

Judy Rees and Paul Scheele at NLP Mindfest August 2011

Paul Scheele: Welcome to the NLP Mindfest, an online festival of change and achievement. I'm your host, Paul Scheele of Learning Strategies Corporation. This NLP Mindfest session with Judy Rees is called *X-Ray Listening: Decoding the Native Language of the Unconscious Mind*.

Judy Rees is from Brentford, London, England, is co-author of the book *Clean Language: Revealing Metaphors and Opening Minds*, and a contributor to Rapport, a magazine of the Association of NLP.

She is an NLP Master Practitioner and an expert in Clean Language, a therapy technique that combines listening, questioning and metaphor to get under the surface and discover what people really think and feel.

Judy has a passion for connecting with people and ideas. She uses and teaches X-Ray Listening to help people develop businesses and create systems, products and services that meet a variety of needs and make a difference in people's lives.

As a journalist and former media executive, Judy found ways to simplify the Clean Language process to help people successfully apply it in everyday situations - at work, home, on the phone, online, wherever people find ways to connect and influence each other.

You can find out more about Judy's work, her book and her video on her website at www.xraylistening.com.

In this session, Judy will help you use the language of the unconscious mind to make your interactions with others easier and more supporting of your goals and aspirations. You'll learn how to connect with people at a deeper level and to listen beyond the obvious and grasp the truth about what really matters to you and to others.

Judy is going to teach you how to use the two Lazy Jedi questions, special questions, to find out what's really going on with someone and she'll help you to understand the impact of embodied metaphors. We've got a lot to cover, so let's get started. Judy, welcome to the NLP Mindfest.

Judy Rees: Hello and thank you for including me.

Paul Scheele: Well, it's a real delight and I'm very enthusiastic about the whole concept of Clean Language and the presentation that you're making. I have to say, I am a novice at what you're talking about although I've been a part of the NLP community for quite a long time so I'm really delighted to get started, so why don't you go ahead and take it away.

Judy Rees: Okay, well, in this session, hopefully what I'm going to do is really introduce you to a way of thinking about the way people think that will help you to really understand yourself and others at a deep level so that you can be more influential, persuade other people to do what you want them to do and what they know they should do, and persuade yourself to do things that you should do.

It's not a quick hit, very superficial approach so this session may get a little bit complicated at times, but it will be worthwhile because once you understand what's really going on, basically your interactions with other people just become much, much, much more interesting as well as making your life easier and making it easier for you to reach the goals that you're aiming for.

What I suppose I'm claiming with X-Ray Listening, just to sort of summarize, is that the unconscious mind is the part of us which actually drives our behavior. That's probably not wildly controversial, the new bit is to most people that the unconscious mind has it's own language and that you can learn to understand and to speak it - and when you do that you open a whole world onto how people really tick and what's really going on for them.

If you've ever tried to, for example, persuade a loved one to change a habit that's harming them, such as smoking or overeating, or tried to understand why you keep doing things you say you don't want to. So, you're watching the telly instead of exercising, then you know the power of the unconscious mind controlling your behavior and this session will be useful to you.

Paul, you've already explained what we're going to cover in this session. Perhaps I should explain that I've been working with these specific techniques for about six years and used them in a whole range of different business contexts and trained hundreds of people in them worldwide.

I'm not the originator, the originator is the late David Grove. You can find out about him online. Absolutely fascinating man, unfortunately he died a couple of years ago. He was a therapist, but these techniques I use way beyond therapy these days. I'll come back to some of the contexts in which they get used later in this session.

So, I suppose where we start is this idea of the unconscious mind and it's now pretty well acknowledged by most experts that at least 90%-95% of our cognition, our thinking, is outside of our conscious awareness. People don't behave rationally, they don't carefully choose in a conscious way. It's really the rest of the stuff that determines what we do, so for example research shows that even when we know that a branded medication and a store brand medication are exactly the same product, if we've got severe symptoms we'll choose the branded one. It's unconscious. We're just doing it without thinking.

And in the past the unconscious mind has been thought of as a dark, sort of dangerous, mysterious place because it's not been understood - but there's a lot more to it. Now, the research is increasingly coming out to fill in that detail, to solve the mysteries.

People like Gerald Zaltman. Gerald Zaltman wrote a fascinating book called *How Customers Think*. He's a professor of marketing at, I think, Harvard Business School, and he's got a lovely metaphor in it. Zaltman says, "Imagine that you had a special filter, a special filtering pair of glasses, that enabled you to see the heat coming off different items as different colors. So, when you looked at a loaf of bread cooling from the oven, you'd see a fabulous rainbow of different colors as the different heat came off." He says, "Now imagine a similar filter applied to people's unconscious thought. More colors appear that any fireworks show could ever hope to display. These new colors represent the hidden treasures in the shadow of the mind".

X-Ray Listening basically provides such a filter, it enables you to see the hidden treasures in the shadow of the mind. It does that by using metaphor, which is the native language of

the unconscious mind. Hope that's making sense so far, is that okay so far Paul?

Paul Scheele: Yeah, it really is, I've got a lot of questions of course. Now, I often get the question from people about their unconscious mind being a saboteur and how they can overcome it, and I've often said that the metaphor of saboteur is the person who threw their wooden shoe, their sabot, into the gear works of the machine of the industrial factory and that's what stopped the machine from working. People often have this sort of dark relationship with their unconscious and really do see it as sort of this seething cauldron of sabotage as opposed to this fabulous ally and power that can help get them to where they want to go, and so I hope at some point along this way our X-Ray Listening will help us clarify how we can relate to our unconscious processes so that we can see it as more of an ally.

Judy Rees: I think it can. Think of that metaphor, an ally, where you've got two countries and maybe they have two completely different languages in the two countries, how do you manage to form an alliance? Well, if you're able to find a way of speaking their language then you're much more likely to be able to build the relationship on which an alliance can form, than if you're just sort of staring at each other across the water or whatever it might be and not understanding each other at all.

And you can really relate to people's frustration when they think "Well, I've chosen to give up smoking but I keep sabotaging myself, what keeps going on? It's so frustrating." But if you can understand what's going on for the unconscious mind, then all sorts of other things become possible.

There's another very beautiful metaphor for the unconscious mind, which I think was originally by a guy called Jonathan Haidt who wrote a book called *The Happiness Hypothesis*, and he said "Think of the mind as being like a rider on an elephant. The rider represents the conscious mind, and the elephant represents the unconscious mind. Now, when the rider and the elephant are going in the same direction they've agreed on the destination and they're working together, they can be an absolutely fabulous team, but when the elephant wants something which is different to what the rider wants, and they're pulling in different directions, you know exactly who's going to win – it's the elephant."

So, the X-Ray Listening techniques fit exactly. At one point I got labeled "the elephant whisperer" because the X-Ray Listening techniques allow you not only to communicate with your own elephant, but also to understand and communicate with other people's elephants.

And it's fabulously exciting when you suddenly realize that you can understand "Elephantese" and get your message across as well. It's always so exciting. Whether we'll be able to cover all of that in this session, I'm not sure.

Paul Scheele: It's brilliant, I can't wait, go ahead.

Judy Rees: So, I think one thing that ought to be said sort of fairly close up front is a metaphor, the way I'm using that, simply means a situation where one kind of thing is described in terms of another kind of thing.

Now, probably in school you learned various subsets of metaphor, things like allegories and parallels and similes. In a technical jargon of this kind of stuff, metaphor covers all those subcategories and that makes it easier.

Whenever you hear about one kind of thing being described in terms of another kind of thing, that's a metaphor.

The words to listen out for are "It's like". If you hear "It's like" the next words will almost certainly be a metaphor. If I say, "The mind is like a rider on an elephant" the words "is like" have flagged up the fact that a metaphor is the next thing coming.

Now, if people have done some NLP training there are various ways that they'll understand metaphor, particularly as story.

But not many people realize that in ordinary English language we use about six metaphors per minute, an astonishing number of metaphors in everyday English. And that's because the metaphors in our unconscious thought spill out in the words that our unconscious mind chooses for us to use.

Because word choice in our native language is an unconscious process, we know that it's the unconscious mind that's generating these metaphors. So, for example, in that last sentence I think I said "generating those metaphors". So, it's as if I'm comparing the creation of words to some kind of electrical generator.

Paul Scheele: You had earlier used the term spill out, there's another example of a vessel pouring or spilling or dumping somehow, that's good.

Judy Rees: Of course, with these ones, you don't get that little flag of "It's like" but if you stop and think about it, you know it's got to be a metaphor. There isn't really a container of language that is tipping bits of liquid on the floor, it's not literally spilling, it *has* to be a comparison, a metaphor.

Metaphors are really influential at a very profound level, so if someone thinks of life as one long battle so they're comparing their life as being like a battle in a war, or somebody else thinks life's like a fairground ride... there was a pop song recently that said "it's just a ride". Think about the different experiences that people will have if their life was a battle, or if their life was like a fairground ride. It completely transforms the experience that people have. Make sense?

Paul Scheele: You know, it's fascinating because one of the things that I heard quite often in doing communication training is the use of battle language. We're doing war with this or that, and we've got to fight off this and that, and I said let's play – for the entire day – to eliminate any battleground metaphors from our language and start using metaphors around peace and collaboration and coming together. We're going to aim at our goals so we can hit the mark, you know, these are shooting metaphors essentially and it's interesting in thinking about our own thinking to become suddenly so aware of metaphors that we're using and then the potential consequences of using one over another is quite profound, it's quite enlightening.

Judy Rees: Absolutely, and the first step, if you like the process that's implied there, is to notice the metaphors that we're using in our language. I really, strongly suggest that anyone who's listening to this, if you only did one thing as a result of listening to this session, start noticing the metaphors that people use.

And the activity I'd suggest that's the easiest on this is to notice the metaphors that you

hear in recordings like that or on the TV or on the radio where you don't have to be involved in the conversation and just listen to the metaphors that people are using, and particularly with people like politicians and we'll come back to this in a moment, the politicians are always using metaphors. Big, shiny, flashing lights metaphors.

For example President Obama was recently talking about the economy as being like a car that's gone into a ditch. You can pick up on those kind of metaphors, and then you can start to notice the more subtle metaphors, like those battle metaphors or the game metaphors or sometimes even metaphors around place or position.

So, if I say, "My husband and I are in love", "in" is actually a metaphor. Because it's not as if love is a container and my husband are in it, it's a metaphor. You start to hear all kinds of subtle metaphors.

I don't think you'll get to noticing six metaphors a minute on the TV or the radio but it could be fun to try, and then once you've started hearing them on the TV and radio, then start noticing them when you're in the shop or on public transport and you can overhear live people and then notice them in actual conversation as you've been doing, Paul, in this conversation.

The hardest ones to notice are actually the ones you use yourself, and if you really want to do that, you can record your own voice talking about a subject that's important here and notice the metaphors that you're actually using. It can be a very fascinating exercise. So, if that makes sense as far as we've gone, then there's an important chunk which we need to cover which has to do with the way that metaphor influences us.

Now, a lot of the listeners to this will already be aware that, probably since the time of Aristotle, that kind of classical period, people who want to influence us have used metaphor in their rhetoric because they know that metaphor influences. So, advertisers, politicians, religious leaders, teachers, artists, all these people think "If I can come up with the perfect metaphor for the thing I'm trying to describe, I'll be able to influence people to do whatever I would like."

So, back to Obama and "the economy is like a car, and the republicans are standing there drinking Slurpees while watching us pull it out of a ditch". You can see the kind of emotional engagement he's trying to include within his metaphor, and people like George Lakoff are experts in seeing if they can come up with the perfect metaphor to influence listeners, their viewers, their audience.

Now, the big piece, the new piece of the jigsaw, the piece which is only really just being understood by the academics in this kind of field (the field tends to be called cognitive linguistics when it's academic), but it's the piece that David Grove realized in the early eighties - which is that while a politician's or a teacher's or a speaker's metaphor *can* influence us and influences our unconscious minds at a very profound level, there's an even more influential kind of metaphor and that's *our own metaphor*.

So, if we come up with our own metaphor for something, that will influence us and have more power in our unconscious thinking than any metaphor that comes in from the outside.

Now, the trick to that is noticing those metaphors and learning how those own metaphors are different from the ones that the politicians and the teachers and so forth are bringing in from the outside.

And I'm thinking about this now and thinking, "Oh, isn't it interesting to be talking about this with an American." Because they often say that Britain and America are divided by a common language. And I think this is particularly relevant when it comes to metaphor, because with metaphor, you often get a very cultural similarity at a superficial level.

There are metaphors that pretty much everyone in the whole world will use. For example, everyone - and I haven't yet found an exception and the research suggests there is no exception - thinks that important things are big. So, big is used as a metaphor for important. The abstract concept is "important", and the metaphor is "big".

So at that superficial level, we all share the same common cultural metaphors and we more or less understand what somebody means when they say, "Oh, I've got a big project on." It doesn't necessarily mean it's actually physically huge, it may just mean it's important.

What's more interesting is once you probe beneath the surface of that similarity, because everyone's metaphors turn out to be different once you start probing a little bit deeper.

So, if we're thinking about that car-in-the-ditch metaphor about the economy and I were to ask you, Paul, about the kind of ditch that you had in mind, it would be a different ditch to the kind of ditch that I had in mind. And the difference in the kind of ditch that we had in mind might well influence how important we thought that the arguments around the economy might be, and a whole bunch of other things.

If we can actually match the metaphors of somebody else then we really get to understand them. We really get to know what they're talking about at a level which goes way beyond the obvious, and we can then use that information not only to understand people but also to influence them.

Of course, sometimes there will be metaphors that will completely baffle us and we've got no idea what the other person is talking about. So, in that Obama metaphor, he used the word "Slurpee" and apparently that's totally obvious to Americans what the word means, but I had to Google it. There we are again, divided by a common language!

So, how do we find out what somebody actually means by a metaphor that they use? Well, we can guess - but what David Grove discovered is that a particular kind of question can be used to reveal the differences in both the detail of what people mean by a metaphor, and also in the meaning they ascribe to the metaphor.

These questions, they're officially called the Clean Language questions, and you can find a full list of all the Clean Language questions in the book I co-authored which is conveniently called *Clean Language*.

The first two are nicknamed the Lazy Jedi questions, and they're nicknamed the Lazy Jedi questions because if you want to use "The Force" in terms of understanding people and persuading people, these are the questions to use.

At one level they're very ordinary questions, and one level they're very special in how you apply them, you use them to ask about the metaphors that you hear people use.

They're ordinary English questions but they have in them a space into which you put the

other person's words. Their exact words, the precise words that you just heard them use. The precise metaphor that you just heard them use.

So if I say these questions slowly they are, "What kind of X is that?" and "Is there anything else about X?" where X represents the person's metaphor, the exact words that they've used for that metaphor.

You can use those questions in any order and as many times as you like, usually you start with "What kind of X is that?" But after that you can use that same question again and ask about different aspects of the metaphor. "Is there anything else about X (that metaphor)" can be asked about various aspects, and explore and probe.

And by asking those questions, you'll do a number of things. You will reveal and clarify both the details and the meaning of the metaphor that somebody has used. For a number of reasons, you will deepen that connection with the person. This process will help you get into a very, very profound level of rapport and understanding with another person. They basically feel, frequently, like you *really* understand them. You get people saying things like, "I couldn't believe that you really understood me when I was talking such off the wall stuff."

And when you have this rapport, by asking about somebody's metaphor you will intensify any emotion that is connected with that metaphor. Now, that sort of flags up a bit of a warning note which is, if you're asking these questions about metaphors which have strong negative, uncomfortable, painful emotions attached to them, then you will intensify that emotion, so it's perhaps best, at least to start with asking about metaphors that people enjoy, that they want more of, that make them happy.

Then, once you've asked the questions and uncovered loads of information, you may choose to use that information later. Obviously, with integrity, with care, with a sensitivity for how you obtained that information in the content of the conversation, but you can use it to influence people. Hopefully, for their good and for yours.

And of course we'll come back to how you can use these questions for yourself and to understand your own unconscious mind. Paul, does that make sense so far?

Paul Scheele: It does, I'm remembering years ago when David Grove and I were together, we talked about the use of metaphor quite a lot. My business partner at the time, who had gone through NLP Master Certification as well with David, we talked about what we called behavioral metaphors where you could walk into somebody's office and see various paraphernalia from one line of thinking or engagement.

For example, you walk into an executive's office and there's a model airplane of his private aircraft on his desk and he's got photos of him standing next to it and he's got all these sorts of things around that, as a behavioral metaphor, is going to be a governing principal and what we would do is, seeing that, we would know a lot of the metaphors that were driving this particular executive's unconscious behavior. For example, it's important to pick a destination of where you want to fly to when you're a pilot, and you need to file a flight plan ahead of time which requires quite a bit of forethought, and it's going to require that you know the weight and balance of the load that you're putting in, and so on.

Talking with this executive about the training that we're going to do with him, we could load our descriptors in a way so that it balances just right for the destination he's trying to take

off to and actually land on at some point in the future.

We would embed, in our language of what it is we're going to talk about, inside of that metaphor. So to me this is absolutely spot on - and the notion that there is a structure to our unconscious organization that gets revealed not just in the language that we use, for example as you say "it's like flight of an airplane", but it's demonstrated also behaviorally in almost everything that a person does.

So you can actually start to see that in the way that they walk, in the way they drive from a place to another place and so on. It's really quite exciting material and especially exciting and certainly for our participants in the Mindfest, it's so immediately applicable and so pervasive that the moment that you start to attend to it you'll discover it literally everywhere that you look.

Judy Rees: It is absolutely fascinating and I flag up sort of a little warning around if you go into an office and you see things around, planes and so forth, it's very easy to think that you "get" this man and understand exactly where he's coming from.

The bit that I think David's questions add, and the understanding around Clean Language, is that actually we understand at a high level but we don't understand the details, we don't always understand what that metaphor *means* to that person. What meaning are they making for that metaphor?

Paul Scheele: Yeah, I think it's such an important reminder for us all is that all generalizations are lies at some point. We really shouldn't take anything for granted, because that prejudging prevents you from taking an exploratory approach and what's so gorgeous about what you're suggesting certainly in the questioning is that if you take nothing for granted, you may have some clues of where you can explore. It's in your exploration that you'll discover what you need to go further.

Judy Rees: And you're just noticing the metaphors, and the things in the office gives you a first level of approximation.

Paul Scheele: Correct.

Judy Rees: And you've got the tools to go further. It's just so delightful. If you believe that all people are the same and everyone understands the same thing, the same words, well you would be bored. But once you realize that people are incredibly different and that the world that's going on inside their heads and inside their bodies can be phenomenally different from one person to the next, and you've got the tools to explore the detail.

It is like that quote I was using at the beginning about there are so many colors that a firework display couldn't display them all. There's more colors than there are in the rainbow, once you discover the different shades of meaning that can be found.

When I've got a group that I'm working with we do a little activity where I ask everyone to think of a flower, and I then ask them a question each about the flower they've got in mind. I've never yet found a group where after two questions, everybody had the same flower. Everybody's flower is different. If two people said it's a rose, then for one it would be a pink rose and one it would be a red rose. If two people had a red rose, one of them would have leaves attached and the other would be in a vase. These kind of details, it's just so fascinatingly different how people can be. The more you understand people, the

more you can influence them. The more it will enable them to influence themselves as well.

Paul Scheele: Yes, there's a good example of this when I worked with a sales staff of a company that worked to help prospective renters find an ideal apartment building for them then sometimes what would happen is the potential renter would say, "Well I'm really looking for someplace with a pool," and then the sales agent would busily start looking through all the listings of every apartment building that had a pool with it.

I suggested that they pause there and do essentially what you're saying, say "What kind of a pool is that that you're interested in?", "Is there anything else about a pool that I would need to know?" For example, for one person the image of a pool is something like an Olympic swimming pool with lanes in it. For another person, a pool is a kidney shape thing with a lot of beach chairs around it where people are socializing. That's a very different use of a swimming pool, you see. And another person just meant a jacuzzi, a hottub whirlpool that they could sit in.

So unless they asked the question, the sales agent would just start heading off randomly in some direction that they thought because pool meant something to them and something completely different to the prospect so those questions really are so fast at getting at the level of detail and specificity that makes all the difference.

Judy Rees: A colleague of mine in San Diego is actually using these exact same questions in the context that you have just been describing, where she's actually working with real estate agents and teaching them to ask these questions to their clients. About specifics, about the apartment they want, and to find out what it is that that pool means to them because the pool, thought in their imagination it's a real pool, will also be a metaphor for something.

Paul Scheele: For one person, it's a pool and for another person it's a socializing opportunity.

Judy Rees: Or for luxury or for finally having found the perfect relationship, there's a whole bunch of things a pool can mean to people and those questions can tease that detail out. I was wondering, Paul, if you would be willing to be a guinea pig for a moment and just allow me to ask you a few questions so that the listeners can hear what happens when these questions are asked. Would that be okay?

Paul Scheele: It would be wonderful.

Judy Rees: I'm going to start by asking you for a metaphor because we haven't got time for me to just be carefully listening for a metaphor. So I'm going to ask you for a metaphor. For you, this NLP Mindfest is like... what?

Paul Scheele: Alright, well, the subtitle of NLP Mindfest is an online festival of change and achievement, so I like the image that is created with the concept of a festival, also the feeling nature of a festival. It's a gathering of like-minded people, people who are interested in the same things, and are interested in the full experience that can emerge when a lot of people are coming together with an energy of enthusiasm, expectancy and in this case it's going to be specifically a round their own change and their achievement with themselves and others. I think that this kind of festival, or gathering, is also like a community of practice. A community festival, something that people are coming together

from far and around and yet there's a thread within the community that we're all similar and looking for this idea of change and achievement.

Judy Rees: And what kind of community is that community of practice?

Paul Scheele: Well, I think of it as a group of people who have already received a certain level of insight that distinguished them from the rest of their society. It's outside of perhaps the normal social norm, this is a group that is moving to the next developmental level rather than just coming into our society being socialized, we're coming into this community because we recognize ourselves as self-authoring. We're a group of people who really see that we don't just have to accept the status quo, that we can actually influence the status quo and make it different. We can author a new way of being.

Judy Rees: So, self-authoring, influence of the status quo and moving to the next level, and you've already had a certain level of insight. Is there anything else about that level, where they're moving to the next level?

Paul Scheele: I'll use a metaphor of walking up on a higher ground and being able to see more clearly. The air's a little fresher up here, kind of like a mountain energy where you've gathered together. You've come up to a higher ground and can see more clearly.

Judy Rees: What kind of ground is that higher ground where the air is a little fresher and you can see more clearly?

Paul Scheele: I think of it as natural. It's more like nature.

Judy Rees: Is there anything else about that nature?

Paul Scheele: It's human nature, certainly. It's all about interactions with each other

Judy Rees: That nature, on that higher ground where the air is a little fresher and you can see more clearly, is there anything else about that higher ground?

Paul Scheele: Perhaps it's a little less muddled, more pristine. Less influenced by others.

Judy Rees: Less muddled, more pristine. Walking on that higher ground, where the air is a little fresher and you can see more clearly and the group have already achieved that level of insight, a certain level of insight, and it's a community of practice, and it's a gathering of like-minded people and a festival, and when it's all of that, is there anything else about all of that?

Paul Scheele: Yeah, the concept of festival also has a connotation of happiness, joy. There's a joy in doing this kind of gathering. Doing the work of discovery, or as you talk about probing and exploring, there's a fun nature.

Judy Rees: There's a fun nature, and there's a happiness, a joy in doing the work in that concept of festival there's a community of practice and a gathering of like minded people that are moving to the next level by walking on higher ground where the air is a little fresher and you can see more clearly. All of that, the NLP Mindfest is like all of that, for you.

Paul Scheele: It is, yes.

Judy Rees: Thank you very much for sharing all of that. You see how the questions just help discover more about it? How was it for you, being asked those questions? What was that experience like?

Paul Scheele: I liked it in that it forced me to take a meta position, or a position alongside my own representations. So, I became aware of the representations I was making with greater clarity.

Judy Rees: So, you became aware of the representation of a greater party, so you perhaps perceived things differently as a result of being asked the questions.

Paul Scheele: Yes, it gave me a way of almost getting new perspective.

Judy Rees: Excellent, and I suppose in doing that quick demonstration, obviously in the demonstration I was using quite a lot of your words and repeating quite a lot of your words in order to sort of probe different aspects of the metaphor that you are using. What I hoped to achieve was for me to find out more information about how you thought about the NLP MindFest and for you to find out more about it to have greater clarity to perhaps know things that you didn't know at the beginning of that demonstration. I don't know whether that was actually true for you because you probably thought a great deal about the NLP Mindfest and what it means to you.

Paul Scheele: Yeah, I thought it helped to clarify a lot of the original design principles that we put into bringing this out to the public.

Judy Rees: And one of the points of doing that is to demonstrate that I wasn't using any of my words, I was using your words because your words are the words that your unconscious and semi-conscious mind, but primarily your unconscious mind, was coming up with to describe the Mindfest.

So, by using the questions I was just getting a little bit more understanding, getting a little bit more information, getting it a little deeper. Of course, if I want to write a new proposal for being part of next year's NLP Mindfest, I might well use words like community of practice, like a level of insight, like moving to the next level, like self-authoring. I would use your words, your metaphors, in order to influence you to have me back again next time. Does that make sense?

Paul Scheele: It absolutely makes sense, that's the very nature of rapport. It's when we're so in alignment with the way another person is already operating that they're more willing to follow your lead and if you were to lead with a new proposal, we would be more likely to follow that lead as a result.

Judy Rees: And the difference between these questions and some of the rapport techniques which are often taught in face-to-face trainings is that these questions can work on the phone as we are, or you can even use them in text messages or in email, or on discussion forums or on Facebook or on Twitter. You don't actually need to be in the same room as the person to be developing that level of rapport and connection. You can understand them even if you're on the other side of the world, and even – and this is probably an important piece – if their culture is not the same as your culture.

One of the big success stories for how this was used was in an IT, a technical

requirements gathering job. The consultant there reckoned that he saved 34.8 million Euros which is about 38 million dollars.

As a result of using these questions he discovered that two teams in two different countries, two different native languages, had a completely different understanding about how one part of the system was going to work.

If you think about it, computer systems are a metaphor because really all they are is series of 0s and 1s, and that in itself is metaphor. So, people use metaphors all the time to describe computer systems. And actually if people mean subtly different things by the metaphor, you can have a complete misunderstanding and you end up with what is depressingly common – complete project failures.

I assume that in the US, as in the UK, we have loads of famous stories of public sector projects where computer systems completely failed? Well, this would have been another one, but luckily the consultant knew Clean Language, knew X-Ray Listening and was able to do something different.

I'm feeling like I need to race, race, race because I've got so much else to share with you. But a couple of other examples of where else it's used. For example, in families, one of my students – a father – started using it with his teenage daughter. They decided to do it every day for ten minutes, they would ask each other the X-Ray Listening questions, the Lazy Jedi questions. They enjoyed it so much the first time they did it, they did it again the next day, and then they've kept on doing it everyday. As a result, they feel like they're having a real relationship again from having gone from being a really difficult and awkward relationship as it so often is between fathers and teenage daughters, now they're really starting to understand each other.

In the same vein, these questions have been used extensively in developing successful groups and teams within organizations so the people are all on the same page. They're used in healthcare, for example, to help a doctor understand a patient and the patient's experience, their symptoms. If you think about it, metaphors are typically used to describe medical symptoms. So, a heart attack is described in terms of a belt tightening around the chest. There are subtle distinctions and by using these questions a doctor can understand much more deeply what the patient is experiencing.

As we explained in the beginning, David Grove is a therapist and this was originally a therapy technique. It's used in particular in addiction and in dealing with trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, and those kind of conditions.

It's also used extensively in coaching. It can be used in a huge range of coaching contexts but I use it, for example, to help people find the right business niche for them. To actually find the perfect context where their passion, their enthusiasm, their knowledge for their subject coincides with the desire of a huge crowd of people waving wads of dollars, or fivers, demanding to work with them so they really connect with the people who want what they have to offer. The Lazy Jedi questions are particularly effective at that.

So, before we move on to this question of embodied metaphor, I'd like to suggest a few things that might do with what we've covered so far. Number 1, start noticing the metaphors that people use and notice how it enhances your understanding of what's going on for them. Notice them first on the TV and radio, and then start noticing them in people more immediately around you. Once you are comfortable with that, start asking the Lazy

Jedi questions about the metaphors you hear to start finding those interesting differences in the details.

Then, and here's the whole next level, start noticing your own metaphors and ask yourself those Lazy Jedi questions about the metaphors you use. I must say, the easiest way to do that is to record yourself talking for a few minutes about the subject you're thinking about and notice the metaphors. Then, ask yourself the questions "What kind of X is that?" Maybe write down your answers, and ask another question and another. There are various ways you can make that activity easier, for example, there's a pack of cards that's out there called the Clean Change Cards which have the questions on them.

These kind of things, but basically the more you practice noticing metaphors the more you will notice them. The more you practice asking the questions, the more easily they'll come to you. The first time you ask the questions, just ask *one* question and see what happens. It will feel uncomfortable at first, anything new feels uncomfortable at first, but it will be worthwhile because you'll discover all kinds of other levels of information that you just didn't know before.

So, before we go on to embodied metaphor, Paul, any other questions about what we've covered so far?

Paul Scheele: No, I think it's brilliant, and you've really given us a good way to proceed in terms of our own practice so those are great thoughts to kind of summarize all of that and I know we only have a few more minutes left so let's race to the finish line - if I could use that metaphor.

Judy Rees: It's race to the finish line - but it's almost as if I'm going to race us into the next race, because there is a whole other field beyond what we've been talking about so far which gets called "embodied metaphor" or "embodied cognition" and it's even more fun and even more fascinating than what we've touched on so far.

So, once you start noticing metaphors you'll increasingly notice that we often use our senses and our bodies as metaphors to represent abstract ideas. You might use a phrase like, "He's falling behind with the payments." So, falling behind is a metaphor and lateness is like falling behind.

Or another example might be, "She's a pain in the neck," or, "Things are looking up." And there are loads of these. We're constantly using these very physical embodied metaphors to describe our experience and that's of course, because, we are human. We have bodies. We are not disembodied brains in jars, and it's really important when people get into NLP and these kind of subjects, remember we are not disembodied brains in jars.

All this stuff is not only happening in our brains, not only happening in our heads, it's happening in our bodies. Our bodies are doing a lot of our thinking. They're doing unconscious processing and it's our bodies that are thinking in metaphor.

I wrote down a quote that I thought needed to be mentioned, which is from a neuropsychologist, J Allan Hobson. He said that most of the data available to us from the external world and from our bodies *never enters consciousness*. Most of the data that we could have access to is just processed by our unconscious mind, it just never goes anywhere near our conscious processing.

The researchers worldwide in this field are coming up with some quite astonishing discoveries as a result of this. For example, they've discovered that if you ask someone to hold a warm drink and then introduce them to a stranger they will feel warmer towards the stranger than if you ask them to hold a cold drink. So, that "warmer" is going straight from the body to the way they interact with the stranger, without going through their conscious mind. It's not going through the language at all, it's just in the body.

Similarly, if you take someone outdoors they'll be more likely to do things that we think of as "blue sky thinking", much more open thinking, than if you take them into an enclosed space. If you want to get a win-win outcome in negotiation, sit next to the other party rather than face to face with them because the body will interpret that face to face as being confrontational, potentially a battle or at the very least a game.

If you have a problem and you put physical distance between you and the problem, the emotion you attach to the problem will be reduced. It happens without needing to go through consciousness at all. Your body does that metaphorical thinking. I could quote all the references for this stuff.

It sort of makes sense, and yet people haven't really realized that literally, if you put physical distance between you and the problem, the emotion reduces.

Now, in the last ten years, research is catching up with something which I think is hinted at in quite a lot of NLP. Particularly John Grinder's work. Now, the theorists are absolutely now - with all sorts of practical research from around the world - supporting these ideas.

Of course, they're so simple that you don't need even questions like the Lazy Jedi questions to play with these metaphors.

If you've got a difficult conversation to have with your child, you can choose to have it in a different place. You can choose to sit side by side rather than across the kitchen table. You can choose to have a conversation about their future career on top of a mountain on a hike rather than in the home with all its associated connections, and potentially its enclosed spaces. So, you can just play with using physical embodied metaphor to influence people, and of course to influence yourself.

The funniest thing, sometimes, about how people get themselves frustrated and stuck and unable to change is that they sit still in their house staring at a computer. If you want things to change, things to move, then *move*. Go out, get outside, allow your mind to open. Allow your body to open to the blue sky and something different will almost inevitably happen. You may think that's obvious, it's *only obvious once you know*. It's so true, and it becomes obvious once you know and once you start to play with it. And I really would encourage anybody who's listening to this to start playing with it.

If you have a look at my website, there are a whole bunch of links and connections that you can see, and different places you can find out more and of course all the references that I've mentioned during this session. So, www.XrayListening.com - I hope that isn't too much of a plug, Paul.

Paul Scheele: No, please, I was going to repeat it myself. So, to get more information from Judy please go to her website www.XrayListening.com That's beautiful. I know we're about out of time here, so I wanted to know is there sort of any kind of concluding thoughts that you might leave with us so that we can really integrate what you've presented and

offered to us all here.

Judy Rees: That's a good question. I'm very tempted to ask a question like, "When you've integrated what we've been discussing, in exactly the way that you would like to, into your life whether it's your home life or your working life or your hobbies, when you've integrated all of that, that's like... what?"

And of course, I really want to know what people do with what they've discovered in this talk. I hope it's been of use to people. I'm easy to find. Do let me know what happens - because it excites me. As I hope you notice, I'm just so passionate about this stuff! I'm really curious.

Paul Scheele: That's beautiful, and brilliant information. So really, thanks so much Judy. We really appreciate what you've shared in this session of the NLP Mindfest and I'm sure that getting access to a lot more of your work is going to be beneficial to all of us, thanks so much!

Judy Rees: Thank you.

Paul Scheele: And before we close the session, I would like to remind everyone who's participating that digital recordings and CDs of this session and all the sessions of the online festival of change and achievement are available at www.learningstrategies.com. I hope you've enjoyed this session as much as I have. I absolutely adore this whole topic and I absolutely, also, know that the information and processes that Judy has shared with us can really help us so much. So, listening more times can really assist tremendously.

If you thought of others that might benefit from what you've learned here, please also be sure to tell them about how they can participate. We know that when you can collaborate with others about what you're learning, you're going to really accelerate the results that you enjoy so thanks again for participating. This is Paul Scheele of Learning Strategies. I'll be with you again in our next session of the NLP Mindfest, an online festival of change and achievement. And again, Judy Rees, thanks so much for being with us as a part of this. All the best.

Judy Rees: Thank you.

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