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## Guided Metaphors and Their Use in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Speech Disorders

Tim Mackesey, CCC-SLP, BCS-F

Moderated by:  
Amy Hansen, MA, CCC-SLP, Managing Editor, [SpeechPathology.com](http://SpeechPathology.com)



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## Guided Metaphors and Their Use in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Speech Disorders

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TIM MACKESEY, CCC-SLP, BCS-F

continued

## About Tim Mackesey, CCC-SLP, BCS-F

Tim Mackesey, a Georgia licensed and nationally certified SLP since 1992, specializes in the evaluation and treatment of stuttering and fluency disorders. He is an ASHA Board Certified Specialist in Fluency Disorders (BCS-F). Tim taught the graduate-level stuttering course at Georgia State University. He is a past president of GSHA. Tim has a number of published articles in peer-reviewed journals. He has served as an expert witness in litigation involving communication disorders. Having a severe stutter into his mid 20's helped Tim gain insights into the necessity of CBT integration into SLP.



With respect to CBT, Tim is a master practitioner in NLP and Neurosemantics. He is trained in Solution Focused Brief Therapy, Interactive Guided Imagery, and Mindfulness. He combines these modalities in his approach to CBT.

5

## Overview

Starting in childhood, a person with a speech disorder will most certainly deal with listener reactions that can lead to anxiety, embarrassment, and can motivate the person to avoid talking. The speaker's experience of stuttering and fluency disorders, selective mutism, articulation disorders, lisps, and other speech impediments can trigger anxiety. The integration of CBT to behavioral models of SLP delivery is often vital to unleashing confidence and the courage to communicate.

Guided metaphors offer leading-edge CBT skills to the SLP who wants to offer a holistic therapy approach. A story whose content parallels the client's problems will indeed bring the experiential material closer to consciousness and exert significant influence on the speech behaviors.

6

## Disclosures

- Financial: Tim Mackesey was paid an honorarium for this presentation by SpeechPathology.com. He owns a private practice devoted to stuttering and fluency disorders in Atlanta, GA. Tim is available to teach seminars for CEU.
- Non-Financial: Tim is founder of Raise Your Voice, Inc.- a 501c3 non-profit dedicated to education and advocacy for people who stutter.

7

## Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify one example of "projecting" and one example of "personalization" of a speech disorder.
2. List three ways that "state anxiety" affects a person with a speech disorder.
3. Identify one story cited by the presenter to use as a metaphor in helping people with a speech disorder.

8

## Why is it important for SLPs to be skilled with metaphors?

1. Core change happens at the unconscious level and not the conscious level. *State anxiety, courage, motivation, for example, lie at the unconscious level.*
2. You can bypass a person's critical faculty (for their benefit)
3. For times when direct communication won't work and may not be appropriate
4. Metaphor gives you many more options
5. With our diverse caseloads, metaphors can transcend a client's upbringing
6. Well chosen and artfully timed metaphors deliver CBT

\* These are all to be congruent with achieving better outcomes in therapy and not manipulative

9

## Playing with metaphors: Let's dive in

Tell me what these have in common?

- King George VI
- Fortnite –the video game \*
- Football coach Lou Holtz
- James Early Jones
- Harry Potter
- and a congenital amputee- Kyle Maynard?



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\* <https://www.stuttering-specialist.com/post/fortnite-and-stuttering-battle-royale>

10

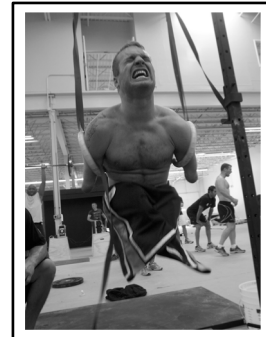
## Kyle Maynard

Written permission from Kyle Maynard



*"I've always believed that **anyone** can achieve their dreams, regardless. I've always had this attitude about **no excuses**. A belief that I can go on and do what I need to do. To go on, to **succeed**, regardless."*

- Kyle Maynard



11

## Anxiety and speech disorders

...trait anxiety is higher among people who stutter compared to fluent speakers, thus indicating that anxiety is a personality trait of people who stutter. State anxiety in social communication is higher among severe stutterers as compared to mild stutterers and fluent speakers. Thus state anxiety is related to stuttering severity. The results are discussed in the frame of the multidimensional model of anxiety.

\*Ezrati-Vinacour, R., Levin I. Journal of Fluency Disorders. 2004; 29 (2) 135-148

Feeling anxious about one's stammer might be considered a reasonable reaction because of its potential to elicit listeners' mockery, embarrassment, frustration, or pity (Bloodstein, 1995; Menzies et al, 1999)

\*Craig, A & Tran, Y. Advances in Psychiatric Treatment (2006) 12:63-68

12



## “The 3 P’s”: Punctuate + Personalize = Pervasive



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13

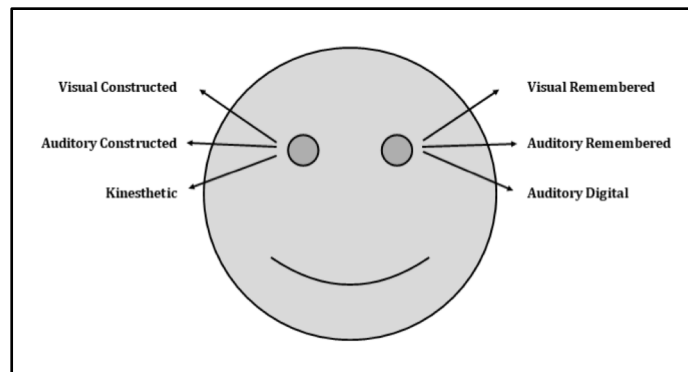
## CBT in SLP is Sine Qua Non

1. REBT
2. Mindfulness
3. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
4. CBT / Cognitive reorganization/ Reframing
5. Solution Focused Brief Therapy
6. Interactive Guided Imagery
7. Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) and Neurosemantics

\*People with speech impediments often *project* thoughts into their listeners- they feel shame, embarrassment, and are at risk for teasing and bullying.

14

## NLP Eye Patterns (Bandler & Grinder, 1979)

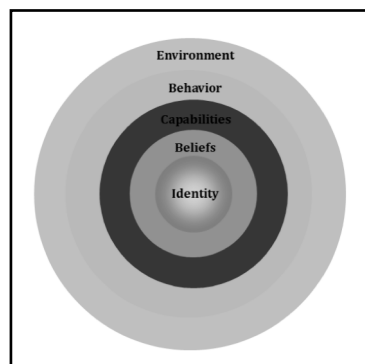


Graphic Created in Microsoft Publisher  
Content from Bandler and Grinder (1979)

15

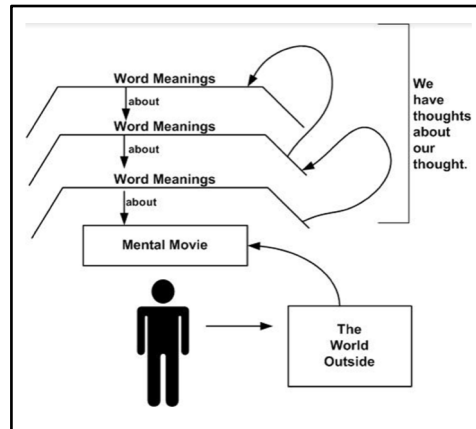
## Logical Levels (Gregory Bateson, 2000)

- **Environment**- The “Where, When, and With Whom”
- **Behavior**- The “What”
- **Capabilities**- The “How”
- **Beliefs**- The “Why”
- **Identity**- The “Who”



Graphic Organizer Created in Microsoft Publisher  
Content from Bateson (2000)

16



Written permission from Bob Bodenhamer, Ph.D.

17

## Common Cognitive Distortions

- 1) **Projecting-** Imagining what others think when you stutter
  - i.e., "The kids think I'm special needs because I stutter."
- 2) **Black and White Thinking-** Either/or thinking
  - i.e., "If I stutter, my project partners will be mad and blame me for any points off."
- 3) **Personalization-** Blaming yourself for something you weren't entirely responsible for or blaming other people.
  - i.e., "If I stutter, I failed... I've started speech therapy."
- 4) **Should statements-** Criticizing yourself with *shoulds* or *shouldn'ts*.
  - i.e., "I *should* be able to say my name... everyone else can."

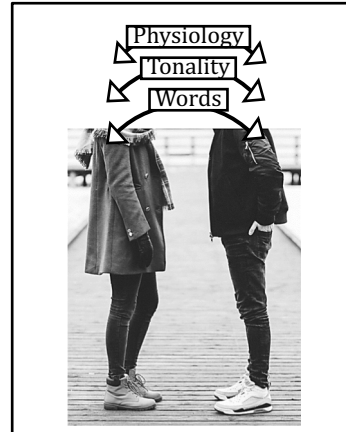
\*David D. Burns- The Top 10 Forms of Twisted Thinking (see references)

18

## Rapport is the first step



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19

## Advanced language patterns in therapy

- I. State all directives in the positive. Make a resolution to abandon "don't"
- II. Avoid "should" and "need."
- III. Validate your clients and teach others how to do it
- IV. Pacing and leading: "If I understand correctly, you \_\_\_\_"
- V. Avoid asking "why?" (i.e., "Why did you get embarrassed?")
- VI. Capitalize in key moments of therapy and ask, "Why is that important to you?"
- VII. Realizations: "Wow great. You volunteered in class! Now that you realize you can do that what is your next goal?"
- VIII. Use past tense purposely.
- IX. Avoid using a kinesthetic voice tone that amplifies emotions
- X. Avoid using identity labeling and "language of permanence"

20

## Preparing the Metaphor

- Setting up the metaphor is similar to a chef preparing ingredients. Start with your client's interests. Identify his challenges, beliefs, and cognitive distortions. Is he motivated to improve? Blending the right ingredients will lead your client to achieve his outcomes.
- Example: *Chase, a 16 year-old, has been playing the guitar for four years. In his hours of practice every week he is used to seemingly constant mistakes learning a new song. He loves challenges in music. On the other hand, Chase has not generalized his /s/ and /z/ and still has a significant lisp. He is sometimes teased about it and angry when that happens.*



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***How do we take his intrinsic resources from music to SLP?***

21

## The Anatomy of Metaphors

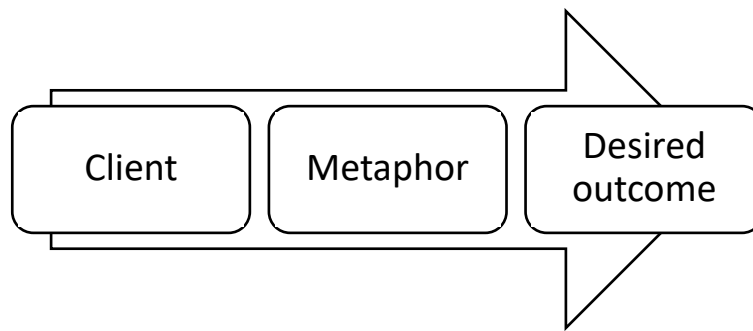
- The left brain understands the content of the story and the right brain "applies to self."
- Example: In Exodus 4:10 Moses' brother, Aaron, used to speak for Moses (enabling). God gave Moses the assignment of meeting the Pharaoh and leading the people out of Egypt. God knew Moses was "more than stuttering." Moses was capable, he could talk, and he was competent.
- As we address the **identity** of the pws we may ask, "Who are you that is more than stuttering?"



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22

Structure the guided metaphor with a 1:1 relationship  
between client and the entity in the metaphor



23

## Isomorphic metaphors

**Isomorphism** means that there is a similarity or identity to the form and structure of elements between two groups. Resources in the metaphor are introduced as a way to enable the character in the metaphor to achieve their outcome.

Example: Former VP Joe Biden had 1) history of stuttering since childhood, 2) history of teasing and bullying, 3) his teachers, Catholic nuns, supported him, 4) he was taught phrasing in oral reading, 5) he was taught to generalize phrasing into dialogue and narrative via mirror work, 6) he still uses his strategies to deliver speeches, 7) he became a fierce debater in the Senate and as VP.

How many of your clients can relate to that story?

\*The VPs Speech. *People Magazine*. March 21, 2011. pp 81-82

24

## Isomorphic Metaphor: Harry Potter\*

- o Voldemort, the villain, was referred to as “he whom should not be named.” Later, Headmaster Dumbledore tells Harry Potter, “Call him Voldemort, Harry. Always use the proper name for things. **Fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself.**” This metaphor is parallel to pws not wanting to say “I stutter” and others not wanting to talk about it.
- o The Devil’s Snare plant tightens as you struggle to escape it. This is similar to secondary symptoms of stuttering and/or avoidance.
- o Professor Quirrell fakes stuttering to appear aloof.

Full article: <https://www.stuttering-specialist.com/post/put-a-spell-on-stuttering-harry-potter-metaphor>

Washington Post article:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2018/09/10/candidate-governor-maryland-stutters-so-does-my-young-daughter/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.e8712d9a832a](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2018/09/10/candidate-governor-maryland-stutters-so-does-my-young-daughter/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.e8712d9a832a)

\*Rowling, J. K. (1997). *Harry potter and the sorcerer’s stone*. New York, NY: Scholastic Press.

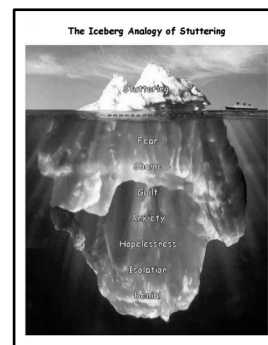
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## Metaphors for parents and teachers-examples

Close the gap between clinical jargon and practical language

Iceberg image: written permission from Russ Hicks

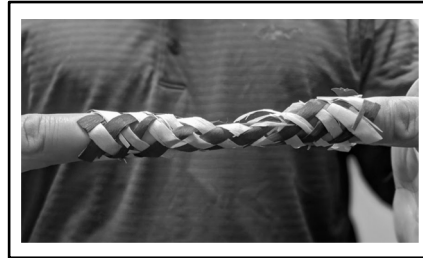
1. Parent: “She doesn’t seem to care that she clutters!”
2. Parent not practicing: “We are just so busy with sports and dance...you wouldn’t understand”
3. Temperament: coping, patience, delayed gratification, interrupting
4. Parent who talks turbo speed and interrupt but wants a slow talking child
5. Teacher who enables too much
6. When I tell my child to stop and say it again it works!
7. Parent who enables too much



26

## Tension and Struggle Metaphors

- o "Patience will achieve more than force." –Edmund Burke



27

## Metaphors for Rate Control, Precision, and Patience

1. A road with speed humps
2. A combination lock
3. Learning an instrument
4. Typing and texting
5. Revolving doors

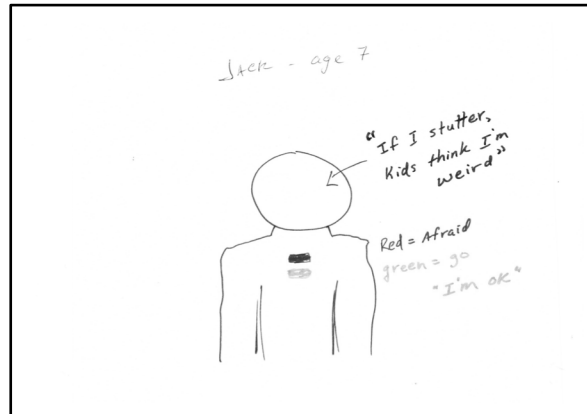


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28

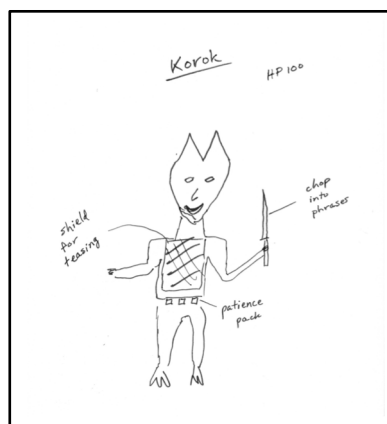


## Coloring, Anatomy, CBT, and Metaphors



29

## Pokémon Metaphor



30

## Celebrity Analogies

Written permission from Jane Fraser @ Stuttering Foundation of America

- Joe Biden still uses phrasing technique for speeches (*People Magazine*)
- James Earl Jones feigned mute as a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader
- King George VI endured bullying from his brother, disapproval from his father, and benefited from therapy with Lionel Logue
- Samuel L. Jackson pursued acting to take on his stuttering
- Jack Welch, former chairman of GE, led the world's largest company with a stutter!



31

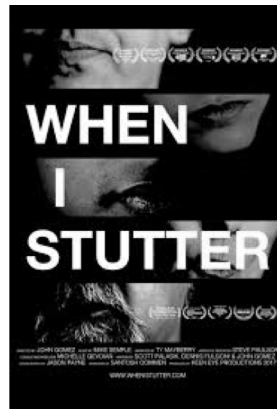
## The power in a quote

- "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." - Nelson Mandela
- "It always seems impossible until it's done." -Nelson Mandela
- "Patience achieves more than force" -Edmund Burke
- "When the objective is clear enough there are no obstacles" -Earl Nightingale
- "There's no such thing as failure. There's only feedback" - NLP presupposition
- "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts." -Winston Churchill
- "You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.' -Eleanor Roosevelt
- "The journey begins within and ends within." -Sufi
- "Do or do not. There is no try." -Yoda

32

## *When I Stutter*

Written permission from movie director, John Gomez



33

## Why is it important for SLPs to be skilled with metaphors?

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34

## Website & Contact

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35

## Q & A



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36

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38