

Life's Paradox

uncommon reflections of life matters

The Magic of Wisdom Training

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Have you ever been in a heated discussion with someone and you cannot believe why and how s/he could possibly hold that opinion? It could have been about politics, maybe religion, or football teams,perhaps the philosophy of Life, the Universe and Everything! Wars have started over lesser things!

What would it be like to be able to resolve these situations? Is it possible that we could actually step into somebody else's shoes and experience it from their perspective? What would it be like to be emotionally uncharged and totally non-judgmental on the whole discussion? If you had all the angles, how differently would you have reacted?

A wise person once told me: "Your opinion is worth nothingif that is all you have." What does that mean?

Imagine yourself face to face with someone holding a pen horizontally in front of you. He says to you: "the pen nib is pointing to the *left*." From your vantage point, there is no doubt it is pointing *right*. Both of you are correct from your individual point of view. Yet the two statements are diametrically opposed. At that level of thinking, there is no agreement. If we then looked at it from a third perspective that makes the situation true for both parties, and announce that "The nib is pointing *North* (or whatever cardinal point of the compass is true at the time)", we would now both be in agreement.

This is what we call “Wisdom” – the ability to see one situation from multiple perspectives. In order to be wiser in any circumstance, we need to train ourselves to experience that event from a minimum of three positions. This is what we call “Wisdom Training”.

What is Wisdom Training?

In my previous articles, we explored how Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) can help manage daily situations in our professional (and personal) lives. For those of you who have just joined us, NLP can be summed up as a behavioural science of excellence modelling top performers of any field as a transferable skill. NLP originated in the USA in the mid-1970’s when John Grinder and Richard Bandler modelled outstanding communicators. These methodologies can be applied to running our business, enhancing the delivery of our dentistry and managing our daily lives.

Wisdom training is another one such transferable skill.

There is an assumption in any interpersonal interaction for a positive outcome that we have an **intent** to get along, to want to resolve the issue or at least to come through with an objective non-judgmental result.

Let us consider a simple scenario. Mr Jones comes in for an appointment with your boss half an hour past what is documented on the Management Diary. In your role as his PA, you tell him that your boss is unable to see him as he has missed his appointment. Mr Jones produces an SMS message from you confirming his appointment which shows that he is actually on time!

Moving through multiple perspectives

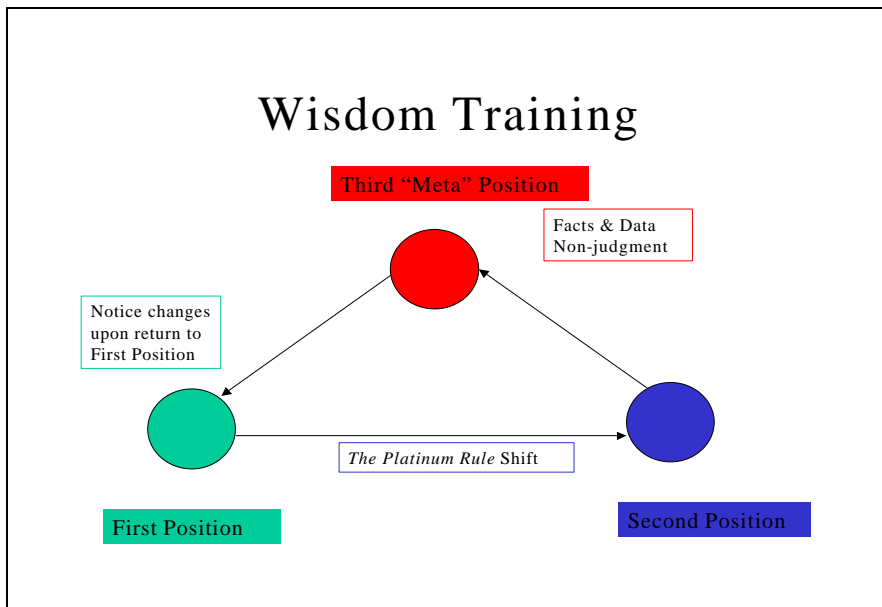
From your perspective, which we shall term the *First Position*, it is quite clear that Mr Jones is late. From the *Second Position* where Mr Jones is coming from, there is no doubt he is correct too. Should we continue to maintain our respective positions, the discussion is likely to get heated. The more we stick to our guns, the more emotional it will develop.

Imagine what it would be like if you stepped into Mr Jones shoes and experienced the whole situation through his point of view. Remembering in *The Magic of Rapport*, we can attempt to pace the situation from Mr Jones’ model of the world.

Most have heard of The Golden Rule of Wisdom spanning many cultures, which states: “Do unto others as *you* would like *them* to do unto *you*.” Let me relate to you the rule that overrides it. The Platinum Rule of Wisdom proclaims: “Do unto others as



they would like you to do unto them.” This illustrates the importance of First Position (you) stepping into Second Position (Mr Jones).



From the Second Position, see yourself in First Position doing your role, and experience it as if you are Mr Jones. If you have read *The Magic of Values* or *The Magic of Personality Filters*, you can attempt to appreciate the interaction by taking into account Mr Jones’ values and personality filters.

What if you were a fly on the wall? From your angle, you can see and hear the two parties having a discussion about appointment schedules that have appeared differently in each others’ records. This is a factual and unemotional report from a **Third Position**. From this Meta perspective, there is no judgment.

Now that you have taken at least three different perspectives of this matter, return to your First Position and notice what has changed. Assuming the intent is to resolve the issue, you are likely to discover that the charge of the situation has lessened and you can now respond with more objectivity and calmness. Use *The Magic of Suggestive Language* to further defuse the situation.

Have a go

Don’t take my word for it. Try it yourself with circumstances that have occurred in the past (or which may be happening right now). For instance, it may be a disagreement with a colleague about a service modality, or it might have been an

argument you have had with a supplier. Perhaps it was an angry exchange with a team member over the completion (or lack) of a task. Move through the three positions and notice what changed when you return to first base.

So the next time you become aware of a situation that could potentially turn ugly, why not try your wisdom training skill and notice the difference. It may be during a consultation with a client when philosophies could differ, or when discussing a performance issue with your team, or whilst in the midst of an academic debate with a colleague.

In *The Magic of Outcome Planning*, a procedure for formulating actions to bring them more easily to fruition was put forward. When one is making future plans, wisdom training could be useful to research the different angles. The viewpoints of different stakeholders could be identified and worked through objectively. For instance, before bringing in a new associate into the business, it may be interesting to explore the perspectives of say, the new associate, the team, the clients, and the principal.

Generalize it through your life

Remember that the skill of wisdom training can be applied to times when you are dealing with family, friends and social acquaintances. Pounce at the opportunity to turn that explosive argument around with your significant other. (I don't know about you, but the closer I am to someone the more emotional the interaction can get.) What about those debates you have with your mates concerning say, your favourite sports team? And those dinner parties when a controversial topic gets unveiled and those present start to stake out their battle stations?

You will be amazed at how just one person altering their response completely changes the dynamics of the situation. Once again, don't take my word for it. Go test it.

Rest assured that the more you learn and practise these skills, the more you realize the impact of NLP applications in all areas of your life. The more you are conscious of different perspectives occurring in different contexts from day to day, the more you will notice the transformation in your ideal way of being who you are when relating to colleagues, business associates, team members, clients, acquaintances, friends, family and all those meaningful people in both your personal and professional life. Enjoy. I know your life will never be the same again.

That is the magic of gaining wisdom.

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