

Re-Modelling NLP: Part Three: **Feeling, Conflict and Integration**

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“Contradiction is not a sign of falsity, nor the lack of contradiction a sign of truth.” Pascal

Many, if not most clients, seek therapy because of some kind of bad feeling. NLP offers a number of techniques for dealing with bad feelings. In this third part of my series on re-modelling NLP, I will concentrate on the area of feeling generally and specifically the area of conflicts and how we can use feelings to resolve difficult issues.

As with the previous articles, I am attempting to cover a great deal of territory to give an overview of my re-modelling of NLP as a whole. This means leaving out a lot of detail and supporting examples. Please take the time to consider the examples and do the exercises. In the last 5 - 10 years that I have been teaching my new material, I have done it experientially. This written form is good for the ideas but impossible to guarantee that the reader successfully experiences what is necessary to make the most of the new models. If you would like further clarification or examples for this or previous parts please contact me at the address at the end of the article and I will do my best to provide you with more. One good thing about developmental modelling is that there is always more.

What's in a feeling?

First of all what do we mean by feeling? Feeling is a priority for many psychotherapies and is such an everyday word that we all assume that we know what someone means when they say they have a feeling. What exactly does the therapist mean when asking someone to get in touch with their feelings? Through modelling I have identified the following different types of feeling that we experience.

No.	Types of Feeling	Examples
1.	Sensory: Matter	“Feels hard” “Feels soft”
2.	Sensory: Temperature	“Feels warm” “Feels cold”
3.	Sensory: Texture	“Feels rough” “Feels smooth”
4.	Sensory: Perceptual	“Feel out of balance” “Feel unsettled”
5.	Behavioural	“Feeling for my keys” “Feeling my way in the

		dark”
6.	Emotional	“Feel happy” “Feel sad”
7.	Evaluative	“Feel good” “Feel scared”
8.	Cognitive	“Feel it is going to rain” “Feel it will go well”
9.	Gestalt	“Feel Happy” “Feel at one with the world”
10.	Secondary Processing	“Feels right” “Feels wrong”

Any one of these ten can be "felt". They are all useful for some things but clearly very different. We also use the word feeling as a metaphor. Using these distinctions can clarify miscommunications. Without these distinctions modelling feelings can only be at best a crude approximation, at worst totally misleading.

Congruence, Compatibility and Conflict

A major source of bad feeling comes from conflicts of various kinds and one of the early NLP books, ‘Structure of Magic, Vol. II’ dealt with this area.

“More specifically, the strategy for working with incongruities involves three phases:

1. Identifying *the client's incongruencies;*
2. Sorting *the client's incongruencies;*
3. Integrating *the client's incongruencies.*

These three phases are, of course, a fiction, as are all models. It sometimes happens that the phases do not occur in their full form, or, frequently, they will not be sharply distinguishable, but will flow into one another. They have proven to be, as is demanded of any model, a useful way both of organising our own experiences in therapy and in teaching others to do the same.

In short, the therapist has the task of assisting the client in learning to use his conflicting parts of incongruencies as resources - of assisting the client to become congruent.” Magic II, Page 45

And then:

“The term incongruent, then, applies to a situation in which the person communicating is presenting a set of messages carried by his output channels which do not match, are not compatible - this person is said to be incongruent. Other people's experience of an incongruent person is confusion, saying that he doesn't know what he really wants, is inconsistent, untrustworthy, indecisive.

The terms congruent and incongruent may be applied to messages presented by a person's output channels as well as to the persons themselves. Thus, if messages carried by two output systems are incompatible, do not fit, do not match, they are incongruent; if they fit, they are congruent.” Magic II, Page 46

When we identify anything we make use of equivalences (see previous article) and what we understand by incongruence will dictate what we are looking for and listening to and what sense we make of our client's behaviour. Bandler and Grinder fail to specify how compatibility is decided. “Compatible with what?” When we appreciate organisation in levels then in an example such as when we want to eat fish and chips and at the same time want to only have a salad these appear to be incompatible with each other. However they are compatible with our desires as a whole person. This has a major impact on subsequent sorting and integrating.

Bandler and Grinder made the assumption that people have parts. If we assume that incongruities are the result of different parts then we are not modelling but instead are imposing a model. The imposition of this idea of parts has been popular as it is easy to connect with at first. It is only when you question the working of the part and its relationship to the whole that the term presents difficulties. Part certainly doesn't mean a separate part like an arm or leg that can be removed. I will return to this issue later in the article.

Bandler and Grinder went on to recommend sorting incongruities in terms of parts and then polarities.

“The most common sorting of a client's incongruities is a sorting into two parts - we distinguish this situation with a special name. When a client's incongruent paramessages are sorted into two parts for therapeutic work, we call these two parts polarities. Very dramatic therapeutic work and profound and lasting change can be achieved by a therapist and clients through polarities.

We recommend the sorting of incongruities into polarities as an excellent therapeutic technique and one which will allow the therapist to make sense out of the client's behaviour. We make effective polarity work a prerequisite for therapists before instructing them in working with more than two of the client's identifiable parts at one time. In our description of Phases 2 and 3, we will focus on the two-parts situation - the polarity case; the remarks we make are also applicable to work in which more than two parts are being handled simultaneously. At the end of the sections on Phases 2 and 3, we will discuss more specifically working with more than two parts at a time.” Page 62

I used this approach for many years and found great value in it. I also found some major limitations and useful additions as a result of my re-modelling in this area. The result has been a change in the three phases of identifying, sorting and integrating. I will now give an overview of these changes.

History of my Re-Modelling of Conflict Resolution

It is nearly 20 years since I started using NLP ideas, skills and techniques. My previous training included linguistics, family therapy and Gestalt. I took immediately

to the meta-model and to the patterns outlined in Magic I and II and Changing with Families. The identification of incongruence and conflicts utilising Satir categories was very useful for me in integrating different areas of therapy.

In Magic II there are a number of ways of sorting and working with incongruity. When I later attended training in NLP these weren't included. Instead one technique, the Visual Squash or Conflict Resolution technique, was all that was used.

Traditional NLP Visual Squash Technique:

There are now a few variations in this technique. The basic pattern is as follows:

1. Identify incongruence or conflict and separate into parts
2. Place one part on each hand and develop a full sensory representation (picture, sound and feeling)
3. 'Chunk up' to identify the positive intention
4. For each side develop an appreciation of the intention of the other side and of the benefit of integration
5. Establish an agreement to integrate
6. Bring the hands together and integrate
7. Test the integration (the result of the visual squashing together). Re-do if required
8. Bring back into the body and future pace

I used this technique for years and taught it to many people. This technique was often used in association with "Parts". I gradually became aware that the "resolution" which clients attained sometimes didn't last very long. I checked this out with colleagues and other trainers, and those that had followed up on their clients reported similar results.

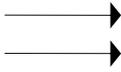
An insight which I had was stimulated by the brain hemisphere distinction in Magic II together with a detailed study of a number of examples of conflict resolution. This insight only occurred when I changed from using 'Parts' to 'Directions' as a way of describing polarities. My realisation was that two different types of conflicts were occurring.

Re-modelling of Consistency, Congruence, Dilemmas and Conflicts

The assumption in Magic II is that different messages, if they are not compatible, are incongruent and that incongruence is a bad thing. Once this assumption is accepted then it's a straight forward implication that incongruence should be changed to congruence. For example, if I want to go out for a meal tonight and I'd also like to stay in and rest then this would be considered incongruence in the old NLP model. If I assume that human beings are single channel processors, that they can only think or feel one thing at a time, then this is correct. I totally disagree with this. I can have many "desires" at any single time - we all do. We get used to usually only choosing one of them and this can give the illusion of only one thing. If we have difficulty choosing then this is often considered to be a conflict and requiring resolution. Because there is uncertainty and indecision this can become associated with incongruence.

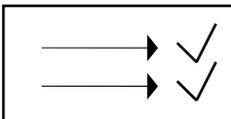
Below I have provided a summary representation of Consistency, Congruence, Dilemmas and Conflicts.

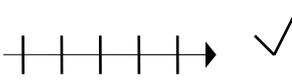
1. Consistency:

a. Between
Matter-Space-Time
Levels 

b. Across
Matter-Space-Time
Areas 

2. Congruence:

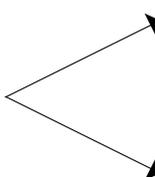
a. Between
Matter-Space-Time
Types and Levels 

b. Across
Matter-Space-Time 

3. Dilemma:

Same overall direction
Two or more alternatives
Matter-Space-Time 

4. Conflicts:

Two opposing directions
Matter-Space-Time 

There are then two different types of conflict. I have named them dilemma and conflict. A dilemma is where there is more than one option for going in one direction, e.g., Indian food or Chinese food tonight? A conflict is when there are two directions, e.g., go out for meal or save money. The crucial difference is that in a dilemma all options will get you what you want at a higher level. With conflicts the more you go for one, the less you get of the other.

In my experience conflicts occur consistently between issues of development and issues of safety. These are two crucial concerns for our survival. We constantly need to develop, even more so now that the world is changing so quickly. We also need to stay safe as we develop. Development is more often processed by the conscious mind and is often linguistic and visual as it is about ideas and achievement. Safety is often an unconscious check and is experienced as a feeling.

These two patterns require different interventions. The visual squash, or 'conflict resolution', ironically is ideal for dilemmas but not for conflicts. This technique "chunks" them up to a level of sameness and therefore brings them back together. With this accomplished the client can then proceed more easily.

A conflict involves issues regarding safety and development and thus can be masked by using the visual squash technique because the two issues are not of the same type. When they are chunked up to 'sameness' the feeling of conflict is masked but is not resolved and so will re-occur later. For example, if you take any conflict like getting your tax returns done or watching TV and chunk both up until you connect with 'a oneness with the universe' you will find that you no longer feel the conflict. The need to sort the tax return out hasn't gone away. The conflicting issue is still there whether you are feeling or not. That is why it will surface as soon as you come back down to earth. There is clearly a danger in inducing a drug type high feeling instead of tackling real life issues with the obvious ecological concerns.

Sometimes the visual squash will stimulate the client to resolve the conflict but it is by no means guaranteed and I found that this was the cause of the inconsistent results. In 1987 this was the pattern I developed for dealing with conflicts. It utilises the sorting and chunking portion of the visual squash but accomplishes the integration in a different way. I named it the "Hemispheric Integration" technique.

Hemisphere Integration Technique

1. Identify both 'sides' as in Visual Squash. Use of sides or 'hands' can be used, e.g., "on the one hand I want this but on the other hand I want that".
2. Establish full sensory involvement as in Visual Squash
3. Chunk up to level of safety and development. The actual words are not important. Other synonymous words will do, such as doing things, protecting myself, etc.
4. For each side: Establish need for other attention
 - a) Safety: Example text: "*In a world that's changing, you are physically changing, you need to develop safety if you are to stay safe.*"
 - b) Development: Example text: "*How long will you continue to develop if you don't stay safe?*"
5. Integration. Use each side to motivate the need for an integrated ability to respond.
Example text:
"*So now you realise that you need to develop, you can develop safety and develop safely and that you need to be safe as you develop and to be safe in your safety*"
(repeat links, reversing the order to reinforce)
"*... and you can let your hands come together on their own as your unconscious integrates your thinking and feeling so that you can do what's best for you to develop safely. And in the future when you feel one of these concerns it will remind you that you are most effective at doing things when your thinking and feeling is integrated.*"
6. Internalisation: As in Visual Squash instruct that the hands come back to the chest and to take a deep breath and bring in the feeling of integration
7. Extension: Repeat the deep breath once for
 - a) Spreading the feeling into the past to appreciate the occurrences of conflict and to appreciate the benefits of being integrated and

- b) Again spreading the feeling into the future anticipating the benefits of an integrated approach to life.

In using the Hemisphere Integration, Safety and Development are directions to go toward. Some clients experienced the 'away from' feelings connected to the directions of safety and development. These feelings are 'fear', the awareness of danger, and what is best called 'Angst', the stagnant lack of meaningful development. This led to a major new model for using feelings, the FADS model.

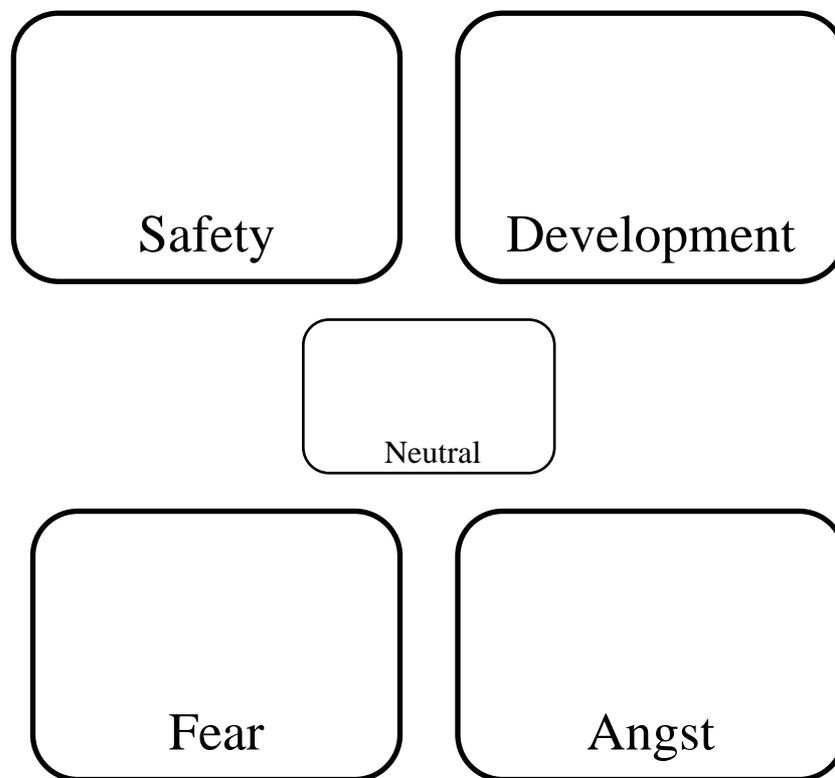
Fear –Angst – Development - Safety (FADS) Model

This is a model for using your feeling to think through emotional issues. Often we stop thinking and give up if an issue feels bad. We can instead learn to use these feelings.

Exercise:

On the floor Place four pieces of paper with safety, development, fear and angst and place them as in the diagram below.

1. Identify an issue. A good practice example is one that you began with and then gave up. For example *“I’m bored with my job and would like a new one but I might get rejected at an interview”*.



2. Walk to the places that fit the feeling. So “Bored with job” is ‘angst’, ‘like new one’ is development, ‘might get rejected’ is fear. At this point the person gives up as the feeling of the feeling of anticipated rejection is too strong.
3. Repeat and this time return to the start to remind yourself of the initial feeling using the word ‘but’.
“I’m bored with my job and would like a new one but I might get rejected at an interview but I am bored with my job”.
This stage will often re-motivate the subject by getting them back into ‘why’ they need to change.
4. Repeat and this time at the point that you gave up move to any of the areas not used, using the word ‘so’. In the example the client would add in safety,

“I’m bored with my job and would like a new one but I might get rejected at an interview, so I need to be safe at the interview”.

5. Continue using each of the four areas to explore all possible issues that might arise building a plan of action based on using your ability to identify concerns and how to use them rather than let the feeling get in your way.

“So I need to be safe at the interview. What can I do to make it safer (Development); It could be boring (Angst), what could make it more interesting (Development); Would that be alright to use (Fear), how could I do it appropriately (safety), etc.

Have fun exploring!

Parting from Parts

With my developments in directions, I was able to re-model the use of parts. Parts as a metaphor is one thing as an embodiment of different aspects of an individual it is quite another and potentially dangerous. People are not a collection of ‘parts’.

Multiple personalities are an extreme and thankfully uncommon example of the illusion of parts taken to the extreme. So do we need to use parts? My answer is no, not if we can get all the positive results some other way that is not so misleading.

The following exercise sequence will give you an experience of the difference. Firstly think of two things that you would like to do at the same time e.g. “tonight I will go out for a meal (X) and tonight I will stay in and relax (Y)”. Then try stating your two examples of X and Y in the three different ways below. Notice the differences.

- 1) Establish a part for each hand and express them as
“Part of me would like to X and part of me would like to Y”
- 2) Again hold these in the hand but change the expression to
“I would partly like to do X and partly like to do Y”.
- 3) Change the shape of your hand so that you are pointing
“I would like to go for (direction) X and I would like to go for Y”.

In 1) you will have experienced three separate entities, the two parts and you.

In 2) you will probably have experienced a feeling of fragmentation or partial commitment.

In 3) you will probably have experience a sense of one self with two desires.

The occasional use of parts will probably do little harm and clearly some good. My point is that through re-modelling we can get all the benefits with none of the dangers.

The identification of separate "parts" of a person is a confusion of value (like to, want to, need to) with identity (is, my, our, name, thing). This is a common error which is identified in other areas of NLP but was never applied here.

There are many useful uses of parts. ‘Part of’, as in leg of chair or body; ‘Apart from’, as in away from; ‘Part’, as in to separate or to leave; ‘Partly’, as in portion or one of a selection

Interestingly, a more extensive the use of General Semantics by Bandler and Grinder would have, if applied to this use of part, clarified this error of feeling of value or desire and identity.

Many Types of Polarities

There are also many types of polarity and not just the simple forms identified by Bandler and Grinder. Again the modeller, therapist and consultant will greatly benefit from greater precision this creates. These are the distinctions I have identified.

Type of Polarity	Examples
Singularities:	Value: Enjoy, Hate, etc.
Basic Polarities:	Black – White Good – Bad Right – Wrong Introverted - Extraverted a. Negative and positive: “Right and wrong” b. Negative to zero to positive: “Profit and loss” c. Negative to zero “Untidy to tidy” d. Zero to positive “Night to Day” Common mistakes include: Love – Hate, two singularities put as a polarity
Analogues:	Shades of Grey Spectrums
Multiple Digital’s:	Many rights and wrongs and partials
Relatives:	Sometimes right or wrong
Compounds:	All of the above.

When working with higher level issues, especially issues of identity and with organisations and teams it is often important to keep the differences at one level and have them compatible at a higher level. For example a mother refusing to give her child sweets on demand needs to hold the incompatibility of upsetting the child with also wanting to please them. Many of the poorer forms of parenting I worked with from 1979-89 involved the inability to work with many values simultaneously. The work I have since then done with teams and the boards of companies also demonstrate the need to appreciate different values such as research and development with accountancy. Many conflicts are created unnecessarily through this lack of understanding. Further limitations are created through a lack of ability to work with ‘many-valued’ systems in addition to ‘single-valued’ systems.

Summary:

Phases	Bandler and Grinder	Re-Modelled NLP
Identifying	Parts Conflicts Simple polarities Single values	Thoughts Feelings Values Directions Dilemmas Conflicts All types of polarities Many values
Sorting	Parts: Spatial Fantasy Psychodramatic Representational System Satir Category Brain hemisphere	Directions: Spatial Fantasy Psychodramatic Representational System Satir Category Brain hemisphere
Integrating	Through sameness Single value only	Through sameness for Dilemma Through difference for Conflicts Many value possible

This summary encapsulates a major change in scientific thinking that has taken place in the last twenty-five years. This change has been firstly to recognising the importance of complexity and secondly to develop the ability to model complexity.

When NLP was beginning, complexity was avoided in all areas of science because of the difficulties in working with it. This was also the case with therapy. Some of the simple models were created not as a final answer but as a simple answer until a more accurate description of the complexity could be modelled. In my own way I have constantly sought to model the true complexity of our human behaviour. Through developing an appreciation of our true complexity I feel enriched and I am more able to enrich my clients, friends and people who train with me.

I hope that the re-modelling of NLP that I have so far presented will encourage you to question positively and to constantly seek to improve the accuracy of your understanding and the effectiveness of your interventions in all areas of your life.

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