

Rapport: Re-Modelling NLP Part Seven: **Facilitating Change**

“Develop your own technique. Don’t try to use somebody else’s technique....Don’t try to imitate my voice or my cadence. Just discover your natural self. It’s the individual responding to the individual.”

Milton H. Erickson

In previous articles, and in my last article in particular, I outlined a number of models for understanding change. In this article I will outline a number of skills and issues related to facilitating change. In the next article I will explore the actual performing of the change work.

In life none of us has all the skills to deal with every situation. We rely on builders, lawyers, doctors, bakers, tailors, chefs to do things we do not have time or skills to do. It is the same with life’s challenges and problems. We can deal with most of them but at other times we are again lacking in time or skill.

We are all modellers of our own realities. Therefore we are all naturalistic modellers. However, we all can benefit from learning more precise and thorough modelling skills. We can learn to model our natural modelling skills and to develop more formal and accurate modelling skills.

In my experience modelling is the most effective means of facilitating change.

Epistemology - Methodology - Technology

I covered these distinctions in previous articles. I was the first person to introduce these distinctions as a way of organising the technology of NLP. I introduced them in the late 80’s and it is gratifying to see them being used by other NLP trainers such as Steve Andreas, and Robert Dilts in his book Modelling and NLP.

NLP traditionally didn’t explicitly operate at all three levels. My inclusion of them was a major change in my use of NLP and integral in creating DBM. I wanted a holistic, congruent, total approach to change and not a technology with bits of methodology and epistemology tagged on to support it. I wanted to be able to perform change work from the first principles of a holistic, systemic epistemology. I wanted from this to create an integrated methodology for change work in all areas of life.

I developed the modelling epistemology and methodology initially to utilise the technology of NLP. While developing it I realised that all of them were also relevant to each individual and not just NLP as a field. We each have our own personal epistemology; our personal way of knowing. We each have our own personal methodology; our general approach to life and life’s problems. We each have our own personal technology; our behavioural repertoire.

Their implications have been quite revolutionary in terms of what, for me, they advocate for facilitating change. This approach is to model each client and use a modelling methodology as the basis of change and the personal epistemology of the client together with their personal methodology and technology as the content that requires to be "Re-Modelled". NLP, at most, changes the technology because it is based upon changing products - the bad feelings that clients don't like or beliefs that limit their behaviour that they don't like.

Facilitating fields and individuals

Change, whether in a field of study or in an individual, can be improved through intentional facilitation. NLP was a new field of study that changed the technology of therapy twenty-five years ago. The technology of NLP greatly facilitated the lives of many individuals. My creation of DBM has been facilitated through NLP and through applying NLP with many individuals.

DBM is a field and its purpose is to develop modelling. Its application in therapy and consultancy is called Systemic Counselling and Consultancy (SCC). There has sometimes been confusion associated with this name. SCC operates in the same territory as psychotherapy. I decided many years ago that NLP psychotherapy was a name that didn't make sense as there is no 'psyche' in the NLP model and the methodology is one of education and optimising functioning - not one of fixing and illness. The name was incongruent with all three levels of technology, methodology and epistemology. The approach of SCC covers psychotherapy, counselling, coaching, consultancy, teaching and training and will be outlined in my next article.

WHY Facilitate Change

“Every year a baby starts from scratch to learn a great number of different things. The baby plays with its toes, its knees, its ankles, with all parts of its body; its fingers, its hair, its nose, its eyes, its ears, its mouth, and so on, in an effort to understand the total body configuration. And that body is constantly changing in size, so the baby has to learn again and again.”

Milton H. Erickson

In order to have an accurate model of the world and to meet our needs we have to keep learning. In order to keep developing our mind and our understanding of life we must continually learn. Our understanding of the world will dictate how we respond to life's challenges and also what kind of learning we think is not only suitable but also possible. We need to keep learning and re-learning. Through this process we also learn about our learning.

Every type of intervention we create will be explicitly or implicitly structured and designed to function in relation to our understanding of the world, our epistemology. It will also be organised through how we have learnt to organise ourselves, our methodology. Our understanding of the world and the nature of therapy will dictate the kind of changes to be made. If we do not have choice and flexibility we are likely to impose our model of the world

onto the client. The importance in NLP of choice and flexibility is clearly a very practical issue.

It is useful then to understand WHY we want to facilitate change; what are our reasons for it and what are we aiming to achieve through the facilitation. For me the main reason for facilitating change is to work with people and through the joint exploration and education to improve our abilities and the application of our abilities in creating and selecting the most relevant actions for our growth and development as human beings.

In terms of reasons for facilitating change, NLP advocates adding choice. However it is very useful to be more precise about this central issue of choice because it quickly becomes a background issue that permeates all our interventions and so any inaccuracies or limitations will spread through all that we do.

Choice and choosing

There is a major difference between having choices and choosing. Choices are what we choose from. If we add more choices we can also make the process of choosing more difficult. It is useful then to balance the relevance of the choices with the practicality of choosing. This means that simply adding more and more choices could lead to an inability to decide on one of them.

In NLP we emphasise the importance of adding or creating choice. Choice, though, is more complex than often realised. I find it useful to distinguish between three levels of choice. The first is choice between “alternatives”, a simple example being different alternatives on a menu. These types of choices are all variations of basically the same type of thing. The second is choice of the range of alternatives. This creates “options”. For example the type of restaurant and menu can be one of a number of options. The third is the choice of the range of options. This creates the big “choices”. At this level the choice is selecting to go for a meal in the first place from a range of other choices for example the theatre, movies, staying at home.

1. Choice: Creation and Selection of Type
2. Option: Creation and selection of Example within the Type
3. Alternatives: Creation and selection of Specific behaviour within the example

When we choose we often evaluate using feelings. These evaluations can be achieved in a number of different ways (see Clients Feeling for Change below). A thorough use of these feelings can greatly facilitate the choosing of the most appropriate changes.

It is important to me that people learn to learn and that they learn to be in charge of their own learning. This is only possible if all three levels of choice are available. The three levels of choice offer increasing levels of flexibility and creativity. Too often we are limited to doing more of the same. We can easily have the illusion of acquiring new choices when all we have is only an increase in alternatives. All too often exaggerated claims of deep change in relation to many models and techniques end in results like this. Only with more understanding of the underlying processes can more options and choices be created.

When we connect these levels with technology, methodology and epistemology we can easily see at which level the NLP technology is directed. NLP mainly adds alternatives, alternative

feelings (anchoring), beliefs (sub-modality belief change), meaning (reframing), behaviours (swish, new behaviour generator).

Variability, Flexibility and Adaptability

The developmental benefits of increased choice are different at each of the three levels. Having more alternatives will increase our potential variability. Having more options will increase our potential flexibility. Having more choices will increase our adaptability.

Level		Issue	Level of Choice	Developmental Benefit	Level of Choice
Epistemology	Why	Need	Choices	Adaptability	Choices
					Options
					Alternatives
Methodology	How	Want	Options	Flexibility	Choices
					Options
					Alternatives
Technology	What	Like	Alternatives	Variability	Choices
					Options
					Alternatives

I have introduced most of these elements in previous articles through DBM Fractal Modelling. In the next fractal level, the choices, options and alternatives exist within each level.

My interest in creating a holistic approach to facilitating change means that all three need to be involved. The type of change at each level is different. A change in technology will be ineffective for changes in methodology and epistemology. We need to do different things to facilitate change at this level.

How to Facilitate Change

In my last article I outlined the difference between NLP and DBM as the difference between organic and inorganic approaches.

I have also described models for understanding higher-level structures and outcomes. These are the emergent outcomes and emergent feelings. The process of life is a sequence of emergent changes. When we are facilitating all levels of change we are influencing.

In my previous article I used the metaphors of cooking and gardening to demonstrate the facilitating of change in these areas. In these areas even though we talk about baking bread and growing flowers it is clear that we don't directly cause the cooking and growing. What we do is facilitate a natural process through optimising the conditions. The more that we work with the process the more likely we will be to get the results we want. There are a number of important components in successfully working with the process.

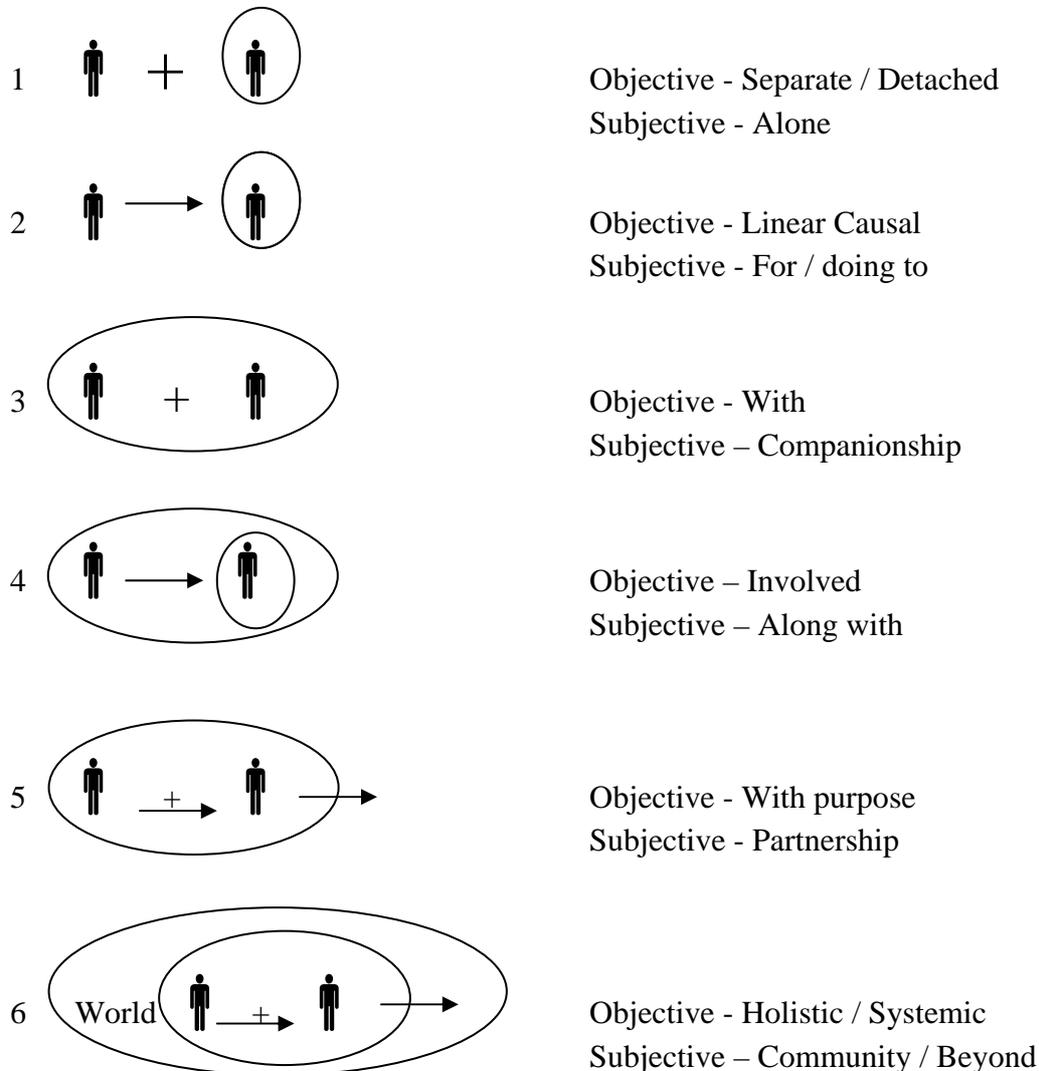
NLP emphasises the therapist as a technical expert with a tool kit and it's a matter of which tool to use. The metaphor that most fits is that of a car mechanic. The emphasis can easily slip into an over-emphasis on power and doing things TO people.

My own preference is working together WITH people. As such I was not drawn to the power to do things but the skills to assist people. This has continued through my re-modelling and use of modelling as change work. Over the years I have realised that this is not just a personal preference but a serious professional and ethical issue regarding how we interact with our clients and also influence them. The patterns of our interaction can be learnt just as easily as the official pattern that we are teaching.

Whatever type of intervention we select we require to relate with our clients. There are a number of different ways that the relationship can be structured. If we know this we will have more choices available and be in a position to choose the most effective one for the intervention.

Relationship Structure

When we interact with others we may be engaged with them in a variety of ways. There are both objective elements of attention and subjective. Each of these relationships can be used beneficially but are also open to abuse or misuse.



NLP is dominantly delivered through 2 above where the expert NLP Practitioner does things to the client. This relationship is open to the emphasis on power over people and this is clearly evident in some NLP literature. In re-modelling, all of these patterns of relationship are utilised. Which particular combination will depend on the specific changes being worked toward.

Intervention Issues

Our skills in investigating and building an understanding of what is happening with the client, ourselves and the relationship between the two is the basis for a systemic methodology of change.

To work holistically we also need to attend to all three levels of technology, methodology and epistemology.

Below are a number of important elements that operate at all three levels.

Summary table: A range of important considerations

Topic	Epistemology	Methodology	Technology
Our Understanding	of the nature of development and change	of the process of change	of the process
Clients Understanding	of the nature of development and change, what upsets them	of the process of change, how they are trying to solve their problems	of the working of the process, what they ask for
Our Relationship	Our relationship with the client	How we relate	Our interaction
Our Processing	Our model of the world	Our subjective modelling	Our thinking, feeling and behaviour
Clients Processing	Their model of the world	Their subjective modelling	Their thinking, feeling and behaviour
Our Deciding	What is the priority	How we decide	What specific things we decide
The Clients Deciding	What is their priority	How they decide	What specific things they decide
Our Action	What is important	How we choose	What we use and what we do
Clients action	What is important	How they choose	What they use and what they do

The relationship between the epistemology, methodology and technology of ourselves and our clients involves many variables. Through modelling we can avoid the over simplification or reduction of complex human behaviour into simplistic behavioural interventions.

To be effective for the whole client and not just affect their surface behaviour we must be able to identify, understand and intervene in all areas of their model and modelling of the world.

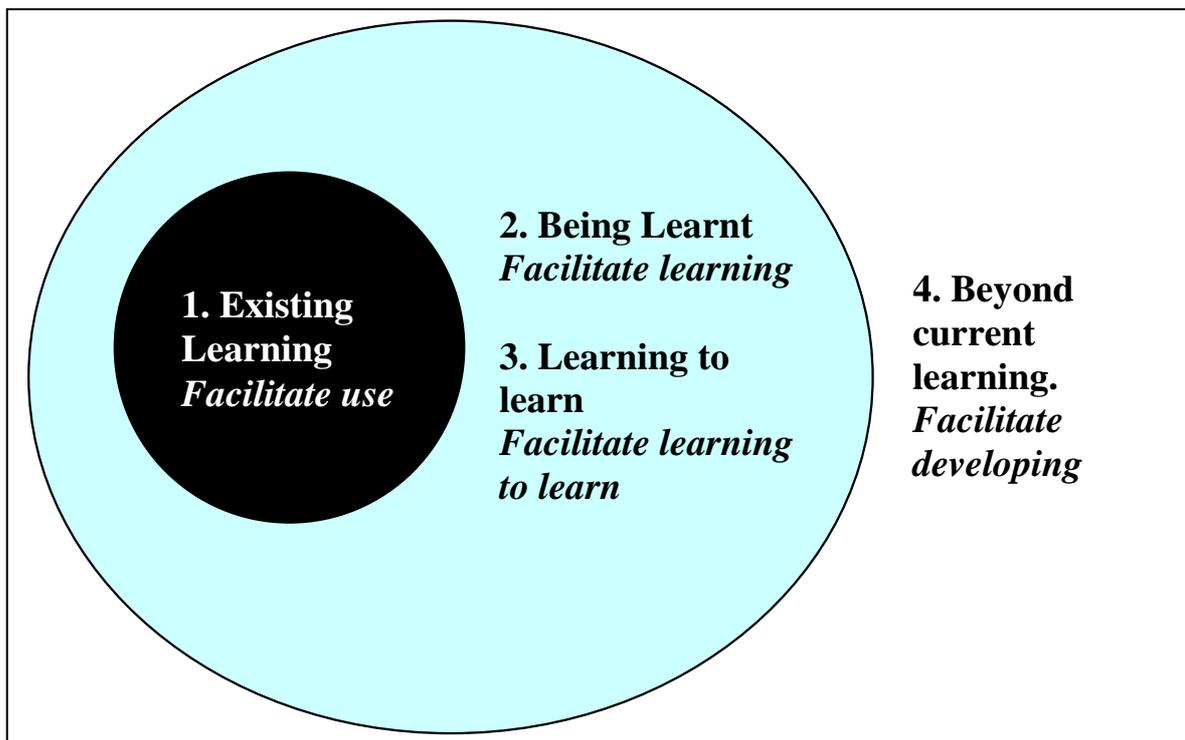
Where to facilitate Change

There are various stages in the learning process that we can utilise in our facilitation of change. A very useful distinction was made by the Russian psychologist Vygotsky. He developed the idea of the zone of proximal development as a way of representing and explaining how children learn. IQ tests traditionally give a score for the child's performance at certain tasks. This is an example of the child's learnt abilities, what they have mastered and can perform on their own. Vygotsky was also interested in what the child was currently developing. So for example two children could score the same on an IQ test but very differently if both are given a little assistance because one may be further toward completing a new skill and only requires a little reminding or guiding while the other may have practically

no development in progress. The development in progress is the learning zone. This is what is currently being learnt. It is also useful to identify what is beyond this learning that the child has not yet started.

In terms of facilitating change there are four main areas of facilitation:

1. Facilitate use: Within what the person can currently do – encouraging them to use their skills.
2. Facilitate learning: Within the zone of development, supplementing specific gaps.
3. Facilitate learning to learn: Within the zone of development, learning to learn - developing the person to fill their own gaps.
4. Facilitating developing: Beyond the zone – inspiring new possibilities.



WHAT Change to Facilitate

"My aim is to bring about a psychic state in which my patient begins to experiment with his own nature - a state of fluidity, change and growth where nothing is eternally fixed and hopelessly petrified"

C.G. Jung

Using DBM we can identify the structure and function of different approaches to therapeutic work with clients. These will be very generalised and not directly representative of individual practitioners who may well operate inconsistently with their official approach, have their own variation, or work eclectically and use a number of the patterns below.

NLP Areas of Intervention

In NLP there are four main areas of intervention:

1. Model of the World
2. Internal Computation
3. Internal State
4. External Behaviour

These four areas of intervention are the products of the client's own subjective modelling processes. The client will have learnt or created how to model their world and how to use their model to meet their needs. The client's own modelling is not worked with using traditional NLP.

I described the kinds of things NLP traditionally changes in the last article and how DBM expands these. DBM also expands the areas of potential intervention by also including the process behind the four products above. Because I take modelling seriously the clients modelling is a central feature of DBM.

DBM Areas of Intervention

In DBM there is an expanded range of areas of intervention. I listed some of them in a previous article. The diagram below outlines the main areas and their interconnections through the model of the world. All of these boxes are possible areas of intervention. The links between them may also benefit from change.

More understanding is required, also more information gathering. This is in the spirit of Richard Bandler's work when he used to say that NLP is 95% information gathering and 5% change work. If you know what information to gather and what things you can change then the relative amount of time necessary for change work is greatly reduced. In my experience when clients share in the gathering of information across all of the areas below they develop a working knowledge of HOW they feel, think and do what they do. This is often enough facilitation and allows them to go on and make the changes they want. Sometimes more facilitation is required.

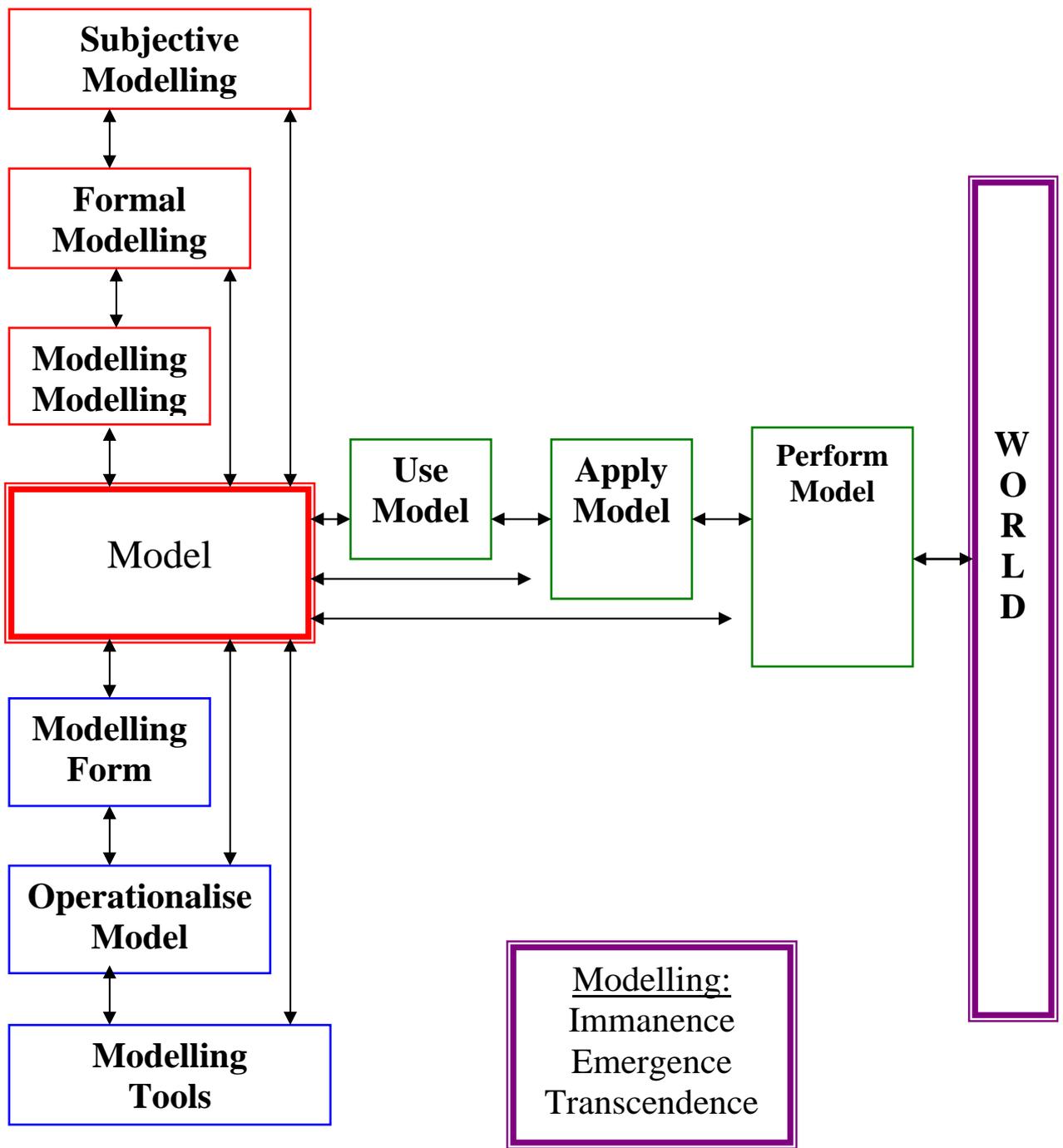


Diagram: DBM Modelling Processes

When clients would benefit from more formal change they use their feelings to decide. The next two models help outline both the existing feelings and the next areas to facilitate.

Clients Feeling for Changes

There is a thorough range of checks that are useful for clients to make before deciding that particular changes are useful to have facilitated. The therapist / consultant can also use them as a very useful way of using their feelings to check thoroughly.

Level	Check	Result	Detail of Check
Why	Fitting	Impact	Appropriate
			Accurate
			Acceptable
How	Feeling	Affect	Need
			Want
			Like
What	Felt	Effect	Conceptual Issue
			Concern
			Crisis

Crisis - Concern - Conceptual Issue

When we feel we are in crisis we are usually very motivated to change. When the crisis recedes the motivation tends to decrease. Many years ago I worked with families often when they were in crisis. At the point of crisis they were usually very motivated to work toward change. Days later when the crisis was over they had little motivation to work on change. This was a very frustrating experience at the time. If I had had the model below it would have assisted not just me but also my colleagues and the families greatly at that time. The model shows what was missing and what was required in order for them to continue to be motivated toward change; they had to feel a degree of concern about the future rather than just the immediacy of crises. Acting on feelings of concern will help prevent situations reaching crisis.

It is even more useful for prevention of crises and concerns to identify issues well ahead of time. This requires skills in conceptual thinking, a very different skill from the immediacy of feelings in crisis.

This model is used to guide the therapist / consultant's understanding of the clients level of concern and inform their choice in the level of change in the next changes to make. The model has also been used for business applications.

Level of Evaluation	Remedial	Generative
Crisis	1	6
Concern	2	5
Issue	3	4

The sequence of change runs in the order:

1. Remedial crisis intervention, build concerns earlier to avoid.
2. Responding to remedial concerns, build identification of issue before reaching crisis.
3. Responding to remedial issues, build generative issues.
4. Responding to generative issues, build generative concerns to build desire for change.
5. Responding to generative concerns, build generative crisis to encourage the need to develop.
6. Responding to generative crisis, build remedial crisis if not successfully responding to the remedial crisis.

Not all crises, concerns and issues are structured the same way and once again it is very useful to have precise models in order to work out the facilitated change that is the most appropriate. Inappropriate change could make the situation worse rather than better. There are three very different structures that we can identify that in turn lead to very different types of intervention.

Facilitating Change Summary

Why Facilitate	Why	Technology, Methodology, Epistemology
	How	Choice and Choosing
	What	Variability, Flexibility, Adaptability
How Facilitate	Why	Relationship Pattern
	How	Intervention Issues
	What	Zone of Proximal Development
What to Facilitate	Why	Areas of interventions
	How	Feeling for Change
	What	Crisis, Concern, Conceptual Issue

Concluding comments

A major element in this article has been the integration of technology, methodology and epistemology. The quantity as well as quality of my modelling was increased significantly when I took seriously the process of integrating them. This has led to the practical modelling of them and not just an intellectual, add-on. So while it is useful to have them as a background

model, it is even more useful to integrate them and operate from the resulting holistic model. Since introducing the terms I have continually extended my understanding of them and developed them as detailed modelling distinctions.

I have concerns about methodology and epistemology being only superficially added on to NLP rather than fully integrated. There is always a risk of responding to the limits of the NLP technology by refusing to model the unknown and instead returning to the mysticism of magic and miracle.

Change can seem like a miracle at times but that is the old therapeutic magic trap that NLP was so instrumental in clarifying through modelling. Modelling is also my solution to understanding change and emergent processes. I have continued to pursue the demystification of 'magic' and 'miraculous' through modelling. My commitment to understanding how it is to be a human being is to understand the many amazing experiences, skills and processes that are involved. We have gone beyond modelling the world in terms of wind gods and thunder gods. Science is a developmental process of increasing precision and accuracy in our models of the world. It is still possible to think of the wind as the noise of a wind god, however it doesn't offer us the most accurate explanation. The wind can be explained more accurately in descriptive terms of weather systems. An escape into mysticism through ignorance seems silly to modern minds but mysticism can still appeal when we are faced with ignorance. When the child doesn't really know how life works they imagine monsters and bogey men. It is always tempting for adults to create an imaginary explanation rather than a descriptive model of what is happening.

I have been very impressed with the work of Robert Dilts since I first read his work in the late 70's and later when I first worked with him on a Master Practitioner training in 1986. However, I was surprised recently to read Robert Dilts in his book "Tools for the Spirit" exhibiting this kind of mystifying response.

"Yet at some point it began to become obvious to me that when something actually changes or heals it's not because of the equation or the specific sequence of steps in the technique; it's more like a miracle happens." P. 7

In my opinion this demonstrates a lack of modelling as a means of understanding change. This is an example of modelling not being used, instead it is a reversion to the older mystification. The processes I have modelled and included in previous articles, such as emergence and change patterns, clearly outline the 'structure and functioning of these miracles'. This type of response from one of the leading developers of the NLP technology clarifies for me why NLP has not developed into a modelling methodology and epistemology. Attempting to understand a higher level change such as emergent change with a lower level mechanical change model can only lead to the introduction of mysticism.

I hope that this article together with the previous ones demonstrate clearly that modelling is a very practical and developmental approach to understanding and facilitating change. Modelling highlights the complexity of being human and that it is necessary to match the complexity involved if we want to be precise in facilitating change.

Because change is a major life issue we need to be wise in our facilitation of it. We require the skills and wisdom to know what is worth changing as well as how to make the changes. Given the range and possible levels of precision available, the actual doing of the change

work is a complicated challenge. In my next article "Performing Change", I will explore some of the skills and issues involved in working with clients.

DBM is a registered trademark.

References and suggested reading:

- Bandler, Richard & Grinder, John, *The Structure of Magic vol.1*, Science and Behaviour Books, Inc 1975
- Bandler, Richard and Grinder, John, *Frogs into Princes*, Real People Press 1979
- Bandler, Richard, *Magic in Action*, Meta Publications 1984
- Bandler and MacDonald *An Insiders Guide To Sub-Modalities*, Meta Publications 1988
- Bateson, Gregory, *Mind And Nature*, Bantam 1988
- Bateson, Gregory, *Angels Fear*, Rider 1988
- Bateson, Gregory and Ruesch, Jurgen, *Communication, The Social Matrix Of Psychiatry*, Norton & Co. 1951
- Bateson, Gregory, *Sacred Unity, Further Steps To An Ecology Of Mind*, Harper Collins 1991
- Cameron-Bandler, Leslie, *Solutions: Enhancing Love, Sex, and Relationship*. FuturePace 1985
- Dilts et al, *NLP VOL. 1*, Meta Publications 1980
- Dilts, *ROOTS OF NLP*, Meta Publications 1983
- Dilts, Robert, Hallbom, Tim & Smith Suzi, *Beliefs: Pathways to Health & Well-Being*, Metamorphous Press 1990
- Dilts, Robert, *Changing Belief Systems with NLP*, Meta Publications 1990
- Dilts, Robert, McDonald, Robert, *Tools of the Spirit*, Meta Publications 1997
- Dilts, Robert, *Modelling with NLP*, Meta Publications 1998
- Keeney, Bradford P. *Aesthetics of Change* The Guildford Press 1983
- McWhirter, *Re-Modelling NLP, Part 1 - Models and Modelling*, Rapport (1998)
- McWhirter, *Re-Modelling NLP, Part 2 - Re-Modelling Language*, Rapport (1999)
- McWhirter, *Re-Modelling NLP, Part 3 - Feeling, Conflict and Integration*, Rapport (1999)
- McWhirter, *Re-Modelling NLP, Part 4 – Basic Structures and Processes*, Rapport (1999)
- McWhirter, *Re-Modelling NLP, Part 5 – Planning, Problem-Solving, Outcomes and Achieving*, Rapport (1999)
- McWhirter, *Re-Modelling NLP, Part 6 – Understanding Change*, Rapport (2000)
- Watzlawick, Paul; Weakland, John H., and Fisch, Richard, *Change: Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution*, Norton 1974

John McWhirter can be contacted at:

Sensory Systems Training

162 Queens Drive

Queens Park

Glasgow G42 8QN

Phone: 0141 424 4177

Fax: 0141 424 4199

Email: johnm@sensorysystems.co.uk