

Exercise Exchange

"I TRUST MYSELF"

Tarn Taran Singh
and

Pascal J. Gambardella

"What's possible in the world is possible for you" is often heard in NLP courses, followed by the claim that NLP makes the transfer of skills between people much easier. One skill we have observed to be very difficult to transfer is the creative use of NLP. We often meet people with extensive NLP training who say: "I rarely use NLP beyond matching body postures," or "I can never remember step five in the six-step reframing technique." Our work focuses on modeling the differences between those who learn to use NLP creatively and those who do not.

"Everyone has his own map of reality" implies that every individual presents the programmer with a new unknown to decipher. What are the qualities of those who explore the unknown and those who do not? Among the nonexplorers, some are afraid to fail, while others are reluctant to enter someone else's reality, or feel they don't have the necessary skills. We believe these nonexplorers indicate a lack of trust in self and in the world, while those who are creative and flexible in their use of NLP eagerly explore the unknown and have a high degree of self-trust. The following exercise, the first step in a strategy that helps people develop self-trust, was designed to help people *experience* separating self from behavior. We discovered it did much more.

THE EXERCISE:

Programmer and Subject

Programmer: has the Subject think of a recent experience in which she can say "I trusted myself." In making this statement the Subject speaks of two entities: the "I" and the "Myself," and their relationship, one of trusting. Have the Subject answer the questions below. (Note: The questions are a suggested list; tailor the questions to the individual and context. Other entities may appear while the Subject answers the

questions for the "I" and the "Myself." If so, use these questions to discover the qualities of those entities as well.

- (A) Describe the "I". Where is the "I" located?

What are its visual (V), auditory (A), or kinesthetic (K) qualities? Is it primarily V, or A, or K, or a combination? Is it primarily oriented toward the past, present or future? What is the "I"'s responsibility toward the "Myself"? How is it responsible for 1) how you perceive yourself, 2) how you perceive others perceive you, 3) how you make decisions? Is the "I" trustworthy? What makes it so?

- (B) Repeat (A) for the entity called "Myself."

- (C) After completing (A) and (B), ask the following:

Which (the "I" or the "Myself") is primarily responsible for whether you fail or accept feedback? What is their relationship in each case?

Which one generates choices for your behavior in the present? In the future?

Which one generates and maintains the concept of who you would like to be?

Which one decides that you have made a change? Which one can change more easily?

Which one is more trustworthy? Why?

If you could have only one part which would it be?

Is there anything that either part would like to say now to the other?

We discovered that the "I" and the "Myself" often merge in states of excellence; and we use guided imagery to assist in initiating this merging.

Barbara Greig in her trainings, has the "I" and the "Myself" each say what they need and want from the other. She then has each commit to the other to give it what it wants, anchors this integrated state, and then transfers the anchor to the Subject. That anchor becomes an anchor for high performance.

EXAMPLES OF THE "I/MYSELF"

Ron first did the exercise over a year ago. He experienced separating self from behavior, which initiated significant changes in his life.

For Ron, the "I" is his "observer." It is outside his body, above and to the left of his head about the size of a basketball. The "Myself," located in his solar plexus, is soft, mushy. The "I" generates future possibilities, while the "Myself" generates present feelings. There is also an "Other."

One year ago the "Other" was a full suit of scarlet red armor around his body. The chest plate of this armor was strong metal. Any strong feelings, including excitement, that the "Myself" would generate would be interpreted by the "I" as either anxiety or hunger. Ron could not enjoy himself. For example, at a party the "I", as a disassociated observer, would say to the "Myself," "If you speak to her, she will probably laugh at you" or "That was a dumb thing to say." The "Myself" would become more and more anxious, and the "I", who was in control, would have the "Other" put its armor up so that the "Myself" would not feel overwhelmed. After a while, Ron would be bored.

Ron's "I" wanted to lose weight, but couldn't. It depended on the "Myself" to lose weight. However, the "Myself" wanted the immediate gratification of eating. The "I" set rules for losing weight, including periods to fast. The "Myself" fasted, then ate like crazy when the fasts were over.

Until the "I/Myself" exercise, Ron never thought of himself as separate entities. He thought he acted as a unit; at a party he thought all of him was bored. He began to change when he asked the "I": "What is your benefit to me?" The "I" said that it was there to protect him and to learn. The "I" began to generate positive as well as negative possibilities.

Today, the "I" is still in control, but it no longer believes that the "Myself" just feels anxious or hungry. When the "Myself" has intense feelings, the "I" now says "If you channel it you can use it." Now, as in a game of tennis, they are both on the same side of the net and the "Myself" can now serve the ball. The "I" now has a more pronounced visual sense. It can look through its own eyes, and can also look through the eyes of the "Myself" with a periscope, while letting the "Myself" do its own thing. Finally, the "Other"'s armor is a lighter color of red, and just a breast plate.

Someone asked the "I" what would it take to maintain a weight loss. The "I", instead of going inside and asking the "Myself," set external criteria for losing weight. It established weight loss based on the "doctor's scale" as opposed to asking the "Myself" whether it was hungry or not. The "I" also wrote out all food input and calories. Ron went from 243 to 178 pounds in one year.

Discussion

We recognize the similarity the "I/Myself" exercise has to the reframing and parts party processes. However, we have found that our exercise is a more powerful and useful tool in having people experience separating self from behavior.

For the programmer, the "I" and the "Myself" are easy to elicit and highlight meta-programming distinctions in a clearway. For the subject, the "I/Myself" is self-anchoring and self-maintaining through its use in language. It is ecological. It forces the subject to have a meta-perspective, an awareness of the patterns involved in her experience.

Unlike Transactional Analysis where the parent, child, and adult have static roles, the "I" and the "Myself" (and "Others") can have any roles, which can change when there is a significant change in the person. Finally, the "I/Myself" is integrated in states of excellence.

What are your observations? What makes it possible for the "I" and the

"Myself" to merge? Is it trust or expediency? Is it a situation where they have no choice but to act? We invite you to try the "I/Myself" exercise and report what you find. Write to Gambardella/Singh, 505 Lanark Way, Silver Spring, Maryland 20901.

(Note: We would like to thank Dennis Hupp and Barbara Greig for their help in designing the "I/Myself" exercise.)