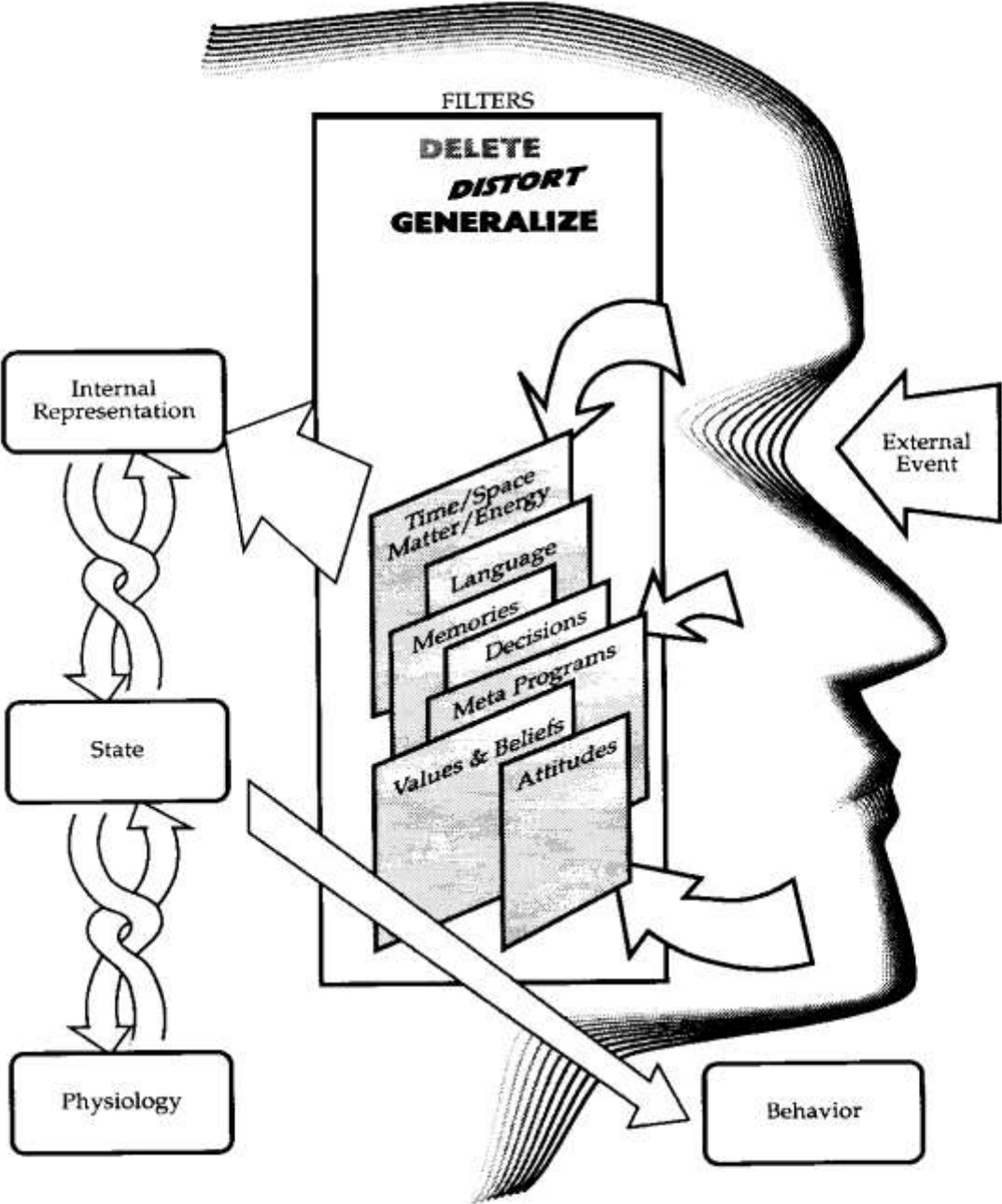


Session 14: NLP Communication Model (Tad James)

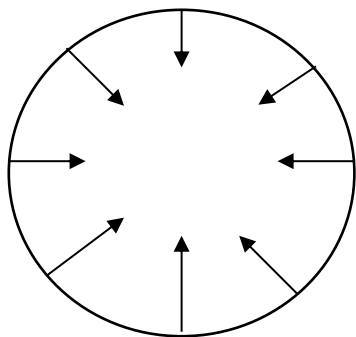


The **Communication Model** explains how we process the information that comes into us from the world around us - a process which begins with an external event that we experience through our sensory input channels (**VAKOG**). Before we make an internal representation (IR) we run the event through our internal processing filters - in other words, we filter the experience – that is we **Delete**, **Distort** and **Generalise** the information that comes in.

This is how we make experience our own or create our own reality; our subjective experience of the same event will be completely different to the person sitting next to us. This is why it is critical to be able to ‘do’ **Sensory Acuity**, **Behavioural Flexibility** and **Rapport**, to be able to get into **2nd Position**. When you understand what other’s lives are like you will be more effective in your work with your’ clients.

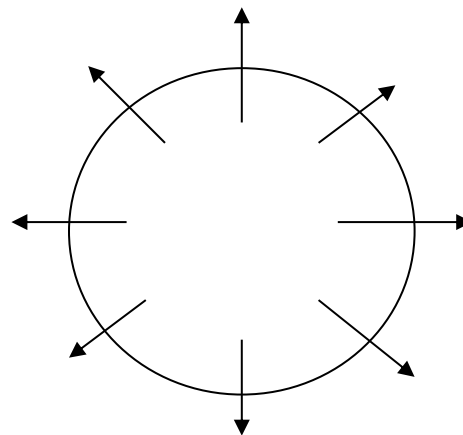
## Deletion

Deletion means that we overlook or omit certain sensory information; we selectively pay attention to certain aspects of our experience and ignore others. We do this because if we did not we would quite literally be overwhelmed by all of the information coming in. Our conscious minds can only handle  $7+ \text{ or } - 2$  at any one time and as Tad James points out, not everybody can handle this many!



**DOWNTIME**

$7 \pm 2$  Focussed Inward



**UPTIME**

$7 \pm 2$  Focussed Outward

## **Distortion**

Distortion occurs when we make shifts in our experience of sensory data by making misrepresentations of reality. There's a well-known story of distortion in Eastern philosophy. It is called the story of the rope and the snake. A man walking along a road saw what he believed to be a snake and yelled, "SNAKE." However, upon closer investigation he is relieved to discover that it really was only a piece of rope.

Distortion also helps us in the process of motivating ourselves. Motivation occurs when we actually distort the material that has come to us and that has already been changed by one of our filtering systems. Distortion is also helpful in planning. We distort to plan when we construct imaginary futures.

## **Generalisation**

This is when we draw global conclusions based on one, two or more experiences. Used to good effect it is one of the ways we learn – whereby we take in information and draw broad conclusions, or make rules, about the world. At worst it is the process by which we can take a single event and turn it into a lifetime of experience.

The **Communication Model** demonstrates that we **Delete, Distort** and **Generalise** by using certain internal processing filters which are:

### **Meta Programs**

**Values**

**Beliefs**

**Attitudes**

**Decisions**

**Memories**

More attention is paid to **Meta Programs** and **Values** at Masters Level, but it is important at this stage to have some understanding of how these operate alongside the others. Indeed we have come across them before; for example we have considered the relative merits of having a tendency to either move 'away from' an undesirable situation or move 'towards' an outcome.

**Meta Programs** are the most unconscious of the internal processing filters, and they are content free – what this means is that they have no content themselves – but they act to filter the content of our experience.

They **delete** and **distort** by either adding to or taking away from our **generalisations**. They are just one of the ways we maintain our identities by either preserving (adding to) or breaking down (taking away) the **generalisations** we make over time. It is useful to know a client's **Meta Programs** because this will enable you to closely predict their states and also their behaviour. It is also possible to assist a client to change their **Meta Programs** where this would be to their benefit. However should not be used to type cast people or for determining right or wrong – there is no right or wrong – they are simply one way a person processes information. When we come across them as we move along we will flag them up.

## Values

These are the next most unconscious filter; unlike **Meta Programs** they have content in and of themselves. They serve as an evaluation filter; they are the means by which we decide whether our actions are good or bad, or right or wrong. Because of our **values** we are able to determine how we feel about ours and others actions.

We all have differing models of the world, or an Internal Representation of how the world is – and our **Values** are inter related with our model of the world. They are arranged in a hierarchy, with the most important at the top and the lesser ones below that. When we communicate with ourselves and with others, if our model of the world conflicts with our **Values** or their **Values**, there is likely to be a conflict. **Tad James** describes **Values** as

*“those ideas in which we are willing to invest time, energy and resources to either achieve or avoid.”*

They are what people typically move toward or away from – our attractions and repulsions in life One of the first tasks in coaching is to elicit a client's values – they serve as a benchmark to guide client's back to if things go off track. It is important to know what is important to you!

## Beliefs

The next level of filters are beliefs. Beliefs are convictions or acceptances that certain things are true or real. They are also generalizations about the state of the world. One of the more important elements in Modelling (which is an NLP process from recreating excellence; see Glossary) is to find a person's beliefs about a particular behaviour we are trying to model.

Richard Bandler says, *“beliefs are those things we can’t get around”*.

Beliefs are the presuppositions that we have about certain things that either create or deny personal power for us. At this level beliefs are essentially our on/off switches for our ability to do anything in the world, because if you don’t believe you can do something, you probably won’t have the opportunity to find out.

In the process of working with someone’s beliefs it is important to elicit or find out what beliefs he has that causes him to be able to do what he does. We also want to find out the disabling beliefs, the ones that do not allow them to do what they want to do.

## **Attitudes**

Attitudes are collections of values and belief systems around a certain subject. We are usually quite conscious of our attitudes, and often tell people, “Well, that’s just the way I feel about that.”

Change made on the level of attitude is often substantially harder than the level of values. Have you ever tried to change someone’s attitude? It is far easier to change values than attitudes because of the level of abstraction.

## **Memories**

Memories,  
Like the corners of my mind  
Misty water-colored memories  
Of the way we were  
Scattered pictures,  
Of the smiles we left behind  
Smiles we gave to one another  
For the way we were  
Can it be that it was all so simple then?  
Or has time re-written every line?  
If we had the chance to do it all again  
Tell me, would we? Could we?  
Memories, may be beautiful and yet  
What's too painful to remember  
We simply choose to forget  
So it's the laughter  
We will remember  
Whenever we remember...  
The way we were...

Barbara Streisand

The fifth filter is our collection of memories. Memories deeply affect a person's perceptions and personality. They are who we are. In fact, some psychologists believe that as we get older our reactions in the present are reactions to gestalts (collections of memories that are organised in a certain way around a certain subject) of past memories and that the present plays very little part in our behaviour.

## **Decisions**

The sixth filter, which is also related to memories, are decisions that were made in the past. Decisions about who we are, especially limiting decisions, can affect our entire life. Decisions may create beliefs, values, attitudes and even life themes, or they may just affect our perceptions through time. The problem with many decisions is that they were made either unconsciously or at a very early age and forgotten.

Also, we may decide at one point in time and then not re-evaluate our decisions as we grow and our values change. Those decisions that are not re-evaluated (especially the limiting ones) often affect our life in ways that we had not originally intended. Decisions and memories vary throughout the range of conscious and unconscious. Individual decisions and memories may be found to be more or less conscious than certain values, beliefs and attitudes.

## **Summary**

These six filters, then, determine what information is retained as we make an IR of any event. It is our IR that causes us to be in a certain "state" and creates a certain physiology. "State" refers to the internal emotional state of the individual- i.e., a happy state, a sad state, a motivated state, and so on. Our IR includes our internal pictures, sounds and dialogue, and our feelings (for example, whether we feel motivated, challenged, pleased, excited, and so on). The state in which we find ourselves determines our behaviour. So the IR of the event combines with a physiology and creates a state. A given state is the result of the combination of an internal representation and a physiology. And all behaviour is state-related.

So these filters, in a way, determine our actions, since what is retained or deleted will have a major effect on the IR. Why is it that two people can attend the same event, and one will love it, while the other hates it? The reason is because the IR is so dependent on the filters.



**Remember that in this model the map (or the IR) is not the territory. Our every experience is something that we literally “make up” inside our heads. We experience reality indirectly, since we are always deleting, distorting and generalizing. Essentially, we experience our representation of the experience of the territory and not the territory itself.**

Time Line Therapy and the Basis of Personality, Tad James and Wyatt Woodsmall

## **Session 14: The Communication Model / Assignment**

**Please ensure that you have read pages 8 - 14 and listened to the MP3 recording before answering the following questions:**

1) With reference to what you have learned explain in your own words how we process information and create our own reality. (250-500 words)

2) With reference to one filter – Beliefs – describe a change you could make that will have a positive impact on the reality you create / your life. (250-500 words)

Please note:

The word counts are intended as a guideline to give you an indication of how much to write.

Where you have relied on any additional references please list these at the end of your work. For example:

*The NLP Workbook, Joseph O'Connor, (2001), Chapter 1: What is NLP? Pages 1-3*