

Sailing the 7C's of Courage. A Framework for One-to-one Work Emerging from Neuro- Linguistic Programming (NLP) – a Single Case History

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Abstract

Introduction: *NLP is well known and used internationally within coaching psychology and psychotherapy, however has often been criticized for lacking an empirical evidence base. This paper provides a brief explanation as to why this may be so, based upon the author's Ph.D. dissertation.*

Objectives: *The purpose of this paper is to build upon the author's Ph.D. dissertation and after examining the history and development of NLP, introduce a new experiential framework for consideration.*

Methods: *With the use of a single case study the author describes a new framework for working therapeutically which has emerged from his 25 years practice as a psychologist specializing in psychotherapy, exploring and using NLP as his main modality.*

Results: *It is suggested the development of such frameworks is a part of a wider phenomenon within the NLP community which is currently addressing the above criticism from academic psychologists. Results from therapeutic work within these frameworks, like the result from this single case study are anecdotally positive.*

Conclusions: *The paper concludes that such new frameworks to develop out of NLP make a useful first step in addressing the critique of academic psychologists. However, this momentum needs to be developed and built upon, in order to increase the standard of scholarship within the NLP community. Further, standardized patterns of intervention which can be tested within specific contexts using the randomized controlled study method, need to be increasingly developed so underlying theoretical perspectives can be effectively evaluated.*

Keywords: *7C's, Frame, NLP, Pattern, New, context, Meta Program (MP), Alter Ego, Core Code, SMACTEPPOMF process variables*

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I. Introduction

NLP beginnings

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is an experiential practice which began within the University of California Santa Cruz, (UCSC) in the early 1970s.

In 1971 Richard Bandler, a psychology student, felt that much of the academic psychology being taught was of little practical value. However, he felt this was not the case with Gestalt therapy and he enjoyed the practice as it used present experience to achieve greater clarity and awareness within the individual. Frank Pucelik too enjoyed Gestalt therapy. He had transferred to UCSC in 1970 to finish his undergraduate degrees in Psychology and Politics which he started at San Diego College where he had studied Gestalt. Together they ran 2 to 3 Gestalt training groups a week “making some good pocket change in the process” (Grinder & Pucelik, 2013, p. 22). With these meetings, alongside student-directed Gestalt seminars during 1972, under the supervision of Dr. John Grinder, a faculty member at Kresge College, UCSC, who had been invited to the group by Richard Bandler, one could say Meta was born. This name then later turned into NLP.

Some of the private NLP meetings at weekends and evenings were held at the house of Dr. Robert Spitzer in Soquel, near Santa Cruz. Spitzer owned Science and Behavior Books and Bandler, who was employed by Spitzer, had been editing the transcripts of Perl's Gestalt sessions at Cold Mountain, British Columbia, which ultimately found their way into book form (“The Gestalt approach & eye witness to therapy”, Perls, 1973). The foundation of NLP in Gestalt therapy is evidenced through Bandler consistently carrying his copy of this book with him at all times in those formative days (McClendon, 1989, p. 7).

Another part of the NLP jigsaw finds its genesis in the methodology of behavioral modelling (Bandura, 1977). Spitzer talks of Bandler learning to play music by listening to the music of someone he admired over and over again, till he sounded just like them. In researching for “Eye Witness to Therapy”, Spitzer, says Bandler, used to come away from the headphones and films sounding and acting just like Fritz Perls, to such an extent Spitzer found himself calling Bandler Fritz on several occasions (Spitzer, 1992, p. 2). John Grinder insists on learning the Bandler/ Pucelik version of Gestalt therapy himself, he did not turn on his conscious academic filters till he had managed to reach a similar degree of competency through behavioral modelling and unconscious assimilation as evidenced by his own

Gestalt work assessed by Bandler/ Pucelik (Bostic St. Clair & Grinder, 2001, p. 145).

Family systems therapy supplemented Gestalt and Behavioral Modelling as foundational for NLP, as Bandler used the same Behavioral modelling to understand the work of Virginia Satir, a family therapist. Both Bandler and Grinder wrote “Changing with Families” with Virginia Satir (Bandler, Grinder & Satir, 1976), in the same year as the second volume of “The Structure of Magic” (Grinder & Bandler, 1976).

The final part of the NLP jigsaw comes from Transformational Grammar (TG), which regarded natural language as a rule governed behavior. The complex equivalent used by Grinder and Bandler is “acts will have structure – and, therefore, will be describable by some set of rules” (Bandler & Grinder, 1975b, p. 2). It is therefore understandable that the first NLP textbook was entitled “Neuro-Linguistic Programming: Volume 1. The study of the *structure of subjective experience*” (*my emphasis*), by Dilts, Grinder, Bandler and DeLozier (1980). Bostic St Claire and Grinder went on nearly 3 decades later to describe TG as “the single most pervasive influence in NLP” (2001, p. 66).

Until 1975 what developed from Meta into NLP had not been put into book form. It was a frenzy of unorthodox, playful and creative therapeutic experimentation and discovery in the Santa Cruz hills. Between 1975 and 1980 NLP developed rapidly, then after that time much of the phenomenal energy of the initial therapeutic group at Santa Cruz, which developed from Bandler, Pucelik, Grinder and many others, began to transfer to alternative partnerships and further publications.

The NLP Diaspora

After academic beginnings with the “Structure of Magic 1 & 2”, based upon the above paradigms and “the building of a theoretical base for the describing of human interaction” lauded by Gregory Bateson, and “Wowed” by Virginia Satir in their introduction and foreword, respectively to the first volume, NLP was off to a good start (Bandler & Grinder, 1975b; Grinder & Bandler, 1976).

The early popularity of NLP however created a dilemma though; does one continue to build and model in this academic way, or does one capitalize on the nascent success and earn yet more pocket money? Of course, the two are not mutually exclusive, however NLP chose the latter route. In contrast to the Organizational Development (OD) movement with such notables as Kurt Lewin, Douglas McGregor, Chris

Argyris and Leon Festinger to name just a few who did similar work within T groups and chose to embed itself in the University system in the 1950s, NLP 20 years later chose to go down the commercial route. This commercial, rather than educational orientation is one of eight defining characteristics of NLP currently, according to a model of NLP generated through grounded theory in a PhD thesis by the author (Grimley, 2016). Tosey and Mathison (2009) point out significantly the sponsorship of Bateson for the early work soon disappeared, with his comments on the follow up behavioral modelling project of Milton Erickson being “shoddy epistemology” (this was the response of John Grinder to a direct question concerning what Gregory Bateson thought of the Milton Model, at a three-day seminar on NLP modelling in Brighton UK, 2009) (Bandler & Grinder, 1975a; Grinder, DeLozier & Bandler, 1977). Bostic St Clair and Grinder allude to this fall off in academic attention and orientation to commerce themselves when they say:

“The immediate success and rapid diffusion of the initial models of NLP in the mid and late ‘70s created a ground swell of interest leading to a great demand for the presentation to and training of people who desired to become proficient in the patterning. This demand constituted both an opportunity and a distraction for Bandler and Grinder.” (2001, p. 228)

This “presenting to and training of people” in NLP has now spread around the world and has defied academic critics of the day who dismissively wrote:

“It is as if NLP has achieved something akin to cult status when it may be nothing more than another psychological fad that will go its merry way until it is replaced by the next fad.” (Elich, Thompson & Miller, 1985)

However, that the significant patterning stopped in the late 1970s is poignantly alluded to by Tosey and Mathison, who, when referring to NLP entropy and the current lack of creative energy and motivation, say:

“Its knowledge base is being recycled rather than it is being extended” (2009, p. 190)

New beginnings and a developing evidence base

As mentioned above, one of the original exemplars for NLP patterning was Fritz Perls, the founder of Gestalt therapy. When reading the preface of “Handbook for Theory, Research, and Practice in Gestalt Therapy”, edited by Philip Brownell (2008) one might be forgiven for thinking the author was referring directly to NLP:

“It would be most accurate to say that this book started at least a decade ago when it became apparent that the field of gestalt therapy was lagging behind other perspectives in gaining research support. Gestalt therapists knew, from the satisfaction encountered in their clients, that gestalt therapy ‘worked’, but for the most part they lacked a body of empirical support for such an assertion. It’s not that gestalt therapy had been proven ineffective, or for that matter, even inappropriate; it just had not been studied comprehensively... Leslie Greenberg was also conducting gestalt-related research through his position at York University in Canada, but it was largely going by another name, ‘process-experiential’.” (p. ix)

Speaking entirely from an academic perspective, Grimley (2016) found in his PhD thesis that Brownell’s comments mirrored precisely a further 2 of 8 defining characteristic of NLP. Firstly, the NLP evidence base is primarily anecdotal and secondly some practitioners were spreading out and using NLP and behavioral modelling in developing further therapeutic patterning, but going by different names and seeking to generate research support for these developments.

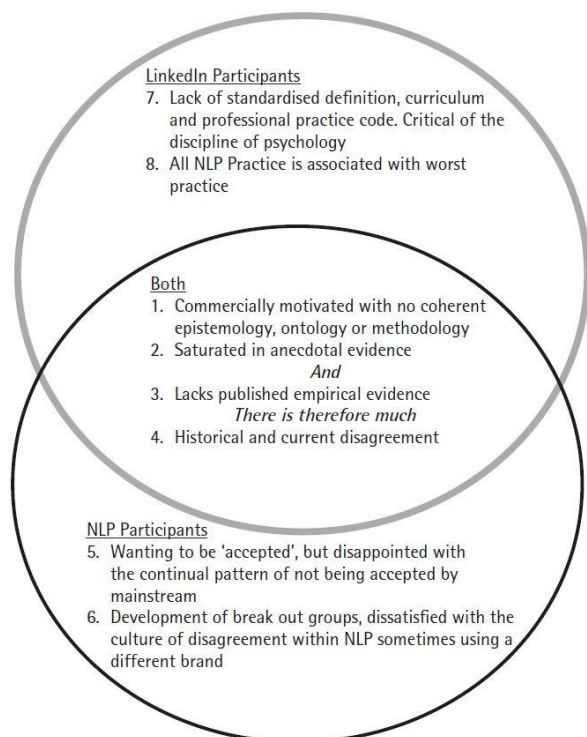
As well as academic randomized controlled research providing some evidence for NLP in education and psychotherapy (Allan et al., 2012; Zaharia, Reiner & Schütz, 2015), examples of these new ideas going by different names are Social Panoramas, mBIT (Multiple Brain Integration Techniques), Clean Language, Neuro-Semantics, Lightning Process and The Research and Recognition Project, to name a few (Derks, Oetsch & Walker, 2016; Arroll et al., 2017; Lawley & Linder-Pelz, 2016; Lawley & Manea, 2017; Linder-Pelz & Hall, 2007;

Linder-Pelz & Lawley, 2015; Crawley et al., 2013; Gray & Bourke, 2015).

Experienced figures from the NLP community have all written in peer reviewed journals in an attempt to develop a research base for these emerging ideas and what is being presented in this paper is a further idea of framing and patterning for consideration going by the name “7 C’s” and based upon the ideas originally developed and shared in the book of the same name (Grimley, 2020).

The PhD model of interacting variables that describe and predict the trajectory of NLP by Grimley (2016) can be seen in figure 1. Even though the evidence base of NLP is still mainly anecdotal, the hope is that following the lead of some of these emerging ideas going by different names, NLP as an experiential modality will begin to texture its culture with an acknowledgement of the need for education of NLP practitioners in research methodology. Consequently, it is further hoped NLP will thus develop a larger and higher quality evidence base. Indeed, if one goes to a database of NLP research compiled and edited by Daniele Kammer and published by Franz-Josef Hücker (2020), one can see that to say the evidence base for NLP is entirely anecdotal is no longer true, even though it may be weak, as evidenced by Witkowski (2010).

Figure 1. 8 Interacting Dimensions of NLP (Grimley, 2016)



II. Method

The 7C’s model formation and development

If, as an experiential therapist, the reader imagines themselves first meeting their client with the 7C’s model primarily being their frame, the first thing they will do is inculcate the RESOLVE framework of Bolstad (2002). They will thus know what their most Resourceful therapeutic state is, access that state and from that point they will Establish and develop a strong rapport with their client. This may take a few sessions to build trust to such an extent that the next steps can usefully be operationalized within a 7C’s context. These next two steps are to Set an outcome and Open up the client’s model of their world. However how the therapist or coach goes about this is quite specific within the 7C’s frame.

As one can see from figure 2, 7C’s refers to two sets of ideas. Firstly, any well-formed outcome must exist within one of 7 Contexts, so eliciting the context specifically and emphasizing the importance of context is one aspect of 7C’s work. Secondly, when working within that Context, 7 process variables must be effectively addressed, each of these variables begins with the letter “C”. In order to elicit each of these 7 process variables in just one of 7 Contexts, therapy proceeds to open up the client’s model of their world with the intention of clarifying first of all what their outcome is and then assist in reframing their internal model of the world, with specific reference to the chosen context, so as to effortlessly move towards that outcome.

Two questionnaires are completed before the first session by the client to provide the therapist with an idea of both context of the Well Formed Outcome (WFO) and personality of the client. These questionnaires go by the names Core Code (Context Of Revised Effort & Context Of Development of Excellence) and Alter Ego (Achieving Lives Team Effort Role & Enhancing Generative Outcomes).

“CORE” alludes to the basic process of therapy which is recognizing the client’s revised effort towards excellent mental health will always be within a context. “CODE” alludes to the fact that such a shift towards being the best version of themselves will be experiential as well as cognitive and behavioral and often results in what can be regarded as a fundamental shift in personality within said context of WFO. 7C’s thus takes a situational perspective (Mischel, 1968, 1973) regarding personality, and expects and encourages personality change throughout the process of therapy, especially within the context of the WFO being worked on.

“ALTER” refers to the basic reality that whatever goal the client wishes to achieve he/she will need to achieve it in the context of being a team member. None of us achieve in isolation, we will always find in our journey to our WFO we need to interact with other people and elicit from them the appropriate responses to garner their support. A big part of obtaining this support is recognizing that we too need to associate into an appropriate Resourceful emotional state and Establish rapport with the people whose support we need. If from a personality perspective the prospective supporter has a totally different set of personality characteristics, it is our job to authentically Establish rapport with such a person through identifying and matching those Meta Programs (MP), to use NLP language. The more our client can learn how to authentically generate this internal flexibility, the more he/she will be able to flow in their relationships, dove-tail outcomes and quite literally Enhance Generative Outcomes for all stakeholders in these relationships, which is what the EGO stands for.

Figure 2. 7 process variables within the 7 Contexts (Grimley, 2020)



- Clarity
- Confidence/Congruence
- Capability
- Creativity/Courage
- Commitment
- Climate
- Communication
- Context of you and:
- People very close to you
- Work colleagues
- Interpersonal skills
- Career
- Money
- Health
- Relaxation

An acronym building on the well-known SMART framework (Doran, 1981), from management coaching, has been created to assist in this process of ensuring each of the 7 process variables in figure 2 are achieved and integrated into therapy or coaching. 7C’s insists that any WFO must include a tick in the box for each letter in the acronym; “SMACTEPPOMF” (Grimley, 2013, 2020). This builds throughout the therapy or coaching session in such a way that any WFO has ecology and thus sustainability built into it, and it does so by addressing many creative, holistic, affective and right brain characteristics which are not present in the SMART framework. Specifically, “SMACTEPPOMF” stands for:

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Chunk size appropriate, Time-frame acknowledged, Ecology, Positive, Preservation of what is currently positive and valued, Ownership, Motivation, Future pacing of what is consistently possible in a congruent and authentic way.

When developing 7C’s (Grimley, 2002, 2005), what the author was keen to discover was whether any of the original 8 specific contexts which he had found to be significant in therapy and coaching were specifically correlated to personal stress or distress. In a series of principle component statistical analyses, he found that the only context which was reliably associated with stress and distress was the client’s relationship with themselves. 8 contextual themes thus became 7 Contextual themes, with each of the 7 Contextual themes being subordinate to the key superordinate theme, which was the client’s relationship to themselves. 7C’s assumes it is at this deepest neurological level, in the relationship not so much with our self, but rather our multiple selves within multiple contexts, that we need to develop first of all strategies for access, but then consequently flexibility in the moment as a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world unfolds around us. It is this deepest level that Ernst Hilgard (1977) termed “The Hidden Observer”.

The statistical weightings of the Core Code items into the one factor solution can be seen below in table 1 and the replication analysis 12 years later in table 2.

Table 1. One Factor Solution, Principal Component Analysis of 7Cs Model (Grimley, 2005). N=200

1. I feel very good about myself every day of the week (0.72).
2. When I think of my future, I can see many exciting tasks to be accomplished (0.74).
3. I often take corrective action when my life does not go according to plan (0.71).
4. I am very sure of myself (0.71).
5. I am confident I have what it takes to achieve my goals in life (0.78).

Table 2. Replication analysis with similar One Factor solution of 7Cs Model (Grimley, 2017). N=200

1. When I think of my future, I can see many exciting tasks to be accomplished (0.77).
2. I feel I control my destiny (0.75).
3. I often take corrective action when my life does not go according to plan (0.73).
4. I am very sure of myself (0.73).
5. I very rarely feel anxious (0.72).
6. I am confident I have what it takes to achieve my goals in life (0.78).

The key context of Relationship with Self

As can be seen from Tables 1 and 2 above, the only one of 8 original contexts which was reliably associated with a felt experience of stress was “relationship with self”. Thus, as the therapist opens up the world of the client with the intention of first of all discovering what he/she wants in what context, and then consequently helps them reframe their internal world to facilitate a smooth journey to their WFO, the actual focus is not so much on the WFO, nor indeed the context, but rather the **client’s relationship to themselves** in the context of that WFO and indeed to the WFO itself. The aim of 7C’s coaching is nicely summed up by a client with her permission:

“I have experienced more and more some of the thoughts, senses, and emotions that quite frankly I had forgotten, or could no longer access. For this only, I am truly grateful to you. But you have gone further than that and have given me the knowledge and tools **to be** whatever I want **to be** and that in its self is a stupendous gift, for you to give and me to use.” (*my emphasis*).
(Fiona Phipps, Grimley, 2020, p. 134).

A fundamental principle of 7C’s is the Humanistic idea that as an organism, when whole and balanced, the human being can access their own resources and move with ease and elegance towards their outcome. Their relationship with themselves and their levels of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) inevitably will be very high in these circumstances. Thus, calibration to the client and supporting them to feel efficacious and confident within the context they bring to therapy as they focus on the particular WFO being worked on is key within 7C’s. Accessing a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) within 7C’s coaching is the aim. Not just flow in terms of executing a performance, but flow as well in terms of learning how to learn. Put specifically, learning how to navigate their own internal structures and feel confident in developing the ability to change those internal structures at a deep unconscious level when they need to do this in the future, as well as in the present with what they bring to therapy.

The 7C’s frame thus sets up therapeutic sessions with a strong boundary and a solution-oriented frame (De Shazer, 1988; O’Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989). Often the client, when working within the context he/she brings to therapy, recognizes that the resource from which he/she has become disconnected is readily available to them within another context. When this happens, 7C’s uses

behavioral modelling to facilitate a process where the client will model themselves in the resourceful context so as to develop, through that modelling who they can more effectively be in relationship to themselves and to others in the unresourceful context. Consequently, for example, a director of a company who is tense when presenting to the board, after modelling how he successfully communicates within his family context naturally and with ecology, finds he can now communicate with the board in a relaxed, confident and influential way.

Such a therapeutic orientation borrows heavily from the work of Watkins and Watkins (1997), and recognizes each moment of our day is filled with many contexts and, indeed, if we wish to be the very best version of ourselves within each of those contexts, we cannot operate from a default personality which we call our true self. Rather each individual needs the requisite variety of internal personalities to authentically discharge their well-rehearsed strategies in each context. Within the individual we invariably find changing the simple behavior and strategy is not enough. In order to be the very best version of themselves these behavioral and cognitive activities need to be incorporated into an ecological system which has at an unconscious level a set of beliefs, values and an identity as well as a purpose embodied, so the cognitive and behavioral activities elegantly flow from within a more complex system when triggered (Bateson, 1972; Dilts, 1990). Authenticity and personal excellence can only be achieved by quite literally being somebody else at the level of identity in each of the 7 life contexts.

In the film “The Next 3 Days”, when Russel Crowe is interviewing and modelling a prisoner who has escaped from prison 7 times, with the intention of learning how to successfully break his wife out of prison, the exemplar takes him through all the things he needs to know and to do; the timings, the contexts, the key players, the equipment and resources, the skills, as well as the consequences of failure. As Crowe records him on audio and takes all this information in, the exemplar points out the very first thing Crowe needs to do is ask himself if he can do this. After listing all the things Crowe needs to do, some of which are quite horrible, the exemplar emphasizes that, in order to do these things, this is who you must **become** and advises strongly that if he cannot **become** this person, he should not start. Sustainability and success for any WFO in therapy or coaching is thus within 7C’s invariably configured at the highest of Dilt’s (1990) neurological levels, and that is at the levels of purpose and identity; everything else flows from there. Almost every parent working from home will have had the experience of talking in motherese to their child and as soon as the

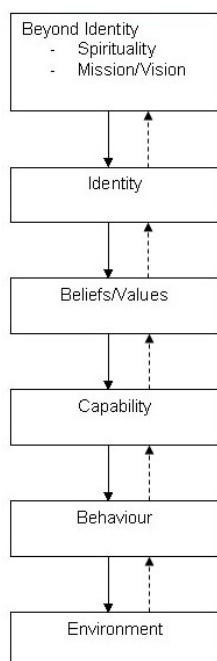
business telephone rings changing in an instant to a competent and focused managing director dissociating from their intimate relationship with their child.

It is this experience which 7C's attempts to facilitate, however at the same time one does not wish to encourage Dissociative Identity Disorder. In order to be clear about precisely who you are, what you value, what your core beliefs are and what your purpose is within a particular context is very difficult and can take a lot of work, or, as Ericsson (2016) calls it, Deliberate Practice, over a long period of time.

However, in the experience of the author not many people are prepared to put in this internal work. It is because of this lack of work that often when clients come into therapy or coaching, the problem is not a lack of resourcefulness, rather it is an inability to access and organize that resourcefulness in an appropriate way in respect to the context within which the client wishes to operate. 7C's expands upon the definition of stress of Cooper and Palmer (2000), adding the variable of importance, and claims that stress is "When expectation exceeds a person's perception of capability in an *area of importance*" (Grimley, 2005, p. 2).

Thus, the opposite of stress is not relaxation as many people think, rather it is a perception of capability, which then results in relaxation. To use Bandura's terminology (1977), this is self-efficacy, which in the therapeutic literature has shown to be conversely correlated with shame, something often clients bring into the therapeutic context (Baldwin, Baldwin & Ewald, 2006).

Figure 3. Neuro-Logical Levels (Dilts, 1990)



So often the client generally believes there is some unspecified ghost in the machine which they vaguely refer to as the Self and that this Self somehow manages to do a good enough job in a variety of contexts in order to get by, however does not have the capacity to notch performance up a level within a particular context when needed and that is why they enter the therapeutic arena. 7C's as a therapeutic and coaching frame would agree entirely with the words of Buckminster Fuller:

“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete” (Sieden, 2011, p. 358).

The new model which 7C's insists is necessary is a model that not only incorporates change at the deepest level of the Hidden Observer (Hilgard, 1977), within each context, but a model that equips the client with the ability to re-structure appropriate changes themselves in the future so they never need to become dependent upon a therapist again. Simple cognitive and behavioral change is not enough, the change needs to be totally systemic and needs to incorporate the deepest levels of identity and purpose in order to be both sustainable and satisfying.

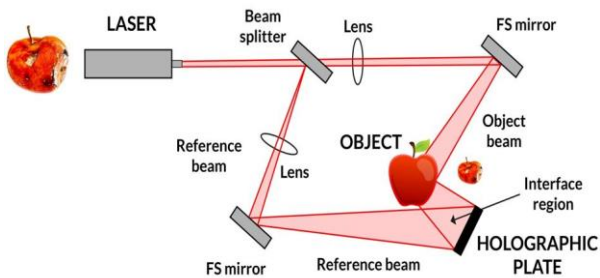
Historical Content which leads to embedded process

In 7C's one finds that invariably at the deeper levels of their neurology the client has content, which has put in place systemically anchored processes, often referred to as Meta Programs (MP) in NLP, or Personality in academic psychology, which are triggered through the process of stimulus generalization. Tompkins and Lawley (1997) make the point that NLP has prided itself on working with structure and not content and has mostly ignored the symbolic meaning of the content of subjective experience. In their work, through modelling David Grove, they recognize the importance of symbolic meaning of content, with symbol and metaphor being the focus of their therapeutic and coaching work. However, with 7C's, whilst acknowledging the truth of this, Personality factors are also regarded as abstract and symbolic metaphors which, though content free, have their origin in content. An MP or personality trait has been likened to the reference beam in an optical hologram (Durlinger & Hustinx, 2010). This is quite appropriate because the reference beam is content free, it by passes the object entirely and the resultant holographic image is only brought into being through interference between the reference beam and the object beam (figure 4). For

example, a healthy apple in the outside and “objective” world can be perceived as a rotten piece of fruit by a client who has had anxiety producing experiences with fruit in the past, triggering a strong “Away from” MP in this context.

The metaphor of a hologram is more appropriate than the normal metaphor of a filter because in an experiential and embodied way the client, in 7C’s, is regarded as responsible for constructing the hologram through which he/she experiences the world as a result of stimulus generalization from the past.

Figure 4. Projection of unhealthy content from the past onto healthy present content



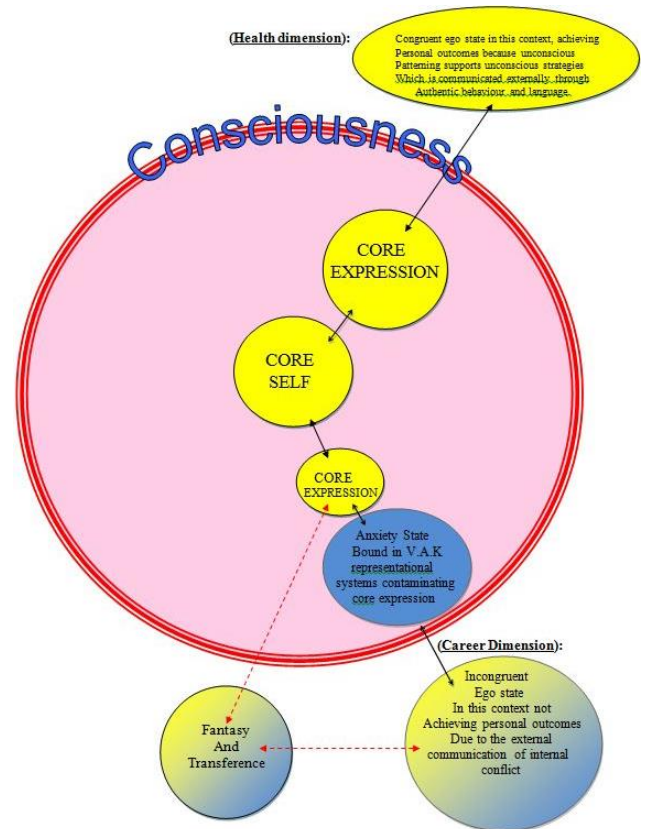
7C’s thus, with a strong constructivist orientation, places responsibility for the creation of the maps which mediate our experience of the real world fairly and squarely on the client. Even though 7C’s will work with metaphor extensively to understand and explicate the implicit content from the past which is generating limiting beliefs, so it will also work with Meta Programs as well, for the same purpose. As with all therapists who work in a process-oriented way it is of course **not** necessary to talk about this content, or even fully bring it to conscious awareness, however to acknowledge it and work with it and around it is absolutely essential.

Whatever content has created the cluster of personality processes and metaphors to effectively deal with the situation in the past, this content must be touched upon, in order, to use Kurt Lewin’s expression, to “Unfreeze” the system (Lewin, 1947). When “Unfrozen” the therapist then, with the client, reframes the experience, co-creating resources at critical points and then appropriately developing and “Refreezing” who the client needs to be in order to achieve the outcome agreed during the process of therapy. The processes being used will depend upon the modality you practice from. It would be anchoring to use NLP language, or conditioning to use psychological language. Of course, 7C’s being both holistic and systemic in nature does not accept in the above hypothetical case one can, at the level of strategy and capability, develop a set of behaviors within the context of

eating fruit without addressing the deeper levels from which personality flows and which invariably have their origin in content. This is the finding which is consistent with the reconsolidation of traumatic memories which demonstrates memories must be touched upon in order to render them labile and subject to alteration, even if for only a moment, to ensure the therapist is working with the correct experiential system (Gray & Bourke, 2015).

The author once had a client referred to him for PTSD following a fatal road traffic accident. However, during the initial sessions, even though the client was presenting with many markers for PTSD, using his experience, the author suspected this trauma was not of a type that had its origins in the content of a road traffic accident. As he continued to work in a process oriented and content free way the client burst into tears and said she had been sexually molested and raped at 12 years old and had never got over this as her mother was not supportive at all and was even antagonistic to her. The identity of somebody who has been raped is very different from the identity of someone who has been in a fatal road traffic accident, and using the 7C’s frame the author needed to assist in the rebuilding of an identity of a young lady who had been raped, before he could work with the older lady who had been in the road traffic accident.

Figure 5. The dynamic 7C’s framework



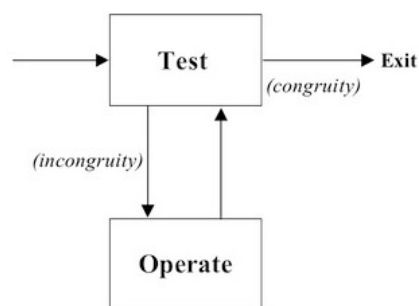
Even though the above case was clearly traumatic, when using the 7C's as a framework in which to deliver psychotherapy or coaching, even coaching clients are perceived to have content in the past which are introjects of a negative nature preventing the natural human experience of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). In figure 5 above, these introjects, which are heavily content laden, are known within the 7C's frame as "The blues". It is hypothesized that the number of blues in each of the important life contexts and the size of such blues is directly correlated with the amount of anxiety and depression experienced by the client in each context.

As 7C's has emerged from an interest in the psychology of excellence, the model recognizes the work of Ericsson (2016), who points out that, in order to become competent at the level of expert performance in any context or domain, one needs considerable devotion to deliberate practice over a number of many years. This is the process of attending in detail to small improvements and developing marginal gains incrementally over a long period of time. In terms of personality theory this is personified most closely by the dimension of conscientiousness in the Big 5 (Costa & McCrae, 1992). As mentioned above, often it is not a lack of resourcefulness that the client faces, but rather a lack of conscientiousness in regards to accessing and re-organizing their internal resources into such a structure that unconsciously supports their WFO rather than consistently sabotages it... To work in a process-oriented way within the 7C's frame to achieve this aim is the job of a 7C's therapist or coach.

As well as navigating the Neuro-Logical Level model of Dilts (1990), 7C's also makes liberal use of the TOTE model, by Miller, Galanter and Pribram (1960), to supplement the meaning making process of classical conditioning which goes by the name of anchoring.

Where as in the affective behavioral model a dog will salivate when a bell rings, a more cognitively oriented dog would create a series of if-then models and test his operations against his WFO to obtain some steak, working within a cone of probabilities until he has a perfect internalized model which can ensure being fed with such delicious food on a regular basis. Being at cause within the cognitive TOTE, is always within the context of being at effect as predicted by the Classical conditioning paradigm, and sorting this out so the unconscious anchoring matches the more pre-conscious cognitive strategies and the automatic behaviors within any context is the bread and butter of working with the 7C's model.

Figure 6. TOTE model (Miller, Galanter & Pribram, 1960)



Distal Trauma in the 7C's Framework

An interesting comment was made by a psychologist in regard to the popular paradigm for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Eye Movement Desensitization (EMDR), concerning not only the lack of promised results of EMDR, but also warning against using such a paradigm in a context other than PTSD for which it had National Institute for health and Care Excellence (NICE)'s recommendation. Gurnani (2014) cites McNally (2009), who talks about conceptual bracket creep where ordinary stressors are regarded as traumatic, in which case "nearly everyone in the USA would count as a trauma survivor" (Gurnani, 2014, p. 638). However, if the reader looks at figure 5, will see that this is precisely what 7C's suggests and indeed the persistent and stubborn presence of high and rising mental ill health figures around the world would provide a form of distal evidence for this. The World Health Organization said in 2001:

"In the World Health Report 2001 that we devote to mental health, we bring updated figures which show that four of the ten leading causes of disability worldwide are neuropsychiatric disorders, accounting for 30.8% of total disability and 12.3% of the total burden of disease. This latter figure is expected to rise to 15% by the year 2020." (p. 6)

As infants we start as human beings and we express ourselves freely, however "the blues" enter our lives through the socialization process in a variety of contexts. Even within birth, Natelson and Sayers (1973) found over 50% of a sample of 42 infants suffering head trauma at birth were handicapped 13 years later; 14% mildly handicapped and 43% had died or were severely handicapped. It is at these formative times we become interrupted in our flow and generate introjects which do not sit well with us, like undigested bits of food, they are

within us, but not really a part of us. It is in this sense 7C's would very much concur with Otto Rank (1929), who suggested all humans suffer trauma by virtue of being born and of the inevitable physical and psychic separation we suffer at birth from our mother. Rank believed that the physical event of birth, where the infant moves from a state of harmony and union with the mother into a state of separation from the mother, indeed was "traumatic". We may not be able to articulate how and when these traumas formed, either at birth or in our later formative years, however we know in certain contexts, when such introjects (blues) are triggered, through sensing (Gendlin, 1996), that they exist and they prevent us from existing in the moment in an authentic and flow like manner. At these moments we move from being at cause to being at effect. This is probably most concisely expressed in "The 7C's of Coaching", by Grimley (2020, p. 161-162).

"...at the time a normal person first experienced the blues and stopped being authentically who they are, from a phenomenological perspective that was a trauma. It may have been simply told by a respected other, 'you are no good', or 'children should be seen and not heard', or not picked for the football team, or being laughed at during prom night, but in the moment, that was a trauma and those memories linger in the system texturing nascent self-belief with an understanding you can never really succeed because of these events in the past. In fact, it is the total opposite – you can only succeed when you recognize in the midst of those recollections and the representations created at the time the blues came into existence back in the day, you now have choice to be somebody different. In 7C's coaching you have the opportunity to reconnect with who you were before you introjected or assimilated the blues. In this most fundamental way 7C's is a mechanism to assist a coachee connect with who they are and who they always have been throughout their entire life."

One can see how the 7C's frame all fits together in figure 7 and even though it is in the very early stages

of development, it is hoped that in time robust patterns can be developed to work with a range of clients with specific DSM V disorders, as well as clients from specific niche markets within the coaching world.

Figure 7. 7C's structure and content



This section on the development of 7C's has been kept quite brief and has not touched upon the psychology of identity formation, multi-tasking and task switching which is very relevant to 7C's and the psychology of excellence. Neither has it expanded upon the psychology of ego-state therapy from which the model is primarily developed. This work is for academic consideration as the model develops and is tested within various contexts. For the purposes of this paper the author simply wishes to give the reader a sense of how the model fits together, how boundaries are created to differentiate it from other approaches, and explaining a simple step by step approach as to how a therapist would conduct themselves when using the 7C's frame to conduct a series of therapeutic sessions.

As in most cases it is probably best to use a case history to exemplify in real life how the 7C's frame works. In the following case history, permission has been granted and names and locations have been changed to protect the identity of the client. Interestingly the client was so delighted with the outcome of his therapy that he was not concerned with anonymity and sent the following humorous email to the author in response to an email requesting such publication permission:

"Hello Bruce, I confirm, as promised, that you have my unreserved permission to use our sessions and my history as a case study, and to publish any aspect that is useful in your future

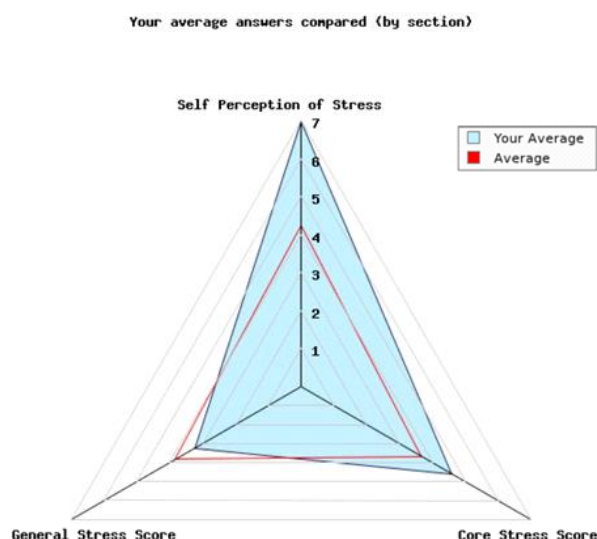
publications. However: Susan has interjected, to say that if you produce a film, then she would like her role to be played by Meryl Streep. All the best 😊 David.”

III. Case Study

David was a senior executive at a technology company and had recently suffered a difficult divorce and was presenting with thoughts of suicide, loneliness and emptiness.

David kindly completed both Alter Ego and Core Code after our first session which was used to build rapport and explain the 7C’s frame and methods used within that frame. His profiles can be seen in figures 8 and 9.

Figure 8. Core Code response set for David, 20th July 2020 (N=263)

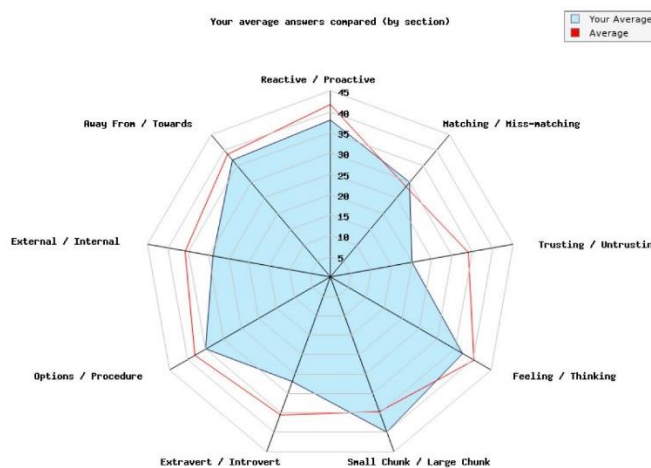


What was interesting about David’s response set was whereas understandably his perception of stress was very high, the general stress score, which is taken from across all 7 contexts and also considers various well known stress variables such as locus of control (Rotter, 1966), was in fact below the mean. However, significantly for the 7C’s framework, David’s score for the core stress, which consisted of the 5 items in Table 1 above and which was an indication of his relationship with himself, was, like his perception of stress, very high.

Looking at the Alter Ego response set in figure 9 provided the author with an understanding of key personality processes. Nothing really stood out for the

author in looking at this profile, however a Reactive (being at effect) and an “Away From” (moving away from motivation rather than moving towards motivation) stood out as possible areas of investigation within a frame work which is essentially solution oriented and focused on providing a flow state for clients.

Figure 9. Alter Ego Response set for David, 20th July 2020 (N=801)

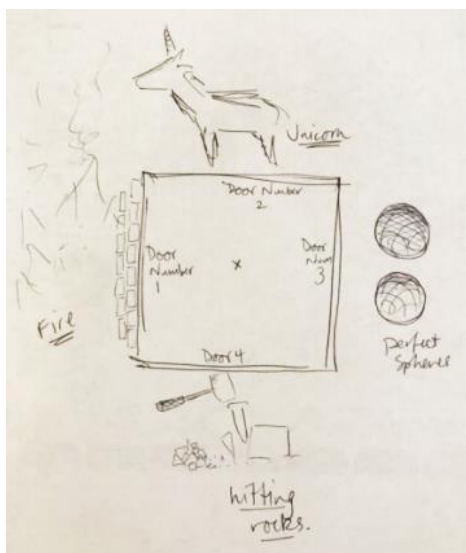


In developing rapport further with David, it seemed he was having difficulty in articulating exactly what the problem was. Despite providing a “Feeling” profile on Alter Ego he reported having difficulty in accessing and articulating his feelings. He pointed out he had got into a very strong vicious circle, and although he could tell it was damaging (weight loss and some functional impairment), he felt he did not have the tools to stop it, and he sensed that it could not get much worse before it had serious consequences. David reported a feeling of emptiness and a sense of comfort from blaming/ punishing himself and speculated this might be due to a lack of control over all other aspects of life. A psychotherapist had helped him through a divorce in 2019 and had suggested to David that the difficulties he may be having might be “more deeply engrained and pre-dating the divorce”.

As David was having difficulty in expressing himself verbally concerning exactly what he was feeling, the author requested as a task that David would draw exactly what it was, not paying consideration to artistic competence, but simply doing the best he could to express what he was feeling through pictures and whatever came out would be incredibly useful and valid. David produced 2 pictures which can be seen in figures 10a and 11 below.

As can be seen in figure 10a, David represented himself with a very small x in the middle of a room with 4 doors. Explaining the figure David told the author that behind door 1 was the fury of his ex-wife, behind door 2 was a unicorn that represented his new girlfriend, behind door 3 were his 2 children represented as perfect spheres, and behind door 4 was a hammer and chisel, chiseling into rock and this represented his workplace, a place which was good for him and which he really enjoyed. This set up a series of sessions where David acknowledged in his representation of himself in the context of intimate relationships he was effectively walling himself off from his new girl-friend and his children which he had access to 3 days out of 7 during the week.

**Figure 10a. Expression of David's Feeling (1),
28th July 2020**



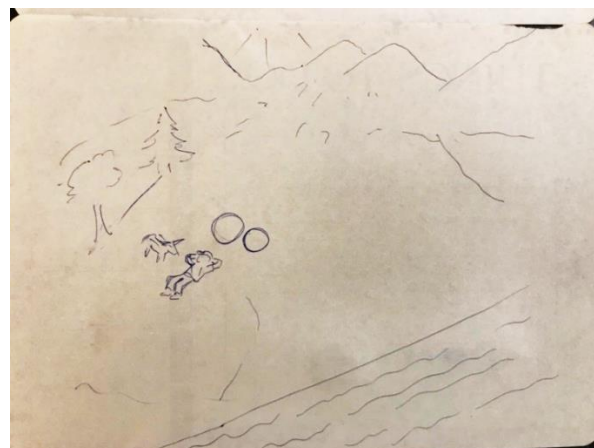
Also, David represented himself as very small and in terms of an “x” in relationship to all of the other stakeholders in his life. We discussed whether or not that it was surprising he felt empty when indeed he was in a room, walled off from key contexts in his life and living there totally by himself.

David had contracted for 10 sessions as a private client and for 3 of these sessions we did a lot of sub-modality work changing how David represented key relationships. He began to delete the “Fury of his wife” after doing an ecology check to make sure there were no secondary gains to be had by continuing to focus on that, and David began to represent himself as a real human being rather than a

small x. The reader might get a sense of how these representations changed by looking at figure 10b, which was drawn half way through the 10 sessions and after session 5. The reader will see the fury of his ex-wife is no longer present and David is relaxing in the countryside with his children and his new girlfriend by his side.

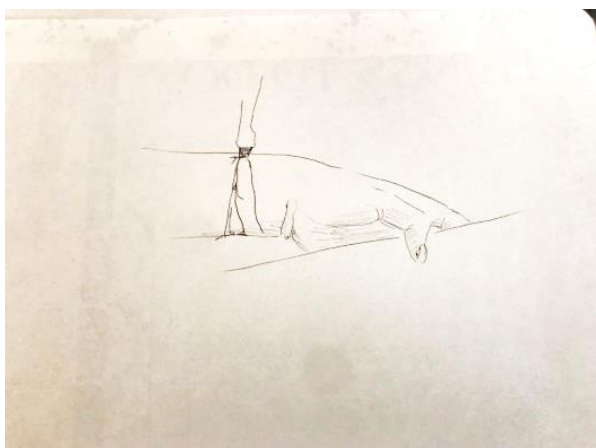
What was very interesting during this case was how Alter-Ego returned a high feeling MP for the client, however when talking with him, and in keeping with somebody who had a doctorate in engineering, in fact he was a very high thinking person and in fact this was his default MP. What transpired to be the case was that in addressing the presenting problem of emptiness, David had been encouraged to develop the feeling side, so as to be able to represent his relationships in a more kinesthetic and associated position.

**Figure 10b. Expressions of David's feelings after session 5,
21st August 2020**



This would of course address the feelings of emptiness. However, what he had not been able to do in previous therapeutic sessions was to examine and thus appreciate that “the fury of his wife” belonged to his wife and did not belong to him. Indeed, by focusing on this fury and representing it in a kinesthetic way was the very internal model that compelled David to draw figure 11 below, which was quite worrying. An assessment was carried out to ensure that these feelings of suicide would not transfer into actual attempts, but understanding and examining respective responsibilities for respective emotional states, whether very negative or very positive was key, in order to allow David to create representations in his own life that would eliminate the negative and accentuate the positive putting him into a more “towards” orientation.

Figure 11. 2nd drawing of David at the beginning of therapy, 28th July 2020




The 5 sessions after the production of the drawing in figure 10b were aimed at goal setting in terms of specific tasks in the context of his career, with his new girlfriend and his two children. Each of the SMACTEPPOMF process variables were ticked off in these goal setting exercises, ensuring the 7C process variables were addressed in the context of intimate relationships and career, which were the two key contexts needing to be addressed in this intervention.

David returned to his default Thinking MP in a follow-up Alter Ego administration and he now returned a proactive (at cause) profile rather than a reactive one. Despite having thinking as his default, David now knew that in the appropriate contexts he could access very positive and rewarding feelings to ensure his life was never experienced as empty again. He was encouraged to use techniques from both mindfulness and appreciative inquiry to essentially assist him to recognize these new feelings and this new life is something which needed to be worked on during a daily basis. David needed to be both appreciative and mindful of the wonderful career he had, the lovely new girlfriend he had and the excellent relationship he had with his two children, processing this in a “feeling” way rather than a “thinking” way, enhanced the experience. Comically, during a board meeting at work on one occasion, a butterfly came into the meeting and David uncharacteristically came out of his high thinking and strategic way of representing the world and pointed out to the board how beautiful the butterfly was and how difficult it was to predict its trajectory around the room. Fortunately, as David held a very high position in the company, this did not adversely affect his career,

however a discussion about ecology and triggering appropriate states for appropriate contexts was had. Indeed, as in many successful therapeutic interventions it was this characteristic conscientiousness of David which brought the intervention to a successful conclusion after 10 sessions with his stress levels as measured on Core Code reducing to below the mean for self-perception of stress, Core stress and general stress. In the final wash-up the feedback via email was very positive and ratings with comments by David can be seen in figure 12 below. The only poor rating was that of suitability of therapeutic environment and this was due to the whole intervention needing to be done remotely via Zoom because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The use of the word coaching in the feedback form rather than therapy is an interesting discussion (Bachkirova & Cox, 2005), however feasibly many people from a Corporate environment do not like the idea that they need to go for therapy. But being able to talk about having an executive coach allows them to have a one-to-one intervention that produces good and sustainable benefits, yet frames the work in such a way that is acceptable to them.

Figure 12. Feedback of Psychotherapy, 26th November 2020

Name: Dr David  Date 9th October 2020

COACHING FEEDBACK FORM

PLEASE RATE FROM 1 TO 10 AS YOU FEEL APPROPRIATE:

Please highlight or underline responses below that apply to you. 1=Terrible, 10=Excellent

- Suitability of coaching environment. 3 (*online is the only option right now, but is not as good as in person*)
- Explanation of coaching process. 10 (*very open!*)
- Use of questionnaires / psychological models when appropriate. 10
- Usefulness of coaching exercises. 8
- Professionalism of service. 10
- Relevance of Coaching to meet your needs. 8
- Value for Money. 10 (*most notably, I appreciate that you go “above and beyond”*)
- Ethical Conduct of Coach. 10
- Did you achieve what you wanted from coaching? 10
- Where questions answered satisfactorily. 10
- Learning Culture Produced. 10
- Would you recommend a friend to this coaching practice? 9
- Level of support throughout coaching intervention. 10 (*you are very committed, and I appreciate that*)
- Pace of coaching intervention. 9 (*very good – at times I wondered about speeding up, but would immediately get stumped, e.g. with mindfulness!*)
- Level of belief that gains created are sustainable? 10 (*mindfulness, paying attention to all contexts, joy of small goals, experiencing feelings to make memories, and the various psychological profile measurements... oh, and Susan's return to the UK!*)

IV. Conclusion

This paper has introduced a new framework which developed out of NLP and is hoped will contribute to the academic literature in the future. It is recognized a lot of work needs to be done in order to continue to contribute in a useful way and that development of this framework in a scientific way using both qualitative and quantitative methods is essential. However, using a single case to qualitatively demonstrate the possible utility of the 7C's frame described in this paper is what hopefully has been achieved here.

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