

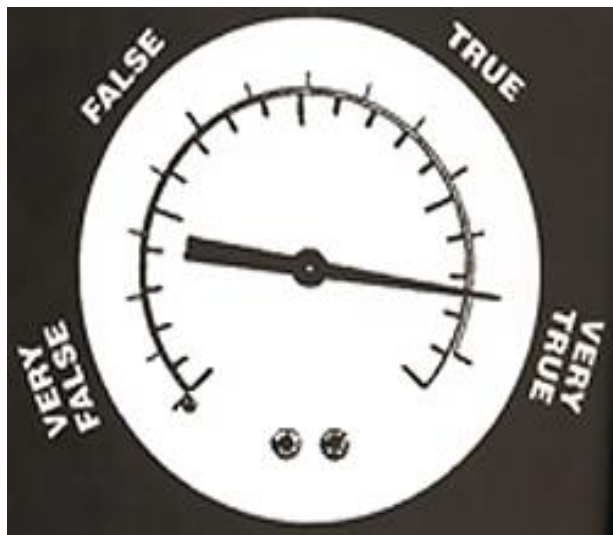


## Paul Burke Training Group

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*Beyond training: Looking at learning MI in a whole new light!*

### Thoughts on Improved Practice (TIP) #1509



This week, you're invited to take our little 10-item "True and False" Quiz! Please note that some items are tricky! Some are "partly true" and some are "partly false". An answer key is provided on page 2. If you've been keeping up with these T.I.P.s in the last few months, you'll do well here. If not – you can use your score as a motivator to get back into the routine of doing 15 minutes of reading about your M.I. practice each week from now on! (That makes for 13 hours of MI reading in one year! I recommend starting with the David Rosengren manual "Building Motivational Interviewing Skills (Guilford Press).

#### Try our "True or False" Quiz!

(Answer key begins on page 2).

1	In Motivational Interviewing, the word " <i>motivational</i> " speaks to the idea of helping people develop motives that support a positive change.	T or F?
2	The <i>engaging process</i> in MI is about helping the client to engage in the conversation you are hosting and to engage with the argument that suggests change is necessary and possible. Engaging work also involves the MI host engaging with the client's point of view (or frame of reference) before working toward changing it.	T or F?
3	When working in the Motivational Interviewing way, helpers don't provide advice or suggestions to clients. MI helpers encourage clients to listen to <i>their own</i> advice.	T or F?
4	In the practice of <i>reflective listening</i> , MI helpers try not to modify what the client says. Reflecting is all about the client hearing exactly what they have said.	T or F?
5	On average, it is ideal if an MI helper can offer clients twice as many reflective statements as questions during an MI conversation.	T or F?
6	An MI helper should always remain neutral about the decision or choice that a client makes as a result of participating in an MI conversation.	T or F?
7	Paul Burke has experienced temperatures as cold as of -51C in his MI training travels.	T or F?
8	There are some people who try numerous times to make a change –only to be met in the long-term by failing to maintain the change. When this happens, some of these people "give up" ever trying again. Such people can be considered " <i>unmotivated</i> ".	T or F?
9	Whether clients change or not can be influenced by the characteristics of the person who is trying to help them.	T or F?
10	Motivation is most affected by how important a particular change is perceived to be by the client. If a person sees a particular change as important, they are likely to pursue it.	T or F?



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#### ANSWER KEY

1	False.	(Well, actually that statement is “partly true”). In fact, MI does involve helping people develop and strengthen motives (reasons) that support positive change. That is an important part of MI work. MI providers enhance pro-change motives by differentially attending to client reasons that support change as opposed to those that reinforce the status quo. MI also involves helping strengthen client’s perceptions around their ability to pursue the target change. As a third pillar of the work, MI practitioners also help people examine and identify the importance of making the targeted change. With these three primary interventions, MI serves to bolster readiness, willingness and ability to pursue positive changes.
2	False	That is only partly what engagement in MI conversations is about! Engagement in MI conversations is also about you, as the helper, engaging with the <i>client’s</i> logic, or “train of thought”. Until you can engage in the client’s way of looking at their situation, most clients are not very receptive to hearing about your point of view – or the perspective of other people. Thus, in MI work, it is most helpful to think of “engagement” as that part of the conversation where you, as the helper, engage with the client. In the early stages of any new “topic”, it is important for you to engage with the way your client sees her situation and with the logic that drives the behavior that is being explored. You will find that as you work to see things from the client’s frame of reference, you will begin to develop obvious and accurate empathy with the client’s frame of mind. The client will appreciate your working hard to understand, and then s/he will become more likely to open up to exploring other ways of looking at the situation too. In all, the engagement phase of MI work is not just about the client engaging with you; it is equally important for you to engage with them!
3	False	Although MI helpers do, in fact, encourage clients to listen to the advice they themselves come up with (e.g. when their self-advice is good advice), MI work also involves offering clients information, advice, suggestions and recommendations – in certain circumstances. In MI work, helpers respond to clients requests for information and advice in an open and genuine way. Other times, when clients don’t know to ask, MI helpers ask permission to offer some information, advice, suggestions, or concerns. Above all else, MI supports the client’s autonomy. Accordingly, the client is in charge of when the MI helper is going to shift onto the “informing” role.
4	False	Only “simple reflections” involve unmodified reflection of the input that client provides in a conversation. These “simple” (unmodified) reflections are important in MI work. They help the client to hear important elements of what they are saying and thinking. Sometimes, however, for a variety of reasons, MI helpers deliberately modify parts of what clients say. Such modified reflections are considered “complex reflections” in MI practice. They help the client to think about what they have said in a more complex way. Sometimes it is helpful to amplify something a client says. Sometimes it’s helpful to “undershoot” or “soften” some element of what a client says. Other times it may be useful to help the client reflect on a feeling that they have implied (but not stated) in a



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		conversation. MI helpers also reflect beyond what a client has said, at times. To help “continue on” a train of thought that the client has used – but where the client has not taken the thought to completion.
5	True	Clients answer our questions so that we can hear their answers. Conversely, clients listen to our reflections so that they hear themselves think. Our reflections help them to examine their logic. Often, reflections serve to help clients begin to question their logic, and to begin opening themselves up to the idea that a specified change might be in order. Research indicates that it is helpful to have more reflections in an MI conversation than questions. For beginning levels of proficiency, a one-to-one ratio is acceptable (and fairly easy to achieve). For “competency rating” in MI however, a 2/1 ration of reflections to questions is required. Very experienced MI practitioners sometimes demonstrate ratios as high as 3/1 and even 4/1. (What’s your “personal best” so far?)
6	False	MI work involves enhancing a client’s motivation for a specific outcome. It involves “guiding” the client’s thinking and feelings toward increased desire for specific (predetermined) changes. Accordingly, an MI helper cannot really be “neutral” about the intended outcome. In order to know where to guide, you must know what the outcome is that you are guiding toward in a conversation. Before MI work can commence, it may be necessary to “counsel with neutrality” for a while – at least until it becomes obvious what the ideal outcome (or the intended outcome) of the conversation ought to be. Counselling from a neutral position however, is not MI. Of course, there is nothing wrong with starting from that position but to get into MI gear, it is important to remember that MI is directional. You need to know if you are moving the conversation forward toward a specified outcome). Thus, you can’t be neutral when it comes to deciding which motivational outcome you are trying to achieve.
7	True and False	Paul was in Yellowknife recently where it was -42C – and windy. With the wind chill the temperature dropped all the way to -51C. He thought he had died. (The cab driver that day told me “this is nothing. You should see it here when it gets really bad!”). I discovered that Yellowknife is an ancient Latin word meaning “so cold you can’t tell if your cheeks are freezing or burning”. (Yes, those cheeks as well). I was also in Inuvik last year on the first day of the sun’s return in January. It was -48 that morning. (I walked to the training session 3 blocks away that day, lugging my training cases through the snow. I learned a lot on that trip – mostly that Inuvik is a long way from the Equator!)
8	False	It may well be the case that such people are motivated for change, but demoralized about their ability to make it happen. To describe such people as “unmotivated” is probably falling into the “Labeling Trap”. When people would like to be able to change but feel that they can’t, confidence and ability issues are what need to be addressed. Motivation for change increases when people feel that the intended change is important to pursue and when they also have the confidence to pursue it. Many people become ambivalent about change when they know they need the change – but don’t think they can achieve it. Such a profile does not equate with “low motivation”. It sometimes equals “low ability” or “low confidence”.



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9	Very True!	We all know what to expect from a helping relationship where the helper is judgmental, pushy, impatient, “preachy”, or “phony”. On the other hand, where helpers work hard to prove their genuineness, their warmth and compassion, and to show that they are accurate in their understanding of the client’s point of view (empathy), much better outcomes are the result. Dr. Miller says “we all know exactly how to behave if we want to ensure that the client locks his feet in the sand and refuses any possibility of change”. Truer words were never spoken. Similarly, MI conversations tend to get good results from helpers who can demonstrate the capacity for compassion, partnership, acceptance, and evocation. It seems that it’s not just about what we do – but also about how we do it.
10	False.	Seeing a possible change as important is only one part of the recipe for internal motivation. Understanding that a specific change is important impacts on readiness for the change – but so does willingness-to-change and the client’s perception of his/her ability to change. All three ingredients (importance, willingness, and ability) are necessary in order to fuel the internal drive to pursue a significant change. Thus, just because your client thinks that a change is necessary does not mean that they will develop an inner motivation to take action. Once a client begins expressing the importance of a change, help them explore the other two dimensions as well (willingness and ability). Many clients continue to feel ambivalent about a potential change even though they can express how necessary such a change might be.

Until next week ...

Team Leader,  
Paul Burke Training & Consulting Group.