



Communication Magic

Exploring the Structure and Meaning of Language

L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.

I stand in awe of the genius of L. Michael Hall."
Judith Pearson, Psychotherapist and Certified NLP Trainer/Practitioner.

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Formerly *The Secrets of Magic*



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Preface

Communication Magic describes the *magic* that we can perform with *language*. It describes the neurological effects of words, symbols, and ideas on our lives and emotions. It shows how mental phenomena which we can't see, hear, touch, taste, or smell can turn life into a living hell or into an experience of ecstasy and delight.

In *Communication Magic*, you will find a model, a cutting-edge model about communicating, thinking, experiencing, constructing realities, and influencing the realities of others. That makes this a *dangerous book*. Yet when you finish this book, you may not feel that you have just completed reading something dangerous. Yet it is. In the wrong hands, this model can supply the unscrupulous with the human technology for influence and persuasion by which to do immense harm.

Why take the chance of arming the unscrupulous and dishonest with the model and techniques here? Because by hook or crook (in other books, in trainings, by trial and error experience) they can find such techniques anyway. I have written this for defense against such. After all, *awareness* of the magic of language gives us a 'heads-up' about dangerous spins and manipulations.

On the surface, this book is about how to communicate more effectively, precisely, and even magically. It is a book about how to effectively use your unique gift of language in a way that *expands* your mental maps and enriches your life. This book highlights the dangers of impoverished language that limits and undermines success and happiness.

The Magic of Language Elegance

Everyday, in just about everything we engage in, we *use language*. We use language to get along with others, to engage in business, to negotiate, to persuade, to sell, to solve problems, to express our creativity, and for a thousand other activities. And, sometimes, language works in seemingly magical ways. Sometimes a single word can set off an argument, break loyal bonds, violate friends,

and ignite legal proceeds. Sometimes a word can turn a person around, create a new sense of hope and meaning, and heal a wounded heart. Words work powerfully in these ways.

Languaging uniquely defines how we use symbols in our everyday experiences. The pervasiveness of language as well as the centrality of our *language skills* explains why our *use of language* so crucially determines our effectiveness, self-management, and happiness. This book focuses on these things and on how to use language with both the magic of precision and the magic of hypnosis. It's about developing greater skills in the persuasion arts. In this book, you will be invited into a mindful understanding of several things:

- How language affects the mind-body system
- How language can perform magic-like feats in nervous and immune systems
- How we navigate the territory of the world via the magical realm of words and ideas
- How the magic can curse and sabotage and turn life into a living hell
- How the magic can bless, empower and enable us to take charge of running our own brains.

At a deeper level, this book invites you to take a journey—a journey into the wild and wonderful realm of 'mind,' into neuro-linguistic and neuro-semantic reality where mind-body works as a system in response to *symbols*. That may sound complex. And certainly, from the point of view of a neuro-biologist or neuro-scientist, there are all kinds of complexities about this that we have not begun to fathom. Yet, how *language* actually affects our mind-body system on a day to day basis is simple. You can test it. Test it simply by trying out some of the patterns, using the secrets, and noticing whether it empowers you as a person, enhances your life, or doesn't create any magic for you.

The Magic Things You can Do with Language

Since language operates as one of the meta-processes above and beyond ('meta') primary experiences, there's all kinds of things that we can do with language.

Austin (1955) recognized the ‘performative’ role of words and described such in his classic William James Lecture at Harvard, *How To Do Things With Words*. For Austin, much of our language use involves performative language; “to say something is to do something, or in saying something we do something” (p. 108).

Church (1961) took that idea further,

“Words do not have meanings, but functions. The ‘meanings’ assigned to words by dictionaries are abstractions drawn from the way words function in various contexts.” (p. 217)

Though stated here in either/or terminology (for words have both meanings and functions), Church emphasizes the functional role of words. What are all the things we can do with language, with symbols, verbal and non-verbal? What are some of the things *you* do with words every day as you move through the world?

Gather information	Learn something new
Understand another’s perspective	Inform another
Seek clarification when confused	Influence people
Bond with another person	De-hypnotize
Dis-bond with another	Unload emotional stress
Express endearment to another	Validate, affirm
Reinforce behaviors and responses	Advocate a position
Extinguish behaviors and responses	Problem solve
Create patterns of persuasion	Formulate a problem
Experience a catharsis of emotion	Apologize for hurts
Confess faults and problems	Negotiate an arrangement
Take responsibility for myself	Confuse someone
Shift responsibility away from myself	Insinuate
Update mental maps about reality	Swear
Hypnotize people into various states	Universalize a problem
Engage a person about something	Show off
Disclose various depths of things	Meta-communicate
Soothe, nourish, and comfort	Express intentions
Joke, create humor, jar consciousness	

Chapter 4

Expressions of Magic

Map Magic for Transformations

The magic of language lies in its *structure* and it is this that enables us to do some pretty magical things with words as we communicate. The *secrets* of how to use and work with this magic give us access to higher and more elegant communication skills. In the following chapters, we will review the language model that describes the form of neuro-linguistic magic as well as explore many of the principles that govern this *magic* in our lives. In doing so, we will identify the linguistic distinctions in our communications that open the door to the models that govern our lives. These distinctions inform us of the leverage points in the mind—leverage points for magic.

This will prepare us for *using the magic to transform our lives*. If there's transformational magic in the words that we use, in the mental maps that we develop, in the frames of mind that we cultivate, then knowing the structure and the secrets of that magic will improve and enrich our lives. This brings us to a set of application questions:

- What *magic* does this model allow us to perform?
- What *magic* can we perform on our own minds-and-emotions, and those of others?
- How can this linguistic magic enrich our communications, states, skills, expertise, etc.?
- What other benefits will this create?

To answer these questions we will explore some of the neuro-linguistic and neuro-semantic magic that we have found in the communication magic model. When Bandler and Grinder first experienced the wondrous magic-like cures that they saw and heard in Perls, Satir, and Erickson, they set out to model the struc-

ture in that communication excellence. Eventually, they were able to replicate it themselves, and teach others to do the same.

One of my objectives in doing this is to go beyond the mere replication of that expertise so that we can develop the *attitude* of a creative magician. Why? Because if we fully appreciate the power and wonder of language in our thinking, communicating, and relating, then we'll develop a very special attitude—one that will keep us alive and vital as we make a difference in the world.

“Hey! Where’s the Magic?”

In the USA in the 1980s the Burger King hamburger chain ran a series of commercials wherein a ‘little ole lady’ kept asking, “*Where’s the beef?*” She didn’t want some tiny little shriveled up burnt burger that could get lost in a bun. She wanted ‘the real thing.’ But when she peered under the gigantic bun, she didn’t find the real thing.

Similarly, in the fields of communication, coaching, therapy, consultation, personal empowerment, learning acceleration, etc. we often hear more offered than delivered. The P.R. sounds great. But the results indicate an over-sell. Consequently, all too often we find the helpings under the bun very sparse compared to the marketing.

“Where is the beef?” Or, as we ask here, “Where is the magic?”

The magic lies in the language, in the way we represent, format, structure, and frame our ideas. Since we do not deal with or interact with the territory directly, but as mediated by our maps, the magic lies in how we communicate and map things.

If the interface with the territory occurs in our map, then that’s where we will find the *magic*. As we construct images, schemas, paradigms, or models of the world and *use them to navigate* as we move through life, the excellent ones put ‘magic’ in our hands. They form, mold, govern, direct, organize, modulate, and determine *our experiences* as we navigate the world. Our maps determine what we can see or not see, what we feel or don’t feel, how

Chapter 8

The Magic Model Part IV: Distortions (Part II)

“The Meta-Model is an explicit set of questions as well as a model for asking questions.”
Dilts (1983, pp. 77–79).

Now for the conclusion of the distortions. We began exploring the deeper magic, the un-track-able magic involved in the language patterns under the category of distortions in the Meta-Model. In this chapter we will finish that description.

Figure 8.1: Linguistic Distinctions of Distortions

- 9. *Nominalization*: Verbs turned into nouns.
- 10. *Mind-Reading*: Reading the motives, intentions, and emotions of another person.
- 11. *Cause—Effect*: Inventing a causal structure about events.
- 12. *Complex Equivalences*: Equating events, ideas, emotions.
- 13. *Presuppositions*: Assumptions about life, existence, people, etc.

11) *Cause—Effect*

Cause—Effect statements assert causation. They assert that one thing necessarily leads to, makes, or *causes* another thing. To make such a statement indicates beliefs and presuppositions about the way things, emotions, thoughts, experiences, and events relate to each other. We typically encode our ideas about ‘cause’ with causal verbs (e.g. make, cause, force, etc.), although we can do it with almost any active verb (e.g., present, go, drive, etc.).

In causation language, we suggest or imply a linkage between stimuli and responses, a linkage or relationship, which may or may

not have any actual direct or logical connection. Most of us develop our ideas of causation from events that demonstrate macro-level causation. Someone throws a rock at us; it hits us and we both see and feel a bruise welling up on our skin. So we say, “Tommy *caused* it.”

In the world of macro-effects, such ‘causation’ as a conceptual category works pretty well. Newton saw an apple fall from a tree and theorized about the unseen force of gravity. In his model of physical forces and the field of Newtonian physics, gravity *causes* things to fall.

Of course, this *concept* of causation does not exist externally. It’s a conceptual way of thinking about things, a way of symbolizing and encoding relationships between events. We create that concept using the modeling process of distortion. In the realm of Newtonian physics, it works sufficiently well. It allows us to build homes and bridges, cars and planes, to explain and model billiards, and to establish many facets of law regarding responsibilities.

This becomes less valid and useful when we apply these rough ideas of *cause and effect* to complex systems and to human mind-body systems. New and different features enter into the fray.

Bateson described the effect of kicking a stone or hitting a ball on a billiards table. The *effect* that we get in each case, while complex, can nevertheless be generally predicted and understood. Take into account all of the forces, the dynamics, and the energies inside of the various environmental contexts and contributing influences (temperature, wind, etc.), and we can pretty much figure out cause—effect relationships.

But kick a dog. The trajectory of that dog is much less dependable than the trajectory of a rock or a billiard ball. Why? Because there’s latent energy within the dog. Kick your child or your neighbor, or the policeman on the corner, and again, the trajectory of where that person goes in *response* to the kick is dependent upon more factors than just the physics of your kick.

Yet all too often we attempt to use the same linear macro-level cause and effect thinking on neuro-linguistic systems that involve mind, emotion, value, meaning, history, memory, imagination, etc. Here linear *cause—effect statements* can become very inadequate and ill-formed.

This is especially true when we attempt to assign a single, linear *cause* in complex systems like relationships. We confuse and mix up the influencing factors that belong to us (e.g., the things we do or can do, the responses that we can make) with sources outside of ourselves that cannot affect things.

We say, “Jim *makes* me angry.” But that statement follows the kind of format that, at best, only works with the strict Newtonian physics of inanimate objects. That’s like saying, “George forced Mary to weigh 175 pounds.”

Bandler and Grinder (1975) wrote,

“Some person causes some person to have some emotion. When the first person, the one doing the causing, is different from the person experiencing the anger, the sentence is said to be semantically ill-formed and unaccepted. The semantic ill-formedness of sentences of this type arises because it, literally, is not possible for one human being to create an emotion in another human being. [Actually] the emotion is a response generated from a model in which the client takes no responsibility for experiences which he could control.” (pp. 51–52)

Although the two events are here encoded, one ‘the causing’ and the other ‘the result,’ and do occur one after another, we do not necessarily have a closed-case of *causation*. This might involve a different kind of relationship, it might be a correlation, an accident, a sequence within a systemic network of responses, etc.

How do we question this model about cause—effect relationships? How can we inquire and explore it so that it empowers the speaker to look at the facts again, to take responsibility for his or her responses, to move beyond a single cause to recognize with multiple causation and contributing factors? The Meta-Model provides several questions:

A revised and substantially expanded edition of the classic *The Secrets Of Magic, Communication Magic* takes the Meta-Model to new levels of significance. In his development of the Meta-Model, which lies at the heart of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Dr. Hall demonstrates how your life can be dramatically enriched by having complete control over how you communicate using language. In a clear and logical manner he examines:

- how language affects the mind-body system
- how language can perform magic-like feats in the nervous and immune systems
- how this magic can empower us and enable us to take charge of our own lives.

“I have never read anything in the realm of NLP that presents such a readable, understandable, logical and sequential presentation of the genius and magic of NLP than is found in the pages of this wonderful book. I know that as a trainer this work will provide me with a tool that I can recommend to my students and clients.”

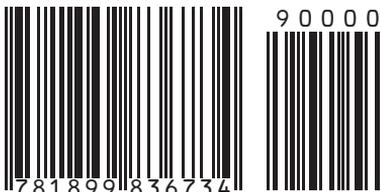
—**Bob Bodenhamer**, co-author of *The User’s Manual For The Brain*.

L. Michael Hall, Ph.D. has authored many groundbreaking works on communication, neuro-linguistics, emotions and motivation. He is one of the foremost theorists in NLP today, and is dedicated to advancing its techniques into new and exciting realms of business and personal development. He works as a consultant and trainer in Grand Junction, Colorado.



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