Lessons for Life from ‘Slights of Mind’

As promised, here’s the follow-up post to my ‘Slights of Mind’ review, focusing on the ideas in the Epilogue – ‘Lessons for Life: Bringing the Magic Home’.

2. Multitasking is a myth – it’s just not possible to do two or more activities at once properly. For best performance, do one thing at a time.

I completely agree with this, so I don’t always try to do two things at once. I have a Twitter feed (it’s open whenever on my screen) so I do see it and it’s not that I’m not aware of it but I try to give it the attention it deserves.

3. Memory is fallible – keep records of important information and conversations immediately after they happen.

Agreed. Close the loop and complete a task as soon as possible and, if one is likely to be later (you’ve just finished a meeting or now have to teach, so you can’t follow-up on meeting action points until after the meeting) then write it down, update your iPad or phone – capture it somehow, and then it’s easier to live in the zone.

5. When you make a mistake, sit it aside and keep moving forward – a nagging audience will hardly ever notice.

Yes. When speaking publicly, teaching, or doing anything important can hold you back if you dwell on them – but when you make an error, and even if anyone does notice, they’ll want you to keep moving and be successful, and you’ll want to keep moving forward too.

6. Sit people and ‘psychics’ will read your mind and tell you want you want to hear.

Yes, they will. Where I disagree with this is the suggestion that people are not being honest if they change their focus if your interests change. For example, you start by being interested in the design of a car, then switch to being interested in safety and then the nature of the sales pitch. Whatever is the trigger: that’s different, that’s giving relevant interest. A car can be well designed and safe. Of course, if the sales pitch doesn’t fit that, then that’s unethical and not. Playing to people’s interests is okay.

6. *Psychics* – well, that’s another matter for another day.

7. Scream with charm – use humour and empathy to lower people’s guards.

Humour is a very good way of getting people to lower their guard, at least to pass rapport. In terms of learning, yet people to lower their ‘don’t talk to my guard’ guard. Learning can be so funny that’s very effective when fun. Have my ‘serious side’ and that provides some contrast with the fun bits in my workshops and professional development events.

6. If you have something to hide, your voice, pace, or posture will give it away when you think about it.

You will give yourself away. Whether you get picked up is another matter. Do that a skilled NLP practitioner will receive those signals. Eric Robbins, who was right at the start of the development of NLP, can read amazing details of body language, eye movements, skin tone, and more.

5. Attention enhances one small part of the world, while suppressing everything else.

Sometimes expressed in NLP as ‘we pay attention to what we want more of’. And we do. The classic exercise for this is to get someone to count all the blue objects in a room – and then ask them how many red objects they saw. What we pay attention to matters. As a teacher, what you invite your learners to pay attention to is vital. When you give feedback, do you focus on what went right, or what went wrong?

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