

Manipulating Submodalities

Overview

A Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) technique is to manipulate the way you perceive an experience by adjusting the submodalities (descriptive qualities that are directly linked to a sensory system) of your sensory systems (vision, hearing, touch, taste, smell and balance/movement). For example:

- In visual terms, common distinctions include: brightness, degree of colour (saturation), size, distance, sharpness, focus, and so on.
- In auditory terms, common distinctions include: loudness, pitch, tonal range, distance, clarity, timbre, and so on.

All of our experiences have submodalities and this activity will illustrate this. For this activity you are required to think of a minor frustration in your life. It could be someone sniffing on the bus when you are travelling to work; crumbs being left on the kitchen bench, dirty dishes being put in the sink rather than in the dishwasher; the milk carton being put back into the fridge with only a dribble left inside; a colleague who talks more than they listen, etc.

The Process

Step One - Chose a minor frustration to focus on.

Step Two - Close your eyes while continuing to think of this frustration. Notice whether you have an image of it. If you don't have an image, just continue to think about the frustration and start to notice how the frustration makes you feel annoyed.

Step Three - Next, open your eyes and mark one checkbox on each line to describe the submodalities of your experience. If you can't recall the submodalities then simply close your eyes while continuing to think of your frustration, and then open them to complete each row. Continue this process until you have assigned a mark to one checkbox on each line.

Sensory System

Visual

- Is the image in colour or is it black and white?
- Does it seem near or far?
- Is it bright or dim?
- Are you looking at yourself in the scene?
- Is it a small image or a large one?
- Is the scene framed or panoramic?
- Are you looking at a movie or is it still?
- If there is movement, is it fast or slow?
- Is it 3D or 2D (Flat)?

Auditory

- Is it quiet or loud?
- Is it fast or slow?
- Is it high pitch or low pitch?

Submodalities

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colour | <input type="checkbox"/> Black & White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Near | <input type="checkbox"/> Far |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bright | <input type="checkbox"/> Dim |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small | <input type="checkbox"/> Large |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Framed | <input type="checkbox"/> Panoramic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Movie | <input type="checkbox"/> Still |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fast | <input type="checkbox"/> Slow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3D | <input type="checkbox"/> 2D (Flat) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet | <input type="checkbox"/> Loud |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fast | <input type="checkbox"/> Slow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |

Step Three - Now adjust the submodalities of the experience, one at a time. Open your eyes and mark one checkbox on each line to describe how adjusting the experience effects the level of annoyance. If you can't recall then simply close your eyes and adjust the sensory system as detailed on each row below, and then open them to complete the row. Continue this process until you have assigned a mark to one checkbox on each line.

Sensory System

If it is...

How does adjusting the scene/experience effect the annoyance?

More Less No Change

Visual

Colour, make it black and white or vice versa.

Near, make it far or vice versa.

Bright, make it dim or vice versa.

You in the scene, jump right into the scene so you are looking through your own eyes. If you are in the scene, hop out of it so you are seeing yourself in the picture.

Small, make it larger or vice versa.

A frame of the scene, make it panoramic or vice versa.

A movie, make it still or vice versa.

Fast moving, make it slow or vice versa.

3D, make it 2D (Flat) or vice versa.

Auditory

Quiet, make it loud or vice versa.

Fast, make it slow or vice versa.

High pitched, make it low pitched or vice versa.

Last Step – Take the time to reflect on your overall experience using this technique and how you can make use of it in your day-to-day life.

Example

Sensory System

Visual

Is the image in colour or is it black and white?

Colour

Does it seem near or far?

Near

Is it bright or dim?

Bright

Are you looking at yourself in the scene?

Yes

Is it a small image or a large one?

Small

Is the scene framed or panoramic?

Framed

Are you looking at a movie or is it still?

Movie

If there is movement, is it fast or slow?

Fast

Is it 3D or 2D (Flat)?

3D

Auditory

Is it quiet or loud?

Quiet

Is it fast or slow?

Fast

Is it high pitch or low pitch?

High

Submodalities

Black & White

Far

Dim

No

Large

Panoramic

Still

Slow

2D (Flat)

Loud

Slow

Low

Sensory System

If it is...

Visual

Colour, make it black and white or vice versa.

Near, make it far or vice versa.

Bright, make it dim or vice versa.

You in the scene, jump right into the scene so you are looking through your own eyes. If you are in the scene, hop out of it so you are seeing yourself in the picture.

Small, make it larger or vice versa.

A frame of the scene, make it panoramic or vice versa.

A movie, make it still or vice versa.

Fast moving, make it slow or vice versa.

3D, make it 2D (Flat) or vice versa.

Auditory

Quiet, make it loud or vice versa.

Fast, make it slow or vice versa.

High pitched, make it low pitched or vice versa.

How does adjusting the scene/experience effect the annoyance?

More

Less

No Change