

The new behaviour generator

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Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is literally to do what it says on the tin, and that is to generate new behaviours that have not hitherto been a part of an individual's repertoire.

Description

We are *all excellent at doing some things* and this is because our experiences have trained us to filter sensory information in such a way that is unique to us. Conversely, there are some behaviours that, however much we try, seem to elude us when it comes to the crunch. The new behaviour generator is a coaching strategy that helps us alter the way we currently look at the world so we can get that same confident feeling we all can relate to, when we try the things we would like to do, but at the moment can't.

The strategy takes advantage of the fact that our unconscious minds do not differentiate real from imagined data. If you like steak and begin to think about having one, seeing it cooked just how you like it, with your favourite trimmings, as you do sensing the wonderful aroma, with the heat radiating up from the fresh serving, anticipating biting into the freshly cooked meat and tasting those familiar juices . . . you begin to activate all the neurotransmitters and chemical messengers as if you really were actually eating a steak. The new behaviour generator is like a simulator, which allows you to experience yourself in the future and

then to make the necessary alterations so you can be who you wish to be and feel great about it.

The TOTE presented in Figure 6 shows how this coaching strategy has as its main focus what we see ourselves doing in the future and how we feel about this (TOTE – Test, Operate, Test and Exit; see Miller et al., 1960). We negotiate the visual sensory information and the feelings generated as we ‘act out’ and communicate this back in a loop. We eventually obtain a congruent picture of us doing and being just who we wish to be, on our terms, aligned with our important personal values.

Process

- 1 Ask the client to think of a time when they were wonderfully confident and very successful. Ask them to experience that fully, making a note of specifically where and how they experience the feelings.
- 2 Then direct the client to ask themselves: ‘If I had already achieved my goal, what is it I would look like? How would I sound, who and what would surround me, how would I relate to that environment?’. Strategies to aid this step are:
 - breaking the goal down into steps and seeing themselves doing the initial steps;
 - modelling someone who can achieve their outcome well;
 - remembering a previous achievement where they effectively accomplished an outcome and modelling their physiology, tonality and environment at that time;

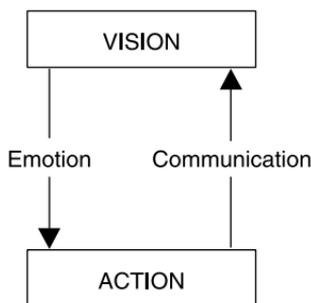


Figure 6 A TOTE

- creating a line on the floor with the future at one end, the present in the middle and the past at the other end; then using this as a spatial representation of time.
- 3 When you think the client has got the representation as compelling as they can, invite them to step into the representation and experience themselves succeeding in their outcome.
 - 4 When the client has spent some time doing this, invite them to compare the feelings they have at this time of the strategy to the feelings from step 1 when they experienced *knowing* they were very successful.
 - 5 If the feelings are the same, the strategy is complete. If the feelings are not the same, ask the client to verbalize what else it is they need in order to be successful in achieving their outcome. After doing this, go back to step 2 and repeat the process.

Pitfalls

- Working with perceptual positions (that is, seeing yourself from a fly on the wall perspective, or becoming fully you by *only* experiencing the world through your senses) and other NLP techniques like working with time lines and modelling, are strategies that take time to develop competence in. Do not be discouraged if using this strategy seems a bit weird at first for either you or your client. There are plenty of good resources on the world wide web to assist you to more fully understand these, and with time you will feel more comfortable with the strategies and the associated language.
- When doing step 1, make sure the client generates very specific locations in their body, and other specific aspects of feeling, and then test these by feeding these aspects back to them and noticing what effect this has on their physiology. This is important as later this state is used as a comparison.
- When comparing states of confidence at stage 4, the feelings may be textured differently. The importance of the comparison is to ensure the intensity and level of the new

confidence generated by what they see is the same as when they *know* they have been confident in the past.

Bibliography

Dilts, R. and Epstein, T. (1991) *Tools for Dreamers*, Capitola, CA: Meta Publications.