

Backtracking:

“Covering the Same Ground Twice: The Magic of Back-Tracking”

Since the beginning of spoken language, we have known that words are magic. Words hold and convey specific meanings, embody entire experiences, and encompass entirely the beliefs which shape our lives. Unfortunately, we each have our own, very specific meaning for each of the words that we think and speak. We act as if everyone shares our personal definition of each word, and act congruently on this assumption. Rarely do any of us use a dictionary definition of a word that we use to describe what is important to us.

Another powerful way to help maintain rapport is to use key words and phrases your partner uses—word-for-word. You can do your very best to match what you believe the speaker’s meaning is by paraphrasing the speaker’s words, and still be completely wrong. ***No words have the same power for the speaker as the speaker’s own words.*** For the purposes of achieving and maintaining rapport, understanding precisely what the speaker means when using a particular word is not essential; there are another large group of exercises and instruction related to learning what the speaker means during practitioner training courses. These models are used specifically for gathering information. For the purposes of achieving and/or maintaining rapport, assume that the speaker’s words are magic, and ***use their key words, emotional sentiment and instant rapport building skills!***

Backtracking Practice

Part 1: The Observing

1. T.O.T.C.H. ☺
2. Begin a conversation with a friend, co-worker, boss, etc... about their experience/s of a given situation. Ask: How is _____? What is going on in your _____? How is your _____?
3. Listen for key words that reflect their emotional buttons. They will be words that are said with a noticeably different emotional energy. The words/phrases will be said: louder/softer; marked with a pause/change in body language.

Part 2, the Action

1. After Above procedure
2. Intentionally match your partners key words and phrases; really, match their exact key words and phrases ☺
3. Notice your partner’s response to this matching. (These actions elicit a response in your partner of increased talking related to the ‘button’ or key word/phrase that you matched; and often with even more emphasis, enthusiasm and passion!

****Criteria****

Those Emotional Hot Buttons!

Definition: A person's criteria are those words which incite a physical and emotional reaction; HOT BUTTONS. We all have our own definition of our hot buttons. A single criteria word is composed of many elements, conscious and unconscious.

Note: You may never need to know a person's definition of his/her criteria in those situations where you simply want to find out how they describe something they are excited about.

Examples of Criteria and their definition:

1. Love = making me laugh
 - + being on time for supper
 - + listening when I want to talk
 - + enjoying the same things I do;
 - + sharing my political opinions

2. Interesting = new
 - + different
 - + fast paced
 - + exciting

(Each of the components of the above criteria has its own definition for the person)

Questions to elicit criteria:

- What is important to you?
- What counts?
- What has to be there (procedures)?
- What would you like to be there?
- What do you love about it?