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Frames, Reframing and Fractionation

Frame

A "frame" in communication refers to the perspective, attitude, or understanding that a person brings to a particular situation or conversation. It can shape how a person perceives information and influences their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

In NLP and other related fields, the concept of framing is used to understand how our mental frames shape our experiences and the way we communicate. It's important to recognize that each person has their own unique frame, and that these frames can shape our perceptions and interpretations of events and information.

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For example, two people might attend the same event but have completely different frames for what they experienced. One person might have a positive frame, and view the event as enjoyable and successful, while another person might have a negative frame, and view the same event as boring or disappointing.

In communication, it's important to be aware of our own frames, as well as the frames of the people we are communicating with. By understanding and managing our frames, we can communicate more effectively, build rapport and understanding, and influence others in a positive way.

Reframing

Reframing is a technique used in therapy and coaching to help individuals shift their perspective on a situation or problem. It involves reinterpreting or rephrasing information in a way that changes an individual's understanding of a situation and can lead to new insights and more effective ways of coping.

> "reframing" functions through changing the way you perceive an event and so changing the meaning. When the meaning changes, responses and behaviors will also change. Reframing with language allows you to see the world in a different way and this changes the meaning. Reframing is the basis of jokes, myths, legends, fairy tales and most creative ways of thinking. *(O'Connor, Joseph, 2001)*

There are examples in children's literature; for example, the fictional Pollyanna would play The Glad Game whenever she felt down about life, to remind herself of the things that she could do, and not

worry about the things she couldn't. Alice Mills also says that this occurs in Hans Christian Andersen's story where, to the surprise of the ugly duckling, the beautiful creatures welcome and accept him; gazing at his reflection, he sees that he too is a swan.[2]

There are four types of reframes:

- **Consequential Reframe**: A Consequential Reframe focuses on the consequences of a situation, behavior, or belief, rather than the situation itself. It helps individuals understand how their actions or beliefs impact their life and can help them see a situation in a new light.

- **Content Reframe**: A Content Reframe focuses on changing the content of a situation, behavior, or belief. It involves replacing negative or limiting beliefs with positive or empowering ones.

- **Motivational Reframe**: A Motivational Reframe focuses on an individual's motivations and goals. It helps individuals understand why they behave a certain way and can help them see their behavior in a new light.

- **Contextual Reframe**: A Contextual Reframe focuses on the context or circumstances surrounding a situation, behavior, or belief. It helps individuals understand the larger picture and can help them see their situation in a new light.

Reframing is common to a number of therapies and is not as sometime claimed original to NLP. Understanding the different types of reframes and when to use them can help individuals and therapists more effectively utilize reframing as a tool for growth and change.

Fractionation

Fractionation is a technique used in hypnosis to help individuals enter and maintain a state. It involves alternating between different inductions, hypnotic states and frames. Here are a few examples of how fractionation might be used in hypnosis:

Induction: A therapist might use fractionation as part of the induction process to help a client enter a hypnotic state. For example, they might first have the client relax their body by tensing and then releasing each muscle group, and then have them focus on their breathing, counting backwards from 10 to 1. This back-and-forth between relaxation and focus helps the client to sink deeper into a hypnotic state.

Deepening the trance: During the session, the hypnotist might continue to use fractionation to deepen the client's trance. For example, they might alternately give suggestions for relaxation and then for focus and concentration.

Reinforcing the trance: At the end of the session, the hypnotist might use fractionation to reinforce the hypnotic state and help the client maintain the trance after they leave the session. For example, they might have the client count backwards from 10 to 1, alternating between focusing on their breathing and relaxing their body.

Fractionation by alternating the frame of a message can be a powerful tool for changework and is used in various forms of communication, including political campaigns, advertising, and in therapy conversations. Famous and well documented (see Recursive Frame Analysis) speeches using fractionation with alternating frames are Martin Luther Kings "I have a dream" and Steve Jobs iPhone launch presentation:

Fractionation is a useful technique in hypnosis and changework that can help individuals enter and maintain a different and hypnotic states. By alternating between different inductions, frames, or suggestibility-enhancing techniques, the therapist can deepen the trance and make it more lasting. This can lead to more effective and long-lasting results for the client.

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[1] Wellcome Collection gallery (2018-04-01) CC-BY-4.0Wikipedia

[2] Methods of neuro-linguistic programming (Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License 3.0;)Wikipedia

1. ˆ O'Connor, Joseph, 2001. *NLP: A Practical Guide to Achieving the Results You Want: Workbook..* Harper Collins, ISBN 9781590035184.