

# The swish model

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this exercise is to allow the client to feel positive in a situation where previously they have felt unresourceful.

## **Description**

The swish model helps an individual identify how they are, in a way, making a mountain out of a molehill concerning a particular situation. The swish is a technique for reducing this 'mountain' again to the size of a molehill. When this happens the individual feels much more confident in being able to tackle their problems and consequently can begin to put into place the appropriate behaviours to take them to their outcome.

## **Process**

- Ask the coachee to identify a specific behaviour that they wish to change.
- Tell them to treat the current behaviour as an achievement. If they had to teach someone how to limit themselves in this way, what would they need to see, hear and do? What would be the most salient of the senses?
- Ask the coachee to find at least two aspects of the senses that they feel are salient. For instance, if it is hearing, one aspect may be that the volume is turned up very high. If it

is vision, the other person communicating may ‘appear’ very large and close. This initial representation is known as the cue. Ensure that the coachee is associated (seeing/hearing out of their eyes/ears). Once you have done this, distract the coachee in some neutral exercise so that the experience to date is no longer represented in their neurophysiology.

- Now ask the coachee to represent themselves as they would really like to be in this situation. Use your language skills as a coach to ensure that the representation is as compelling as it can be and ensure that the coachee can see themselves in the picture. So, for example, the person will see themselves on the end of someone shouting at them, however they are relaxed because they have turned the volume down as they represent the auditory aspects of the communication. There may also be a visual component and in the new representation they might have also reduced the size of the person shouting at them. As a result of this distortion, the coachee might see herself as more confident as well. The picture of themselves succeeding needs also to fit in with the rest of their life; this is known as ecology in NLP.
- Now again distract the coachee for the same reason as above. This is known as ‘breaking state’ in NLP.
- Take the cue and make it large and loud *if those are the identified senses and critical aspects*. In the corner of this picture put a small dark, picture of the new self-image. Now change the position of the two images so the small dark one becomes large and bright, and vice versa. The visual brain works very quickly so you do not need a lot of time to do this. Make sure the old image really does fade and shrink by repeating this change as many times as necessary. This is usually 5–6. Break state after each change. This is to ensure this is a one-way ticket. A reverse swish will just cancel out a forward one. Once your coachee has broken state, repeat 5–6 times. The swish technique can be done for all of the senses; however, it is most frequently used with the visual sense.
- Ask your coachee to think of the cue. Does it elicit the same response, or does it elicit the new response? When

this model is used effectively, your coachee will be amazed at how quickly a congruent different response can be elicited in such a short period of time.

### **Pitfalls**

- Make sure the coachee totally ‘breaks state’ in between phases.
- Make sure the coachee is totally ‘real’ in each of the phases and is not just going through the motion to please you as the coach.
- Make sure the new behaviours and thoughts created through the new representation are aligned with the rest of the coachee’s life and the outcomes currently being negotiated.
- Make sure the process is repeated as many times as necessary to install this new pattern. One pitfall is to only do the swish two or three times and leave it there.

### **Bibliography**

Bandler, R. (1985) *Using your Brain – For a Change*, Boulder, CO: Real People Press.