

Ericksonian Hypnotic Language Patterns

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Reverse Meta Model patterns, continued.

In NLP the "meta model" is Bandler and Grinder's name for the wellformedness conditions of the surface structure of the English language*. (*See their book "The Structure of Magic.") In Hypnosis we sometimes chose to deliberately violate these wellformedness conditions ("reversing the meta model") in order to be purposefully and artfully vague.

Pattern 38. Selectional Restrictions

A "Selectional Restriction Violation" is when we, as storytellers, ascribe to a person or thing something that is technically impossible for it to possess, at least as far as we know. As an example, if in the course of my telling a therapeutic metaphor I were to say, "You can listen to the happy trees and sit on this proud divan while your hands decide which of them will lift up first," I'd be employing this pattern three times. First, with the "happy" trees, second, with the "proud" divan, and thirdly with the hands being able to decide for themselves what to do. This pattern is especially useful while telling metaphors.

Because the listener realizes on some level that the selected thing can't actually feel these feelings, they will personally identify with the feelings. This is especially true when the speaker uses a shift in tonality consistent with an embedded command. This is referred to as an interspersal technique.

Readers who have read Bandler and Grinder's "Patterns of the Hypnotic Techniques of Milton H. Erickson M.D., vol. 1" will remember the section (pp.26–50) about the farmer named Joe who was suffering from cancer. Erickson spoke to Joe about tomato plants and how they feel good and comfortable when they grow.

*That little seed, **Joe**, slowly swells, sends out a little rootlet with cilia on it...
...they must make the tomato plant **feel very good, very comfortable**, ...*

So you, dear reader, are probably thinking that you could write a trance induction of your own using this and many of the other language patterns explored this year.

What a terrific idea! I wonder how much fun you could have doing that? Tell you what, send in your finished product and I'll post it on line. Send them to info@Ericksonian.com.

See you next week.