

**Priming: Using the Hidden Power
of Language for Superior
Client Outcomes and
Self-Improvement**

Dr. Clifton Mitchell

ABRIDGED HANDOUT

**"You do not have to want to stop
your current behavior in order
to change, you simply have to
want something else *more*."**

Aldo Pucci

- 1. You do not like the status quo.**
 - pushes client**
 - less pleasant motivator**
 - but familiar state**

- 2. You want something else more.**
 - pulls client**
 - more pleasant**
 - but unfamiliar, threatening**

Most clients have not clearly formulated the desire side of the change equation.

The first rule of language is that all language is hypnotic. All words and paralinguage influence.

The second rudimentary point is that, if you are talking to another, you cannot, not manipulate.

Brain most complex organ in the universe

86,000,000,000 nerve cells (86 billion)

86 (billion) to 860,000,000,000 (billion) glial cells

Each cell has 1000 to 20,000 connections

100 (trillion) to 1,000,000,000,000,000 (quadrillion)

neural connections in brain

Processes 1 (trillion) to 100,000,000,000,000 (100 trillion) bits of information per second

You are only aware of about 2000 bits of info being processed per second

Typical neuron fires 5-50 times per second

Ave. 20 yr. old has about 100,000 miles of nerve fibers in brain

In a recent simulation experiment it took the 4th fastest computer in the world with 82,944 processors 40 minutes to do what the human brain can do in 1 second.

The brain uses 20-30% of the calories we take in

The mind move you and your listener in the direction of the *dominant thought*, regardless of whether it is stated in the positive or the negative.

Instead of Saying... More Effective to Say...

“Don’t fall.” “Walk Carefully, hold the hand rail.”

“Don’t lie to me.” “Tell me the truth, now.”

“Don’t hit your little sister.” “Keep your hands to yourself”

Instead of Saying... More Effective to Say...

"You're not dumb." "You're smart and capable."

"You're gonna fall and break your neck." "Hold on tightly, maintain your balance."

Instead of Saying... More Effective to Say...

"Don't forget to." "Remember to....."

"You can't miss it." "You will see it on your right..."

"Don't hesitate to call." "Call when you need me."

Instead of Saying... More Effective to Say...

"You will not fail." "You'll succeed!"

"Don't be nervous." "Remain calm and relaxed."

"I'm really poor at." "Inch by inch everything's a cinch!"

Instead of Saying... More Effective to Say...

"I hope I don't eat "I am healthy, I am thin."
that chocolate cake."

"I gain weight just "Everything I eat turns to
looking at food." health and beauty."

1. Define what you are currently doing.
2. Define the positive opposite of what you are currently doing with much attention to a properly worded dominant thought.
3. Make a present-tense statement of you *doing* the desired behavior with the precisely worded dominant thought.
4. Repeat the present-tense statement to yourself 500-1000 times a day consistently across time. Give it 2-3 months, once formulated, consistency is the crucial!

Priming refers to an increased sensitivity to certain stimuli due to prior experience.

Priming occurs when an earlier stimulus influences response to a later stimulus.

Priming can occur at the unconscious level or at a conscious level.

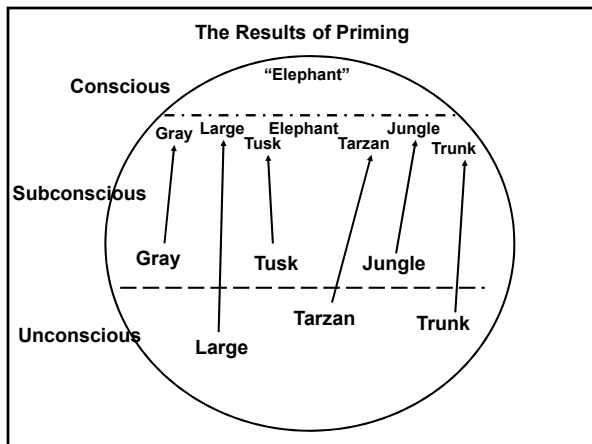
Subjects primed with words like “polite” “considerate” “respect”

were less likely to interrupt than subjects primed with words like

“rude” “obnoxious” “impolite”

Subjects primed with words like “old” “Florida” “wrinkles” “bingo” etc., all associated with elderly

- 1) walked slower after the priming, and, in similar study, if S had much contact w elderly
- 2) performed worse on a memory test than S primed with neutral words w little contact w elderly



1.

Every behavior is preceded by preparatory thoughts whether you are aware of the thoughts or not.

2.

No word stands alone in the brain.

Every word is neurologically linked to other words in the brain, literally. When you say a word, all associated words are momentarily triggered. There is a chain reaction of associated words all being neurologically stimulated. More importantly, these words also trigger preparatory thoughts that trigger action.

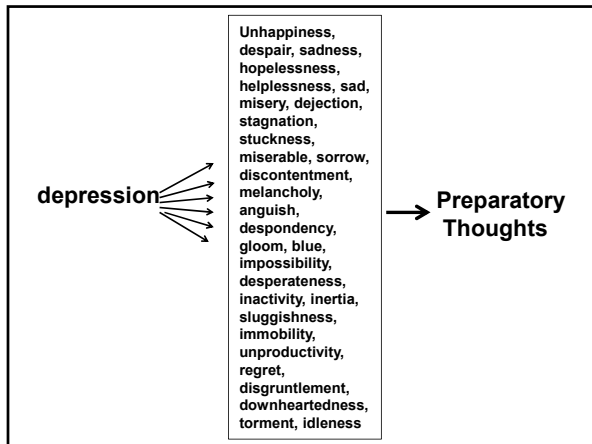
The priming and ironic process research has confirmed this repeatedly.

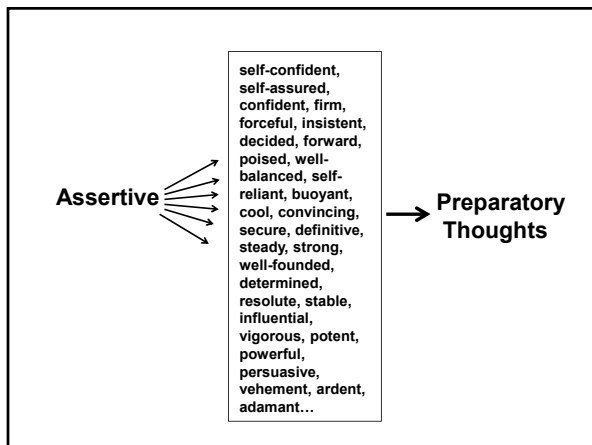
Anxiety



nervous, worry, concern, apprehension, disquiet, fretfulness, angst, fear, edginess, jumpiness, tenseness, uneasiness, burden, discomfort, dis-ease, agonize, stew, fuss, trouble, bother, alarm, distress, trepidation, upset, restlessness, agitation, irritation, torment, dread, fright...

→ Preparatory Thoughts





3.
Therapist should always think of every primary word said as a cluster of related words and consider what preparatory thoughts they are priming and triggering.

We are controlled by an unconscious behavioral guidance system more than we think. And we are unaware of it.

Once covertly activated, unconscious goals are more powerful or just as powerful as conscious goals.

Goals do not require an act of will to be acquired.

What Does This Mean for the Therapeutic Dialogue?

- 1. Remember you are constantly priming your clients.**
- 2. Consistently state the positive opposite of client's negative framing of problems.**
- 3. Use high level empathic responses that include deficit statements.**
- 4. Use embedded suggestions/commands in your dialogue.**
- 5. Carefully observe client reactions when prime clients.**
- 6. Remember that your job is to plant seeds. Talk to the subconscious.**
