

Training, Coaching and Hypnotherapy: a Powerful & Empowering Combination

Training courses seek to impart knowledge and skills. Presenter input, exercises, discussions, written and electronic material are designed to ensure that participants will leave the course with knowledge that will enhance their work performance.

Having been a trainer for over 25 years I have observed mixed 'buy in' from the material on offer in courses. Many variables can have a marked influence on how fundamentally it is possible to reach and pass on skills to individual participants. Issues such as the stage of their personal development, their reason for coming, ranging from being sent to desperation for the skills on offer, their mental state that day, can all have an impact. A reasonable estimate is that around 8 out of 15 will derive significant benefit from attending a good course. This means that the other 7 will take away varying lesser degrees of knowledge and skills. Such a figure is deeply regrettable, particularly for the organisation which is paying.

The techniques of Coaching and Hypnotherapy are powerful tools that can provide the additional embedding qualities which will considerably raise this figure.

Aspects of coaching can take place during the course itself. The use of the **GROW** model to set goals is a pragmatic and effective way of ensuring that participants internalise and actualise their action plans:

- Set up a specific **Goal**
- Explore the current **Reality** in which the desired goal is not happening
- Define all possible **Options** that will lead to the realisation of the goal
- Focus on the **Will** to commit to and follow through the goal (needs to be 8/9/10 out of 10 for it to happen)

Coaching is essentially pragmatic; constantly working to ensure that participants maximise their potential. This is done by facilitating their progress towards defined goals, using honed listening and questioning skills that lead to empowered thinking, resulting in powerful, practical results.

In the weeks following a course, when much of the power of the material discussed and the skills developed will have faded, coaching can be an invaluable input tool. Individual coaching sessions, set up 2 to 3 weeks after the course, can serve to further embed the material, greatly increasing the value derived from the course. Individuals can maximise their potential by tapping into the resources they already have, and with the coach identify and deal with any obstacles that could prevent them from making their goals a reality.

Hypnotherapy combines interventions (mental exercises) and hypnosis (trance, simply a deeply relaxed state) with cutting-edge research on how the brain works, to set up mental and physical changes in how we think and act. Modern neuroscience has estimated that up to 90% of our behaviour is generated unconsciously. The mind is hugely powerful and since the mind and body are intrinsically connected, how we think and feel has great impact on what we do. Change the thoughts of the mind and change the actions (goals) a course participant will be motivated to attain. For example, the usual interpersonal skills involved in establishing rapport can be greatly enhanced:

- By matching not just their body language, but the words and metaphors they use.
- Reading the eye cues they reveal
- Discovering whether they are motivated towards pleasure or away from pain and phrasing the material accordingly
- ‘Matching’ a negative mental state before ‘leading’ them towards a more positive outlook
- Discovering whether they experience their world primarily, or in combination, in a Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic (feelings) or Audio Digital (concerned with words and numbers) mode

Such skills lead to a greater understanding of their 'map' of the world, which can be utilised in the presentation of the course material. This increases greatly the relevance and utilisation of the material for different participants. They can then employ these skills, going on to establish significantly improved communication and influencing skills themselves.

Both coaching and hypnotherapy are underpinned by many of the concepts and techniques of Neuro Linguistic Programming. NLP focuses on the language that the brain can choose so that a person can communicate and influence outcomes most effectively. During a course the more participants can envisage and plan for change, not letting their minds hold them back, the greater will be their ability to absorb additional skills and reap their fruits. This will result in success for both participants and their organisation. Our beliefs can either limit and hold us back, or enable and take us forward. We all have both sets of beliefs. For example:

Limiting belief: "I'm no good at that; I'll look stupid if I fail"

Enabling belief: "Mistakes are just feedback on how I need to change"

Limiting belief: "Nothing I do makes any difference"

Enabling belief: "With work I can achieve my goals"

Limiting belief: "I get so anxious and stressed, I just lose it"

Enabling belief: "I can learn how to deal better with anxiety and stress"

Coaching can challenge intellectually limiting beliefs, allowing the client to discover more enabling, positive beliefs; while Hypnotherapy can alter and change existing beliefs and embed enabling, positive beliefs.

The power of positive thought is an essential component of success. The impulse of positive thoughts causes the brain to release serotonin, the 'feel good' chemical that leads to the feeling of happiness and wellbeing. Such thoughts are transmitted from one brain cell to another. If however, the thoughts are negative, the chemical triggered is cortisone, which releases a feeling of sadness and depression, limiting the flow of positive thoughts and ideas. This explains why two people can look at exactly the same challenging situation and one person thinks "Oh my God, I've had it" and

the other thinks “This is going to be hard, but I can draw on resources I have to cope”. Hypnotherapy and coaching expand those resources.

Effective Hypnotic Interventions include:

- Creating a physical &/or mental ‘anchor’ - the memory of a good experience that can be recreated in a moment when needed in a difficult situation. For example, just before a difficult presentation
- Through relaxation techniques the brain can be made to think that all is well and there is no need to panic and become stressed, which blocks the ‘fight or flight’ responses to difficulties that lead to mental agitation, adversely affecting performance
- Rapidly changing the visual pictures in the brain from problem to solution state a number of times, allows participants to begin to experience and believe in a different reality, that they will now be better equipped to realise
- Priming the mind to be on the look-out for that which is positive. This is done by noting on a regular basis the positive things (however small) that occur throughout a day. The things themselves are unimportant, it is the priming of the mind to look for the positives that encourages the empowering creative nature that makes things happen and improves performance

Such interventions are easily assimilated into course exercises and materials since, whatever the nature of the course, being relaxed, open and positive will enhance its benefits and outcomes.

Piecing all this together, let us look at the example of a Leadership training course. The content would include the usual training skills and materials underpinned with NLP based concepts and interventions of coaching and hypnotherapy. This will produce a richer, deeper event, that will have a substantial affect on all its participants. Such a course will also have far-reaching effects for their organisation, delighting the client. Such a course will be in demand.

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