

Executive Success Coaching Resource Week 8

Neurological Levels – The Six Structures of Belief

Anthropologist Gregory Bateson developed the original Neuro-linguistic Programming model on neurological levels, which was later adopted by Robert Dilts in his Neuro-linguistic Programming pursuits. There are six neurological levels organized one top of another.

A set of rules applies for changing something at any level and these rules differ from each other. Changing an attribute on one level may or may not affect the upper levels. **However, changing an attribute at the upper levels will always affect the lower levels.**

The model can be considered as a cascading waterfall, where the upper levels translate their effects on the lower levels.

In order to understand these Neuro-linguistic levels, we must start with the lowest level and work our way up to the highest level.

Starting with the lowest neurological level:

1) Environment: This is the lowest level of the neurological model. It helps you consider the surrounding world, in terms of location, people, objects etc.

2) Behavior: This level comes above the environment. Using this level, you can identify your specific behaviors that you are good at, such as negotiating, making schedules etc.

3) Capability: This level comes above the behavior. Using this level you can identify what the overall capability is that your behavior translates to, such as marketing, time management etc.

4) Belief: This level comes above the capability. This level indicates who you are and what you believe about yourself. What is the belief that is true for you in order to have the capability? For example: importance of value of a product, or importance of time.

5) Identity: This level comes above the belief. It sums up you as a person by stating your identity. For example, you are a business oriented person, or a timely person.

6) Spirituality: This level comes above the identity. It indicates what your spiritual connection or higher ideals or your life purpose are. For example: saving the planet, greater connection to God, serving the poor, helping children.

Every level feeds the level below it in a logical hierarchy. For example, a person who believes in the importance of people will have the capability of relating to people. This capability will feed his behavior related to people skills such as listening, rapport etc. Moreover, these behavioral skills will support the capability of the person, and thereby his beliefs.

This model can be used to address problems or make important decisions as well. You can begin by identifying the level in the Six Structures of Belief where the problem exists. Then identify the cause of the problem in terms of its level, by tracing the issue at each level. You can then find out how a personal change in a level can be done to tackle the problem.