned. If these actions are not possible then she stands up and moves around.

This action causes a distraction and shift to her thoughts. It has also, on occasions, offers new possibilities.

These steps allow Sara to feel more relaxed and strengthened. The whole process takes less than two minutes.

This state of calm then helps Sara to engineer the desired resourceful state or provides a useful frame of mind to get through the situation.

4. PRACTICAL APPLICATION

You can create a resourceful state, whenever you choose, with this simple sequence.

To take an example, I have chosen a confident, positive state of mind. I used this technique before writing the abstract to this project.

The step by step process works equally well for any other state that you may find useful.

*Step 1*

Recall your moment of success. A time when everything "clicked" and it all came together.

It could be a sporting moment. It could be a moment when you suddenly solved a problem, saw a solution in a flash of insight. Perhaps your exam result exceeded your expectations. Or colleagues praised you on a piece of work that you did.

*Step 2*

Now intensify that memory. What did you see at that moment? What did you hear? What did you feel? Get as much detail as possible using all of your senses. Take as much time as you need. See it with your own eyes as you did originally. Hear with your ears and feel with your body.

Avoid seeing yourself in the scene from a distance. It is essential that you look out at the successful scene with your own eyes. This recreates the same feeling of competence and strength that you had originally.

*Step 3*

Having re-captured your moment and feeling of peak experience, think of one word that sums up the original event. It is your "access" word.

*Step 4*

Sit up straight and straighten your body. Pull your shoulders back. Look straight ahead or close your eyes. Now look up and take a deep breath.

*Step 5*

Clench your fist as you intensify your memory of that original experience. Really revel in the successful feeling.

*Step 6*

Unclench your fist and open your eyes.

Repeat the sequence as many times as you need to. The more often you repeat the sequence, the more likely it is that you will be able to call upon the resourceful state at will.

Later, you will be able to return to this resourceful state whenever you wish. Just take a deep breath, picture the scene, clench your fist and say the cue word inside your head.

You have deliberately programmed yourself to feel good and confident on command. This is skill will benefit you for the rest of your life.

You can use this technique to see life's stresses as challenges and meet them with confidence.

If the process doesn't seem to be yielding results it may be that you need to clear away any distracting tension by creating a calm or relaxed focus. Then you can run through the six step process set out above.

First, you need to pay attention to that internal voice that may be saying "I can't do that" or "Oh, no ...". Make sure that you hear these comments and don't let them get in the way. You may find breathing deeply for one to two minutes after closing your eyes and saying to yourself "I can hear you" helpful.

Second, physically shift your position and, if possible, change your surroundings by moving outside or to a different room. You can have the ability to create a calm focus whenever you want to and move to resourceful state at will.

Remember, you are in control.

Gary B Deane

6 May 1997