
Human Transformational eLearning™



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Human Transformational eLearning

White paper from Diane Kramer, Ph.D., CEO, PeakSkills Learning System

Deep Changes to Self

Human Transformational eLearning is the appropriate type of learning for changing significant mindsets and beliefs at a deep level of self. When an individual changes from a follower to a leader, from a procrastinator to a taker of responsible action, from a person who has self-doubts to one of high self-confidence, deep beliefs and mindset have changed. These deep changes are changes in the way we process, store and retrieve mental information. These deep changes result in changes in the way we think, feel and act.

As we have discovered at PeakSkills Learning Systems, eLearning methods for causing these deep changes differ markedly from traditional eLearning methods for mastering skills and information.

Taxonomy of eLearning

At PeakSkills Learning Systems, we train trainers, coaches and instructional designers in eLearning course design using the PeakSkills Learning Method and our eLearning platform (Learning Content Management System/Learning Management System). Over the years we have come to recognize that ‘one size does not fit all’. So to appropriately coach each student through their eLearning course design and development, we created a taxonomy of eLearning types, including one we labeled ‘Human Transformational eLearning.’

Persuasive/Informational eLearning

This is a type of eLearning where information is presented to recipients to be absorbed such as in marketing campaigns and commercials. This type of eLearning works based on the principle of *repetition*. The more often the brand or commercial is repeated, the more likely the information will get stored in the learner’s long-term memory or human database.

Procedural eLearning

This is a type of eLearning where the learner masters a specific procedure, such as a way of filling out a form, that gets repeated over and over. To be successful, this type of eLearning must closely match the procedure back at the workplace.

Process Flow eLearning

This is a type of eLearning where the learner learns a general set of steps that can be applied in many different situations which are variations of each other. Here we are talking about a sales process, a managerial process, a performance appraisal process, etc.

The success of this type of eLearning depends on practicing each step under multiple conditions.

Principle Based Problem-Solving eLearning

This is a type of eLearning where the learner learns a set of principles and then practices applying them in multiple problem-solving situations. Examples include training managers, lawyers, and other professionals in a body of knowledge and practice.

Human Transformational eLearning

This is a type of eLearning where the filters that determine what and how we store information in our long-term memory or human database are altered in order to improve functioning and well-being. These filters represent our beliefs and determine what gets paid attention to, how information gets interpreted and what gets pulled out of our human database. Example: Pessimists who believe in the 'worst possible' remember negative childhood memories far more than positive memories. Once they change their mindset filters and become more positive, they remember different and far more positive memories than they had before.

Difference That Makes a Difference

Definition - Learning is defined as any relatively permanent change in the mind/brain that results in changes in sequences of thoughts, feelings and actions.

Each of the first four eLearning methods above (persuasive, procedural, process flow and principle-based problem-solving) work in much the same way. According to Cognitive Learning Theory (Clark, R. and Meyer, R. E-Learning and the Science of Instructional Design. San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, 2003), new information or skills come into our short-term or working memory, get transferred to our long-term memory or human database, and then get retrieved when we need the stored information or skills...on the job or in a more general life situation. To improve learning in each of those four contexts, we need to figure out how to move new information more efficiently from short-term to long-term memory and then out again for use.

Human Transformational eLearning is a different type of learning. It is not principally about storing new information and skills in the human database. Rather, it is about changing the filters or rules that determine what and how information is stored in our human database. Another word for those filters or rules are beliefs. For instance, if we believe that we 'are not good enough', we will filter out or distort compliments while amplifying 'complaints' and criticisms about ourselves. If we believe we are 'right' and others are wrong, we will filter out their useful comments and wisdom. If we believe 'it's hopeless', experiences that suggest the opposite will be either distorted or totally deleted by our filters. These filters are powerful constraints on our ability to learn and to develop new roles and responsibilities. Lets take a look next at how these filters or beliefs come to control our mindsets so thoroughly. Then we will look at where changing these filters or beliefs is useful, and how to do so.

(Note: Human Transformational eLearning is based on the methodology and research from Cognitive Psychology and Neuro-Linguistic Programming. Neuro-Linguistic

Programming is a practice field where patterns of excellence, down to the level of beliefs, are modeled from people of excellence and then taught as step-by-step procedures to others.)

How Did We Get This Way, Anyway?

In childhood, we are dependent on the powerful people around us, especially our parents. We experience strong emotional needs...for love, belongingness, safety and approval. At the same time, we are learning much about the world and ourselves. And our minds are naturally creating meaning out of our experiences, allowing us to make sense of the world.

So as little children, we make meaning out of what happens around us...we are creating generalizations and beliefs that seem to make sense. While we are doing the best we can in making sense of our world, our interpretations may ultimately not be accurate since our minds are not fully developed and we lack important information. These distortions include our generalizations about the encounters with the people who have power in our life.

For example, if our efforts to communicate or carry out new activities are criticized by our powerful parents whom we need to love us and keep us safe, we may interpret those messages to mean “There is something wrong with me.”, “I am not good enough.” or “They don’t like me”. The result may be “I better not try.” “I better do it their way.” or even “I will shut them out, so that I can do it my way.” Once we start believing our own stories about what is happening between our parents and ourselves, we operate as if these beliefs were true about ourselves. They become part of our self-image.

These beliefs then become the prevailing beliefs or filters that are used to make subsequent sense of our world and guide our thoughts, feelings and actions. At a young age, we are not yet aware enough to realize that our interpretations and beliefs are often inaccurate. We do not realize that when our parents ‘bruise’ our younger selves, it is because they are generally trying to protect us or teach us and they often lack the skills in how to be really sensitive to our childhood minds. They may also be wounded themselves, or are trying to protect themselves. Our understanding comes later when we begin to gain enough objectivity to change our limiting childhood beliefs. Later still, many of us even learn to accept and forgive our parents. When our filters change to ‘adult’ mode, we experience breakthrough changes in our relationships, our work and our communication.

Why do so many of us maintain these self-limiting beliefs and stories from childhood so long into adulthood? Why do we not learn to change these beliefs to more affirming and expansive beliefs earlier or at all? After all, we made up the beliefs in the first place.

There are lots of reasons for holding on to self-limiting beliefs. Most frequently people are not aware of having limiting beliefs. In addition, there is usually a gain or payoff for maintaining the limiting belief. Such a belief might keep us safe or comfortable, make us feel important, make sense of our reality, keep us connected, or protect us in some way.

Changing those limiting beliefs is what Human Transformational eLearning is all about. Lets look next at the supporting research for what it takes to change minds before discussing uses and 'how to' methods of Human Transformational eLearning.

What is the Supporting Research?

In his book Changing Minds, Howard Gardner, Ph.D., of Harvard University (Harvard Business School Press, 2004), describes seven factors that determine whether or not we will change our mindsets or beliefs. It is the combination of these factors which determines how likely we are to change our belief filters. Factors include:

Reason

A good logical argument is one way of changing beliefs. For instance, the argument that it is better to adopt useful than non-useful beliefs is a powerful argument to those individuals who know that beliefs are simply constructions of our own mind.

Research

Facts, figures and scientific investigation are great convincers. For instance, scientific theory is reworking itself right now to fit the data we are getting on planets in other solar systems. Scientists are 'changing minds' about how new planets are formed as data pours in.

Resonance

A powerful factor in 'changing beliefs' is the resonance of our intellect and emotions combined together. 'Does this make intuitive sense?' 'Does it feel right?' are questions which tell us whether we resonate with a new belief or not.

Representation

Because our minds process information in multiple ways (examples: words, images, metaphors, graphs, numbers, poetry), it turns out that the more different types of representations of a new belief, the more likely is the human mind to change.

Resources and Rewards

One significant way of changing beliefs is to reward or reinforce a specific belief. This only works up to a certain point. Outside rewards are often less powerful than our own inner feelings about something.

Real World Events

How likely would it be that we will believe in extraterrestrials once we receive convincing visits. Real world events such as a visit from extraterrestrials will displace beliefs that are not backed up by real events.

Resistances

Resistances are about what stops us from changing our beliefs or mindsets. Aside from the fact that there may not be enough of the above six factors, a powerful resistance comes from the gain or payoff we are getting from believing the way we do. For instance,

if you believe that you need to belong and your way of doing so is by being nice at the expense of your true thoughts and feelings, you will stay a blind conformist for a very long time if this strategy for belonging works.

Its Better to Change Than Not

Now that we have discussed what goes into and keeps us from changing beliefs, lets talk about where Human Transformational eLearning might be useful. In the business world, changing minds, so that more leaders can develop powerful leadership qualities, so that teams are more productive and so that more successful products are marketed, is a key arena for Human Transformational eLearning. In the personal area, changing views of self, from such antiquate beliefs such as “I am not good enough.” to beliefs that are more empowering underscore human successes and victories. Changing beliefs about childrearing is often critically important to developing healthy children. These are just a smattering of useful venues for Human Transformational eLearning.

'How To's of the Design Process – Human Transformational eLearning

Human Transformational eLearning is about changing the way in which we store and retrieve information, not about the information itself. eLearning design and development methods are therefore different from methods used to store and retrieve new information and skills effectively.

What follows are some suggested design tips for Human Transformational eLearning. These tips come from the fields of Cognitive Psychology and Neuro-Linguistic Programming. (*Neuro-Linguistic Programming or NLP is the field that models the strategies of excellence of extraordinary people, including their beliefs, thought sequences, feelings and actions, and teaches these strategies to others using 'step-by-step' procedures.)

Motivational Factors

At least 50% of success in any type of learning program is the motivation of the learner (Nevid, J. Psychology Concepts and Applications. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003). Presenting stories and models of people who have successfully changed their beliefs and the benefits to these people is an important motivational design strategy.

Outcome State

Research tells us that we are more likely to change when we set a powerful outcome that is within our control. That means we actually state the change we want, in what context, and what thoughts, feelings and actions will follow from that change. To define an outcome, four important questions to pose to an eLearner are:

- What do you want? (in terms of accompanying thoughts, feelings and actions)
- What underlying beliefs will you need to change in order to get what you want?
- What will that do for you?
- How will you know when you have reached your outcome?

Present State

By clearly stating what the individual is experiencing before change takes place, and what are the accompanying specific beliefs, thoughts, feelings and actions, the eLearner begins to establish a mental representation or 'mental map' of the change process (from present state to outcome state), giving it a place to live in the brain. Important questions to pose to the eLearner include:

- What triggers off the pattern you want to change?
- What are the current thought sequences, feelings and actions you want to change?
- What is the underlying belief that you want to change? If you don't know what it is, guess what it must be based on your thoughts and behavior.

Content Presentation

Presenting reasoned arguments, graphs, images, facts and figures about the belief change and subsequent thoughts, feelings and actions makes it easier for the individual to change. Pointing out the rewards to come for changing is another powerful technique.

Ecology Questions

Here we want to deal with resistance to change. We want to find out what is the gain or payoff for keeping to the current set of beliefs that were often established in childhood while we were busy making ourselves safe in the face of powerful figures and an often unfriendly world. Finding out the gain or payoff helps us recognize that we must find some other way to deal with that gain or payoff or our mind won't let us change.

Important questions to ask the eLearner include:

- What are you gaining from staying the way you are?
- What is the payoff for maintaining the current situation and accompanying story?
- What would be the pain in changing?
- What is the worst thing you can imagine will happen if you changed?
- How are you keeping yourself safe or protected by staying the way you are?

Here is an example from the author's experience: A coaching client could not lose weight although she said she wanted to. She was about 100 pounds overweight. Under hypnosis, it was determined that a part of her was protecting her. That part kept her heavy because she got too involved with the wrong kind of men when she was thin. Once she learned better how to choose men based on careful criteria, she then lost the weight. She was now keeping herself safe in a new kind of way.

Change Process

There are hundreds of change processes used in the fields of Cognitive Psychology and Neuro-Linguistic Programming. Simple change processes include catching old and practicing new thoughts, visioning the change, and pretending 'As If. The learner can be led systematically through this process using interactive eLearning techniques.

Practice and Follow-Through

No serious change in mindset is easy. It takes lots of practice to make the changes permanent. That is because we have so many examples in our mind of the old patterns, and there are so many triggers in the world that set off the old patterns. The most consistent way to practice change is to write as many old trigger situations as possible. Then practice thinking the new beliefs, thoughts, and actions in the old triggering situation. (*Feelings are a result of the thoughts we think and actions we take. Change your thoughts and actions and your feelings will follow.) Imagine this over and over. Out in real life, when the old triggering situation leads to a new pattern, stop, notice and reward yourself. Prepare yourself in advance for possible triggering situations by visualizing the new patterns coming up instead of the old ones.

Conclusion and Next Steps

PeakSkills Learning Systems develops Human Transformational eLearning programs for companies and organizations or trains trainers, coaches and instructional designers in doing the same. Contact us at dkramer@peakskillslearning.com for more information.

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Company Overview

About PeakSkills and Dr. Kramer

Diane Kramer, Ph.D., a learning specialist, cognitive psychologist and Neuro-Linguistic Programmer, has led the award-winning design and development team at PeakSkills Learning Systems since 1992. Her coaching and training programs in eLearning design and development are truly exceptional as evidenced by the following quote:

“...I attended Diane's workshop on Breakthroughs in eLearning at the eLearning Guild Conference in Boston, 2005...The content of that workshop was really stimulating, informative and full of practical techniques that you can use on your job as an Instructional Designer. I thought it was an excellent session that I highly recommend.” – Sandrine Beky, IT Learning Project Manager, Cisco Systems

PeakSkills Learning Systems - Deep and Transformational

Our team at PeakSkills has accomplished its mission of developing a breakthrough method of eLearning instructional design paired with a state-of-the art affordable eLearning Platform. Our offerings are easy-to-use, affordable and serve as a gateway for trainers to add their expertise to the eLearning world.

PeakSkills® Learning Systems is:

PeakSkills Learning Method

PeakSkills eLearning Platform (Learning Content Management System)

PeakSkills Certified Developer Program

EvolveU Training and NLP Courses

PeakSkills Partner Programs

PeakSkills offers eLearning design and development services to corporations and then hosts the developed courses for the corporation on the PeakSkills eLearning Platform.

PeakSkills also trains trainers, coaches and instructional designers in the PeakSkills Learning Method (instructional design method) and the PeakSkills eLearning Platform. These trainees then develop/launch their own courses on PeakSkills for their clients.

PeakSkills Benefits

Benefits include:

Ease-of-Use – PeakSkills eLearning Platform was totally designed by trainers for trainers. Trainers love the way the system “just makes sense”. If an instructor can handle PowerPoint, this system will take them to a whole new level of eLearning development within a few days of training.

Intuitive Content Development – This template-driven system naturally leverages NLP and Accelerated Learning techniques. By combining a Knowledge Management system with learning methodologies, exceptional quality course building is rapid, easy and inexpensive.

Total Control – The instructor can change any lesson content at any moment.

Highly Economical – PeakSkills eLearning Platform is priced on a simple price per seat program. Pricing is predictable. There are no hidden costs.

Flexible – PeakSkills eLearning courses are used for: pre-sales learning demos, employee, partner and customer training, customer service tutorials.

Turnkey Solution – Everything you need to get started: training, content development and hosting.

PeakSkills is a full service channel driven eLearning company offering the following services:

- eLearning Marketing and Strategic Consulting
- eLearning Content Development
- Training on transformational learning and eLearning Methods
- ASP Hosting of eLearning courses and programs, developed by us or by your team, on the PeakSkills eLearning Platform

For a demonstration, training and more information, contact:

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