Neuro-Linguistic Programming Business Consulting Certification

presented by
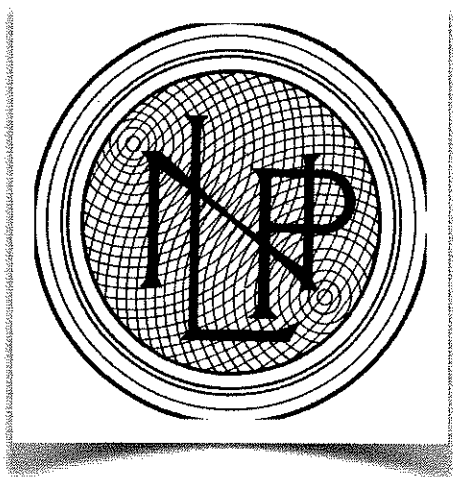
Robert Dilts with Judith DeLozier & Suzi Smith

July 8–14, 2003   100 Page Class Manual   UC Santa Cruz

Welcome to Learn & Enjoy @
ROBERT DILTS/NLP University

Dynamic Learning Publications

NLP

Dilts' Business Consulting Certification
July 8-14, 2003, Santa Cruz, California

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NLP Business Consulting Tools

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NLP University 'Ground Rules'

In general, be *responsible, respectful, creative and flexible.*

Seminar Etiquette:

- Wear your name tag every day (new trainers will not know who you are).
- Bring your training manual every day.
- Everyone is expected to participate in all activities and be present at all sessions. If you intend to go for certification you are required to participate in all activities and be present at all sessions.
- If, for whatever reason, you have to miss a session, be late to a session or leave a session early, contact one of the trainers either directly or by a written message.
- Please, no smoking in the seminar room. Check for designated smoking areas outside the training rooms.
- Please ask fellow participants about smoking during exercises.

Be Responsible for Yourself

- Be in charge of your own internal state. (Don't wait for someone else to put you in a learning/ resource state.)
- Pace yourself. When you are in an unfamiliar place for a long period of time, it can sometimes be destabilizing. Take actions (e.g., rituals, routines, etc.) that promote health and stability. There will be plenty of activities relating directly to NLP University studies. Avoid taking on too many extra activities (e.g., new diets, practices, etc.) that may distract you from your primary purpose of learning NLP in an ecological fashion.
- If you feel emotionally upset or unsettled, seek advice from the trainers or resource people—but remember, trainers and resource people are here to support the training goals, not to be therapists.

Interacting with Fellow Participants

Enjoy the Diversity. Respect the Differences.

- Remember, there are a lot of different models of the world, backgrounds, expectations and cultures represented at this seminar. If you have a concern or disagreement during the program, first try to work it out using NLP—i.e., rapport, meta position, spatial sorting, etc. Manifest NLP presuppositions.
- Pace first and then lead. Acknowledge the other person's model & positive intent, then state your first position, owning your own model, intent, feelings, etc. (*"From my own perspective, I feel...."*).
- Respect confidentiality. Ask fellow participants for permission before you discuss content details of their experiences in class.
- Be respectful of the need for stability in others. Don't push people to try things that may jeopardize their balance or ecology (either during or outside of seminar hours).
- Watch out for one another. Be attentive to signs of instability in fellow participants (e.g., not sleeping or eating properly). If you are concerned about the physical or mental well-being of a fellow participant, or the behavior of a fellow participant, report it to one of the resource people or trainers.
- Participants in an extended residential course often form very strong and intimate relationships with one another. Because of the instability that can surround such situations, however, we recommend that you wait until the program is over before pursuing romantic relationships with fellow participants.

Community Responsibilities

A core criterion for systemic NLP is *ecology*. Please demonstrate respect for all elements of the system, including the University of California, students, staff and other conference groups. For example, picking up your coffee cups and putting your chairs in order at the end of the day is a way of taking responsibility for the training environment.

University Policies

Our contract with the University of California requires that everyone to be responsible for their *own* food and lodging. Please respect these expectations. Use your own meal card. Empty beds or rooms may be reserved for other participants. The cleaning staff notices and reports if extra beds or rooms are being used.

Public alcohol consumption is not permitted by the University. There are many underaged and impressionable young people attending other programs during the Summer. Drinking is allowed in the privacy of your apartments.

Interacting with University of California Staff

NLP University is being sponsored by the Dynamic Learning Center and is only using the facilities at the University of California campus. The people on the University of California staff are employed by the University of California not the Dynamic Learning Center/NLP University. Most of them are college students working for the Summer. They have very little organizational experience, knowledge or responsibility (remember, this is *not* a hotel). Young people are often very sensitive and impressionable and the University of California has very strict policies regarding sexual harassment. Please use maximum rapport skills.

Copyrights

Please honor the copyrights on printed materials. It is a way of demonstrating integrity and showing respect for other people's work. We understand your desire for as much information as possible, but it is important to get it in an ecological way that doesn't infringe upon the rights of others. We will provide you with our policies regarding duplicating or reusing copyrighted materials. Please don't put your fellow participants in an awkward position by asking for copies of their materials.

We will be recording each training session. Audio tapes will be made available to the members of each course. Personal audio or video taping is not feasible during the training. Taking photographs during training sessions can disturb the trainers and other participants, and interfere with the continuity of the program. Therefore, we ask that you be respectful and reserve taking photographs for special occasions and appropriate times. Also, remember that not everyone is comfortable having their photograph taken.

Interacting with Teresa

When in doubt, ask Teresa. Teresa's goal is to make you as comfortable as possible during your stay at this program.

Teresa handles all organizational questions—i.e., scheduling, housing, meals, places to go, purchasing books and materials, payments, receipts and all other financial matters.

Teresa is generally available in the mornings before the seminar starts, in the evenings immediately following the afternoon session. Please be mindful that she has many others to attend to in addition to you.

When in doubt, write it down.

Exercise Protocol

Stay within the defined training area to do exercises (do not go to private rooms or out of sight of the training building). Keep all passageways and walkways clear (do not draw on them, or leave things on them—chairs, papers, stones, etc.).

NLPU exercises involve a combination of skill development and personal development. However, our primary focus is on skill development. Therefore, we highly recommend that you practice the steps of the various exercises and procedures as they have been given before making adaptations or variations. If you have a question or confusion about an exercise, a model, a technique, etc.:

- Ask one of the trainers or resource people
- Bring it up during an 'open frame' or study group
- Write it on a piece of paper and hand it to one of the trainers.

When in doubt, write it down.

Interacting with the Trainers

The trainers want to be as open and available to all participants as possible. However, they will all be *very busy!* *The trainers have no time available for individual client work.* They have very limited time for meetings with individual participants. If you feel you have something important to talk about that cannot be handled by other Dynamic Learning Center staff then make a written proposal including the following information:

1. Topic:
2. Goal or Expected Outcomes
   a. For Yourself:
   b. For the Trainer(s):
3. Which Trainer(s):
4. How Long Do You Expect To Need To Meet:

The trainers and resource people will not have any time available for private consultations or therapy. We would be happy to make referrals to local therapists.

Many of the trainers are also authors, and we understand that you will want books signed. Because this can be distracting during the training period, please give any books that you want signed to Teresa and she will make the appropriate arrangements and return them to you.

Break Etiquette

Remember, *everyone needs a break.* Generally, trainers and resource people will need to meet ('huddle') at the beginning of each break. Be respectful of their needs.

When in doubt, write it down.

Emergency Information:

Dominican Hospital
1555 Soquel Drive
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Emergency Room: 462-7710
Mental Health Unit: 462-7719

UCSC
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

Health Center: 459-2211
Campus Police: 459-2231
Emergency: 459-2345

Marc Lehrer, PhD (Local Licensed Psychologist): 426-3321

Consulting Overview

Consulting is one of the main areas of application of NLP. The term "consulting" refers to a wide range of issues which encompass both coaching and counseling. Coaching, which focuses on a business and sports training model, promotes conscious awareness of resources and abilities. It emphasizes generative change, concentrating on strengthening identity and values, and bringing dreams and goals into reality. Counseling takes a more therapeutic approach, focusing on problem solving and remedial change in order to address particular symptoms. Counseling and therapy tend to be more oriented toward past causes of present problems.

In contrast with coaches and counselors who work on a more one-to-one basis with their clients, a 'consultant' tends to be in more of a 'meta position', intervening not only with the client but with the larger system in which the client is involved. Consulting addresses both problem solving and generative aspects of change.

From the NLP perspective, consulting requires the ability to transcend the boundaries of a system and view the system from a meta position. The focus of consulting is on process rather than content. That is, the consultant is not the content "expert." Rather the consultant guides people through processes which help them to release their own resources or solve their own problems. In this sense, consultants are more advisors than "actors."

Common NLP skills and models used by consultants include Well-Formed Outcomes, The Precision Model, eliciting and utilizing Strategies, Modeling and the S.C.O.R.E. and T.O.T.E. Models.

Business Applications of NLP

NLP was originally developed as a result of modeling the shared cognitive, linguistic and behavioral patterns of exceptional psychotherapists such as Fritz Perls (Gestalt therapy), Virginia Satir (family therapy) and Milton Erickson (hypnotherapy). At first glance, a model based on the interactive skills of effective therapists may not seem relevant to the area of business. Yet, when one thinks of the understanding of human nature, perception and motives it requires to influence someone's behavior therapeutically, one realizes that there may be a number of areas of overlap between the skills of effective therapists and the skills of effective leaders and managers. Regardless of the degree of overlap, the same modeling principles used to extract the meaningful therapeutic behaviors of these exceptional therapists can be used to find the behavioral, psychological and linguistic patterns of exceptional leaders.

NLP has been extensively applied to the study of how mental strategies, language patterns and value systems influence a variety of business and management related activities including communication skills (Dilts, et al, 1980, McMaster & Grinder, 1981; Richardson & Margoulis, 1981; Laborde, 1982; Dilts, 1983; Yeager, 1985; Eicher, 1987; Smith & Hallbom, 1988); sales skills (Moine, 1981; Dilts, 1982, 1983; Bagley & Reese, 1987), negotiation skills (Dilts, 1980, 1983; Early, 1986; LeBeau, 1987), organizational development and training (Dilts, 1979; Maron, 1979; Gaster, 1988; Dilts 1993, 1994), the management of creativity and innovation (Dilts & Bonissone, 1993), recruitment and selection (Bailey, 1984) and leadership (Pile, 1988; Gaster, 1988; Dilts, 1989, 1996).

The applications of NLP to business and organizations encompass skills that are essential for expressing oneself and accomplishing goals in the context of working with other people. They involve establishing rapport, organizing, interacting and communicating within an organization, network or social system to move toward one's highest aspirations.
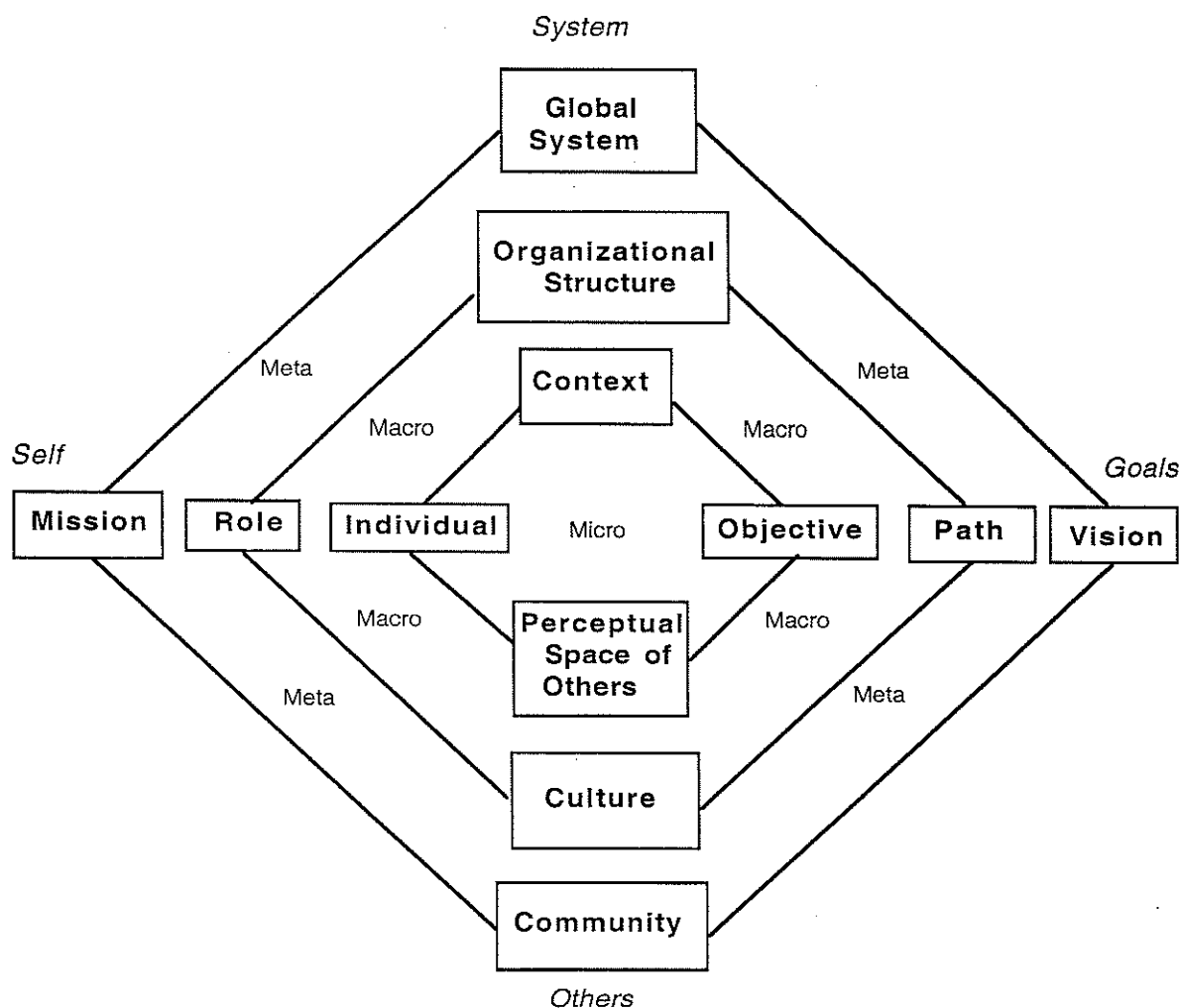
The "Problem Space" of Effective Organizations

Basic Applications of NLP in Business and Organizations

Basic Applications of NLP in Business and Organizations cover the skills necessary for attaining tools and skills related to effective management, organizational development, and leadership. These skills have been modeled from effective leaders, managers and consultants from around the world using the principles and filters of NLP. These skills allow an individual to communicate and accomplish goals in the context of working with other people. They involve establishing rapport, developing personal leadership style, setting outcomes and dealing with the dimensions of both task and relationship within the dynamics of a team, group or organization. Some of the outcomes of applying NLP to the area of business and organizations include:

Identifying and Releasing Natural Leadership Abilities
Enhancing Personal Effectiveness in Communicating and Managing Others
Developing and Maintaining States of Personal Excellence
Dealing with Group Ecology and Systemic Issues

These applications cover a variety of skills which address each of the key elements which make up the 'problem space' of operating in an organizational environment: (a) oneself, (b) one's relationship with one's collaborators, (c) the system in which one is acting and (d) the goals to be achieved by oneself and one's collaborators in that system. This set of skills includes: self skills, relational skills, strategic thinking skills and systemic thinking skills.

```
                        System
                      /    |    \
Self Skills          /     |     \        Strategic
                    /       |      \       Thinking Skills
        Self ——————————————+——————————— Goal
                    \       |      /
                     \      |     /
                      \     |    /
                        Others
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Relational Skills
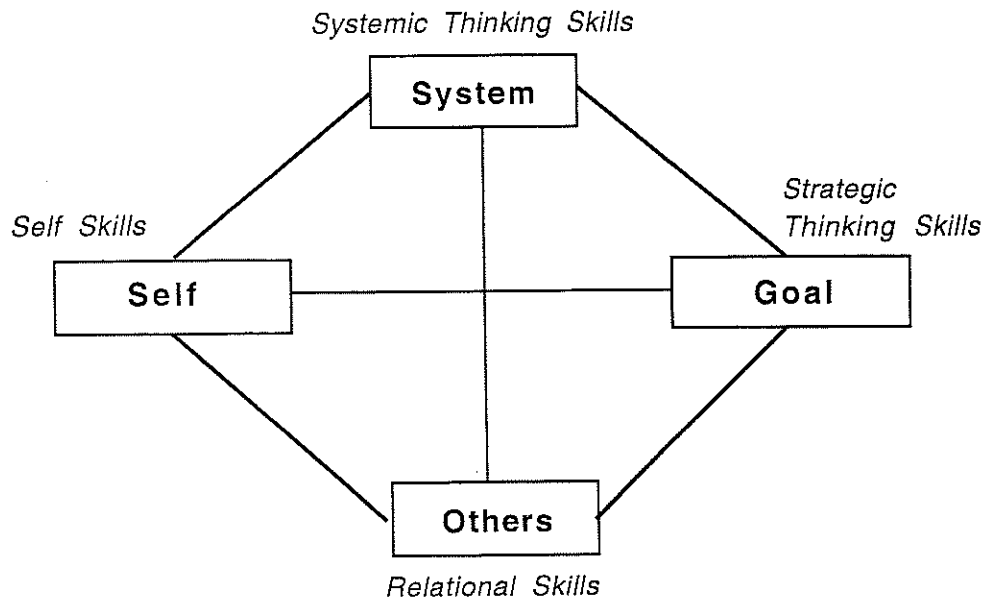
The "Problem Space" of Management in an Organization

Self skills have to do with how an individual conducts himself or herself in a particular situation. Self skills allow a person to choose or engineer the most appropriate state, attitude, focus, etc., with which to enter a situation. In a way, self skills are the processes by which a person leads himself or herself.

Relational skills have to do with the ability to understand, motivate and communicate with other people. They result in the ability to enter another person's model of the world or perceptual space, establish rapport and guide that person to recognize problems and objectives. Since managers and leaders must reach their visions and accomplish their missions through their influence upon others, relational skills are one of the most essential aspects of business and team building.

Strategic thinking skills are necessary in order to define and achieve specific goals and objectives. Strategic thinking involves the ability to identify a relevant desired state, assess the starting state, and then establish and navigate the appropriate path of transition states required to reach the desired state. A key element of effective strategic thinking is determining which operators and operations will most efficiently and effectively influence and move the present state in the direction of the desired state.

Systemic thinking skills are used by an individual to identify and comprehend the problem space in which that person, his or her collaborators and the organization are operating. Systemic thinking is at the root of effective problem solving and the ability to create functional teams. The ability to think systemically in a practical and concrete way is probably the most definitive sign of maturity in a manager or leader.

Self-to-Self Skills—Defining Personal Contexts Requiring Leadership
    Exploring Self T.O.T.E.s for Leadership
    Selecting and Maintaining Personal States of Excellence
    Self Alignment Process
Self-to-Other Skills—Clarifying Communications through the Meta Model
    Calibrating Meta Messages
    Principles and Skills for Delegation and Negotiation
    Mapping the Sender-Receiver Relationship
    Co-Alignment
Self-to-Group Skills—Problem Solving Principles and Procedures
    Systemic Thinking Skills
    Managing Group Dynamics
    Meta Mapping Techniques

Section 1: Self Skills

Self skills have to do with how an individual conducts himself or herself in a particular situation. Self skills allow a person to choose or engineer the most appropriate state, attitude, focus, etc., with which to enter a situation. In a way, self skills are the processes by which a person leads himself or herself.

Sense of Self

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines *self* as "the union of elements (as body, emotions, thoughts, and sensations) that constitute the individuality and identity of a person." A person's *sense of self* is a result of that person's map or model of this union of elements which makes up his or her identity. It is a result of self-reflection, and, like all maps or models, is subject to deletion, distortion and generalization. According to NLP New Coding, our perception of "I," or "self," is a function that is mobile or fluid. That is, we are able to "identify" ourselves with different aspects of our experience; such as particular environments (an "islander" or "Californian"), roles (a "parent"), capabilities (a "doctor" or "secretary"), behavior patterns (an "alcoholic"), etc.

From the NLP perspective, people often identify themselves with one of their sensory representational systems, or literally derive their "sense" of self from one of their 'senses' more than another. For one person, "sense of self" may come more from feelings, while others may be more "visual" or "auditory." A visually oriented person's sense of self may result from his or her "self image." A more auditorilly oriented person, on the other hand, may define himself or herself on the basis of his or her "voice" or "word." A kinesthically oriented person would have a sense of self based on body awareness, and so on.

According to Systemic NLP, sense of self relates to the NeuroLogical Level of *identity*. As such, it has a tremendous influence on our beliefs, thoughts and behavior. According to the NLP logical levels model, it is our sense of identity or "self" that integrates and organizes our beliefs, capabilities and behaviors into a single system. Our sense of self also relates to our perception of ourselves in relation to the larger systems of which we are a part, determining the "role," "purpose" and "mission" that we take on. Thus, perceptions of identity, and sense of self have to do with questions such as "Who am I?" "What are my capabilities and limits?" and "What is my purpose?"

Because it is at a higher level than processes such as behaviors, capabilities and beliefs, our sense of self cannot be conditioned, taught or installed. Rather, it is "sponsored" by significant others and "revealed" to us through special circumstances. NLP techniques such as the Identity Matrix and Logical Level Alignment help people to discover, strengthen and evolve their sense of self more fully.

Personal Mastery

In his book *The Fifth Discipline* (1990), Peter Senge defines personal mastery as one of the cornerstones of the 'learning organization', claiming, "An organization's commitment and capacity for learning can be no greater than that of its members." According to Senge, "*Personal mastery* is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively. . . Personal mastery goes beyond competence and skills, though it is grounded in competence and skills. It goes beyond spiritual unfolding or opening, although it requires spiritual growth. It means approaching one's life as a creative work, living life from a creative as opposed to a reactive viewpoint."

NLP has a great deal to contribute to what Senge is referring to as "personal mastery." NLP provides specific techniques by which one can work toward the outcomes that Senge suggests as the guidelines for developing personal mastery. NLP processes such as Logical Level Alignment, State Management, Meta Mapping, Imagineering and the ability to make Multiple Descriptions, all contribute to what Senge defines as 'personal mastery'. NLP's emphasis on personal development—in addition to its study of patterns of effective group communication and interaction—makes it one of the most effective technologies and methodologies for developing personal mastery currently in existence.

Personal Power

Increasing one's "personal power" is often identified as one of the primary goals of NLP. And, indeed, many people feel the desire and need to increase their personal power to be safer and more effective in the world. The term *power* (from the word *poeir*, "to be able") literally means "the ability to act or produce an effect." Thus, increasing one's personal power means increasing one's ability to act or to produce effects in the world around oneself (it is not about dominating, manipulating or controlling others).

From the NLP perspective, "personal power" is a function of the degree of choice and flexibility a person has with respect to his or her various life situations. Increasing personal power is essentially about increasing one's skills and capabilities in many different areas of life. It comes from having clear values and establishing empowering beliefs that provide a person with the motivation and permission to reach his or her potential as fully as possible. Ultimately, personal power involves recognizing one's vision and mission, and pursuing them with passion and commitment.

This definition relates to the Law of Requisite Variety, which states that, in order to survive and succeed, a person needs a certain amount of flexibility. NLP is founded on the notion that the more choices a person perceives within his or her model of the world, the more able that person is able to achieve his or her desired goals.

Given this definition, NLP certainly provides many tools with which people can increase their personal power, by increasing the number of choices they have with respect to their internal states and strategies. Processes such as Logical Level Alignment, State Management, the Circle of Excellence, the New Behavior Generator, the Disney Imagineering Strategy, the Belief Installation procedure, and the Generative NLP formats, all contribute to helping a person develop choices, and to recognize and release more of his or her own personal power wisely and ecologically.

# Levels of Learning and Change in Individuals and Organizations

The life of people in a company, and indeed, the life of the company itself, can be described and understood on a number of different levels. At one level, there is the *environment* in which the organization and its members act and interact—i.e., *when* and *where* the operations and relationships within an organization take place. Environmental factors determine the context and constraints under which people operate. An organization's environment is made up of such things as the geographical locations of its operations, the buildings and facilities which define the "work place," office and factory design, etc. In addition to the influence these environmental factors may have on people within the organization, one can also examine the influence and impact that people within an organization have upon their environment, and what products or creations they bring to the environment.

At another level, we can examine the specific *behaviors* and actions of an organization or individual—i.e., *what* the person or organization does within the environment. What are the particular patterns of work, interaction or communication? On an organizational level, behaviors may be defined in terms of general procedures. On the individual level, behaviors take the form of specific work routines, working habits or job related activities.

Another level of process involves the strategies, skills and *capabilities* by which the organization or individual selects and and directs actions within their environment—i.e., *how* they generate and guide their behaviors within a particular context. For an individual, capabilities include cognitive strategies and skills such as learning, memory, decision making and creativity, which facilitate the performance of a particular behavior or task. On an organizational level, capabilities relate to the infrastructures available to support communication, innovation, planning and decision making between members of the organization.

These other levels of process are shaped by *values and beliefs,* which provide the motivation and guidelines behind the strategies and capabilities used to accomplish behavioral outcomes in the environment—i.e., *why* people do things the way they do them in a particular time and place. Our values and beliefs provide the reinforcement (*motivation* and *permission*) that supports or inhibits particular capabilities and behaviors. Values and beliefs determine how events are given meaning, and are at the core of judgment and culture.

Values and beliefs support the individual's or organization's sense of *identity*—i.e., the *who* behind the why, how, what, where and when. Identity level processes involve people's sense of role and mission with respect to their vision and the larger systems of which they are a member.
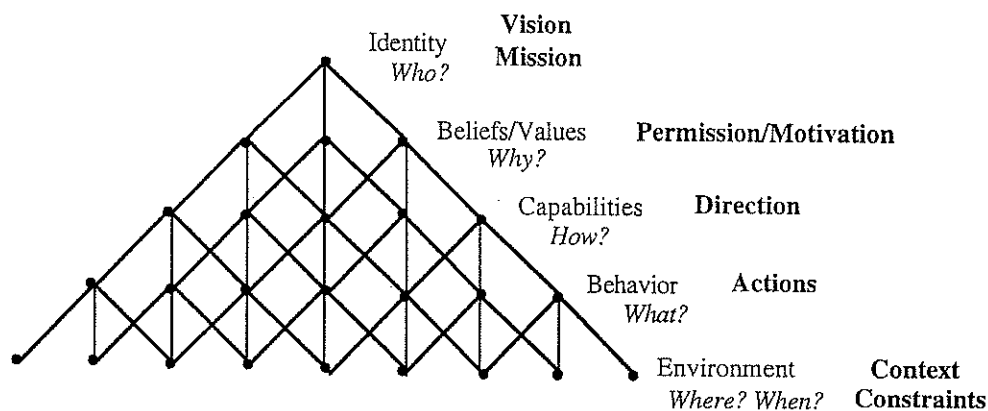
Levels of Processes Within Individuals and Organizations

Typically, a particular identity or role is expressed in terms of several key values and beliefs. These, in turn, are supported by a larger range of skills and capabilities, which are required to manifest particular values and beliefs. Effective capabilities produce an even wider set of specific behaviors and actions, which express and adapt values with respect to many particular environmental contexts and conditions.

Creating an Aligned State

One of the most important aspects of effective and ecological communication and change is the congruence between the 'message' and the 'messenger'. On a personal level, a healthy and effective person is one whose own actions are aligned with his or her capabilities, beliefs, values and sense of identity or mission. A person's sense of role and identity is a dynamic process related to several different factors:

1) One's sense of mission or purpose (which evolves with one's cycle of development in life).
2) One's view or vision of the larger system of which one is a part (a 'spiritual' perspective).
3) One's role in relation to the organizational and family systems of which one is a member.

The concept of different 'levels' of change provides us with a powerful road map for bringing the various dimensions of ourselves into alignment in order to realize our goals and visions. Each of these different levels is embodied through successively deeper and broader organizations of 'neural circuitry'. As one moves from the simple perception of the environment, for instance, to the activation of behavior within that environment, more commitment of one's mind and body must be mobilized.

Capabilities call into play longer term plans and maps, and require the involvement of even deeper levels of the nervous system. Beliefs and values are represented and manifested through the mobilization of neurology that calls into play structures as deep as the autonomic nervous system (such as the heart and 'guts'). Identity involves the total commitment of our nervous systems. 'Spiritual' experiences involve the resonance between our own mind and nervous system with the larger systems of which we are a part.

To be effective in a particular system, an individual must understand the relationship between the various levels of change, and align his or her activities to fit those dynamics. That is, goals and actions on an individual level should support the functional objectives and strategy related to role, which in turn should be congruent with culture and identity, and mission with respect to the larger environment.


Network of Logical Levels
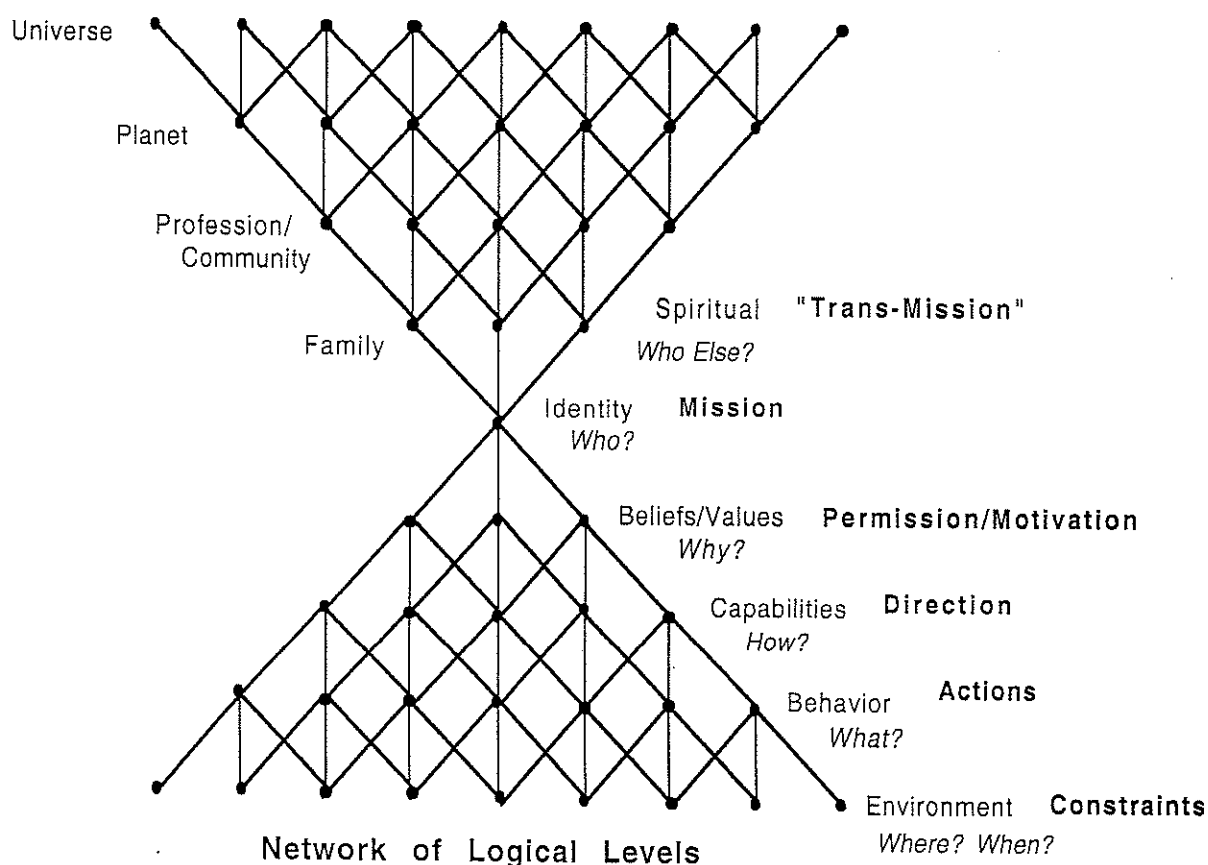
Logical Level Alignment Process

The 'Neuro-Logical Level Alignment' process provides a way to systematically access and connect experiences and neural processes associated with each of these different levels. By combining mental and physical processes with the different levels of change, a person can bring all these levels into alignment in the service of their vision and mission.

The process uses what is called 'spatial anchoring' to activate and integrate these different levels of experience. Many people have found this to be a very powerful experience and a tool to put themselves into an effective 'aligned' state.

1. Physically lay out one space for each of the six logical levels.

Spiritual	Identity	Beliefs/Values	Capabilities	Behaviors	Environments
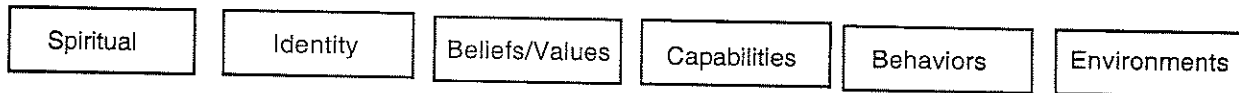
2. Answer the question: "When and where do I want to act more as a leader?"

3. Answer the question: "What will I do when I am acting as a leader in those times and places?"

4. Answer the questions: "How will I carry out those leadership behaviors?" "What capabilities do I have/need to do those actions in those times and places?"

5. Answer the questions: "Why will I use those particular capabilities to accomplish those leadership activities?" "What values are important to me when I am acting as a leader?" "What beliefs guide me when I am acting as a leader?"

6. Answer the questions: "Who am I as a leader?" "What kind of leader am I?"

7. Answer the questions: "Who else am I serving as a leader?" "What is my mission as a leader?" "What is the vision I am pursuing or representing as a leader?"

8. Anchor the state that you entered into in the spiritual space. Take that physiology and inner experience and step back into the identity space so you experience both at the same time. Notice how it enhances or enriches your initial representation of the identity experience.

9. Take you experience of both your vision and your identity and bring them into your belief space. Again notice how it enhances or enriches your initial representation of your beliefs and values.

10. Bring Your vision, identity, beliefs and values into the capabilities space. Experience how they strengthen, change or enrich the capabilities you experience within yourself.

11. Bring your vision, identity, beliefs, values and capabilities into the behavior space. Notice how even the most insignificant seeming behaviors are reflections and manifestations of all of the higher levels within you.

12. Bring all levels of yourselves into the environment space and experience how it is transformed and enriched.

Logical Level Alignment Worksheet

1. "What is the *environment* in which you want to act more as a leader?"

   "*When* and *where* do you want your leadership goal? What will be the external context surrounding the desired goal and activities?"

   In the context of _____

2. "What are your leadership goals or outcomes in that context?

   "*What*, specifically, do you want to do in that context? What is the new behavior associated with the goal?"

   I want to _____

3. "What *capabilities* are needed to reach those goals within the chosen context?"

   "*How* will you accomplish that goal and those behaviors? What capabilities and cognitive processes are needed or presupposed in order to trigger or guide those desired actions in that context?"

   To accomplish this I will use my capabilities to _____

   _____

4. "What *beliefs* and *values* are expressed by or will be validated by reaching your goals in that context?"

   "What values are expressed by your goal and capabilities?"

   I want to do this because I value _____

   "*Why* will you use those particular cognitive processes or capabilities in order to accomplish those goals? What beliefs provide the motivation your thoughts and activity?"

   I believe _____

5. "What is your *identity* or role with respect to the goals and the beliefs and values associated with them?"

   "*Who* are you if you engage those particular beliefs, values, capabilities and behaviors in that particular context?"

   I am are _____

   "What is your mission in that context?"

   My mission is to _____

6. "What is your sense of the *larger system* in which you are operating?"

   "What is your *vision* of the larger system in which you are pursuing that mission?"

   This mission is in the service of the larger vision to _____

   _____

The Hero's Journey

Managing the process of life change can be likened to what Joseph Campbell called the "Hero's Journey" (*The Power of Myth*, 1988). Campbell searched for the connections in the myths and stories of change that cross cultural boundaries. He discovered that certain themes are repeated in many cultures and appear to be deeper threads connecting all of humanity, reflecting the overall path that we take form birth to death regardless of our individual circumstances. Just as we are born the same and die the same, there are other deep patterns held in the collective memory of our species.

Campbell described the commonalities of our overall life path in terms of the steps of the "Hero's Journey" – the sequence of events that seem to be shared in the epic myths of every culture. According to Campbell, these steps include:

1. *Hearing a calling* that relates to our identity, life purpose or mission. We can choose to either accept or ignore the calling.

2. *Accepting the calling* leads us to confront a boundary or threshold in our existing abilities or map of the world.

3. *Crossing a threshold* propels us into some new life "territory" outside of our current comfort zone; a territory that forces us to grow and evolve, and requires us to find support and guidance.

4. *Finding a guardian* or mentor is something that often comes naturally from having the courage to cross a threshold. (As it has been said, "When the student is ready, the teacher appears.")

5. *Facing a challenge (or "demon")* is also a natural result of crossing a threshold. "Demons" are not necessarily evil or bad; they are simply a type of "energy" or "power" that we need to learn to contend with or accept. Often, they are simply a reflection of one of our own inner fears and shadows.

6. *Transforming the "demon"* into a resource or advisor is typically accomplished by either:
   a) *Developing a special skill.*
   b) *Discovering a special resource or tool.*

7. Completing the *task* for which one has been called, and *finding the way* to fulfill the calling is ultimately achieved by creating a *new map of the world* that incorporates the growth and discoveries brought about by the journey.

8. *Finding the way home* as a transformed person, and sharing with others the knowledge and experience gained as a result of the journey.

While the hero's journey is clearly a metaphor, it captures a good deal of the reality facing leaders and managers as they seek to build a path to a successful future and contend with the uncertainties of change. The notion of a "calling," for instance, clearly symbolizes the vision and mission that the leader and his or her team or company is pursuing.

The "threshold" represents the unknown and uncertain elements that we must confront in order to bring the vision into action.

The symbol of the "demon" reflects the challenges of upheaval, competition, internal politics and other obstacles and crises which emerge from circumstances beyond our control.

Our resources are the values, behavioral skills and business practices we are able to put into action in order to deal with complexity, uncertainty and resistance. This is the area where the leader himself or herself must grow in order develop the flexibility and increased requisite variety necessary to successfully navigate the new territory and overcome the obstacles which arise along the way.

"Guardians" are the sponsors and relationships we develop that support us to build skills, believe in ourselves and stay focused on our objectives.

Mapping the Hero's Journey

While Campbell's description of the journey begins with hearing and accepting a "calling," our real life experiences often call us to the hero's journey by presenting us with the challenge first. The many heroes who emerged as a result of the September 11 terrorist attacks, for instance, were thrown into their journey by a direct confrontation with the "demon." They had to face their threshold and recognize their calling within the crisis they were facing.

This is also frequently the case with our clients. It is a crisis which presents the calling. Certainly, dealing with any sort of crisis is a type of hero's journey in and of itself.

To help clients explore and prepare themselves for some of the key aspects of their own heroes' journeys, pick a project, transition or initiative that they are currently involved in or planning and ask the following questions:

1. What is the "demon" (challenge) you must face? What is a situation in which you feel more of a "victim" than a "hero?"
   [This will typically be a situation in which the client is confronting some type of negative sponsorship messages, either from himself or herself in response to an external challenge, or from a significant other.]

2. What is your "threshold"? What is the unknown territory, outside of your comfort zone, that either a) the crisis is forcing you into or b) you must enter in order to deal with the crisis?

3. Given the demon you are facing and the threshold you must cross, what is the "call to action"—what are you being "called" to do or become? (It is often useful to answer this question in the form of a symbol or metaphor; e.g., "I am being called to become an eagle/warrior/magician, etc.")

4. What resources do you have and which do you need to develop more fully in order to face the challenge, cross your threshold and accomplish your calling?

5. Who are (will be) your "guardians" for those resources?

When the client has identified his or her guardians, ask the client to imagine where they would be located physically around him or her in order to best support the client. One by one, have the client put him/herself into the shoes of each of the guardians, and look at him/herself through their eyes (second position). What message or advice does each guardian have for the client?

Have the client return to his or her own perspective (first position) and receive the messages.