

# Out of the Box Coaching Newsletter

## A Clever ReOrganization Nudges Your Memory

by Mary Bast



As a teacher or a learner, you know the power of acronyms for meaning and memory. Acronyms condense highly useful information in a way that's easy to remember. Ironically, the word *acronym* is not an acronym, though some clever folks have made it so, as in this newsletter's borrowed title.

In modern times we've become accustomed to **HTML** (Hyper Text Markup Language) and **LOL** (Laughing Out Loud), as well as the maddening media trend (dare I call this **MMT**?) represented by **BFF** (Best Female Friend).

These examples don't intimate content, although we've endowed with meaning such acronyms as **CEO** (Chief Executive Officer), **SCUBA** (Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus), and **LASER** (Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation).

Even more powerful are acronyms that represent a system of ideas and also carry a specific meaning. Neil Rackam's **SPIN** comes close, in that his psychologically-based sales model puts a "spin" on the traditional notion of selling (**S**ituation questions, **P**roblem questions, **I**mplication questions, **N**eed-payoff questions).

Parallel to my coaching approach, organizational consultant Sylvia Lefair's **OUT** makes it easy to remember the process her acronym represents, and also conveys the meaning of the word "out":

1. **O**bserve behavior patterns so change can happen in a rapid manner.
2. **U**nderstand where the behavior came from for deeper and more long-lasting change.
3. **T**ransform the patterns to their positive and healthy opposite, to effectively inspire and lead teams and organizations.

**AWE** is the acronym I've coined to represent clients' potentially awesome progress:

1. **A**wareness of their unique patterns.
2. **W**atching, without judgment, how those patterns operate.
3. **E**xperimenting with pattern breaking until their unwanted beliefs and behaviors drop away.

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## A Clever ReOrganization Nudges Your Memory (continued)

**Awareness of clients' unique patterns:** If your clients had been hypnotized in a nightclub act to do something afterward at the hypnotist's command, would they then ask, "Why am I clucking like a chicken?" No. They volunteered to let someone make strong suggestions about their behavior. As children, they were even more suggestible, and that programming has kept the patterns operating into adulthood. The Enneagram helps you guide them to key patterns. You could then take unnecessary months or years for them to understand *why* they have these patterns. Instead, you'll achieve quick results when clients accept their patterns as simple programming and explore with you *how* their unique trances play out.

**Watching, without judgment, how those patterns operate:** You may remember Joe Btfsplk, from the Li'l Abner comic strip, who radiated a cloud of doom everywhere he went. Btfsplk couldn't help being a jinx to other people. Even the name "Btfsplk" was off-putting (close your lips with your tongue sticking out, then blow out air — commonly known as a Bronx Cheer). Clients typically judge their Btfsplk patterns negatively. Instead, help them get to know those troubling aspects and see what they can learn. They need to befriend their Btfsplk!

**Experimenting with pattern breaking until their unwanted beliefs and behaviors drop away:** Sometimes awareness itself will dissolve a key pattern. Often, though, your clients will need a nudge. Here's an example of the three-step process from one of my clients. A Three who was stuck in a Nine pattern of seeking harmony at all costs, she had contracted with several business partners in a row, only to run into problems with each.

"There's obviously a lesson I need to learn," she said. "What did each of these relationships have in common? What pattern was I operating from?" At first she was self-critical: "What's wrong with me that the same thing keeps happening?" As she let go of judgment, she became aware how attached she was to making each relationship work, often accommodating, ignoring early clues that her partners were operating from a different perspective. "I kept attracting partners who were competitive, focused on the 'outcome' they wanted so strongly, they weren't willing to consider the relationship with me important enough to collaborate. I kept trying too hard to make it work, despite the fact that the only way it would work for them was if they got their way." She experimented with a model of partnership where she could stand up for her opinions *and* integrate her high value for relationships, without having to compromise. "Now when someone hardlines me," she concluded, "I've learned to walk away early on."



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