

Non-verbal Level

We are going to use a new term, the NON-VERBAL LEVEL (also called the silent level). Although everything we encounter and perceive goes through this level in our brain before we associate ‘words,’ we can consciously achieve the NON-VERBAL LEVEL only with considerable difficulty.

Perhaps this exercise will assist you in understanding just what the non-verbal level encompasses. Spread your fingers out on both hands and lace them together. Now place them in front of your face, just in front of your nose. Keep your hands there, and close your eyes.

Now pretend that you are a baby just about to be born. Now pretend you are born, and open your eyes. Everything looks blurry. Nothing focuses. Start moving your hands apart slowly, letting a little light come in. That action only took a few seconds, but it would take a baby many days to focus on objects. He sees objects. At this time he has no names to call them, no labels, no descriptions. Baby just sees what baby sees. At this point, baby resides at the non-verbal level.

Now when you and I see, hear, smell, taste, or feel something, our brains receive this information and begin to abstract. This first abstracting takes place on the non-verbal level. At this level our brains attempt to match the object forming in our minds, abstracted from what’s out there, with our data base of shapes and color. Then our brains start comparing the abstracted material to our mental data bases of words, and we either mentally label the object or describe it. We in effect are talking to ourselves; verbally, although not yet orally.

Now just to show you the difficulty of staying in the non-verbal level, I want you to close your eyes and listen to any sounds. Can you just hear, and not label, the sounds. Do this for a couple of minutes.....How successful were you?

Another exercise needs you to find a restful spot—a garden, a mountain, a stream, etc. Can you look at the overall scene and not identify any of the objects? Just let the beauty of the scene permeate your brain. If you occasionally do these exercises, you may find it quite restful---and informative about the world “out there.”