Appendix II

Hypnotic Language Patterns: The Milton-Model

Milton Erickson used language very systematically in his hypnotic work, often in unusual ways. These patterns were first described by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in their book, *Patterns of the Hypnotic Techniques of Milton H. Erickson, M.D., Vol. I.*

Using this "Milton-Model" is a prerequisite to effective hypnotic communication, and all of the induction examples in this book have used these language patterns. Many readers will unconsciously begin to learn the hypnotic language patterns by reading the many examples of inductions in this book. This appendix makes these patterns more explicit, so that you can practice using one pattern at a time, in order to systematically incorporate them all into your behavior.

I Inverse Meta-Model Patterns

Often the Milton-Model has been called the reverse of the Meta-Model. The Meta-Model is described fully in *The Structure of Magic, Vol. I,* by Bandler and Grinder, and there is an excellent 12-page summary of it in an appendix to *They Lived Happily Ever After,* by Leslie Cameron-Bandler. The Meta-Model is a set of language patterns that can be used to specify experience more fully. In contrast, the Milton-Model provides the user with ways of being "artfully vague." Being artfully vague allows a communicator to make statements that sound specific and yet are general enough to be an adequate pace for the listener's experience, no matter what that is. The Meta-Model pro-

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vides ways of recovering specific information that is deleted in any sentence; the Milton-Model provides ways of constructing sentences in which almost all specific information is deleted. This requires the listener to fill in the deletions from her own unique internal experience. The Meta-Model can be conveniently divided into three chunks: A. Gathering Information, B. Semantic Ill-formedness, and C. Limits of the Speaker's Model.

A. Gathering Information

As part of the Milton-Model, this chunk is called *Deleting Information,* and is the most useful of the three chunks for hypnotic purposes The four sub-categories follow.

1) Nominalizations: Nominalizations are words that take the place of a noun in a sentence, but they are not tangible—they cannot be touched, felt, or heard. The test for a nominalization is "Can you put it in a wheelbarrow?" If a word is a noun and it cannot be put in a wheelbarrow, it is a nominalization. Words like *curiosity, hypnosis, learnings, love,* etc. are nominalizations. They are used as nouns, but they are actually process words.

Whenever a nominalization is used, much information is deleted If I say "Emily has a lot of *knowledge,*" I've deleted what exactly she knows and how she knows it. Nominalizations are very effective in hypnotic inductions because they allow the speaker to be vague and require the listener to search through her experience for the most appropriate meaning. Milton Erickson's inductions are filled with them.

In the following example, the nominalizations are in italics:

"I know that you have a certain *difficulty* in your *life* that you would like to bring to a satisfactory *resolution* . . . and I'm not sure exactly what personal *resources* you would find most useful in resolving this *difficulty,* but I do know that your *unconscious mind* is better able than you to search through your *experience* for exactly that *resource.* . . ."

In this paragraph nothing specific is mentioned, but if this kind of statement is made to a client who has come in to resolve a problem, she will provide specific personal meanings for the nominalizations used. By using nominalizations, the hypnotist can provide useful instructions without running the risk of saying something that runs counter to the listener's internal experience.

2) Unspecified Verbs. No verb is completely specified, but verbs can be more or less specified. If a hypnotist uses relatively unspecified verbs, the listener is again forced to supply the meaning in order to understand the sentence. Words like *do, fix, solve, move, change, wonder, think, sense, know, experience, understand, remember, become aware of*, etc., are relatively unspecified.

The sentence "I *think* this is true" is less specified than "I *feel* this is true." In the latter sentence, we are informed as to how the person thinks. If I say "I want you to *learn*," I am using a very unspecified verb, since I'm not explaining how I want you to learn, or what specifically I want you to learn about what.

3) Unspecified Referential Index. This means that the noun being talked about is not specified.

"*People* can relax."

"*This* can be easily learned."

"You can notice a *certain sensation*."

Statements like these give the listener the opportunity to easily apply the sentence to themselves in order to understand it.

4) Deletion. This category refers to sentences in which a major noun phrase is completely missing.

For example "I know you are curious."

The object of that sentence is missing completely. The listener does not know what he is supposedly curious about. Again, the listener can fill in the blanks with whatever is relevant in her experience.

B. Semantic Ill-formedness

1) Causal Modeling, or Linkage. Using words that imply a cause-effect relationship between something that is occuring and something the communicator wants to occur invites the listener to respond as if one thing did indeed "cause" the other. There are three kinds of linkage, with varying degrees of strength.

a) The weakest kind of linkage makes use of conjunctions to connect otherwise unrelated phenomena.

"You are listening to the sound of my voice, *and* you can begin to relax."

"You are breathing in and out *and* you are curious about what you might learn."

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b) The second kind of linkage m
during, and *while* to connect state
tion in time.

"*As* you sit there smiling, you
"*While* you sway back and
completely."

c) The third and strongest kind
stating causality. Words such a
requires can be used here.

"The nodding of your head
completely."

Notice that when using each kind
begins with something that is alread
something she wants to occur. Th
effective if she begins with the weake
moves to a stronger form.

These forms of linkage work by i
occurring will cause something els
gradual transition for the listener b
some other experience. Chapters I a
detailed descriptions of the use of ca

2) Mind-Reading. Acting as if you l
another person can be an effective to
hypnotist as long as the mind-rea
language patterns. If the mind-readi
cator runs the risk of saying some
experience, and thereby losing rapp

"You may be wondering what I'll
"You're curious about hypnosis."

3) Lost Performative. Evaluative s
making the evaluation is missing (lo
Lost Performatives. Statements usi
effective way of delivering presuppos
follow.

"It's good that you can relax so e
"It's not important that you sink a

C. Limits of the Speaker's Model

This chunk of the Meta-Model is the least significant chunk as a part of the Milton-Model. Its two categories can be used to limit the listener's model in ways that produce trance as well as other outcomes.

1) Universal Quantifiers. Words such as *all, every, always, never, nobody*, etc., are universal quantifiers. These words usually indicate overgeneralization.

"And now you can go *all* the way into a trance."

"*Every* thought that you have can assist you in going deeper into a trance."

2) Modal Operators. Modal operators are words such as *should, must, have to, can't, won't*, etc., that indicate lack of choice.

"Have you noticed that you *can't* open your eyes?"

II. Additional Milton-Model Patterns

In addition to the inverse Meta-Model patterns, the Milton-Model includes a number of other important language patterns. The most important of these is the use of presuppositions.

A. Presuppositions

The way to determine what is presupposed and not open to question in a sentence is to negate the sentence and find out what is still true. The simplest kind of presupposition is existence. In the sentence "Jack ate the food" it is presupposed that "Jack" and "food" exist. If you negate the sentence and say "No, Jack didn't eat the food" the fact that Jack and the food exist is still not questioned.

Presuppositions are the most powerful of the language patterns, when used by a communicator who *presupposes what she doesn't want to have questioned.* A general principle is to give the person lots of choices, and yet have all of the choices presuppose the response you want.

Examples of specific kinds of presuppositions that are particularly useful in hypnotic work follow. There is a complete list of presuppositional forms in the appendix to *Patterns I.*

1) Subordinate Clauses of Time. Such clauses begin with words such as *before, after, during, as, since, prior, when, while,* etc.

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Such clauses begin with words
ce, prior, when, while, etc.

"Do you want to sit down *while* you g
the listener's attention to the question
presupposes that she will go into trance

"I'd like to discuss something with yo
project." This presupposes that you wil

2) Ordinal Numerals. Words such as *a*
etc. indicate order.

"You may wonder which side of yo
first." This presupposes that both sides
only question is which will be first.

3) Use of "Or." The word "or" can be
least one of several alternatives will tak

"I don't know if your right *or* your lef
cious movement." This presupposes tha
the only question is if I know which on

"Would you rather brush your teeth
bath?" This presupposes that you will
teeth; the only question is in what orde

4) Awareness Predicates. Words like *k*
etc. can be used to presuppose the res
question is if the listener is *aware* of wha

"Do you *realize* that your unconsciou
learn. . . ."

"Did you *know* that you have already
in your life?"

"Have you *noticed* the attractive effe
living room?"

5) Adverbs and Adjectives: Such word
a major clause in a sentence.

"Are you *curious* about your develop
supposes that you are developing a tran
t you are curious about it or not.

"Are you *deeply* in a trance?" This pr
trance; the only question is if you are i

"How *easily* can you begin to relax?"
can relax; the only question is how eas

"Do you want to sit down *while* you go into trance?" This directs the listener's attention to the question of sitting down or not, and presupposes that she will go into trance.

"I'd like to discuss something with you *before* you complete this project." This presupposes that you will complete this project.

2) Ordinal Numerals. Words such as *another, first, second, third,* etc. indicate order.

"You may wonder which side of your body will begin to relax *first.*" This presupposes that both sides of your body will relax; the only question is which will be first.

3) Use of "Or." The word "or" can be used to presuppose that at least one of several alternatives will take place.

"I don't know if your right *or* your left hand will lift with unconscious movement." This presupposes that one of your hands will rise; the only question is if I know which one it will be.

"Would you rather brush your teeth before *or* after you take a bath?" This presupposes that you will take a bath and brush your teeth; the only question is in what order.

4) Awareness Predicates. Words like *know, aware, realize, notice,* etc. can be used to presuppose the rest of the sentence. The only question is if the listener is *aware* of whatever point you are making.

"Do you *realize* that your unconscious mind has already begun to learn. . . ."

"Did you *know* that you have already been in a trance many times in your life?"

"Have you *noticed* the attractive effect this painting has on your living room?"

5) Adverbs and Adjectives: Such words can be used to presuppose a major clause in a sentence.

"Are you *curious* about your developing trance state?" This presupposes that you are developing a trance state; the only question is it you are curious about it or not.

"Are you *deeply* in a trance?" This presupposes that you are in a trance; the only question is if you are in deeply or not.

"How *easily* can you begin to relax?" This presupposes that you can relax; the only question is how easy it will be.