

Book Review - Words That Change Minds: Mastering the Language of Influence (second edition)

By Judith E. Pearson, Ph.D.

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Despite thousands of books and seminars on the subject, communication continues to be a problem at work, at home, and in the world at large. Why? Because each person has a unique way of processing information. **Words That Change Minds** provides a solution to communication difficulties because it helps readers identify individual differences in information processing. This book will teach you ways to customize your language for each person you meet. It is the definitive reference on metaprograms, destined to be a classic in NLP literature.

Most NLP practitioners know about metaprograms; personal traits that give us markers for verbally establishing rapport, for pacing another's map of the world, and for influencing, persuading, motivating, and inspiring others. If you are a novice with metaprograms, Charvet's book is a good place to start your tutelage. She takes NLP into the mainstream of the workplace, by presenting her material with such a clarity that even those unfamiliar with NLP can become adept at using metaprograms.

Background

Words That Change Minds is the product of Charvet's work in applying the Language and Behaviour (LAB) Profile in organizational consulting and in supervising two masters' theses on the LAB Profile. Rodger Bailey developed the LAB Profile in the early 1980s as a result of his NLP training. The profile is a tool for eliciting metaprograms: the filters with which we create our models of the world. The metaprogram concept, itself, is one of Leslie Cameron Bandler's major contributions to NLP. She identified 60 metaprograms that describe the ways individuals interact with the world. Metaprograms are the perceptual patterns with which we delete, distort, sort, and generalize information.

The LAB Profile identifies 14 predominant metaprograms, divided into two types: Motivation Traits and Working Traits. Examples of Motivation Traits are:

Motivation Direction - Toward or Away: A "toward" person is motivated toward benefits and rewards. An "away" person is motivated to avoid problems.

Motivation Source - Internal or External: An "internal" relies mainly on feedback from within self. An "external" relies mainly on feedback from others.

Motivation Reason - Options or Procedures: An "options" person is motivated by options and possibilities. A "procedures" person is motivated by having specific rules and procedures to follow.

Motivation Decision Factors - Sameness or Difference: A “sameness” person wants things to stay the same. A “difference” person thrives on change and variety.

Motivation Level - Proactive or Reactive: A “proactive” likes to initiate action. A “reactive” likes to first wait, consider, evaluate, and understand.

Examples of Working Traits are:

Scope - Specific or General: A “specific” person mainly focuses on details. A “general” person mainly grasps the big picture, and may ignore details.

Style - Independent or Proximity or Cooperative: An “independent” person likes to work alone. A “proximity” person likes to work around others, but prefers to maintain a unique role in relationship to others (i.e., supervisor or teacher). A “cooperative” likes to work with others as a member of a team.

Metaprograms edit and shape what information we allow to come in; and, in turn, generate our communication and behavioural strategies. The LAB Profile is unlike any other psychometric tool because it describes, not stable personality traits, but, rather, how we tend to interact with various environmental demands and contexts. This book can teach you to understand, predict, and influence behaviour by using LAB Profile skills to identify you own and others’ metaprograms, and structure your conversation to synchronize your message with another’s model of the world. The larger purpose is to help you become a communicator *par excellence*.

Content

Words That Change Minds presents six chapters on Motivation Traits and eight chapters on Working Traits. Each chapter covers:

How to conversationally elicit trait patterns and deduce them from responses to questions (in terms of both content and language patterns).

Distributions of traits patterns in the general population. Motivation Source, for example, is 40% Internal, 40% External, and 20% Internal and External. The percentages are based on Bailey’s research.

The advantages of each pattern for particular contexts. A person with External Motivation Source, for example, is well-suited to following instructions, because he or she will tend to evaluate his or her own performance based on another’s (the instructor’s) criteria. A person with Internal Motivation Source will tend to judge his or her own performance by internal standards, and conclude that mistakes are the result of poor instruction rather than the result of improperly following the instructions.

A discussion of how patterns lend themselves to particular occupations. Sales and Customer Service jobs lend themselves to people with and External

Motivation Source, who are more likely to evaluate their performance on the basis of customer feedback and satisfaction.

Tips on how to manage and supervise employees with each pattern.

How metaprograms show up within specific contexts, such as sales, marketing, training, counseling, and team building.

Language patterns for influencing various the types within each trait. To motivate Internals, tell them they can decide for themselves. To motivate Externals, tell them about the recognition they will receive from others.

The final chapters show readers how to pull the various metaprogram patterns together and apply them synergistically in a variety of contexts, such as hiring, education, political campaigns, career counseling, and negotiating. In negotiating, for instance, your recognition of metaprograms will give you insights in understanding the needs and communication styles of all parties. Your knowledge of metaprograms can guide you in presenting your proposals in ways that will facilitate acceptance by others. If you are negotiating with a “Procedures” person, for example, be prepared to spell out and follow procedures to the letter. Don’t discuss options with a “Procedures” person.

The Author

Shelle Rose Charvet is a globe-trotting keynote speaker, business consultant, trainer, and columnist. She is an internationally recognized communication expert and a Certified NLP Trainer. She holds an honours degree in Social Science from the University of Ottawa and has worked in a variety of business, governmental, and intergovernmental organizations, unions, and not-for-profit agencies.

Shelle lived in France in the 1980’s and worked around Europe as a communications trainer. She currently lives in Canada and maintains a practice on both sides of the Atlantic and will soon be doing business in Hong Kong and Singapore.

She is director of Success Strategies, a business consultancy dedicated to assisting organizations and people to define outcomes and achieve results they want. Success Strategies is a consortium of consultants and trainers providing a range of technological and human models for diagnosing business issues and implementing change. The group builds its expertise around corporate culture change methods, management skills and team building, sales and customer service training, communication skills training, and training the trainer.

Shelle is best known for her masterful training programs using Accelerated Learning techniques. When I interviewed her via e-mail she told me she is bilingual in English and French, can get out of jail in Spanish, and can eat and drink in the present tense in German. Her book has been sold around the world and is currently being

translated into German and French.

Style

Charvet's writing style is light, brisk, and entertaining. Her book is made for easy reading. Definitions are clear. Her examples are relevant to contemporary business and politics. The chapters average about five pages each, making them nicely "bite size". Her use of statistics, citations of research, short vignettes, sample dialogs, and cartoons appeals to all learning modes. Her lists simplify complex concepts by breaking them down into discrete components.

Conclusion

If your Motivation Direction is "Away" from difficulties, you'll like this book because it will steer you around pitfalls of miscommunication. If your Motivation Direction is "Toward" benefits, you'll like this book because it will help you polish your communication skills to a gleaming shine. ***Words That Change Minds*** is the only book of its kind ("Difference" pattern) that covers metaprograms in depth, while explaining principals of influential communication techniques with which most NLP practitioners are already familiar ("Sameness" pattern). Charvet provides her readers with unlimited possibilities ("Options" pattern) for mastering the language of influence, while teaching the right way ("Procedures" pattern) to apply the learnings and discoveries.

I unconditionally recommend this book to you, as an excellent reference source in your NLP library. Will you be Proactive and go buy it right away, or will you be Reactive and take time to consider the many ways in which you might appreciate the valuable information it contains?

To purchase ***Words That Change Minds: Mastering the Language of Influence***, contact:

Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 4050 Westmark Drive, P.O. Box 1840,
Dubuque, Iowa 52004-1840, 1-800-228-0810.