

# Developing your Personal Genius "demon"

Developing a "Controller" Meta-State  
A John Grinder Pattern for Increasing  
Your Choice of Total Focus  
In Developing Your Personal Genius

How To Keep It  
How to Manage It  
How To Keep It Balanced  
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Have you ever felt 100% committed to anything? What would it feel like to experience a time-and-place wherein you became so totally focused on one thing that "time," "space," "environment" and even your "self" just vanished away.... now... as you fully experience again that kind of commitment state to something -- a movie, a conversation, a ballgame, a tennis match, rock climbing, making love, learning something that totally fascinated you... obsessed you...

Numerous theoreticians have variously labeled the experience of a totally committed and passionate state. Glasser (1976) described it as a "positive addiction." Csikszentmihalyi (1991) more recently termed it a state of "flow." The ancient Greeks called it "demon" (daimonia). John Grinder and Judith DeLozier, in *Prerequisite for Personal Genius* (1987) also described it as a "demon" state --one wherein you become completely and totally focused.

"That's what demons are. They're so narrow-band focused that the whole resourcefulness of the organism is expressed at that single point. That's why you can just ease your way through otherwise very difficult situations." (p. 219)

Also, quoting Castaneda's Don Juan adventures, they described it using the metaphor of "being a warrior."

"If you observe warriors at any moment you will find that they are completely, passionately committed to whatever it is that they're doing at that moment in time. ... although the warrior will do diverse, even unrelated kinds of things, the warrior acts with utter congruency and a passionate commitment..." (p. 164).

"Castaneda proposes the worthy opponent -- a person or a context which serves as a stimulus for the child to make a full mobilization of resources." (p. 208).

In all these descriptions, we have "genius" described as an intensely focused and concentrated state of consciousness characterized by passion, commitment, flow, intensity, purposed, conscious-and-unconscious alignment, etc. And sometimes, just sometimes, to those outside of this state -- it can look like madness. Judith DeLozier, quoting Castaneda, described it as "controlled folly."

Further, such intense demon states typically involve a transformation in one's sense of self. Csikszentmihalyi described it as self-forgetfulness -- a form of self-transcendence. Grinder (1987), following Bateson, described it as an extension of self.

"When you were driving race cars you made that complete demon commitment. You had to be good. In that context your consciousness let go and allowed you to extend your definition of self to the tires...." (p. 79).

And Then the Demon Vanishes

If "one of the prerequisites for effective personal organization is the ability to make clean, 100% commitments at each stage of whatever activities you engage in during the day" (Grinder, 1987: 164), then having that state interrupted or contaminated so that we lose that 100% passionate commitment becomes an important concern. And a common one. How often and frequently we seem to lose our state of flow! So many things seem to

"How many of you are self-interruptive in your activities? Isn't in fact the normal situation one in which you're trying to single track and things have not been carefully sorted, or you do not have controllers to make the choices about their appropriateness and you get intrusions?" (p. 170)

"One of the most important functions that we are responsible for as individuals in a fragmented technological society is clean state switching." (p. 164)

Developing Resources

Okay, so what do we need in order to develop more clean state switching?

We need the ability to sort and separate between our states. Then we can choose more appropriately when to invoke our demon states. Then also we will not contaminate one state with another. We need the skill to step into, and out of, states, to have good separators or boundaries between them. We also need the ability to move to a meta-level and to manage or control our demon states from that level.

"Every state has associated with it a class of physiologies and if you have the sensitivity in your physiology you can use it as a way of very efficiently moving from one state to another and keeping one sorted from the other. The controller at a higher logical level is responsible for clean state switching -- another way of describing the well-formedness condition of nonoverlapping demons." (p. 166).

To do this, we have to learn how to become "impeccable in our state shifts." And According to Grinder, "the easiest way I know to accomplish that is to make use of logical levels." (p. 165, italics added). Doing this allows us to "double-track" without getting lost, experiencing amnesia, getting stressed, frustrated, worn out, or contaminating our states. If we experience the overlapping of our demons "with their tremendous commitment and passion, then we will usually experience a reduction in the demon-like qualities of both because they're at cross-purposes." (p. 174).

Going Meta: Taking a Meta-Position to Use Logical Levels In Everyday Life

In Turtles you will not only find that John and Judy put a lot of emphasis on Gregory Bateson, they also made multiple readings from his classic work, *Toward An Ecology of Mind*. From that work they put an emphasis on Bateson's use and development of logical levels and self-reflexive consciousness. Turtles, In fact, represent one of the few NLP books that deal extensively with these subjects. Grinder says that the easiest way he knows to accomplish becoming impeccable in state shifts

"... is to make use of logical levels. The me that jots down that note, and then moves quickly to intercept the horses that are running across the field by this point, is of a higher logical level than the demon who was passionately committed to whatever that first-/second-attention interface task was and profoundly different at the same logical level than the demon who will now pursue the horses and enjoy gather them and putting them back in the corral. Notice there is no sense of loss if you make a clean, residue-free shift. The only way you could experience loss or interruption or frustration or boredom or any of these funny words that we use for this phenomenon is by double-tracking..." (p. 165-166).

In the following pattern, I have adopted it from the seminar discussion and exercise description given in Turtles (pages 167-179). It essentially operates as a meta-stating pattern for managing our personal genius.

The Pattern

1) Find and access two fully committed states. Use your personal history and specify these two states that you have access to.

Dr. Grinder suggested the following two constraints in your choices of those states: a) Choose two states that come as close to a full 100% commitment as you can achieve at this point. b) Choose two states that lie within a common area: work, personal life, sports, intellectual area, etc.

Perhaps you can access of state of intensity in long-term effective planning and reading/ researching; or doing gymnastics and riding horses; or outgoingness at parties and social gatherings and talking on the telephone. In this way, the two states have some major things in common -- they deal with social relations, they deal with

3) Practice State A Accessing and Shifting. Go into "state A" and snap your fingers when you fully access it. The witness will then calibrate to that state by noticing your posture, breathing, eye scanning patterns, muscle tonus, etc.

4) Practice Breaking State. Upon the witness's cue, break and go to a separator state. The "demon state" of your personal genius needs a total focus which thereby separates it from any other state that might contaminate it. Demon state needs to be about one thing.

[This corresponds to the meta-program Emotional Direction Sort that Dr. Bodenhamer and myself discovered in Cognitive Psychology and incorporated into our recent work, Figuring Out People. This separates the sorting patterns of multi-directional and uni-directional. In the first, we tend to let our emotions "bleed over" from one arena or domain to other domains. In the latter, we keep our emotions focused in the domain to which they relate.]

5) Access State B. Step into "state B," snap fingers, witness calibrate, and repeat breaking state. Continue doing so until you can do so with a minimum overlap between the two states. You have reached the desired level of achievement when you have no residue carried over from one state to the other, but can cleanly separate and break between them.

6) Create or Discover a Controller at a Meta-Level. Many people already have, at a meta-position, a part of them that controls their commitment states. This meta-state "controller" determines the appropriateness of going into this state or not. It determines how we switch into those states -- in what contexts it becomes appropriate to do so and in which context it becomes inappropriate.

a) Go meta to your two genius states and from that meta-position -- find or create a facet of yourself that will do the controllers job.

"It's the controller's job to draw the line. You go, 'You, lovely as you are, you operate on this side,'..." (p. 172)

"Context -- the controller determines the context for the demon." (Judy DeLozier, p. 176).

b) If your "controller" doesn't want to do this, go meta to the controller. "Talk to that controller's controller" (p. 173). Do this by simply moving up another logical level and set the frame there. The controller sets the "cage" for the demon.

"The cage for the demon is the context it accepts. And there it can just get in and kick. Notice the tremendous freedom you get through this organizational structure. But there's no self-interruption because the controller handles the switching. The controller can use time driven variables, or completion of tasks, for example, as a way of knowing when to switch out of the state. The controller is responsible for setting the context and enforcing it and determining when to unleash the demon within the context." (p. 171)

c) At the meta-level build the controller by asking the following questions: first, "What intent drives this demon?" "What does this demon want to try to pull off here?" The controller needs to understand the demon's intent.

Second, "What aesthetic substitutions for the behavior that was less than full quality and full efficiency would the editor recommend as an aesthetic consultant?" (p. 177).

Third, "What behaviors could be substituted consistent with the intent you've already discovered in the demon's behavior that would make the demon's performance both efficient and up to quality?" (p. 177).

Benediction

"May your houses be full of wonderful demons. These demons cannot afford, in doing the kind of powerful, aesthetic job they need to do, to be worried about whether it's time to go to dinner or what 'spousie' will think or whatever. The constraints that they live under have to be set and maintained by the controller. It is not the job of

Since NLP has distinguished itself as a model of excellence and genius -- the ability to manage our personal genius so that it doesn't become a run-away demon, but one balanced, whole, and integrated demon -- gives us the ability to live holistically and impeccably.

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