

Assignment

NLP MASTER PRACTITIONER

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1 Introduction

In this assignment, my first NLP Master Practitioner course, and how it relates to both my personal and work life, as well as my learning and self-development, will be reviewed. The focus will be on modeling. Modeling refers to how a successful performance is repeated by breaking the performance into chunks and creating a model from it (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000). Modeling and the reason why I chose it, and how it influenced my personal and professional lives will be explained, discussed and reflected using Kolb's reflective cycle through the modeling practice that I did during my NLP Master Practitioner studies.

2 Review of the NLP Master Practitioner course

I did my NLP Master Practitioner course in 2009. After the NLP Practitioner course, I was very excited about NLP, and I wanted to learn more. During the training my understanding and competence broadened and deepened, and I was able to learn new skills, such as modeling tacit knowledge. Attending the training made it possible to continue my NLP studies, which eventually led to a change of profession and starting my own business. The skill of modeling myself has been useful both in my personal and professional life and has enabled me to reflect on myself through modeling. Learning how to model was the impetus for me starting therapy years later, which has helped me learn to regulate my emotions and communicate constructively with the people around me. In my working life, the ability to model has functioned as an excellent tool for professional development and as a tool when coaching and training clients.

3 NLP Code of Ethics

The international NLP associations have created a code of ethics, which I abide by in my work as an NLP coach and trainer. NLP code of ethics are important in my work as a coach and trainer because they govern my conduct and act as a guide for how I behave in my professional and personal life. I feel it is important that my actions are ecological for my clients, people around me, my loved ones and myself. Being ecological means that I evaluate the impact of my own actions on other people and the entire system I belong to, with the goal of striving for harmony (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000, p. 343). The code of ethics has been created in order to offer a framework that encourages NLP professionals to act

with sincere honesty, fairness, respect, appreciation, and responsibility towards other people while reinforcing a positive perception of NLP (International Association for NLP, 2022). Ethical guidelines provide a framework for the quality of interactions and decision-making. I find it valuable to return to this list in my mind during difficult situations and to ask myself what the ethically correct way to act is.

4 Theory of modeling

4.1 Definitions of modeling and model

NLP originated from modeling when Bandler and Grinder were interested in how skilled therapists achieved excellent results (Bandler & Grinder, 1979). When modeling, they paid more attention to what a person does than what a person says they are doing (Bandler & Grinder, 1979, p. 7). Based on the models Bandler and Grinder learned, they developed a practical model of therapy and counselling (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000, p. 850). The modeling technique and the work they did was named Neuro-Linguistic Programming, and it refers to the relationships between the brain, language, and physiology (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000, p. 850).

The term “model” has a few definitions in the NLP encyclopaedia (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000). However, the one I have employed is from the Webster’s dictionary, cited by Dilts and DeLozier (2002, p. 790) “Model is a simplified description of a complex entity or process”.

Toivonen (2008) taught that a good model is usable, functional, simple, and repeatable. This means that everything unnecessary for the desired result is removed from the model. He explained also that modeling can be used when you want to bring to consciousness people’s tacit knowledge of how they are able to do something exceptionally well (Toivonen, NLP Master Practitioner course, 2008).

Dilts and DeLozier (2000 p. 790) defined modeling as follows; “Behaviour modelling involves observing and mapping. It is the process of taking a complex event or series of events and breaking it into small enough chunks so that it can be recapitulated in some way.”

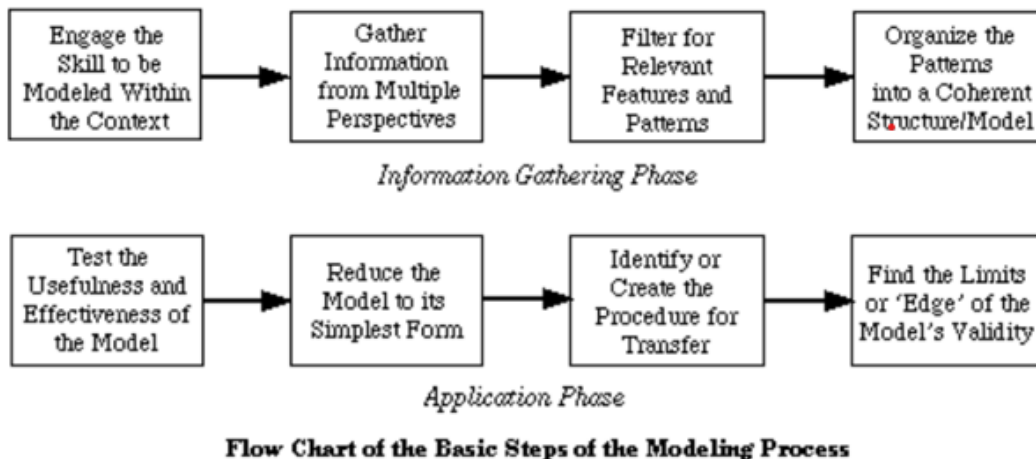
For me, modeling is a comforting perspective because many issues, such as how one thinks, acts, and reacts, can be thought of as skills instead of problems. In my experience, modeling is both a conscious and unconscious process, where a person becomes aware

of what is happening in them and what they are doing to create the skill to be modeled. I also believe that the modeler also learns unconsciously during the process.

The modeling process can be described as on the flow chart below (Dilts & Delozier, 2000, p. 800).

FIGURE 1 DIAGRAM OF MODELING 1

800Modeling

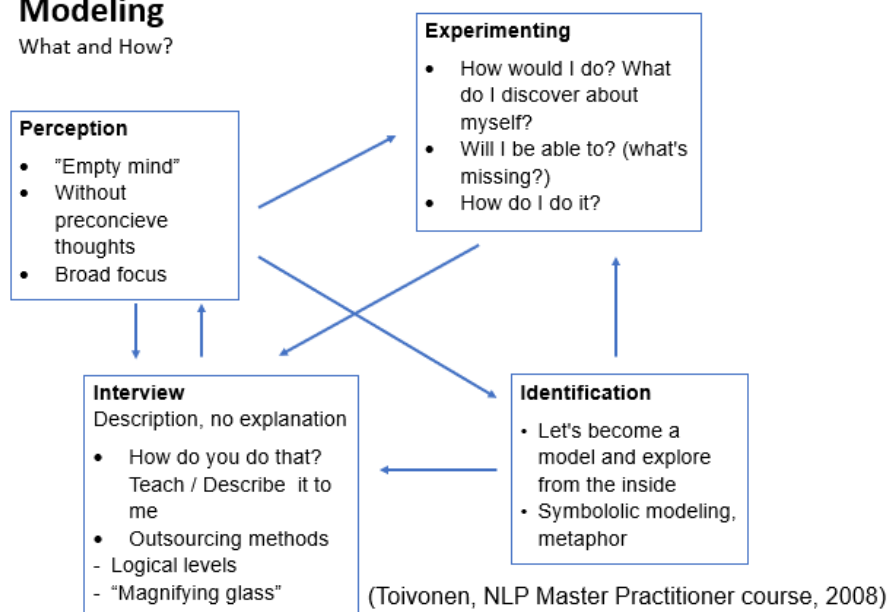


During my NLP Master practitioner training, I was taught that modeling is done by observing, identifying, experimenting, interviewing, and outsourcing, and they cannot completely be separated from each other during the process (Toivonen, 2008). The diagram can be seen below.

FIGURE 2 DIAGRAM OF MODELING 2

Modeling

What and How?

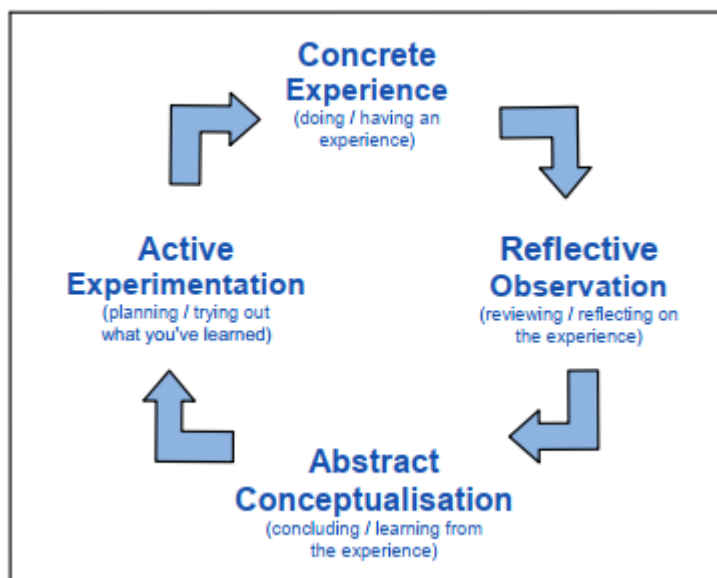


5 Reflective model

Kolb's reflective model (B, 2016) was chosen because it is simple and offers suitable perspectives for reflecting on my modeling experience during the NLP Master Practitioner course, the skills I learned in the training, and how the skills have been applied in practice.

There are four levels in Kolb's learning cycle, which are described by Zegwaard in his conference publication (2012) and can be seen on the diagram below. The cycle begins at the stage of concrete experience where the learner's experience of doing or having an experience is described. The next stage is reflective observing, where the learner reflects on their own experience from different perspectives. In following stage, which is abstract conceptualisation, the learner logically analyses the situation and the problems that may have arisen during it. In the last stage of active experimentation, the learner applies what they have learned in practice.

FIGURE 3 KOLB'S REFLECTIVE CYCLE



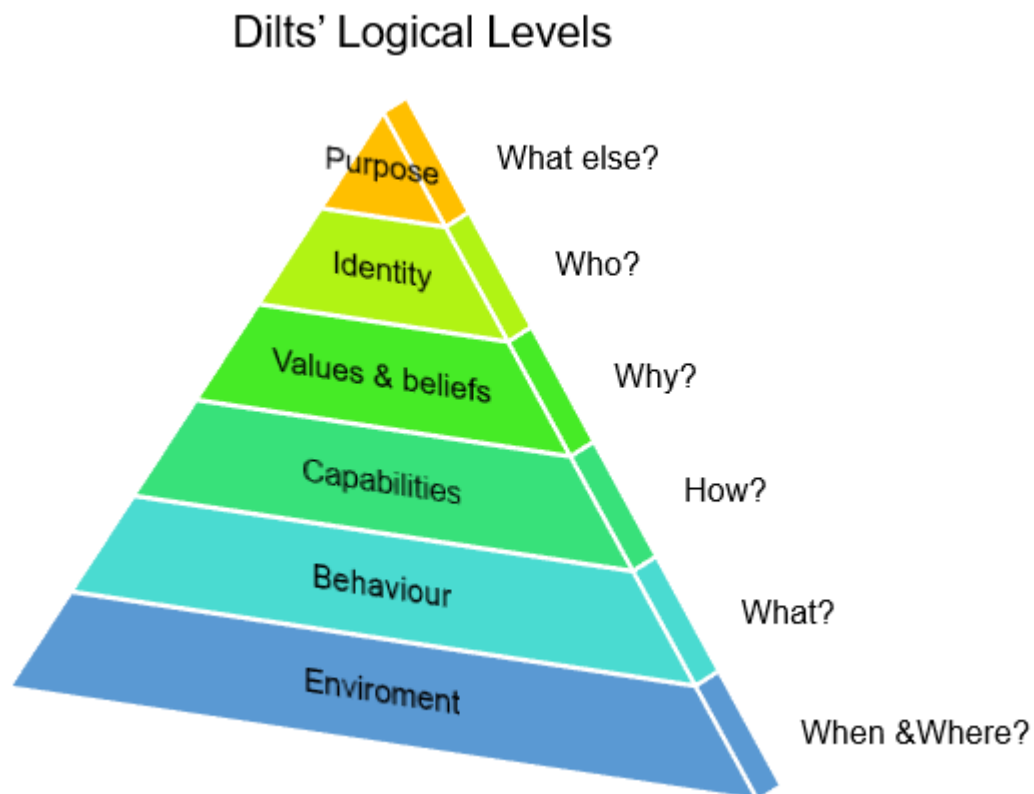
(Zegwaard, 2012)

6 Concrete Experience of modelling

I started the modeling by interviewing a friend of mine on logical levels. Based on the work of Gregory Bateson, Robert Dilts has presented the idea of logical levels of thought, action and change that can be identified in all living systems (Dilts & Delozier, 2000, p. 668).

Logical levels, Figure 4, are a systemic thinking concept where everything affects everything (Dilts & Delozier, 2000, p. 1373).

FIGURE 4 LOGICAL LEVELS



Examining my friend's ability to think about consequences revealed that my friend hardly ever got angry. This was already clear at the behaviour logical level, when the model showed how she knew how to think about long-term consequences in her working life, her finances, in relationships, and in regard to her, health and personal development. The few times that she got angry she did not express it with rage because she knew how to think about the consequences. I found this was even more amazing than her ability to think about the consequences of her choices, so focus of the modelling switched to the skill of staying calm and not to getting angry and showing reactive behaviour.

After the logical levels, we explored the skill with the “magnifying glass” method. In practice, fast processes are slowed down so that it is possible to observe more and more precisely what the model does internally and externally (Toivonen, 2008). This exercise is well suited for exploring a skill that has already become automated into a quick event and even self-evident (Toivonen, NLP Master Practitioner course, 2008).

Lastly, I gathered information by using mirror neuron modeling and by experiencing certain situations using my friend's body posture and her thinking skills. Rizzolatti and Craighero

(2004) have found in their study that the ability of people to learn from each other by imitating and repeating what they observe is based on the mirror neuron system.

What I found was that my friend saw the consequences in her mind and, had certain keywords in mind related to her beliefs. She also had time to make a choice in how to react and she chose to act according to her values. Her body language was that she was metaphorically "floating in the water", a small smile on her lips. Her posture was straight and leaning backward a little bit, her shoulders and the rest of her body were relaxed, and she was breathing calmly from the diaphragm.

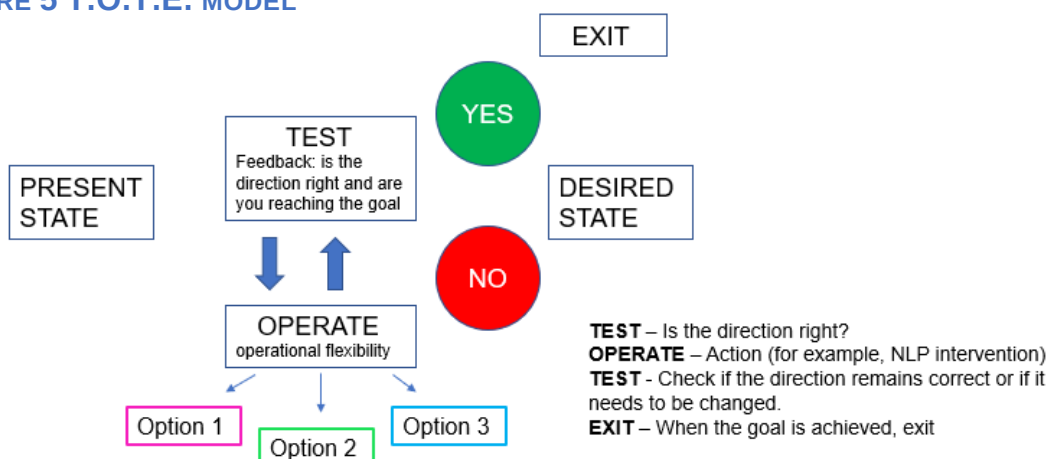
I had not taught or tested the model with anybody else, but I noticed that by the day of the modeling I had gone 11 days without getting angry, even though I had felt irritated. This lack of anger continued for another week. Unfortunately, after that, I automatically reverted to my previous tense body posture and automated thought patterns. I continued to rage at home and sometimes at work too.

I followed how the modeling progressed using the T.O.T.E. model (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000, p. 1434).

6.1 T.O.T.E. Model

The T.O.T.E -model comes from the words test-operate-test-exit and it is a feedback loop of all mental processes and behaviour (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000, p. 1434). Dilts and DeLozier (2000, p. 1434) wrote that the human mind is oriented towards achieving goals, either consciously or unconsciously. In the mind, a person should check whether the action or activity in question takes them in the direction of the goal. A person tests in their mind, often unconsciously, whether their direction is right. The test-operate-test cycle continues until the person reaches their goal and ends the feedback cycle related to this goal (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000, p. 1434). The process can be seen on the Figure 5 (Savimäki, 2012).

FIGURE 5 T.O.T.E. MODEL



7 Reflective observations of modeling

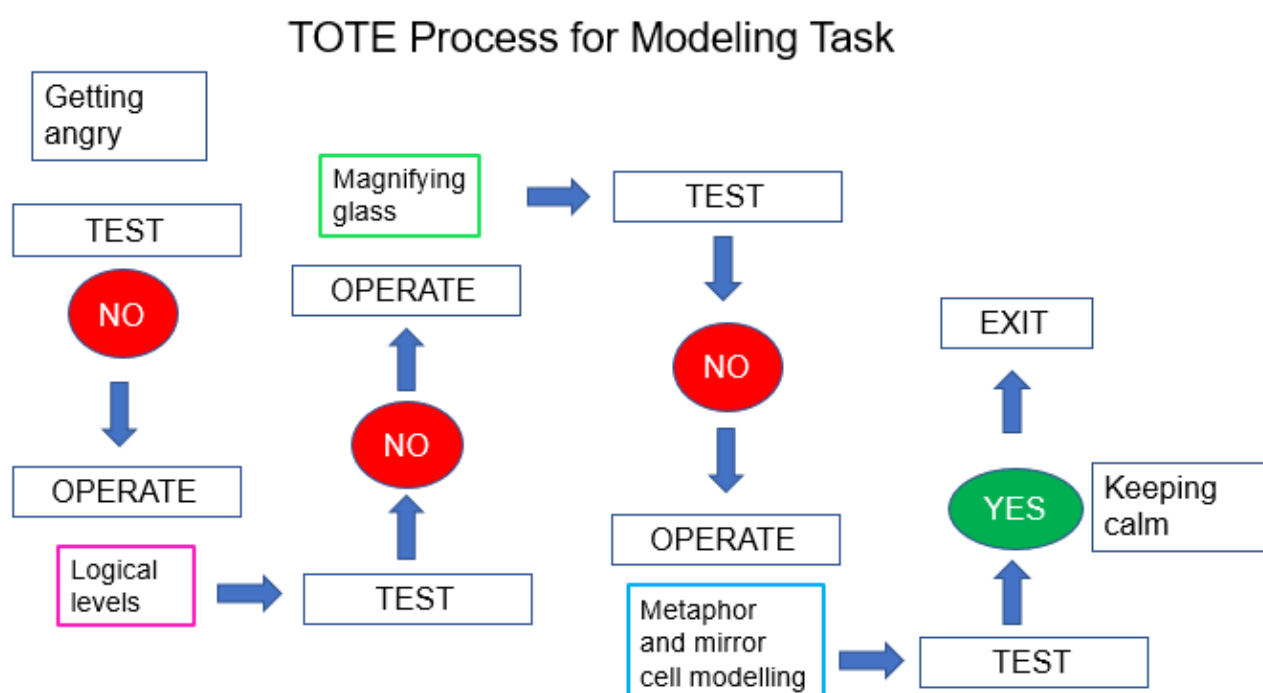
My modeling process, as it is demonstrated in Figure 6, took three main steps before I found the model which worked for me. I tested the information I gathered on the logical levels and found that the model was not yet working for me. The findings were not enough for me to have been able to think about the consequences and stay calm. When I tested my friend's values, her calm identity, and her way of being and acting, I felt an internal pressure to express my rage.

Next, I operated by using the magnifying glass method. I found that my friend experienced that she had time to make a choice to get angry or stay calm and she chose to stay calm because it saved energy. I tested this and noticed that I personally felt that I got energy from anger and the lack of reaction felt paralyzing.

I operated again and found that what worked for me was when my friend described her being by using a metaphor and I tested it. Tuning into her body language and letting my body relax also calmed my mind. With a calm mind, it was easier for me to make a choice not to get angry. I felt I had an opportunity to choose how to react and I felt strong when I could choose not to get angry. The model that I found lasted for 11 days before I gave my presentation, so I believed I had reached my desired outcome and exited the process.

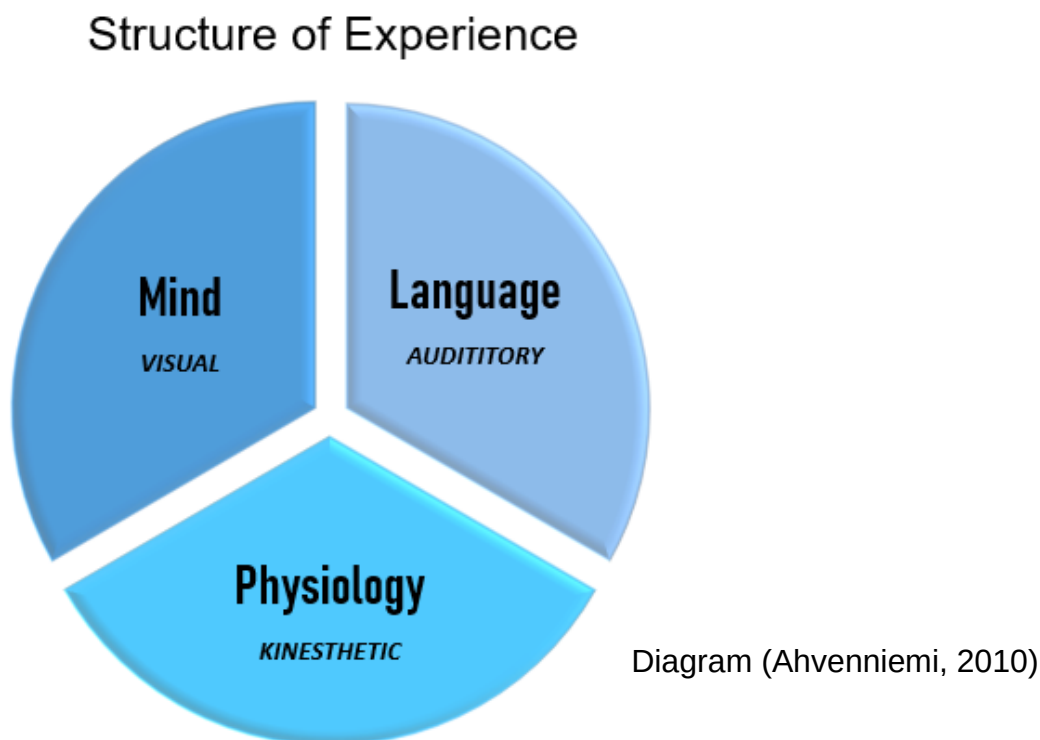
The modeling process is described using the T.O.T.E. model in Figure 6.

FIGURE 6 T.O.T.E. MODEL PROCESS IN MODELING



The model I had found involved changing the posture of the body, breathing, and relaxation which affected my ability to see what would happen next and to calm myself down by talking to myself in my mind. I believed the model should have been sufficient because, as shown in the diagram below (Ahvenniemi, 2010), there was an interplay between mind, language, and body. Experience includes visual, auditory, and kinesthetic representations (Dilts & Delozier, 2000, p. 379)

FIGURE 7 STRUCTURE OF EXPERIENCE



However, I now know that my limiting beliefs were unconsciously affecting my body and leaving me in a constant state of tension. Moreover, they also directed my attention to things that I had interpreted as making me angry. The model I found was not specific enough. I believe that was the beginning of me starting to investigate the feelings and behaviour I had experienced, and this led to a longer process of self-reflection. The biggest factor, however, was that I had not modeled the skill of regulating emotions but focused on a single issue.

During the modeling task, I felt anxiety about whether my modeling would come to anything, whether I would succeed in doing it and finally structuring what I had picked up. I was in the second phase of the learning cycle (Dilts & Delozier, 2000, p. 624) where I was conscious about my incompetence. This stage has always been difficult for me, and it

would have been relief to give up. At that time, I did not realize that I had learned a fixed mindset instead of a growth mindset (Haimovitz & Dweck, 2016) when it comes to learning. Briefly, a fixed mindset means that a person believes they have a certain amount of intelligence that they cannot change. On the other hand, a growth mindset means that the person believes that their intelligence is malleable, and it can be developed in different ways (Haimovitz & Dweck, 2016, p. 859). It would have helped me if I had been taught about those two different mindsets.

Haimovitz and Dweck (2016 p. 859) investigated how parents' attitude about failure influenced their children's beliefs about whether intelligence is permanent or developmental. The perception of one's own intelligence affects motivation, learning and achievements. Children who had modeled an attitude that failure is a debilitating factor in learning from their parents, had a fixed mindset, and they felt that intelligence is permanent. It has been observed that people who think in this way feel unable to influence their intelligence and when faced with difficulties they question their own abilities and give up more easily. Children with a growth mindset instead believed that intelligence is developmental. When faced with difficult tasks, they were willing to put in more effort, thus learning more and achieving better results (Haimovitz & Dweck, 2016, p. 860).

I believe that the pattern I had learned also influenced my belief that the way I reacted was permanent and something that was part of who I was. Over the years, I have personally experienced that in the same way that my intelligence has developed, my identity, behaviour and learning have also developed.

Even though I had learned a fixed mindset and wanted to give up entirely, I could not do that because I wanted to be able to continue my NLP studies with the NLP Trainer course. A meta program that affects a person's actions in a particular direction, either towards or away (Charvet, 2019, p. 68) was relevant in my situation. Meta programs refer to the programs that guide our thinking (Dilts & Delozier, 2000, p. 756). Charvet (2019) describes them as filters for what we perceive from the outside world, how we focus, and they affect how we communicate and behave in interactions with others. I wanted to get away from anxiety and shame, but at the same time the motivation to continue was stronger because I wanted to be able to continue my NLP studies. For that reason, I did not give up and continued to do the modeling task.

In learning more about NLP and modeling over the years, I have realized that when I modeled my friend, I had not been paying attention to the higher logical levels, such as

identity and mission. Logical levels are also considered hierarchical; a lower-level change will not help if a problem or the need for change is at a higher level (Dilts & Delozier, 2000, p. 668). My core belief was that I am not important, and I am insignificant. Many things in my life triggered those beliefs on the identity level and therefore made me angry.

Previously, me and the people around me had acknowledged my fierce temperament, which I understood to be an innate quality and difficult to change (Keltikangas-Järvinen, 2022). In 2013, I realized that my anger was not due to temperament but to having a lot of limiting beliefs. Over the years, as I have worked on myself and my beliefs have changed, I have not gotten angry as often. Nowadays, I might get angry a few times a year, which is a considerable improvement from when I used to get angry a few times a day.

Overall, the skill I modeled was just one part of what I needed to learn. I think I succeeded in gathering some relevant information from my friend because I was able to not get angry and react in the old way for almost three weeks. I believe that the things I realized while learning how to model, as well as the modeling task I did, were an important part of my learning process. This has ultimately resulted in me hardly ever getting angry these days. For me, it is not about making a choice, but rather that I have learned to regulate and articulate my emotions. I have also worked on my beliefs, through which I have interpreted various interactions.

8 Abstract conceptualisation of modeling

Although I understood how much the body affects my being and emotions and was excited about by my realization, it was not enough. I experienced for myself that my model worked when I used it consciously for almost 3 weeks, but I was unable to maintain the learned skill in everyday life because it required conscious effort.

Kahneman (2012) explained mental activity and thinking by talking about system 1 and system 2. System 1 works automatically, quickly, effortlessly, and unconsciously. System 2 processing, on the other hand, is voluntary, slow, laborious, and conscious. System 2 is related to free will, making choices and concentration. This explains why when everyday life continued, I returned to the old, automatic thinking, being, and reacting, unable to pay attention to my body posture.

At the time, I did not yet understand that it was not only about the ability to not get angry, but the ability to regulate one's emotions. Emotional regulation is described by Lorraine OB Madden and Rebecca Reynolds (2021) in the same way as researchers Fresco, Mennin,

Heimberg and Ritter to whom they refer. The authors describe emotional regulation as how a person recognizes their own emotions and understands them. It is also essential to experience how emotions can be influenced, controlled, experienced, and expressed. When we lose control of our emotions, it is called dysregulation. When this happens, a person is usually unable to understand, influence and control their emotions. Regulation of emotions is therefore not only about recognizing emotions, but it also involves the ability to understand them and thereby control them (Madden & Reynolds, 2021, p. 2). However, when a person learns to understand and recognize their thoughts and feelings, as well as their possible triggers, they can begin the process of self-regulation. This means the ability to regulate one's emotions and one's own reactions (Madden & Reynolds, 2021, p. 2).

Gorrigan, Fisher and Nutt (2011) described that the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems of those suffering from trauma-related disorders are in an overstimulated state, making it difficult to regulate emotions. People suffering from trauma-related disorders are prone to sudden fluctuations in their states of alertness. Their tolerance window, Figure 8, is often very narrow, and their stimulus threshold is low. Researchers describe how traumatic childhood experiences often lead to feelings of fear, shame, and rage, numbing of bodily sensations and emotions, and harmful beliefs about oneself.

FIGURE 8 WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

Sympathetic-dominant Hyperarousal: Emotionally flooded, reactive, impulsive, hypervigilant, fearful, angry. Intrusive imagery and affects, racing thoughts Flashbacks, nightmares, high-risk behaviour Efforts to reduce this state may include suicide planning, self harm, compulsive cleaning, abuse of alcohol or opiates	Freeze Mute, terrified, frozen defence responses. High arousal coupled with physical immobility*
Window of Tolerance Optimal arousal zone, encompassing both intense emotion and states of calm or relaxation, in which emotions can be tolerated and information integrated	
Parasympathetic-dominant Hypoarousal: Flat affect, numb, "empty" or "dead" Cognitively dissociated, inability to think Collapsed, disabled defensive responses Helpless and hopeless Efforts to reduce may include suicide planning, self-harm, compulsive	

Figure 1. Autonomic arousal in the wake of trauma: sympathetic hyperarousal and parasympathetic hypoarousal states drive emotional and autonomic dysregulation. Also shown is the frozen fear state in which both extremes may be present. States of optimal arousal and emotional regulation are relatively rare or difficult to maintain. Some examples are included of how dysfunctional behaviours can be utilised in the service of emotional regulation: both to reduce the intensity of the high arousal states and the depth of the low arousal states. Adapted from Ogden et al (2006) and Siegel (1999).

9 Active experimentation

The modeling task and learning to model were meaningful to me because since then modeling has been very useful for self-reflection and in my profession as a coach and trainer. Although the skill I modeled did not come into use immediately and it was not until 10 years later that I was able to use the skills I modeled, the modeling task still had a profound effect on me. I learned that I could observe what was happening inside me. For example, I used the skill when I was modeling the experiences of tension and depression, which I wrote about in the previous assignment.

I have applied modeling in my personal and professional life to increase my own self-awareness and to strengthen my emotional regulation skills. Using modeling with my clients has also enabled them to realize what is happening in themselves. Modelling allows them to understand that in certain situations changes as simple as altering their body posture can affect them.

For example, athletes can experience a wide range of emotions related to sport performance. In their article, Tamminen and Dunn (2022) described different emotions and their impact on athletes' thoughts, behaviour, and sports performance as can be seen in the Table 1. They reviewed coping strategies that athletes use to manage stress in sports as well as explored ways athletes can develop skills to better cope with sport performance (Tamminen & Dunn, 2022, p. 4). They also provided information that emotion regulation would help them to perform better, and they defined emotion regulation in the following way: "Emotion regulation refers to how people try to influence which emotions they feel, when they feel them, and how they show these emotions to others". (Tamminen & Dunn, 2022, p. 4)

Tamminen and Dunn (2022, p. 4) also found that emotions affect the body, and athletes can influence their own feelings by noticing and naming their emotions. After this, they recommend to breathing deeply and possibly even imagine breathing into the part of the body where the sensations are.

TABLE 1 THE EFFECTS OF EMOTIONS IN SPORT

Tamminen and Dunn

Emotions in Sport

Table 1

The effects of emotions on the body and mind, and common responses to emotions.

Emotion	Effects on our bodies	Effects on our minds	Common actions and responses
Anxious	• Butterflies in the stomach • Feeling nauseous • Tingling sensations • Struggling to sit still or relax	• Racing thoughts • Trouble focusing on one thing • Negative thoughts	• Poor sport performance • Poor timing of sports skills
Sad	• Slumping shoulders • Moving slowly • Feeling fatigued or a loss of energy	• Negative thoughts: thinking that you are bad at something • Lack of confidence • Easily irritated or angry at people	• Trouble sleeping • Crying • Changes in appetite • Lack of motivation
Happy	• Moving with lots of energy • Smiling and laughing	• Confident thoughts • Thinking things will work out well • Able to focus more easily	• Good sport performance • Talkative
Fearful	• Feeling nauseous • Feeling too hot or too cold • Sweating	• Thinking one might be in danger • Racing thoughts • Struggling to focus	• Crying • Attempting to make the body small or trying to hide • Short, shallow breathing

Table 1 (Tamminen & Dunn, 2022, p. 3)

There is supporting data offered by Jazaieri, Urry and Gross as their model of emotion regulation describes 5 factors that affect emotion regulation, as can be seen in Figure 9 (Jazaieri, Urry, & Gross, 2013).

FIGURE 9 PROCESS MODEL OF EMOTION REGULATION

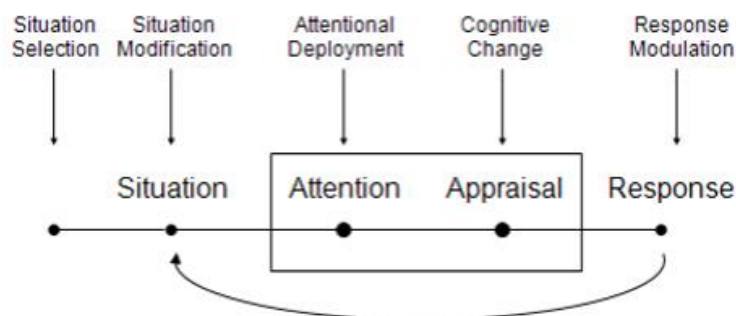


Figure 1: Process model of emotion regulation that highlights five families of emotion regulation strategies (Gross & Thompson, 2007; re-printed with permission by Guilford Press).

What I agree with and what I have experienced in my work is that when a person becomes aware of what they are experiencing and naming it, this already makes a difference. Very often, when I have asked my clients what the first thing, they would do to feel better is, they almost always say breathing.

I have used modeling the most with clients, who were athletes, when exploring experiences such as stress about a sports competition. For example, when modeling stress with clients I have asked them to tell me on a scale of 1-10, where they feel the tension. After that, I have guided the client to walk on the floor, or a hypothetical path in their minds, towards greater stress and to observe and tell me what is happening in them. After this, I have asked the client to move from the initial situation towards a milder state of stress and in the same way to tell me about his or her observations. What I have often noticed is that when they are moving toward the milder stress, they automatically change their body posture and start breathing more deeply. This already has a great effect on relieving stress. Also interesting is the individuality of athletes when it comes to what is the right amount of stress for them to achieve the best performance. For instance, on a scale of 1-10, 2 might be a good amount of stress for one but another might need a stress level of 6.

Now, when I think back to that first modeling process, it was a positive experience where I certainly succeeded in picking up some important elements on how to stay calm and think about consequences. The information I gleaned from modeling was not enough at the time to keep me emotionally stable, but years later it served a purpose. Over the years, as I learned to regulate my emotions, I found myself using the skills I modeled from my friend. When I noticed in a relationship that the way I expressed my feelings did not lead to the results I wanted, I learned to act differently. I knew how to think about the consequences of my behaviour and choose a way of expressing my feelings and needs that better serves myself and our relationship.

When telling stories about my own experiences, for example, when I have organized NLP introductory evenings, I have wanted people to know that emotion regulation skills can be learned and beliefs can be changed. This has contributed to people sometimes wanting to come to me for coaching because they have had similar experiences to mine, and they feel that I can understand and support them in their process.

10 Conclusion

In summary, in order to be able to model, one has to understand a lot of things from NLP, which I did not even think about when I was modeling. Learning to model has led to a deeper understanding of myself and enabled me to notice my own models and be able to change them. While writing the assignment, I remembered things from years ago and the most significant realization was that I have learned to regulate my emotions. I only became aware of this during the writing process. Learning to model in the NLP Master Practitioner training course has been one of the most valuable things I have learned in my life. It will allow me to model working models of myself and other people in the future. It will also continue to provide an effective tool for working with clients. One of the most important things is that I can use modeling as a tool for introspection in both personal and professional development.

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