



Expanding Meta-Programs

Meta-Programs inform your brain about two things: what to attend to and *what to delete*. If you move toward values, you delete awareness about what you move away from. If you sort for the details, you delete the big picture. This deleting can get in the way of listening to what our client is saying and where he/she might be stuck.

But it's more than just the process of filtering out information. The information that we focus on has our preference. We have loaded it with meanings and understandings, often to such an extent that doing the opposite seems "wrong" or boring. It can even make us feel as if we lose our sense of freedom. Think about having to do details and following procedures when you prefer the big picture and having options (doing your taxes, editing something you wrote). A great many of my clients have a hard time choosing a niche, simply because they prefer having options and choosing 1 niche (and sticking with that for right now) feels constrictive and causes anxiety.

We identify with our thinking styles, even though ultimately they are just that: a style of thinking. And in some situations a thinking style is more effective than in other situations. Having the flexibility to do both allows you to be more effective in your coaching as well as in your business.

To expand your meta-programs, you need to re-direct your awareness to what you normally delete, value that information, and practice looking for it.



Example:

If you have typically operated using the Other-Referencing meta-program and you give yourself permission to shift to Self-Referencing. Yet when you do, you hear an internal voice that sounds like your mother's voice in tone and tempo, "It's selfish to think about yourself. Don't be so selfish, you will lose all of your friends." This voice objects on two accounts: selfishness and disapproval that leads to loneliness. So rephrase your permission to take these objections into account.

"I give myself permission to see the world referencing centrally from myself—my values, beliefs, wants, etc., knowing that my values including loving, caring, and respecting others and that this will keep me balanced by considering the effect of my choices on others."



The Pattern:

1) Awareness: Identify and check the ecology of the current meta-program filter.

When, where, and how do you use this meta-program which does not serve you well? How does it undermine your effectiveness in some way?

2) Describe the preferred meta-program filter.

What meta-level processing would you prefer to run your perceiving and valuing? *Contexts:* When, where, and how do you want this meta-program to govern your consciousness?

If having any difficulties, then] Model the new meta-program.

Do you know someone who uses this meta-program? If so, then explore with that person his or her experience until you can fully step into that position. When you can, then step into 2nd perception so that you can see the world out of that person's meta-program eyes, hearing what he or she hears, self-talking as he or she engages in self-dialogue, and feeling what that person feels. What's that like?

3) Give yourself permission for expanding the meta-program.

Do you have permission to expand this meta-program? As you give yourself permission, what are you aware of? How well does it settle? If there are objections or fears that you sense, what are they? Do you have permission to shift to this meta-program filter? What happens when you give yourself permission to use it for a time? Are there any objections? Answer by reframing and then future pace.



4) Experiment with trying out the extended meta-program.

Imaginatively adopt the new meta-program, pretend to use it in sorting, perceiving, attending, etc. Notice how it seems, feels, works, etc. in some contexts where you think it would serve you better. Even if it seems a little "weird" and strange due to your unfamiliarity with looking at the world with that particular perceptual filter, notice what other feelings, beside discomfort, may arise with it.

5) Run a systems check on the meta-program filter.

Go meta to an even higher level and consider what this meta-program will do to you and for you in terms of perception, valuing, believing, behaving, etc. What kind of a person would it begin to make you? What effect would it have on various aspects of your life?

6) Set multiple frames for the new extended meta-program.

What ideas or beliefs would support this way to filter things? What meaning would make this more significant and valuable for you? What decision or intention?

7) Future pace using the meta-program in specific contexts.

Practice, in your imagination, using the meta-program and do so until it begins to feel comfortable and familiar.