

Appendix I – NLP Accessing Cues

NLP offers many ways to watch and listen for indicators of someone's inner sensory bias. The first is through *sensory predicates*.

One way to determine someone's sensory orientation is by listening to how they describe their experience; the kind of descriptors and *sensory predicates* they use. When someone says, "I see what you mean," or "I hear you," or "That feels right," NLP takes these as literal statements of how the speaker is making inner sense of her experience.

Sensory predicates that indicate a *visual bias* include: blackness, bright, clear, colorful, enlighten, focus, fuzzy, glimpse, gray, hazy, imagine, inspect, ogle, paint, peek, perspective, picture, pretty, preview, see, seem, sketch, show, vivid, watch, witness, self-image. Visual phrases include expressions like: seeing eye to eye, point of view, seeing is believing, keeping an eye out, getting some perspective.

Sensory predicates that indicate an *auditory bias* include words like call, click, clash, crash, discuss, harmony, hear, hum, listen, loud, noisy, quiet, roar, scream, shout, silent, sing, screeching, squeal, thunderous, told, tune in. Auditory phrases include expressions like

talking things over and harmonize and click. Were either sounding boards for each other or whistling in the dark. But a few people can listen and lend an ear and I don't mean to chew it off when were jawboning but I'm tired of singing the same old tune and humming the and ready to march to the beat of a different drummer."

Sensory predicates that indicate a *kinesthetic bias* include words like bind, break, cold, cool, dig, feel, firm, float, freeze, handle, grip, grasp, hurt, nail, painful, pounding, pressure, push, rough, scratch, solid, squeeze, unravel, warm, wring.

Kinesthetic phrases include "I'm trying to grasp onto something because so that it doesn't slip through my fingers. Things have been rough lately and I've got no sense the pressure will ease but if it did I feel I'd be on firmer footing standing my own ground on my own two feet and tackling new problems with a lot of muscle when push comes to shove."

Eye Movements. Another way to determine someone's sensory orientation is by watching their non-verbal behavior, especially they way their eyes move. The creators of NLP noticed that when people said, "I see what you mean," they also demonstrated consistent physical cues. Their eyes move in a consistent pattern called *accessing cues*:

Up and to the person's left — accesses non-dominant hemisphere visualization (in right handed people): remembered or idetic imagery. Up and to the person's right — accesses dominant hemisphere visualization (right handed people): constructed imagery. Level and to the person's left — remembered sounds and "tape loops" (non-dominant hemisphere). Level and to the person's right — auditory construction (dominant hemisphere): thinking of things to say, how to say it, etc. Down and to the person's left — auditory digital; internal dialogue. Down and to the person's right — accesses feelings; usually both tactile and visceral.

Straight ahead but defocused and/or dilated — quick access of any sensory information, although primarily visual (generally the straight-ahead-defocus will indicate which system the person has the most skill accessing).

Head Movements. Head position corresponds to the eye positions listed above. In general, up is visual, level is auditory, down is kinesthetic. Additionally, left is non-dominant hemisphere and right is dominant hemisphere.

Other Types of Eye Movements. Squinting — visualization. Blinking — generally indicates visualization if blinking is somewhat prolonged, although it might indicate the access of other modalities depending on head position. Blinking also will often indicate the “punctuation” of information.

Breathing Changes. Breathing high in the chest or the cessation of breathing indicates visual accessing. Visualization is also characterized by shallow breathing. Deep breathing low in the stomach area indicates kinesthetic accessing. Even breathing in the diaphragm or with the whole chest and with a typically prolonged exhale indicates auditory accessing.

Shifting from visual to kino, most extreme example is a sigh. Most of us think the other person is bored with us; NLP would say more neutrally that a sigh is a sudden shift in accessing, usually from the visual or auditory systems into feeling.

Tonality Changes. High pitched, nasal and/or strained tonality indicates access of visual information. Low, deep tonality indicates kinesthetic access (except, of course, for certain emotionally charged memories). Voice is also more breathy. Clear, resonant tonality indicates auditory access.

Tempo Changes. Quick bursts of words and a generally fast tempo indicates visualization. Slow tempo with long pauses indicates kinesthetic access. An even rhythmic tempo indicates auditory access.

Muscle Tone Changes. Muscle tension, particularly in the shoulders and abdomen, indicate visual accessing. Movement indicates tactile kinesthetic accessing. Muscle relaxation indicates internal visceral kinesthetic accessing. muscle tension and minor rhythmic movements generally indicate auditory accessing.

Other accessing cues. Hand and Arm Positions. Finger pointing and/or arm extended indicates visual modality. Palm upturned and arms bent and relaxed indicates kinesthetic access. Hands or arms folded indicate auditory accessing. “Telephone” positions (head tilted onto hand and/or hands touching mouth or chin area) indicates internal dialogue. “Counting fingers” indicates access of dominant hemisphere, generally auditory digital.

Skin Color Changes. Paling or waning of color — visualization. Increased, fuller color — kinesthetic.