The Milton Model

The use of language is essential in directing a person's experience and focus of attention. The Milton model, named after Milton Erickson, lists the key parts of speech and key patterns that are useful in subtly and effectively directing another person's line of thinking. Useful in sales, therapy, family relations and in gaining rapport in general, the principles of the Milton Model basically state that larger chunks (more general use of language) can lead to more rapport, which smaller chunks, (more specific language) is more limiting and has a greater chance of excluding concepts from a person's experience.

Key Milton Model Concepts

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Key Concepts

Nominalizations

If I was to say "you know that you can feel confident about some learnings from last weekend . . . " it is much easier for you to agree than If I was to say "you know that you can feel confident about unspecified noun structures from last weekend . . ."

Learnings is an example of a nominalization. To nominalize something means to make a noun out of something intangible, which doesn't exist in a concrete sense (in NLP, we say any noun that you can't put in a wheel barrow is a nominalization). In this example, the process of learning something is turned into a noun, learnings.

Being happy becomes happiness.

Being curious becomes curiosity.

Being depressed becomes depression.

A state like depression becomes an enormous and sometimes insurmountable, overwhelming state of being, for example, whereas being depressed to most people is more likely to imply a state that has a
beginning, and more importantly an end. A block is something much more insurmountable than something that is merely blocking your progress.

"So close your eyes and think for a moment about some recent learning, one that may have given you much surprise and enjoyment."

Notice in the previous sentence the speaker doesn't say how or where, but allows the listener to fill in with his or her own details.

Unspecified Nouns and Verbs

"People can learn easily under hypnosis." There are a few things in this sentence that are not clear, Which people? How can they learn easily? What do they learn easily?

When phrases like these are used, the listener is forced to use his or her imagination to fill in the who's and how's. Again, these types of phrases are useful for pacing and leading when the speaker becoming too specific could mismatch the listener and break rapport or minimize influence.

"So take a moment and enjoy remembering some of the things you learned and did at the seminar."

What were your thoughts after hearing that sentence? Did you have a specific representation? What did you learn and do, and which seminar did you learn them at?

Nominalizations are one type of unspecified noun.

Unspecified Referential Indices

(Don't you hate these silly technical terms?) are nouns that don't refer to something specific, i.e.,:

"This is much easier to learn than it looks at first."

"This" doesn't really tell us what it refers to. We guess and make an internal decision about the topic of the sentence.

"People can relax."

We need to guess which people.
Unspecified verbs and adverbs
also let us fill in with our own experience.

"This is much easier to learn than it looks at first."

"People can relax."

We don't know how it is easier to learn, or how it looks at first. Nor do we know how people relax, nor how they can do it.

But we can imagine how.

Commentary adjectives and adverbs
are a way that we can lead people to easily accept our presuppositions.

"How soon will you be pleasantly surprised by easily remembering and using the tools you're learning this weekend?"

Comparable "As"
are another type of connection:

"If anyone can learn as methodically as you do, they must be extremely motivated and thorough."

Semantic Ill-formedness

Linkages
imply a cause effect relationship between two things. There are three kinds of linkages:

Conjunctions:
"You are sitting here right now, and you can begin to relax." These include and and but.

Connections in time:
"As you listen to the sound of my voice, you are becoming curious." These include *as, while, during* and *when*.

**Causality (Cause - Effect):**

"The occasional sounds and noises from outside make you feel more and more relaxed." Here you have words like *makes, causes, forces, because* and *requires*.

A linkage works by connecting a statement that is pacing something that is already occurring with a statement that leads the listener to some other (usually internal) experience.

**Mind Reading**

means acting as if the speaker is doing exactly that. By making use of the art of speaking generally, a speaker can make an educated guess about the listener's internal experience to build credibility and deepen rapport.

"I know you are wondering how much you will learn from this training."

"You may be curious about how you will use these patterns."

We must be cautious to keep our references as general as possible. If specific details clash with the listener's thoughts, it will disrupt his or her attention.

**Lost Performatives.**

*It's important* to know about these structures, because *it's often necessary* to deliver presuppositions indirectly. These types of phrases contain at least one judgment or evaluation of which we can't identify the source.

*It's important* to learn language patterns.

*It's essential* to have fun learning all this stuff.

*It's good* that we are all here tonight.

The speaker doesn't state exactly who thinks these things are good, necessary or important.

**Modal Operators**

can be used to direct the listeners experience in a certain direction.
"How fortunate you are to be able to learn so easily. It can happen with your conscious mind reading to know how quickly it may happen."

**Conversational Postulates**

are requests for action or information masquerading as yes/no questions.

"Can you tell me what time it is?"

"Do you know what today's date is?"

"Can you lend me a pen?"

"Can you go into a trance easily?"

**Presuppositions**

are ways of indirectly getting agreement from a listener. There are several types of presuppositions:

*Existence*: "She saw the ice cream in the freezer." Implies is, was, may be.

**Time:**

*Before, after, during, continue, yet, already, begin, stop, start, still, while, since, as*, and *when.*

"You may hear noises in the room while you are entering a state of deep relaxation."

**Ordinals:**

These assume action will be taken, the question is, in what order, *1st, 2nd, 3rd*, etc. "Do you want to take a deep breath or would you like to settle down into your chair first?"

"Or":

"Would you prefer a silk blouse or one in cotton?" This presupposes that the listener wants a blouse. The question is which.
Awareness:

These assume the statement is true, all that may be questioned is whether the listener is aware. "Have you realized how common it is to be in a trance?" "Have you noticed how often you go into a trance, even by yourself?"

Adverbs and Adjectives

Presuppose that something is going to happen. The issue is how will the experience be?

"What have you enjoyed the most about driving the new RX-7?"

"Are you excited about making this purchase?"

"How easily can you begin to relax?"

"Fortunately we have plenty of opportunity to practice this material."

Other Patterns

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Organ Language
Other Patterns:

Embedded Suggestions

are suggestions or directives buried within a larger sentence. They allow the speaker to ask more subtly and in a way that the listener can respond sometimes without consciously knowing he or she has been asked. (We do this all the time without realizing it).

"I don't know how soon you'll feel better."

"You can learn these patterns easily."

"Well, now . . ."

Negative Commands

use the inability of your unconscious to comprehend language constructions that use negatives (No, Not, Don't, etc.). For instance, if someone were to say, "Don't think about pink elephants," what happens? Using negative commands can be thought of as sending subliminal messages to the brain. Since the unconscious cannot process the negative, only the positive message registers.

"Don't relax too quickly . . ."

"It's important that you don't make this purchase any sooner than you feel comfortable doing so."

"Don't go into a trance too soon . . ."

Ambiguity

When words have double meaning, the unconscious mind must process all meanings. Words like down, left, duck, hand, back all have double meanings. Then there are words spelled differently and pronounced the same. Hear/here, your/you're, nose/knows are examples. These can be extremely helpful in helping us produce embedded suggestions.

"One of the things that's most interesting about you're unconscious mind is its ability to scan for hidden meanings."

Tag Questions
According to Milton H. Erickson, "Tag Questions displace resistance to the end of a sentence," *don't they?* In addition, they set up a place to create an agreement frame, as well as to strengthen agreement in a pacing situation. It's a fairly effective concept to utilize, *isn't it?*

**The More, The More**

Once some degree of rapport is established, this construction the incorporation and utilization of otherwise resistant behaviors.

"*The more* you try to resist going into a trance, *the more* you find your eyes wanting to shut all by themselves."

**Oxymoron**

means using a combination of words that are a contradiction in terms.

"Try in vain."

"Notice those memories whose joyful pain are as vivid as those whose pleasant sadness can remind you of important lessons from the past."

**Organ Language**

is often used in day to day language, referring to parts of the body as part of a metaphor, such as, "he was a real *pain in the neck,*" or "I'm not sure if he's *ready to face* that possibility."

"As you develop more and more confidence, it is possible to *reach up to face* many different situations that would have been impossible before."

"We are only beginning to *scratch* the surface of this topic. Who *knows* what we might discover as we study further."

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