



Paul Burke Training Group

PO Box 39027, RPO James Bay, VICTORIA, B.C., V8V 4X8
Telephone: 1-250-385-6468. Toll-Free: 1-855-MI-TRAINERS
Web: www.paulburketraining.com
E-mail: info@paulburketraining.com

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

Thoughts on Improved Practice (TIP) #1826



Without hope, people simply don't have the ability to change – and – unless people believe they have the ability to change, they often hold very little hope. MI serves to change all that.

It's true that with the skillful use of MI, we can evoke *desire* for change. We can also evoke the person's own *reasons* for pursuing change - and even their *need* for change. But – when people don't believe that they have the ability to change, unfortunately, they are dead right.

The Bones of Hope: The hope bone is connected to the ability bone. The ability bone is connected to the confidence bone – and the confidence bone is directly attached to the bone that supports change.

HOPE – is the very backbone of potential change

Miller and Rollnick (2013) explain that “people are unlikely to commit to making a change unless they have some confidence that change is possible. In fact, lack of confidence can be an obstacle even to acknowledging the importance of change. “(MI-3, p. 213). They go on to say that when working with people who lack hope and confidence, “you have not done people any favor if you cause them to believe that change is urgent – but beyond their reach”. In that case, instead of evoking hope, we promote demoralization. People can easily give up. How many times have you heard the “sour grapes” story come up in an interview where your client feels that s/he can't attain the goal – so, to save face, s/he simply reframes that goal as unimportant, unnecessary, and not something they wanted in the first place. Sometimes, when we think we can't do something, it's easiest just to say “I don't need it anyway. Who cares?”

When there's been a fracture anywhere within the bones that link to change, we need to be very skilled at working to support and enhance the client's:

- actual ability to change
- perceived ability to change
- access to hope – for making things better
- confidence in their capacity to get to the goal



Paul Burke Training Group

PO Box 39027, RPO James Bay, VICTORIA, B.C., V8V 4X8
Telephone: 1-250-385-6468. Toll-Free: 1-855-MI-TRAINERS
Web: www.paulburketraining.com
E-mail: info@paulburketraining.com

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

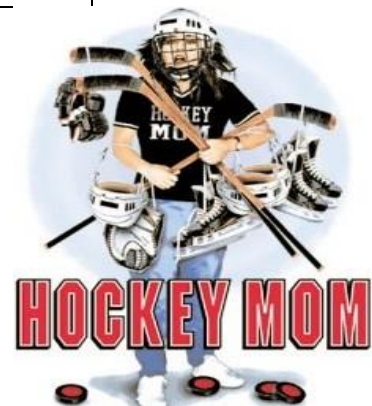
Hands down, the art and science of helping evoke hope in people who are running short, or even on empty, is my favorite thing to work on in MI training workshops. Hopelessness is at the heart of so much of the sustain talk that we all hear in the early stages of MI conversations. For that reason, I've written a series of T.I.P.s on this topic. The "Hope Series" will be continued in later installments.

My experience in conducting training sessions is that it's easy to over-emphasize the importance of evoking a desire for change, and reasons, and need. That's a problem. The fact is that if interviewers don't know how to enhance their client's confidence in their ability to change, many clients will stay stuck. We sometimes mistake such "stuckness" with ambivalence (e.g. with the idea that the person needs to weigh out the pros and cons of the intended change before they can make a decision). It's entirely possible for a person to have decided that change is necessary and to want such change – desperately – all the while not taking a single step in the forward direction.

For this first installment of the Hope Series, I'll start by giving you a little story that one of my workshop participants offered to our group on the third day of an advanced workshop last year. I will never forget it. I'm SO grateful for what that story taught me about confidence, ability, and hope and their effect on motivation. Here goes ...

Confidence: The Missing Link (A true story - with a little creative license)

Mary described herself as a "hockey Mom". She invested a lot of time every winter driving her 13 year old son, Brad, to and from hockey tournaments all over the county. I commented that such mother-son trips must provide a wonderful opportunity to connect with her son; they provided a chance to have long talks about all manner of things. Mary laughed. "Are you kidding?" she asked. "He spends the whole trip with his headphones strapped to his ears playing his Rap music at full volume. "The only time we ever talk in the car is when he wants to convince me how bad we need to stop for hamburgers".



This hockey Mom had a great story to tell about a road trip that she and Brad had taken the weekend before, enroute to a big game. Brad was in grade seven. He had just turned 13 and Valentine's Day was fast approaching. The tradition at his school was that, starting in grade seven, and beginning with the Valentines Dance, all seventh graders were allowed to have their first experience with attending what I used to call the "sock hop" (that may tell you a little about my age).

Mary was very excited about this major rite of passage. Brad was not.



Paul Burke Training Group

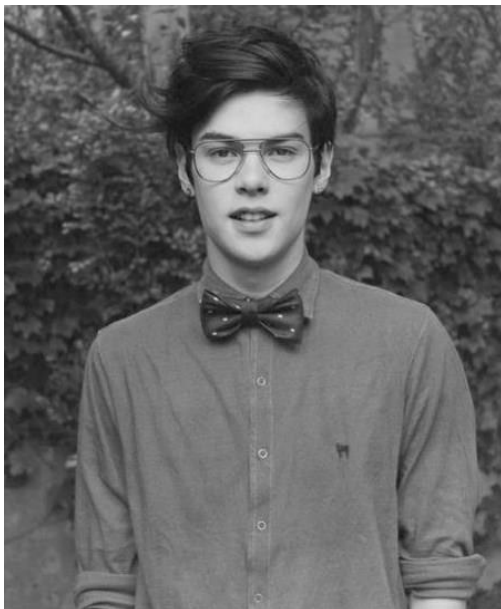
PO Box 39027, RPO James Bay, VICTORIA, B.C., V8V 4X8
Telephone: 1-250-385-6468. Toll-Free: 1-855-MI-TRAINERS
Web: www.paulburketraining.com
E-mail: info@paulburketraining.com

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

"Why don't you want to go to the dance", Mary would ask Brad - over and over and over again – with every chance she got. "They've asked me to be there as a Parent Chaperone you know – and it would look kind of weird if I was there as the Mom - and you weren't there as the son!"

"I don't know", Brad said. "It's no big deal. I can go next year and besides, Dad wanted me to help him clean the garage that weekend. I'll be too tired if I stay up late on Friday night".

Mary worried. She wanted so badly for her son to have the experience of his first school dance at the same time as all of his friends.



"I'll buy you a new outfit if you decide to go", she coaxed. "New shoes and everything! I'd even buy you a nice tie and we could get your hair styled to make you look like a total hottie!"

"Don't be sick, Mom!", Brad moaned. "I'd be a total nerd-from-hell. Plus, I don't need any new clothes, and even if I did, I hate the stuff that you think looks so good. I always look like such a total dork in the stuff you like. But - if you want to buy me a new pair of them skinny jeans for school – that'd be ok, I guess. Whatever".

"Girls like boys who are well groomed, you know", Mary replied. "I should know! I was a girl once, and when I was in school we liked boys who were clean and tidy and who knew how to dress up a little now and again.

"That's so 'not now', Mom", Brad muttered, in contempt. The Hockey Mom tried everything she could imagine. Persuasion. Bribery. Pleading. She told him the reasons that she felt it was important for him to go – and she even led him to believe that his friends would think it strange if they were all there and he wasn't. None of it had any effect. Brad announced that she ought to back off, because he simply wasn't going to go. End of story. His ears were deaf.

Mary knew all about Brad's stubborn streak – and she decided not to push it – at least until Valentine's Day got a little closer. She made no mention of it again for nearly 10 more days.

Then, very early one Saturday morning as Mary loaded Brad and his gear into the van to get to the first semi-final tournament of the season, Brad taught his Mom a very important lesson about enhancing motivation for change. They were more than 30 minutes into the silence of their 45 minute trip. Just Brad and his headphones and Mom and her Starbucks and the Saturday Morning "Across Canada" on CBC-FM. Suddenly, and without any warning at all, Brad shut off his iPod and took the headphones off of



Paul Burke Training Group

PO Box 39027, RPO James Bay, VICTORIA, B.C., V8V 4X8
Telephone: 1-250-385-6468. Toll-Free: 1-855-MI-TRAINERS
Web: www.paulburketraining.com
E-mail: info@paulburketraining.com

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

his ears. He laid them on his lap and turned his head to stare out at the passing fields for a full minute or possibly two. It was obvious, Mary said, that something had happened that put him very deep in thought.

"Mom, can I ask you a really personal question?", he said, without even giving her a look.

"Well, sure, son. I guess. I guess it is. What kind of a personal question?" (Mary was a bit leary as she was aware of the curve-balls kids sometimes like to throw when parents are most off-guard).

"How does a guy go about asking a girl to dance?" Brad asked. (He still wasn't able to look at his Mom except out of the corner of his eye.)

When Mary got to this part in the story, she looked around at all the other participants and the tear in her eye was only slightly less obvious than the lump in her throat. "Wow", she said. "That's when I finally got it! I totally got it! I felt so bad for the poor little guy! He wanted to go to that dance every bit as bad as I wanted him to – but he just felt that he couldn't. He didn't know how to ask a girl to dance! That had never even crossed my mind! And – he was even more terrified about how to react in case he asked – and the girl said no!"

All the way back home that night, after the tournament, Brad and his Mom practiced 50 different ways of asking a girl to dance, and even a few ways of reacting in case she happened to say, "no thanks". It was only now that they were home and just pulling into their driveway that the rehearsal process came to an end.



"So", Mary inquired – gently. "Do you think you will go to the dance next weekend after all?"

"Well of course I'm going to go, Mom! Don't be ridiculous. It's the very first dance of my whole life and all my friends will be there! Even Brittany Franklin will be there – and she is amazing as a dancer!"

"Wow!", Mary replied. "Good for you, son! Do you think Brittany will dance with you?"

"Well, I sure hope so Mom!", Brad replied with a bit of a jovial smile in his tone. "She sure better, I would say...", Brad continued. "...because if she don't, she's the one who loses out. There's plenty of fish in the sea you know!"



Paul Burke Training Group

PO Box 39027, RPO James Bay, VICTORIA, B.C., V8V 4X8
Telephone: 1-250-385-6468. Toll-Free: 1-855-MI-TRAINERS
Web: www.paulburketraining.com
E-mail: info@paulburketraining.com

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

They both laughed, and as they waited for the garage door to open, Mary thought it prudent to offer him one more chance for some learning. “Any other questions you’d like to ask your ancient old Mom?”, Mary offered.

“Yah ... I guess”, Brad replied. “Maybe just one”.

“Well, sure, Brad. Of course. You know you can ask your Mom anything at all. Anything. I’m proud of you, son, for being so open with your Mom. I want you to feel good about coming to me with any question you ever have ... about anything...”



“Yah, Mom. What-ever”, Brad droned in response.

“So – what is your question, Brad?”, Mary pried.

“Well Mom, I was just wondering ...”

“Yes, Brad? What is it that you need to know son ...?”

“Well, Mom - do you think it would be ok if we went for burgers and fries tonight instead of having that stupid left-over soup?”

+++++

Mary’s story made a wonderful way for our group to transition into talking about how we sometimes assume that a perception of lack of importance is behind most motivational problems. Brad helped all of us to learn that sometimes a lack of ability (real or perceived) is the bigger issue.

In a metaphoric sense, many of our clients just need to learn how to ask a girl to dance. If we can just learn to give clients space enough to ask the right questions and let us in on their thoughts, we’ll be able to help them develop the confidence they need so that they will be able to hear themselves say - “I can do it!”

Until next week ...