



wilderness expertise

**Personal Development Courses
Trainers Handbook**



Personal Development

What does this mean? How do we 'do' it? Why should we 'do' it?

The 'WHY'

In order to be able to examine a concept, we first need to be able to define it. Once we have a definition, we can work towards conceptualising the parameters; i.e., "what does this mean for us, and how do we do it?" The only tricky thing is that, in fact, there is no single definition of the term, which makes it very difficult for us to be practitioners of something that is only loosely tangible. There is nothing in the Dictionary, so a quick search on the Internet brings up the following:

"Personal development covers activities that improve awareness and identity, develop talents and potential, build human capital and facilitate employability, enhance the quality of life and contribute to the realization of dreams and aspirations. ... Improving self-awareness. Improving self-knowledge". (Wikipedia)

"Personal Development is the conscious pursuit of personal growth by expanding self-awareness and knowledge and improving personal skills". (Myrko Thum).

A little bit clearer? Perhaps. What is apparent is that Personal Development (PD) is seen as some sort of growth of a person. Even without a strict definition, we MUST each be clear about WHY we are doing PD. WHY is it important? WHY do we need to understand it? WHY should we care?

Reflect for a moment on what PD means to you. How would you define it? How do YOU 'do' it? What impact do you think PD has on a person? How do you know when someone has been through PD?

What is important is that we understand that it is our job to make a positive difference to the young people in our care, whether we are with them for an hour's activity, DofE training over a number of years, or a month-long expedition. A *positive difference*: That means that we arm them with something beneficial that they didn't have before. The list of learning outcomes from outdoor experiences is very long, and covers everything from a participant's physical ability, their academic achievement, right through to their self-confidence and self-esteem.



What do you think are the outcomes of outdoor learning? What do wilderness expertise you hope that participants gain from being involved?

Summary: What does PD mean in practice? What are we trying to do? Be clear on what it is you are trying to achieve, and work towards that. Be specific about what you want the participants to achieve (i.e., don't try and latch on to every outcome known to man. Be selective).

The 'WHAT'

Once we become clear about our goals for each activity (or for the overall activity, e.g., an expedition), it is helpful to have some tools to hand that can inform our practice. For example, we may need to educate our charges about 'communication', but how do we do that?

Certainly we need to understand the topic, and nothing can shortcut this. It is our duty to educate ourselves first. This means personal research and reading time. Augmenting our CPD so that we become better informed, and, therefore, better able to teach to others.

What do you currently know about PD outcomes? Where do feel that you need to learn more? What could you do about this?

Although the outcomes of outdoor experiences are many, there are some that are focused on above others. It may first help to separate some of the outcomes into those that we can directly impact and educate about, and those that will be outcomes of developing other outcomes. Confused?!

Take, for example, self-esteem. Apart from investing in their safety, what could possibly be more important than raising a participant's belief in their own worth? Now, to directly impact self-esteem is actually very tricky. For a start, science recognises no less than *thirteen* different types of self-esteem: general, physical, peer relations, parent relations, academic ability, religion and spirituality, etc., etc. This means that our efforts contribute to 13 different areas all at once, or not at all, depending how relevant the experience is.

In order to 'tap' any of these domains, there are a number of things that have to happen: supportive learning, role modelling, self-belief, repeated efficacy in a task or situation, reward and justification for achieving something, what other people say, and whether or not the participant actually believes such a things as 'success'. It has to have a drip-drip effect over time. For example, in order to boost their self-esteem in academic ability, they would need to have undergone supported and supportive learning from their primary carers, then throughout school, plus the support of peers, then success at achieving tests/answering questions correctly/receiving good reports, and so on.



If we take some of the other outcomes, such as Communication, **wilderness** expertise Teamwork and Leadership, these are much easier to impact. We can teach people facts about these things; we can observe it and feedback about it. It is both less personal, and less complex for us to work on.

Reflect on how you feel about some of these different outcomes. Would you be comfortable trying to work on someone's self-esteem? Would you feel comfortable talking about communication? What could you do to feel better about this?

As a starting point, I will elaborate on three outcomes that seem to be most popular for clients.

Leadership

If we look up the definition of leadership in a dictionary, it doesn't take long to find out that actually there is no real definition of the word 'lead'. It simply says 'the action of taking charge or leading'. Hmm, well that's not very helpful, because now it's really subjective. What you and I think leadership means could be wildly different. Now, if two outdoor professionals, often in a leadership position, can have two different interpretations of what leadership means, how are we supposed to educate people who have no experience of it at all?

Simple, we don't define it. Instead, we look at how it works in action; we look at why it is important.

Leadership has many styles and faces, and we simply have to be able to explain where some styles are useful, and where they are not. We have to point out that the *role* of leadership is more important than who they are. For example, in a task that requires a successful outcome, let's say transporting an injured casualty with a suspected neck or back injury, we need one clear, commanding and reassuring voice to talk us through the lifting and carrying stages. We are relying on someone else to 'take charge'.

It is our idea of how important that person is that skews our understanding of the role. There are definitely two camps of thought. A) A leader is powerful and strong and shouts the loudest and leads the troops into battle, B) A leader has a huge responsibility and it doesn't matter how loud or powerful they are.

Bear with me when I ask you to try and agree to work towards the B) version for our courses. I can spend weeks telling you why, but in brief – leaders who build rapport and use emotional appeals encourage their followers to perform beyond their own expectations (Bass, 1985). It is not the power of the leader; it is their understanding that they *serve* the follower.

"The goal of many leaders is to get people to think more highly of the leader. The goal of a great leader is to help people to think more highly of themselves." - J. Carla Northcutt



Now we start to understand that leadership is actually about serving **wilderness** expertise people, it may be easier to explain this to our delegates. In other words: When the leader in an injured casualty carry takes command, it is not for the glory (we hope), it is not to be all-powerful; no, it is to undertake the biggest responsibility for the group, it is the acceptance that they must face the consequences if it goes wrong, and it is about making it easier for the rest of the group to do their job. The leader, in fact, facilitates...

After more than 100 years of research into leadership, one model that has been demonstrated to be effective across cultures, countries and demographics is that of Transformational Leadership. Many years later, and the research has examined transformational leadership in the context of overseas personal development expeditions. Again, it proved effective here.

“Transformational leaders motivate followers to achieve performance beyond expectations by transforming followers’ attitudes, beliefs, and values as opposed to simply gaining compliance”

(Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1999)

Transformational Leadership can be defined by the following seven behaviours (Hardy et al., 2010):

1. Giving praise and recognition when it is due; being constructive with feedback; guiding followers to improve their performance.
2. Recognising the uniqueness of each individual follower; treating them according to individual needs.
3. Encouraging each follower to think for him/herself; challenging followers to solve problems by themselves.
4. Inspiring and encouraging followers so they can, and want to, achieve their best.
5. Encouraging each follower to want to work as part of a team, and towards shared team goals; putting team needs before ‘self’.
6. Setting and exemplifying high standards; expecting the individual to always give maximum effort.
7. Behaving in a consistently appropriate way that fosters the same behaviour amongst the followers; being beyond reproach.

At Wilderness Expertise this model of leadership is expressed as the **TRAINER’s** code:

1. **T**ake time to give due praise and feedback
2. **R**espond accordingly to individual needs
3. **A**llow followers space to develop their own solutions
4. **I**nspire and motivate towards a common vision
5. **N**urture an environment of team-focused goals



6. Expect high standards
7. Role model the behaviours you want to see

We teach this model to all of our staff, and expect them to demonstrate these behaviours in their roles as Trainers, Course Directors, and Expedition Leaders.

Teamwork

Dictionary definition: 'The combined action of a group, especially when effective or efficient'. Okay, so that definition does actually describe something more tangible. The problem we may have is ensuring that our delegates understand this. Often, 'teamwork' is just a word bandied about because the speaker thinks it is the 'correct' answer to the question 'what have we learnt from this activity/task?'

We need to be able to translate to the group that a team is a collective of people working towards a common goal, and our objective is to make that team...work. Teamwork. Let's take the common aim, let's all work towards it in a united fashion, and let's be effective about how we do it. That is how we make the *team* actually *work*.

Actually, teamwork is an umbrella term that encompasses all manner of actions, traits and behaviours. For example, in order for the team to achieve its common goal successfully, we must assume that there is good leadership, effective communication of information, clear parameters of what is trying to be achieved, the ethos behind that, assigned and understood roles, and the unspoken agreement that we will all try our best to get there.

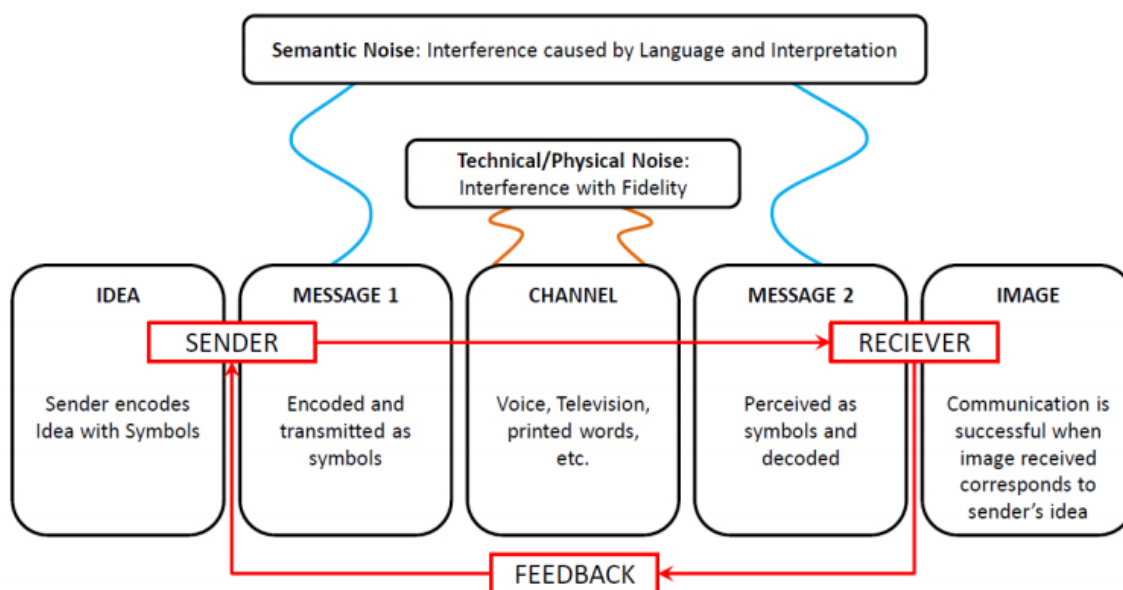
So when a group says the word 'teamwork' in response to any question. It may be worth asking them to list all of the components they think actually makes a *team work*.

Communication

As with 'teamwork', everyone shouts out 'communication' as an example of a learning outcome. What on earth do we mean by this? Our dictionary definition tells us that 'communication is the imparting or exchanging of news'.

Is that all? Is that what we think when we use it in an educational/learning outcome-type-of-way? I suspect not. In fact, for facilitators, the simple transaction of exchanging or giving news is only half the equation. For effective communication to occur, the information given/exchanged must be processed and then understood, and *even better*, there is also demonstration that the information has been received, processed, understood, and then possibly, acted on (see Eric Behrne's (1971) work about 'The Games People Play').

It looks like this (don't be frightened by the posh words, it's simply saying that you have to understand the message the sender gives, in a way that represents what they actually *meant...*):



The Shannon-Weaver model of communication.

We can see then, that effective communication is a process: We think, we send, we receive, we process, we check. Our job is to try and ensure our delegates understand that this is what communication is – the processing and checking part is vital for ensuring that the process is completed. Often, poor

communication happens when we misunderstand (i.e., don't check) the information that was sent to us. How many times have you said or heard "Ohhh, but I thought you *meant* blah blah blah".

Compare the notes with what you already (think you) know. Challenge yourself to learn more, or to re-interpret what you do know. We cannot know everything, and learning develops over time: What we used to know may well have been superseded by new thinking and ideas by now.

The 'HOW'

Importantly, even armed with all of this knowledge, we need to know how to disseminate it. Transfer of knowledge is easy for us, we can simply teach it. If that's the case, though, why do we not teach these things in the classroom? Why outdoors? Why games and trekking?

The most important two words that we really, really have to get our heads fully engaged in are 'EXPERIENTIAL' and 'LEARNING'. If we simply *teach* these ideas, all we are doing is giving information. If we allow participants to *experience* them this adds a personal dimension to the learning. It is unique to the individual, and someone else CANNOT teach this experience.



Further, if we simply *facilitate* (Latin: make easier) the experience, and **wilderness** expertise DO NOT *teach* anything (except maybe how to tie some knots, or some basic navigation, if the task demands), then the participant wholly owns the learning. All we are doing is aiding them in interpreting the experience. Nothing more. We don't need to read a brief of instructions, we don't need to assign roles, we don't need to give them tips, and we don't even need to say a *word*. We let them get on with it, and help interpret it during/after/whenever.

(A side note: If the task starts to descend into misery/bullying/chaos/danger, then PLEASE, DO say something! Use your head).

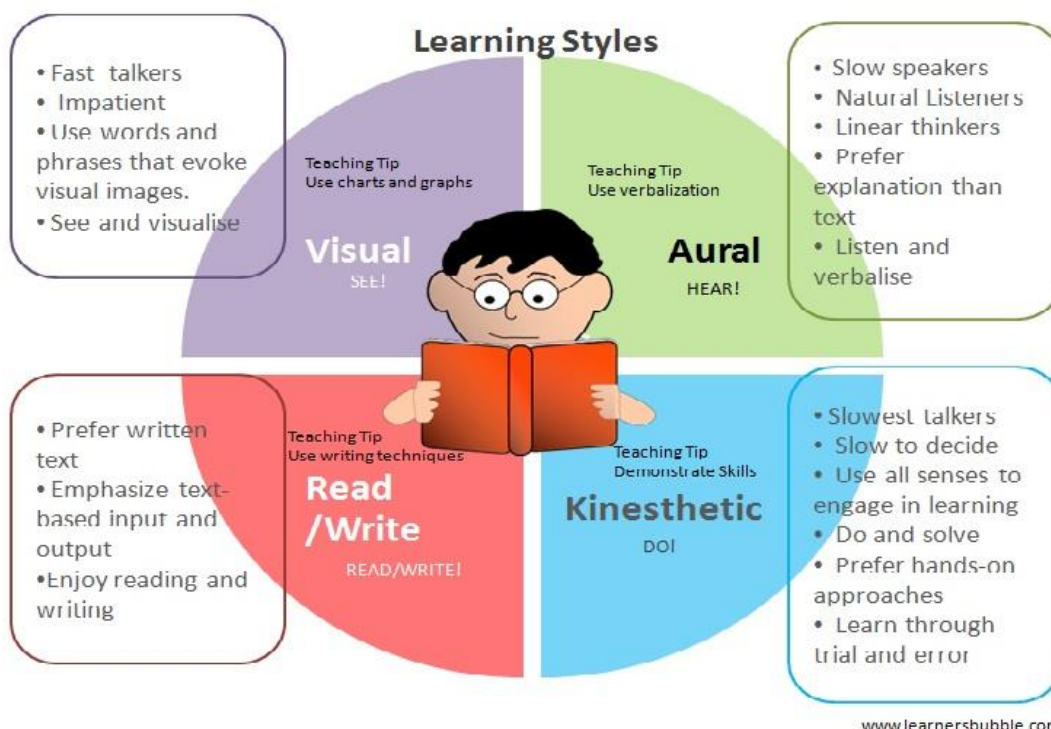
Think about your current practice. To what extent do you 'teach', and how much do you 'facilitate'? What works best for you? What works best for the participants? What are you trying to achieve?

In order to help us facilitate, here are some useful models for us to ponder, and use at our discretion. Let's start at the beginning: How do we each learn...?

VARK

Visual, Audio, Read/Write, Kinaesthetic. These are the four main ways in which we interpret information, sometimes we are quite clearly one, and one alone, but

more often than not, we are a mix. Sometimes, we are all four. What's important is to recognise the four styles, and adapt our language and/or methods so that the learner can take on board the information in the most efficient way.





Interestingly, children predominantly begin as kinaesthetic and visual **wilderness** expertise learners. They change over time. This is why they absolutely cannot wait to play with kit before you have even finished speaking.

To test out which one you may be, try the following: You have some IKEA furniture to put together. Do you a) Look at a picture of the finished article, watch a how-to video, or skip the written instructions and only look at the pictures?; b) Ask someone to tell you what the instructions say, or just tell you what to do?; c) Read all of the instructions, perhaps make notes?; or d) Pick up all of the pieces and try out different permutations, until it works...possibly even just recycling the instructions? Or all/any of the above combined?

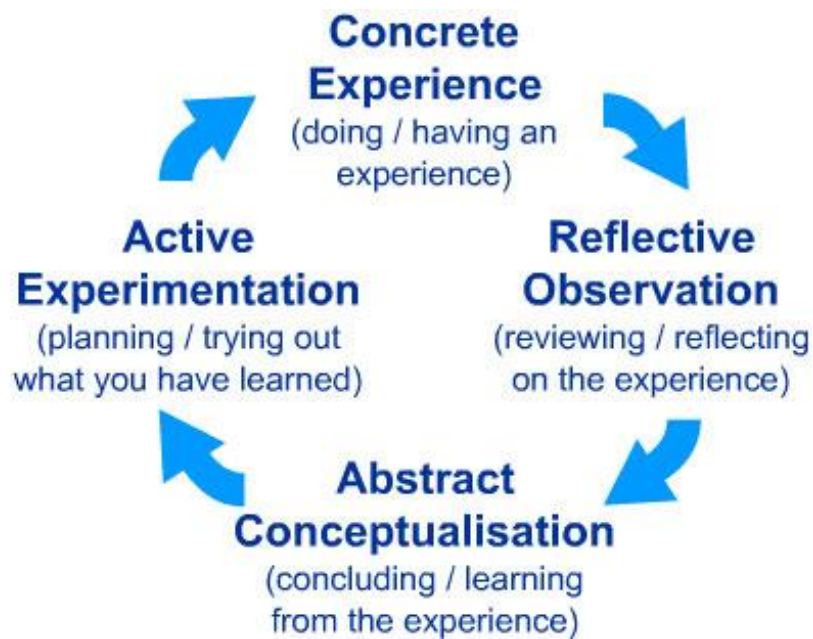
Recognise that everyone is different. What is/are your preferred style(s). How can you adapt your practice to engage all four types of learner?

Now we can recognise that everyone's preferred method of learning is different, and possibly also recognise that we each favour certain methods above others for facilitating/guiding/coaching/teaching (i.e., giving instructions, or handing over a briefing card). Now we need to understand the process that a person goes through in order to actually 'learn'.

Kolb

In 1984 Kolb came up with a definitive model of how we learn. This has not yet been replaced, although there are 'upgrades' to the original model (more about that later). Essentially, there are four stages that an individual needs to go through in order to learn something:

1. Concrete experience – the 'doing' - **WHAT?**
2. Reflective observation - this is where we come in: to facilitate the thinking/reflecting – **WHAT HAPPENED?**
3. Abstract Conceptualisation – What do we think we learnt? - **SO WHAT?**
4. Active experimentation – How can we apply that learning (in repeating the task/elsewhere)? – **NOW WHAT?**



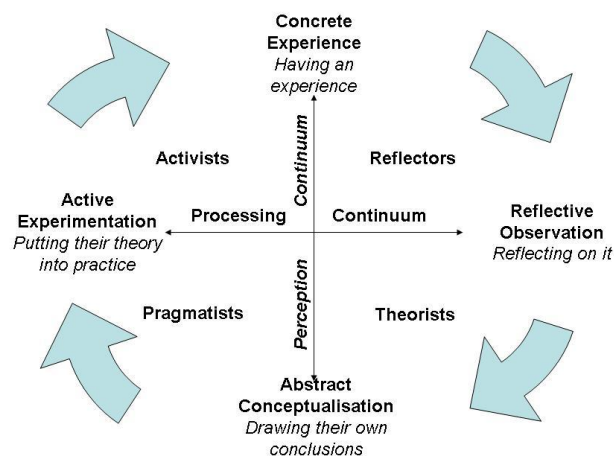
The model is often presented as 'Plan, Do, Review, Apply'. The names don't really matter simply pick whichever you can remember! The important thing is to use the principles to remind you how to help participants go through this process. Sometimes, you may like to explain this to a group, say on expedition where they will repeatedly undergo experiential learning. It can give them more ownership over their own learning process.

The final word on this is don't always assume you start at the 'planning' stage (as in 'Plan, Do, Review, Apply'). Although they may look like they are plotting something, since when did babies learn to walk by planning it?

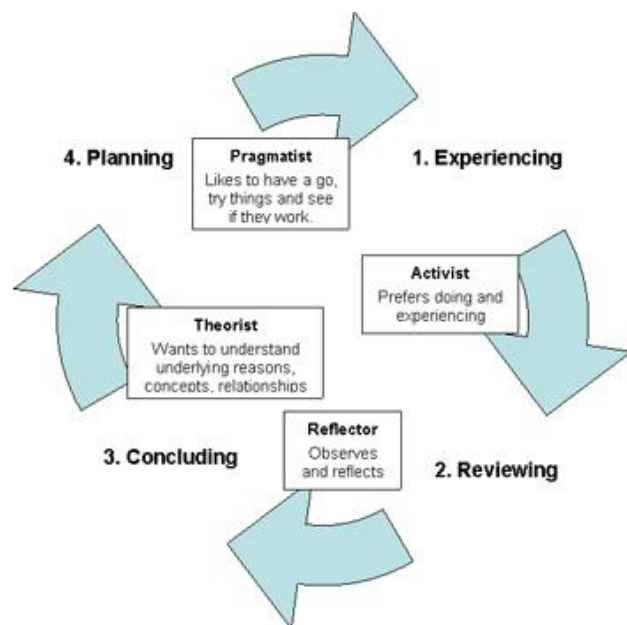


Honey & Mumford

Following on from Kolb, Honey and Mumford designed a learning process that encompassed Kolb's model, but now incorporating learning styles:



H&M said that the four stages in the learning process would suit different people, thus:



Again, we can see that different people will engage with the learning process in a different way. Some individuals will naturally be more inclined towards planning, or doing. I will leave you to draw your own conclusions as to how these styles may or may not relate to VARK styles.

Think about your own preferences, where do you prefer to be in the learning process? To what extent do you favour others with the same preferences? What could you do to develop your strengths in the other, less-preferred styles? What could you do to adapt your practice to benefit all styles?

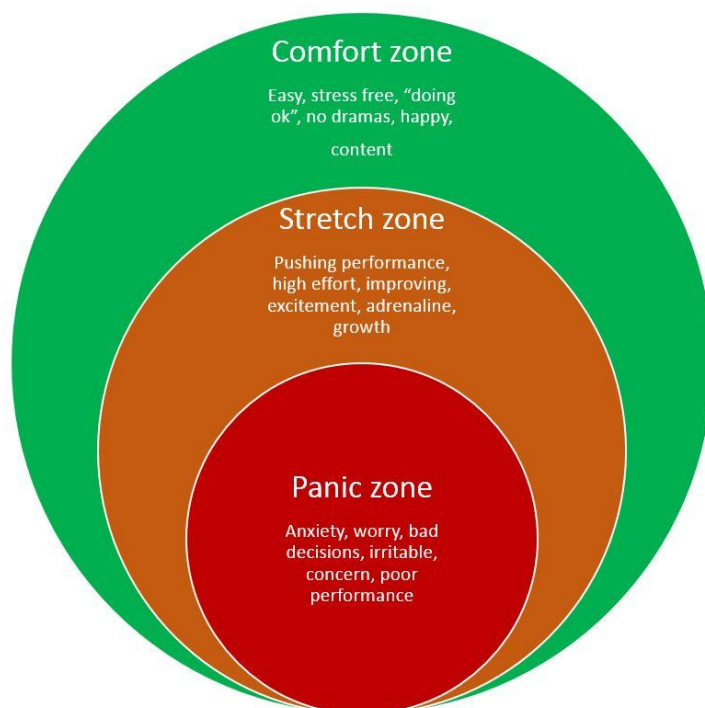


We have examined how learning should take place, and our role within **wilderness** expertise it. We have explored how different people engage with information, and indeed how they fare with the learning process as a whole. There remain two things that may interfere with learning, above and beyond style:

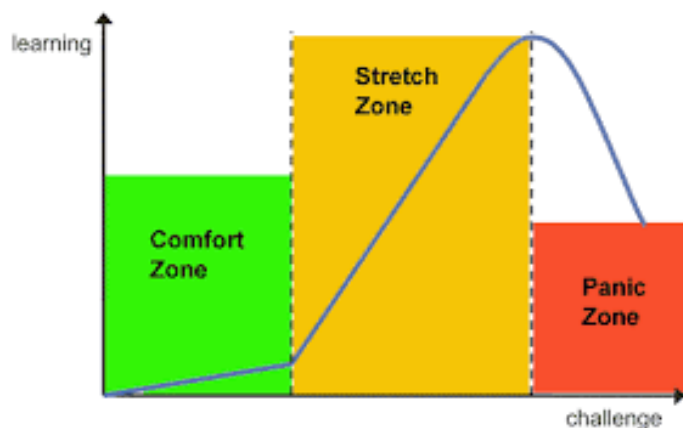
Comfort, Stretch, Panic

The simplest way to understand this model is to think of an elastic band. At rest, the band has potential energy; it reaches its potential by being stretched. Stretch it too far, however, and it will snap, thus negating any stretching along the way.

In the same way, people learn through being stretched. If learning (life) is too 'comfortable' then learning doesn't happen easily. There may be cursory learning, but nothing allowing the individual to reach their potential. 'Stretching', however, is not 'comfortable', so some people need to be heavily encouraged and supported through this phase.



Learning occurs, and potential is reached during stretch. Our only warning is to ensure we do not over-stretch the individuals, otherwise they scurry back as fast as possible into their original and restricting comfort 'zone', all learning is then lost, as shown here:



Think elastic band.

What would be in each of your zones? What could you do to increase your stretch? How do you recognise when you are approaching/in the panic zone? How might thinking about you in the context of this model make you more open to others' experiences in these zones?

Fixed/Growth Mindset

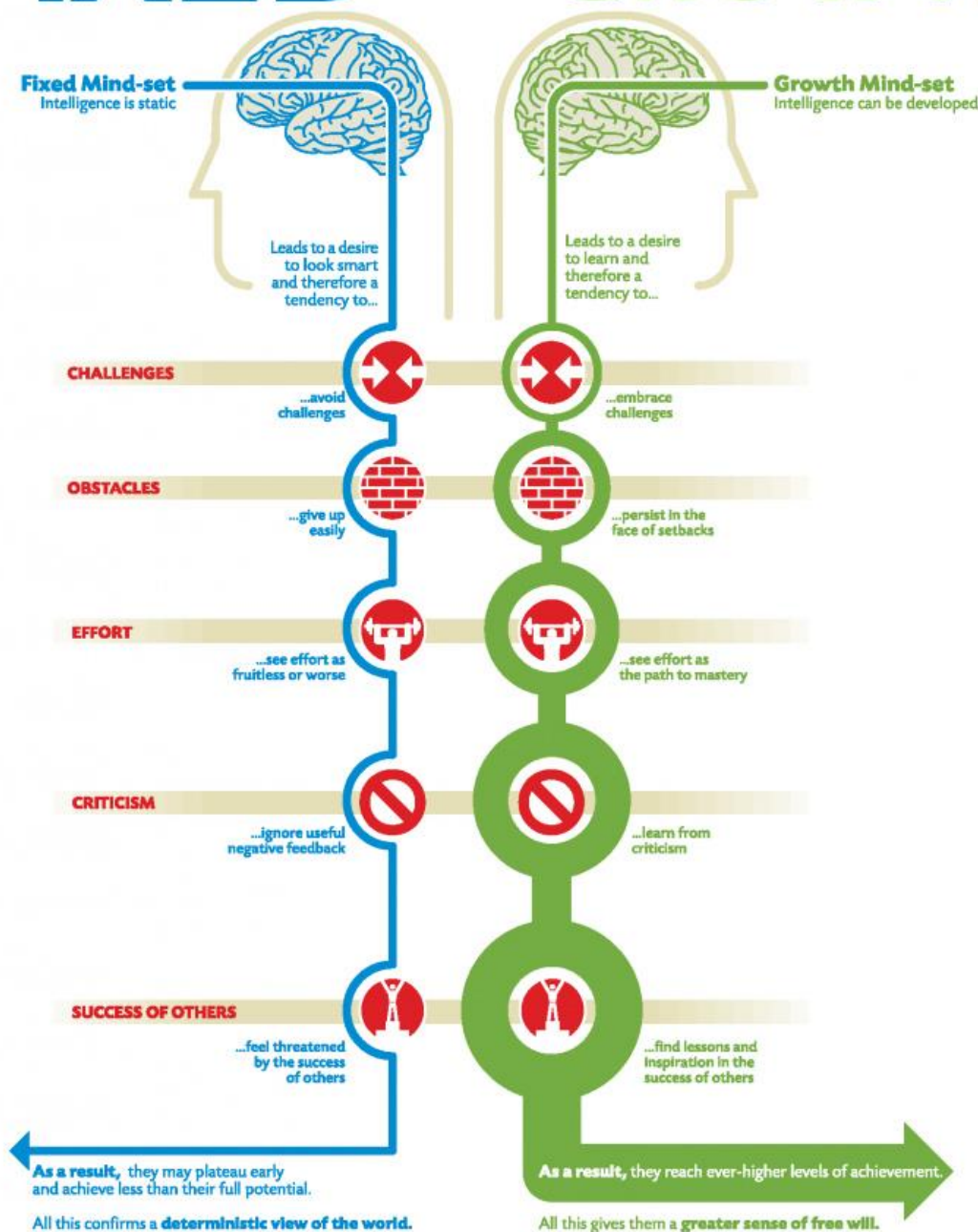
The other thing that may limit ability to learn/develop is the individual's mindset. Carol Dweck introduced the idea of opposing mindsets. One that helps us to be open to learning, and therefore, growth (imaginatively entitled 'Growth Mindset', and one that limits our ability to grow ('Fixed Mindset').

<p>GROWTH MINDSET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">"Failure is an opportunity to grow""I can learn to do anything I want""Challenges help me to grow""My effort and attitude determine my abilities""Feedback is constructive""I am inspired by the success of others""I like to try new things"	<p>FIXED MINDSET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">"Failure is the limit of my abilities""I'm either good at it or I'm not""My abilities are unchanging""I don't like to be challenged""I can either do it, or I can't""My potential is predetermined""When I'm frustrated, I give up""Feedback and criticism are personal""I stick to what I know"	<p>The diagram here shows how the two mindsets can be viewed as opposite interpretations of language. Any NLP fans out there will resonate with this 'reframing' of negative self-talk/thoughts into positive, 'growth' talk/thoughts.</p>
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FIXED

GROWTH



The flow chart above allows us to compare the pathway of both types of mindset dealing with obstacles, challenges and setbacks. Although these concepts may seem quite obvious, once you are aware of the opposing mindsets, it can often help us to pinpoint our negative 'blocks', and therefore reframe them in a much more positive way. Equally, if we work with participants (or peers!) who have a fixed mindset, it is apparent that we need to work on



reframing their paradigm, rather than simply accepting that they do not wish to change or succeed. **wilderness** expertise

With this in mind, we can look at ways of coaching our participants to a more growth-focused mindset. The diagram below gives useful tips on how to approach this. It is a question of subtleties of language and reinforcement of these positively reframed statements.

Thinking along these lines means that we owe a duty to be mindful of our own language, too. In order to reinforce a growth mindset in our charges, we must adopt one ourselves, and think about how we can support their growth using intelligent language. This fits neatly with our 'TRAINER' leadership code. Using positive statements to reinforce the vision and encourage our participants.

Coaching a Growth Mindset

5 Questions to Develop a Growth Mindset

- What did you learn from today's performance?
- What steps did you take to make you successful today?
- What are some different strategies you could have used?
- How did you keep going when things got tough?
- What can you learn from your opponent today?

5 Feedback Comments to Develop a Growth Mindset

- This will be a challenging concept to learn, but I believe you can master it.
- You haven't got it yet, but you will if you keep working and thinking about it.
- I really appreciated your effort today.
- It is okay to take risks, that's how we learn.
- Getting better takes time and I see you improving.

@BelievePHQ @SportPsychDunc

The techniques outlined here are things we probably already use in our review sessions with participants. This should be reassuring! Not all information should be brand new to you; the main aim of this handbook is to raise the level of awareness of your own practice.

What about the two mindsets do you recognise? What challenges do you find with the concept? How do you maintain a growth mindset? Are there times when you have a fixed mindset? Why do you think this is?

The final part of this handbook will look at how different personalities, and their inherent traits may interact. The research and literature on the topic of personality is beyond the realms of this little book. To simplify the matter let us look at the most famous and enduring model of all personality research.



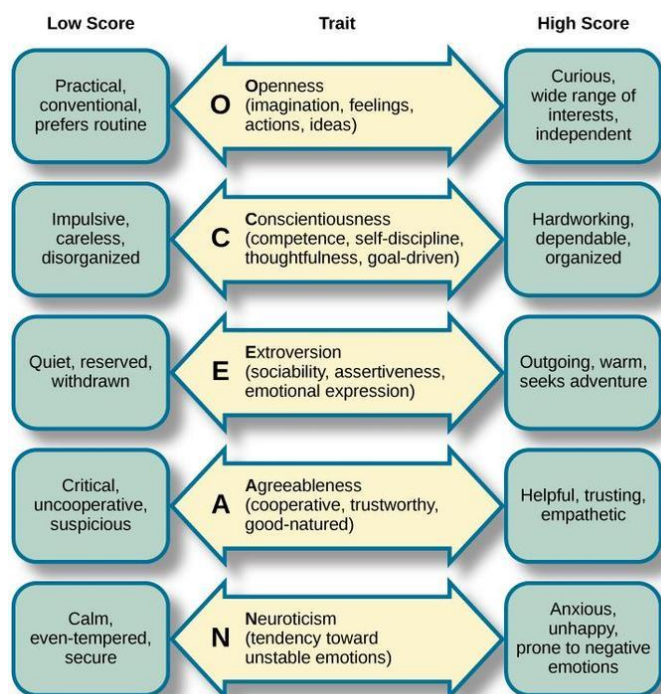
The Big Five

Trait	Description
O penness	Curious, original, intellectual, creative, and open to new ideas.
C onscientiousness	Organized, systematic, punctual, achievement oriented, and dependable.
E xtraversion	Outgoing, talkative, sociable, and enjoys being in social situations.
A greeableness	Affable, tolerant, sensitive, trusting, kind, and warm.
N euroticism	Anxious, irritable, temperamental, and moody.

There are five factors that contribute to personality. There are many, many more than feature as sub-headings to these five, too. The five factors represent the overall categories of the main personality traits.

There is often confusion between ‘traits’ and ‘states’. Here we are examining traits – the more permanent (although this is not to say that they cannot be modified) details that make up factors of personality. We shall look at states (which are more transient) later.

Importantly, we need to recognise two things a) As stated – personality tends to like to stay as it is, but it *can* be modified (like a fixed mindset); and b) These factors are scaled. That is to say that a person may be high or low (scoring, yes, of course there’s a psychometric test for this!) in each of the areas (see below).



This diagram hopefully gives a more detailed insight into the complex make-up of personality. Within each factor there is a spectrum of higher and lower scoring attributes (as with learning style, and learning preferences, etc.). Further, these traits may be modified over time, as experiences, learning, error and success contribute to a person’s overall view of the world.



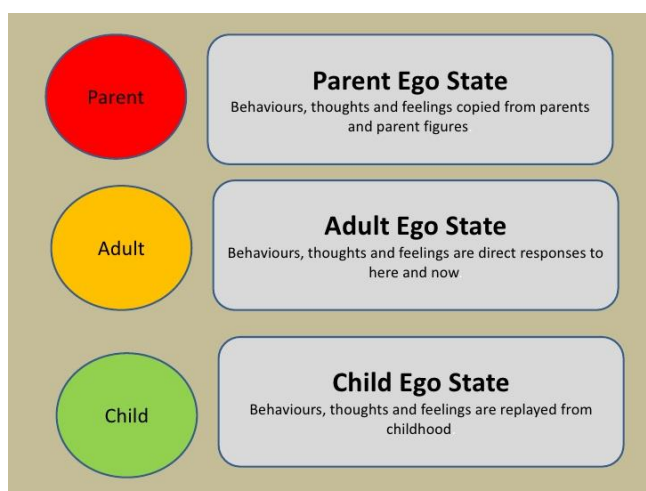
Models and tests such as this are useful in helping us create a clearer **wilderness** expertise idea of what we are each about. Importantly, if we know who we are, then it means that we can be very deliberate, careful and precise with our interactions and empathies for other people.

Which end of the scale do you associate with for each factor? How might this contribute to your overall paradigm of the world? How might these traits be associated with your other preferences (e.g., learning style)? Are there any factors that you would like to modify? How might you do this?

Lastly, let us explore how we actually interact with others, not just hypothetically, now that we are empowered with more knowledge about ourselves.

Transactional Analysis

Not the simplest title, but nonetheless, a fairly simple concept. Dr Eric Berne, a renowned Psychoanalyst suspected that most unsuccessful relationships would benefit from improved understanding of how we communicate. We are talking about *any* relationship here, too. For our purposes, there are three main states (i.e., these are transient and fluctuate quickly, in comparison to personality traits). The Parent, the Adult, and the Child. None of these is age-associated, so a mother may be in the Child state, while her son may be in the Parent state. The table below gives definitions to each state:



Each interaction involves at least two people, each of which may be adopting the same, or a different state. There are positive and negative sides to both the Parent and Child states (see below), but not with the Adult state. The Adult is the optimum state for all individuals involved in the interaction to adopt.

Adult understands that compromise and negotiation may be necessary. The Adult appreciates that solutions need to be found, rather than blaming, shouting, arguing, ignoring, or sulking. Parent to Child interactions mean one dominating the other, taking an authoritative standing. Child to Child and Parent to Parent end in disagreement, power struggles, and inevitably, arguments. Each feels that they are 'right' in the interaction. Adult to Adult is the only state where power is shared, and neither party is interested in being 'right', they are aiming for a solution.



Which state do you adopt when you are feeling 'wronged'? Do you have any interactions that repeatedly trigger specific states? What do you do to resolve such conflicts?

The aim of this handbook is to give a snapshot of some of the important themes and components of PD, and to enable you to reflect on your current practice and preferences. Once we raise our level of awareness about a topic, we are in a much stronger position to develop it. I hope it proves to be a useful tool.

~ Dr S J McElligott

January 2017