

# ANDRE'S WHY

WHY DO THINGS HAPPEN ?

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 07, 2009

## NeuroMagic , The Zone , Sports and Exams.

NeuroMagic , The Zone , Sports and Exams.

Andre Willers

7 Feb 2009

NeuroMagic is a hot new science .

It is the fusion of NeuroScience and Stage Magic .

The exact neurological mechanisms of effective stage magic tricks are explored . The process is synergistic . Both sides benefit to an quite an extraordinary degree .

The Synergy :

Stage Magic exploits processes (flaws , weaknesses , or just the way it is done) in the perception and cognitive processes . It has a repertoire of tricks built up over thousands of years . Tried and tested in the real world .

Neuroscience explains them and suggests new approaches .

An explosion of applications is only now starting .

Sports.

"Watch the ball ! "

"Pay attention!"

"Concentrate!"

Heartfelt imprecations from generations of coaches .

But how do these mechanisms work ? More importantly for competitive sports , how to take advantage of them .

NeuroMagic manipulates the mechanics of the visual system , as well as the more important attention and concentration mechanisms at the neural level .

Examples

1.Mental lapses :

Change blindness , inattention blindness , choice blindness .

The cognitive system is manipulated at a neural level .

2.Visual lapses

Curved and straight motions activate different neural systems at sub-retinal level and cognitive level .

The details can be found in the works of S Martinez-Conde , SL Macknik et al .

A good summary is in ScientificAmerican Dec 2008 p44 "Magic and the Brain" .

NewScientist has also run a good article .

See [www.mindscience.org/magicsymposium](http://www.mindscience.org/magicsymposium)

Misdirection in sport .

This old standby of stage magicians is allowed (feints) .

The Zone .

Being "In Form" .

Well known in sport . Usually described as a state of relaxed concentration .

The meta-feedback processes in the brain are confident that they can handle anything because the processes they monitor are functioning well .

You can be in the Zone and still get wiped . It is an internal state .

But it is fragile .

Neuromagic techniques will be aimed at usable techniques to induce , maintain and recover it , while disrupting the opponent's Zone .

Is the Zone delineated ?

Yes .

ABOUT ME

ANDRE

CAPE TOWN, WESTERN PROVINCE,  
SOUTH AFRICA

I'm the one with the surprised look on my face if the race to the Singularity is a foot-race.

[VIEW MY COMPLETE PROFILE](#)

PREVIOUS POSTS

[The Placebo Strategy .](#)

[Financial Crisis : 31 Jan 2009](#)

[Diabetes and POPs](#)

[Negative Pressure : a Critical  
Invention.](#)

[Beads.](#)

[Paper](#)

[Paper](#)

[Blame and Anti-Blame](#)

[The Sources of the Nile .](#)

[Cool as a Cucumber .](#)



It is a whole mess of feedback-systems coming together in a system recognized internally by the meta-monitoring systems as distinct . So , yes , you do wake up in the morning knowing that everything is tip-top .

But it varies .

If you don't , neuromagic is supposed to develop techniques to kick-back into the Zone-state .

If all else fails , try rebooting . Go back to sleep thinking positive thoughts . Waking up is a fairly random initiation process of feedback loops .

This is where being part of a Team helps . The team acts as a flywheel , kickstarting the process if possible .

Zone Collapse .

If you are in the Zone , and it is then collapsed , a whole host of feedback processes are initiated that reduces effectiveness drastically . This is a neurological effect . Like dropping a spanner in watch-gears . The player's game collapses .

Disrupting Teams .

This is possible by inducing false narratives .

Eg in soccer:

This is done using misdirection and visual-system cues to make a ball disappear and reappear somewhere else from the opposing player's viewpoint . This induces a false narrative , collapsing their Zone .

Building teams can and is being done using similar techniques , but on an ad hoc basis , without a deep neurological-level theoretical background .

A quantum-physicist would be handy . The Zone-state is very much like a fragile quantum state generated from a number of players .

Virtualities .

Does anybody train in SecondLife?

It seems the obvious mechanism .

It is not physical responses that need training , but mental ones . A virtuality is better than real life , because plays can be replicated exactly and repeatedly , identifying and correcting mistakes . Levels of difficulty can be adjusted . Opposing teams can be modeled using agents . Tie it to Wii .

It can even generate revenue . Fancy yourself playing against Rinaldo ?

For \$100 you can play against his model avatar . For \$10 000 you can train against/with him in a real training exercise in SecondLife . This might even be advisable , to add randomness to the training regimen .

In effect , a player can play the opponent repeatedly before the actual tournament .

Of course , both sides will be forced to do this . SecondLife tournaments will grow in importance . Maybe even old , obese , cocaine-addicted brilliant players will make a come-back . (Or their avatars will .)

Business Team Building

This can be done cheaply , interchanging same company or a competitor's personnel .

Headhunters can employ it to get a dreamteam .

Concentration .

The techniques of concentration developed for sport are applicable to scholastic pursuits .

Exams .

The scholastic equivalent of the sports tournament .

There is definitely a Zone for writing exams (personal experience) .

When there is no hesitation . An optimal utilization of known resources . Data flows unimpeded from memory .

The opposite , alas , also happens . The individual usually knows that he is not in top-notch shape (not in the zone , not in form) , but has no choice but to take part .

The results are then also well below expectation .

The scholastic Zone uses the same neurological mechanisms as the sports Zone .

Training mechanisms developed for sports can be used for academic purposes .

The Team and Zones .

At first sight , it would seem more difficult to induce a Zone state in a number of individuals than in one individual . But it is paradoxically easier , and is used on industrial scale all over the world .

This is the highest-paid skill in the world .

What coaches and CEO's are extravagantly rewarded for . The ability to use a team to induce the Zone state in the most talented members of the team .

Note the emphasis on the most talented members of the team . The team is a tool to get the best out the most talented . It also induces Virtual Teams in them .

Think of it as a Socratic method involving mirror-neuron networks . ("What will my team think" , etc)

The traditional tools are well-known : entrainment under mild stress , mimetic emulation , isolation , exposure to carefully vetted social influences , etc .

Neuromagic has expanded on this toolkit , and will enhance it further in the normal competitive manner .

Note that Learned Helplessness is most emphatically not included . The idea is not to crush the most talented members of the team , but to induce them into the Zone , thus also dragging along many in the team not so talented .

Most Universities , especially in South Africa , (Stellenbosch in particular) , still crushes the best students under the misapprehension that they are building teams . They are just creating mediocrity . The talented are supposed to uplift the others , not join them .

Study Teams .

An interesting adaptation of the sports team idea . Widely used in US universities . Note that by pruning , the talented surround themselves with a supporting mimetic pool . This helps to maintain them in the Zone , and also drag along the many others who would not make it on their own .

A natural outflow is FaceBookism , now gathering momentum (see previous posts)

Virtual Teams .

Humans have the neurological means to form Virtual Teams .

Mirror-neuron networks .

Mild Asperger's persons are rich in Mirror Networks . They are also most prone to being crushed by social learned-helplessness techniques forced on them . The few that do survive this process do so via Virtual Teams . Usually characters they read from history . It is no accident that Napoleon , Hitler , Stalin , Mao to name a few were avid readers of history . It was not primarily to learn from it (since they did not) , but to fuel their virtual teams . (One of the major reasons why spectacles fueled social change)

A Virtual Dream Team composed of Alexander , Caesar , Genghis , etc will result in a Supermerd of a different ilk than a Virtual Dream Team composed of Buddha , Jesus , Mohamed , etc .

From an overview , supernerds like these are useful to give the whole system a shake-up now and then .

Those who can't keep up , will have to learn to run a bit faster . Is that not what was drummed into them ?

Choosing your Virtual Team .

As you can see from above , choosing a well-balanced virtual team is essential to anybody's successful and happy functioning as a

composite entity .

Techniques for doing this has been known for a long time  
(meditation , study , role-playing , getting married , etc)

But we now have drugs (eg Ritalin) , electronics (biofeedback , fMRI) , neuromagic that give us easy-to-use methods of precisely forming a Virtual Team .

For a sportsman , this means he can be in the Zone on demand . But it is addictive .

Ditto for academics .

Zone-Addiction .

Remember , being in the Zone is only in internal optimal state (Feel-good , Endorphin release .) . If this conflicts with external events , then depression or mania or both will result . (Eg Hitler when reality and the model in his mind parted company.)

The definition of addiction is that it freezes out other behaviours . Like sleep , non-zonal states might be necessary for other behaviour-states to have a look-in . Research is needed .

Off-hand , from reserve considerations ,

(see <http://andreswhy.blogspot.com> "New Tools: Reserves")

I would estimate that about of 1/3 of waking time is needed for non-Zonal activity . About 2-3 hours . The trick is to use neuromagic techniques to be in a Zonal state when the tournament occurs .

Toujours !

Andre .

POSTED BY ANDRE AT 2:46 PM 

---

0 COMMENTS:

[POST A COMMENT](#)

LINKS TO THIS POST:

[CREATE A LINK](#)

[<< Home](#)