

Mapping Out Your World

By Gayle North

*"The mind is its own place, and in it self
Can make a Heav'n of Hell, or a Hell of Heav'n."*

-- John Milton

The world around us is so vast that even in a whole lifetime, we can experience only a very small part of it. The only way we can experience the world and learn about it is through our senses.

Aldous Huxley pointed out that the doors of perception are the senses, our eyes, nose, ears, mouth and skin. They are our points of contact with the world. Your own unique reality, your map of the world, is built from your sensory impressions and life experiences.

Map making is a good analogy for the pattern of perception that takes shape as one gains experience with various aspects of the world. Your map then generates your behaviors on the basis of what you perceive in your personal model of the world. **"People are always making the best choices available to them in their personal map of the world."** - NLP Presupposition.

Maps are selective, leaving out more information than they provide. Even with their limitations, however, they are invaluable for exploring the territory. What your personal map includes depends on what you notice, and where you want to go.

An artist, a botanist and a logger taking a stroll through a forest will have very different experiences and notice very different things. The world is always richer than your limited perception of it....you see only what fits with your map...noticing some things at the expense of others.

What you pay attention to is further filtered through your beliefs, interests, and preoccupations. These filters of beliefs, interests, and perceptions determine what sort of a world you live in.

With filters of narrow beliefs, interests and perceptions the world will feel impoverished, predictable and dull. The very same world can be rich and exciting to one who includes sensory richness, interpreting pictures, sounds, feelings, tastes and smells and in a pleasurable way. The difference of course lies not in the world, but in our map of it and the filters through which we perceive it.

Even what we see is not real. If it is correct that 70% of the process of seeing takes place not in our eyes, but our brain, the world we see is not the real world. *What we see is only a filtered perception interpreted by our personal map.*

You can get a perfect demonstration of this phenomena is when you discuss your childhood with brothers and sisters. Often their recollection of parents and events will be very different from your own. Who is right?

"The map is not the territory." (NLP Presupposition). A map of Montana is not the territory of Montana. It is only a very selective representation of what the territory actually is.

In the same way, you are not your map. *At best, the map you create over time is a feeble representation of who you are and what you are truly capable of being and doing in your life.* Your map then can be a formidable limiting barrier and you may not even realize its influence.

Old maps take you to the same old territory. Many people are still using old maps they developed as children and adolescents and they wonder why some things don't change for them – why they are still stuck in old thought patterns, old emotional responses and old habits.

Although your outdated maps and filters may have served you well at an earlier time, they may not be effective now to achieve your desires for perhaps a higher level of health, or more love or prosperity in our life.

The good news! You can revise and update your personal maps and your filters.

Have you ever had the experience of a sudden lightening bolt of insight - a change in perspective about a person or situation that, in an instant, changed the way you acted toward that person or situation from that point forward? When this happens, the *map suddenly changes – and you see and feel everything differently so that you suddenly have a new way of being with that person or situation.*

Most people struggle with changing their habits and behaviors because they go about the process backwards. They fortify their willpower, they brace themselves to make the behavior changes they desire and then they can't figure out why, after they lost the weight or they quit a habit for a time, they went back to the way they were before. This syndrome leads to disappointment, emptiness, and worse.

Change can be permanent only if you update your maps and filters in the process.

Revise the map first. Shed outdated beliefs and perceptions. THEN notice the old behaviors magically disappear as a new way of being begins to express itself without struggle.

Gayle North offers Personal Coaching for Positive Change using recently developed empowerment technologies to clear mental and emotional blocks that keep people stuck in unhealthy habits and prevent them from performing at their highest potential in school, sports, relationships, work and finance. Call 406-837-1214 to learn how you can STOP SMOKING IN ONE HOUR and for coaching in person or by phone.

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