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Reason, Emotion and Ways of Knowing: the stuff of personal mastery

In 1990 I attended what was to be the last NLP Practitioner Certification offered by John Grinder and Judith DeLozier in new code NLP. They introduced it by metaphor and demonstration with very little explanation. There was no NLP jargon, only the experience. I learned systems thinking that summer, deep inside of myself. Somehow I knew what strategies and patterns were, I just didn't know how to verbalize what I knew. In other practitioner programs, I heard the same words I had heard from John and Judy with chunked down framing and with explanations which made little sense to me.

This led to my PhD in Organization Behavior and Development. I wanted to understand more about how systems thinking, the new sciences, the rapport between our conscious and unconscious selves, and meta learning inform our understanding about how we are able to transform ourselves and our organizations. This article is part of my ongoing search to understand and explain the ideas behind NLP and to relate them to academic thinking and to my practice.

The times demand transformative skills

How do we know what we know? This question, raised by Gregory Bateson, is addressed in discussions on the role of reason, emotion and ways of knowing. In the machine age, what we knew was respected only if it was from the realm of reason and logic, the result of objective and cognitive thought. It was as if an idea became tangible when conscious.

In a 1997 pre-conference seminar of educators at the US National Staff Development Council (NSDC), Bob Chadwick noted the increasing speed of paradigm shifts. According to Chadwick, today's youth will face a paradigm shift every two years. Assuming Chadwick is