

10 International Congress on Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy

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Brief Ericksonian Solutions to Miscommunication

Miscommunication provokes a negative trance that blocks a person from seeing easy ways out of the endless loop of argument, or misunderstanding. Miscommunication may not start out as a negative trance, but it certainly ends up that way.

While there are a lot of ways to alter miscommunication these are simply ways that alter the negative trance that develops as a result of emotions that surround some sort of fear. Examples could be jealousy, pride or embarrassment all have a fear factor as well as a primary focus. Greed, anger, indifference and dishonesty have another focus entirely.

I Probably the easiest level of miscommunication forming trance to interrupt and alter would be the level of definition of a word.

- 1) Very few words have one meaning.
- 2) Most words have regional, and familial as well as personal meanings that are assumed others share but are pretty isolated.
- 3) Just asking a question about what a word or phrase means can break the negative trance.
 - a) You're asking, or being able to ask means that you have stepped out of the negative trance.
 - b) Your asking or telling what you mean by the word also invites the other person to step away from the trance.
 - c) In part it happens by focus and implied meaning. When you ask what a word means it shifts the implied meaning from "You are wrong, to I want to find common ground."
 - d) It also invites a different understanding because most negative trances like this have a disbelief attached.

II Fear and Logic don't mix

(What logic didn't get you into; Logic won't get you out of.) Shaker proverb

- 1) When the person you are talking with is feeling a high amount of fear, shame, embarrassment, or even simply one down from you, what they hear may not be what you say.
- 2) The more you might try to speak in factual tones will increase the problem.

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- 3) The lack of emotion in your voice is very likely to be interpreted to be insulting and looking down on the person hearing it.
- 4) The lack of emotion helps to perpetuate the negative trance the receiver is in because it doesn't dispute it.

II b When this happens there are only a couple of things that will work.

- 1) You can become angry and or critical sounding. That will stop the person from feeling like you are insulting their intelligence. It doesn't matter that you didn't want this to happen.
- 2) A second method is to become apologetic and nurturing.
 - A) Being nurturing in tone is the key. It breaks the negative trance that the receiver was in.
 - B) Until they can hear a joke from you and laugh, they are still likely to be easily slipping back into the negative trance.
 - C) Somehow laughter can break the negative trance. It can usually only be used if there is enough nurturing so that they can believe you

III It is impossible to convince someone of your trustworthiness

- 1) Their lack of trust is inside of them no amount of logic or demonstration will change their level of mistrust, unless it deals with their fear.
- 2) Their fear is about them. Sometimes we are afraid that we won't be able to detect when someone is deceiving us, so we are mistrustful.

IV Whatever the person fears may be a key to what they will project onto a simple statement that is without emotion, and simply factual.

- 1) Where are the car keys? Can be understood as meaning everything from insult to love, including bossing, doubting, etc
- 2) No amount of declaring that you didn't mean that will really convince the person although it is a good idea to say those things anyway.

V When you are afraid your fear can alter the message that the average person will hear.

- 1) Your fear can if ignored by you alter what you say so that the average person would believe that they were insulted.
- 2) The unacknowledged emotion of fear can invite a negative trance of feeling insulted, discounted, unappreciated, etc.
- 3) It probably happens because of the emotion being communicated even though we don't intend to.

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VI One of the quickest ways of altering this negative trance is by your openly acknowledging your fear.

- 1) Doing that out loud is the quickest and cleanest way of correcting this type of misunderstanding. It breaks the negative trance that has been invited by the fear
- 2) Being willing to openly admit fear when you recognize that you have been misunderstood means that you have already popped out of the negative trance yourself.

VI b A second way of avoiding the negative trance in the first place is to acknowledge your fear to yourself and keep it up front and be willing to admit it if necessary.

VII Positive emotions can alter your communication in ways that go beyond words.

- 1) Any words that you speak when holding a very positive feeling toward a person are likely to be felt in a positive way even if what you say is simply factual.
- 2) It doesn't matter if you are discussing the ball game or the weather, your positive emotions can be communicated.
- 3) Your positive trance toward the other person can have an effect.
- 4) Obviously this type of communication invites honesty.
 - a) Some people do it by the look they give.
 - b) Some people can do it by the attitude they hold
 - c) Some people can do it by the tone in their voice, and their posture, body language etc.
- 5) This approach works because Hypnosis works through the implied meaning of words. The implications are more powerful than the actual words.

VIII Attitudes especially life long ones can impact others to treat us certain ways and to even think about us in certain ways. Changing those changes how others treat us.

- 1) Life long attitudes are trances that invite others to be entranced with the same belief.
- 2) Life long attitudes are so powerful that they can alter what others think and see in relation to us.
- 3) Part of this is because of what Erickson said about how problems get started. He believed that most problems got started in a trance state and could best be fixed in a trance state.

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IX By your going into a positive trance state while with the person who is in a negative one can alter their thinking and allow them new option.

- 1) Your positive trance can alter a persons' negative one.
- 2) Assisting the initial or believed difficulty corrects the negative trance. For instance, when people who have felt much shame about an early molestation feel clean and forgiven for their part in being molested they stop showing any signs of raw sexuality in everyday settings.

X Lack of emotion can invite miscommunication

- 1) The lack of emotion can invite a listener to project some sort of rejection or criticism.
- 2) It wouldn't matter if the words said seem to be critical, or accepting, if no emotion is displayed it becomes easy to project my fears onto your lack of emotions
- 3) People like this often have difficulty accepting compliments

X b One way of altering this miscommunication pattern is by becoming hyper alert to the poker-faced person's few clues.

- 1) Of course the easiest way to alter this type of communication is for the poker-faced person to become more animated.
- 2) However, asking for clarification until you know exactly what the pokerfaced person wants can clear up miscommunications.
- 3) The reason for this is that like the words that get assumed that both are thinking the same thing often the poker faced person is assuming things that are not clearly accepted.

XI Miscommunication with a dishonest person can be fixed easier than you might think.

- 1) When a person lies to us and we suspect it our tendency to and the liar's tendency to want us to be convinced quickly is the reason that we are easy to lie to.
- 2) Slowing the process down of deciding if you believe someone makes it very likely that you will see the truth.
 - a) The longer time interval breaks the pressure of fear to do it right now.
 - b) The longer period gives you a chance to examine what they have said in a different mindset, and thus see the obvious.

XI b White lies and their impact on our communication

- 1) While they may or may not fool others they often fool us in several ways.

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- 2) The lies block us from being able to tell when others are lying to us.

XII Come close and Go Away invites a powerful negative trance

- 1) The trance invited creates almost an addiction.
- 2) The trance invited makes the person doing the dual message as being more powerful
- 3) The person who looks as if they need the attention of the dual messaging person is almost always the stronger person; they just got caught up in the tractor beam of the dual message trance.
 - a) The dual trance would say one thing with words but another with implication.
 - b) The dual trance could be through actions, or words.
 - c) It invites internal confusion in the person who receives it and they begin to question everything they know.

XII b Showing the needy person how the messages sent to them are dual and how dual messages impact a person usually helps them to feel ok.

- 1) Usually assisting the person to become clear about the dual message allows the person to stop feeling crazy.
- 2) It also allows the person to stop feeling addicted.
- 3) When the needy person comes out of the negative trance they can make pretty good decisions.

Some useful rules

- 1) Arguments between two people who are both being honest occur because there is a difference of meaning about a work or phrase. Even differences of opinion won't have the same type of implied put-down to the other person that comes through when there is a word or phrase that is understood differently.
- 2) People feeling shame, fear or inferiority will tend to hear as critical factual information that has no emotional content.
- 3) The best way of resolving a miscommunication that occurred through a lack of emotion is to reinsert a lot of emotion into the conversation.
- 4) When someone lets us know by an angry response that there has been a miscommunication, one way to fix the communication is to become obviously nurturing in response.

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5) When we communicate with a secret fear the likelihood is that it will come through in our communication with others as an implied insult.

6) Using more logic when the miscommunication occurred at the emotional level will only make things worse.

7) The way to resolve a miscommunication that has occurred due to our secret holding of an emotion or some emotionally charged secret is to acknowledge the secret, at least to ourselves. Even a private confession or disclosure to God or self can help.

8) No matter how effective you are in reading others, you cannot trust your intuition when it includes someone that is of major importance to you. Your own emotions and fears can distort what you see or think you see. If you intuit something negative coming from a loved one, check it out.

9) Who we are shows up in our words to and actions toward others.

10) Even so-called white lies impact others and us

11) If you don't know whether or not to believe someone, all you have to do is wait. The truth will become evident soon enough. The reason we haven't been able to detect truth from falsehood is that we have tried to do so without the advantage of time.

12) Changing how we speak to others and ourselves makes a huge difference about how we are perceived and about who we are. Change your words and change yourself.

13) Dual conflicting messages have a powerful confusing effect, and invite self-doubt.

14) Money or the lack of it can distort dysfunction and mask the family secrets.

15) "One-pot" method of distributing money rewards spending and not saving.

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16) Moving from a negative trance to a positive one is much easier than moving from a negative trance to no trance.

17) Recognizing that if our repetitive miscommunications chronically elicit the same responses, same arguments, and same feelings, we have a very real clue that we have been in a negative trance.

18) From a positive trance, it is very likely that you will recognize ways to fix the glitch in your communication, whether it is with words or money.

19) When you are in a positive trance, you are using all of your resources. You notice options and discover options that you wouldn't have seen if you were in a negative trance, even though those options were there all along.

20) One way to move from a negative trance to a positive one is simply to become more and more aware of all the things around you, expanding your awareness outward so that you can become increasingly aware of everything around you. It is amazing how you can make that shift and then see new options and new possibilities.

21) A compulsive desire to defend a position usually means a fear that is irrational and probably cannot be dealt with in any direct way easily. The main reason is that an unrecognized fear is associated with the concept and is causing miscommunication.

22) Only by dealing with the fear related to some compulsive desire to defend a position can communication be enhanced.

23) Compulsive desires to defend a position, political party, religious thought, et cetera, is a very good indication that we are not recognizing some strength that we have that could be discovered if we examined our fear.

24) When there is a compulsive desire to defend and a fear that is driving that fear there are strengths that are not recognized. Looking for them near or connected to the fear will provide you with a positive experience.

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