



De-Suggestion - working with mental models that hinder learning

When we speak of de-suggestion, we are referring to any number of external influences or activities that help identify and work with mental models (suggestions, paradigms) that are getting in the way of learning and development. The success of the work is dependant on the facilitator's ability to recognize mental models that are holding learners back in order to determine the right steps to enable the person to overcome the barriers, widen their perspectives and tap into their inner potential

The facilitator who is successful is one who has not only recognized his/her own restricting mental models, but who has taken the responsibility to replace them with more empowering ones. In the training of facilitators in Accelerated Learning, personal growth and development is a major component of the accredited training course because we, in fact, "teach what we are" no matter what methodology we use.

We differentiate between four levels of de-suggestion:

- I examine and recognize my own mental models
- I accept the responsibility for my own growth and development, for changing those suggestions that I communicate to others to ones that empower and enable.
- I observe and recognize which mental models are facilitating or hindering the development of the learners.
- I support and encourage the development of mental models that accelerate and enhance learning while I help learners overcome those paradigms that get in the way of learning and personal development.

How do I recognize mental models?

Mental Models make themselves known through our actions, through what we do or don't do. A simple way to recognize suggestions about the world, what is possible and what isn't is to listen to the language used. People express their beliefs through four linguistic forms.

Values

"It's important to me, that..." "I like for..." "I hate it when..."
(The sentences express values that are important to people. Values are our expression of how we'd like the world to be.)

Rules

"You can't..." "I can't...", "You have to..." "She must..., must not..."
(The words can't, must, have to signal the rules we live by and believe in, our beliefs about what is wrong and right.)

Cause-Effect

"That's why it happened.". "His ____ makes people ____.", "if you do that, then..."
(Sentences that demonstrate cause and effect show a person's beliefs about how things are related/connected in the world.)

Identity

"I'm just not a singer.", "I'm not a person, who..." "I'm a..."
(Sentences that include "I am" in some form express a person's beliefs about himself/herself, about who the person is, his/her identity.)



How can I help others overcome hindering mental models?

We have all changed our opinion about something or someone at sometime during our lives. Certain beliefs about how the world functions or our own abilities have changed over time. In the process of de-suggestion, the same things happen. We change. We replace out-dated beliefs about ourselves, others, the way the world functions with more appropriate ones.

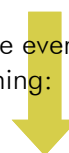
How do mental models/paradigms form?

We start with experiences, impressions that have an emotional quality for us. (S.E.E. = significant emotional experiences). Personal success, a wonderfully uplifting experience, painful events, sickness and disappointments. Whatever the event, the decisive factor is the subjective emotional quality of what happened for us.

Significant Emotional Experience

Parallel to the experience itself, we give what happens meaning. We interpret the event. We create a personal "story" about what happened. The S.E.E.s are interpreted to mean something:

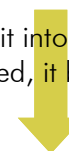
"Great. I can do it after all."
"He wanted to ruin me."
"That woman is dangerous."



Interpretation

The interpretation now takes on a new component - a generalization - to make it into a mental model or paradigm. When we generalize the positive or negative event that we experienced, it becomes abstract and we begin to apply it to life in general:

"I will seek challenges because I know I can master them."
"You can't trust people."
"I'm no softy. I'm not going to take any of his bull."



Generalization

Our mental models are developed by

S.E.E. → Interpretation → Generalization → Mental Model

De-Suggestion

In Accelerated Learning we make use of the same process to help learners overcome the mental models that are getting in the way of their success, their learning and development. We create opportunities for people to have new, powerful, emotional experiences - ah-has, eye-openers. Then we give them the opportunity to interpret the experience. We help them generalize the positive experience to facilitate the development of more empowering mental models.

An Example

We create a significant, emotional experience through learning activities, metaphors, personal success for the learner, an opportunity in a safe practice arena to discover hidden talent or wisdom.



The learners have time to reflect and share the experience with others. The de-brief gives both the individuals and the group time to interpret what has happened in a way that empowers. The facilitator promotes the process by asking the right questions, i.e.: "What did you discover?" "What does it mean to you?" In the case of negative answers, the facilitator can help frame the experience in a way that increases learning and supports development.

Generalizations at the end support the process. "If you can learn this complex material, you can learn anything." "You haven't only learnt ____, you have learnt how easy it can be to learn whatever you want to learn." "Now that you have discovered that you can draw after all, you probably realize that you have the potential to learn and succeed at just about anything you put your mind to."

De-suggestion is simply

S.E.E. → Interpretation → Generalization → new Mental Model

In the positive learning environment of Accelerated Learning, each individual finds the safety, the interaction rich environment and the learning opportunities necessary to overcome hindering mental models and to replace them with ones that will allow him/her to become a proficient learner, someone who can proactively create the life he/she wants to live.

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