In this podcast show we cover Mirror Neurons. We'll look at story structure, the Isomorphic Metaphor. We look at the genius of Pixar and the way that they tell stories because we cover so much in the last few podcasts, we're going to review our journey to this point.

Giacomo Rizzolatti has a long standing interest in how the brain connects to movement. Welcome to this week's podcast. Now what did Giacomo Rizzolatti discover? He is credited of discovering Mirror Neurons.

Mirror Neurons are very-very cool.

So essentially what Mirror Neurons do is, help us learn. And you've watched children who mimic adults. And there was an advert in the UK put out by the government which shows children copying their parents smoking and they would use pens, pencils and anything. And it's true, we all know this children will do what we do, not what we say.

And this is down to the Mirror Neurons. They help us mimic the behavior of people around us and thus learn very quickly. And you can use this to your advantage because as you start to learn a new skill and you watch people who are excellent at that skill. The Mirror Neurons fire in your brain and you will start to learn that skill. Well that's what has been proposed any way. Do you know there is another way to fire Mirror Neurons and that is to tell stories?

Yes story telling will fire neurons in the brain so that it trains the person to behave and act in that way. Oh, the potential of this is amazing. And now it starts to make a little bit more sense when you come across phrases as the key to influencing other people is storytelling. To create transformation in other people is through storytelling. And this is why the best teachers, the best trainers all use stories to illustrate points.

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Now if you think back nonfiction books that you've read you'll remember the stories that illustrate the point not necessarily the step by step list unless you went out of your to have to memorize those.

Now in the last session we explored The Hero's Journey which is a classic well known story structure, but we also indicated that we will talk about some other structures. So what if we want to design a story for a particular person or a group of people and tailor it to them rather than telling a generic direct story. Is there such a structure that help us do this. Well I'm glad you asked because yes there is.

So we're going to explore something that we call in NLP an isomorphic metaphor. Wow, big word and there is another jargon in NLP and really I don't care whether you can label something. Just because you know some jargon doesn't mean you know how to use the skills. But essentially isomorphic means same structure. So how do you design an isomorphic metaphor? We're going to look at the case study by David Gordon from his book 'Metaphors'.

Now he was working with a family and the family were having certain challenges, so we clicked at various bits of information and he designed an isomorphic metaphor for his family.

So we start designing the process like this: Take a piece of paper, fold in half and then open it up. Down the left hand side, put a list of all the characters and what's going on. So for example, we had the family here so we have the father, so we list the word father, then underneath with mother, and then son. So that becomes the family.

So it's written those four words in a piece of paper, now we'll get into what is happening. Then under the word family, write the word, the father is rarely home. That was causing the son to get into trouble. So we'll write down the son gets into trouble. The mother was covering for the son. And the father finds out and is furious and leaves. And this is a problem that keeps on recycling.

Okay, so what we have now got is the characters and the situation and what is happening. So we then design a story to change that behavior. Now as we said before, know your audience. So this family happened to be interested in sailing.

So David Gordon designed the story around sailing to transform this family. So how did he do that? Well to get the structure what he did on the other side of the paper, the father became the captain of the ship. The mother became the first mate; the son becomes the cabin boy, now that's the family which is the boat crew. Now next on our behavior we find the father is rarely home. So we have to remove the captain from the ship which is going to be a bit tricky so what we do is, we put the captain is often in the cabin. Now the son gets into trouble. So who gets into trouble? The cabin boy and so we have the captain boy who sets the wrong sail, now the mother covers for the son in the original version, so who needs to cover for the son?

The first mate. So the first mate tries to help the captain, but he finds out because the next thing that happens, the father finds out and is furious and leaves. So the captain is furious and goes back to his cabin. Now as we get to the end of this, there's no resolution to the problem and it recycles. So we need to come up with a solution. And the solution in this example was the first mate… excuse me the first mate reminds the captain how he was, when he was a youth and this resolved the situation.

Now this gives us a very simple structure and flow to the story. Now within that we want to fill in the details and this is where you get to hide all the lovely NLP language patterns. Now if you haven't learned some of the language patterns yet we'll be exploring language in later podcasts. Let's also acknowledge that you've come up with the solution for the person.

And no matter how clever you're thinking the solution is that you come up with the person, people tend to take away the right solution for them. So resist ears to explain your story to anyone when you tell them. Allow their unconscious minds to create the meaning that will work for them. Yes, wonderfully simple and at the same time being elegant at transformation and helping people change. So a recap, parallel to structure and that's essentially what isomorphic metaphor means, also build rapport, make it appropriate story for the person or people.

And essentially what we're doing here is pacing, pacing somebody's world and then leading them into the new way of thinking. So we're going to keep the verbs, keep all the action words. We're going to change the names.

You like me get excited about the story telling stuff, so let's have a look at another structure. This is from a book by Daniel Pink. I love his books all good books. To Sell Is Human. And he talks about Emma Coats who was a former story artist at Pixar Studios which is owned by Disney now. And it's essentially six phrases that start a sentence that get you going, that gives you the outline of the story. So the Pixar template, six starting phrases.

Once upon a time, one day, every day, because of that, because of that until finally. Alright, wow deceptively simple. So let's apply it to a Pixar film and see if it all works. So we're going to use Nemo, Finding Nemo, yes.

So once upon a time, there was a widowed fish named Marlin. He was extremely protective of his only son Nemo. One day Marlin warned Nemo of the ocean's dangers and implored him not to swim far away. Every day in act of defiance, Nemo ignores his father's warnings and because of that he is captured by a diver and ends up as a pet in a fish tank in a dentist in Sydney. Because of that Marlin sets of on a journey to recover Nemo, and with help of other sea creatures along the way until finally Marlin and Nemo find each other, reunite and learn and to love and depend on trust. Yeah, that sums up the film Nemo.

Now how easy is that. It gives you way to create a great structure very quickly for a story that you'll be able to tell other people. Okay, now let's take another example from Daniel's book, To Sell is Human. He gives this example where he used this outline to create the outline of his book. Okay so can we structure his book, using this method? Let's give it a go. Once upon a

time, only some people were in sales. One day everything changed. All of us ended up in sales. Every day they sold stuff, we did stuff and everyone was happy because of that we had to learn the new ABCs, Attunement, buoyancy and clarity. Because of that we had to learn some new skills to pitch, to improvise, to serve. Until finally we realized that selling isn't some grim accommodation to a brutal marketplace of culture, it is part of who we are and therefore something we can do better by being more human.

Don't I sound different when I'm reading and that summarizes the book and gave an outline to Daniel's book. And what I'll do just for you, you realize is just for you. On the website nlpcourses.com on the podcast page I have included download copy of both these structures. And I get to you. In our last few podcasts we've been covering a lot of theory behind storytelling. And I hope you find it very useful. Let's have a quick recap.

We started by proposing the idea that our brain thinks in stories. And we used example of three words been out to trigger a story in somebody's mind which was rabbit, car, road. Then we said, no, no, no, no rabbits were heard in the telling of those three words.

In the fact the rabbit jumped up, blocked out the lights, ducked at the last moment and saved himself. And we noticed that the brain now runs both stories if you heard that one before. And for repetition we can strengthen that new story that the brain wants to tell itself from those three words.

Now building on that we propose that it is a natural way to progress as humans and we could track the way children use story to become a healthy adult. We also proposed the idea that you could change your beliefs through story telling. We touched a little bit on cognitive linguistics not cognitive therapy different stuff, but cognitive linguistics that proposed that all words which are essentially metaphors we tell ourselves.

We then started to move into story structure. How could we design stories for individuals and groups and we looked at The Hero's Journey and how that seemed to be a universal story that seemed to resonate no matter what culture you came from and what time in history based on the work of Joseph Campbell.

And today we looked at several other story structures. One, we use in NLP called the isomorphic metaphor and we looked at a case study from David Gordon's work. And then we jumped straight over to Pixar and looked at the way that they can use a very simple once upon a time to give a structure. And the next thing is we'll then need to fill in that structure with details and this is where we can use some of the NLP language patterns that we'll be covering in later podcasts.

And I am sure you have realized that what we're really talking about here is unconscious processing. Understanding the unconscious mind so that we can enrich our communication for transformation change work influencing with ethics. So in our next session we are going to talk directly about the unconscious mind. We touched a little bit on what I call the prime directives of the unconscious mind and we're going to start to expand on that in the upcoming podcast. So

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until next time John story structure, Cassidy Rice wishing you a successful week and talk to you soon. PS, I'm not sure you are allowed to do a PS on a podcast, but hey here we go, if you want to see an example of Emma Coats Pixar story structure, visit our website at www.nlpcourses.com. Find the **about us page** and you will see the Pixar story structure in action.