

Community Education Series

The Recovery Village and Advanced Recovery Systems



Presentation Topic:

Evolving Mindsets Using Metaphors

Speaker:

Neil Wright MS, LPC
& Melissa Wright MA



TemmeMeil.com

About the Speaker:

Neil Wright

MS, LPC



- Neil Wright, LPC has a master's in Clinical Psychology and has worked for over 10 years with individuals of all ages, professions, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds in rural, suburban, and urban areas. He has provided individual, couples, and family counseling, as well as developed tailored trainings and consultation services on a wide range of psychological topics. He writes about leadership progression in his books Myths of Mind and consults with professionals on how to use psychology, mythology, and communication to evolve automatic thoughts and belief systems. He owns and runs his communication consulting company, Temme Meil, with his wife, Melissa Wright, who is a linguist, and author, as well.

About the Speaker:

Melissa Wright

MA



- Melissa Wright, MS has a master's degree in linguistics. As a linguist, she has worked as a content analyst, writing coach, conversation analyst, communication consultant, and authorship attribution analyst. She has a certificate in Applied Mythology and writes about using metaphors, mythology, and dreams to help us communicate better in her book *Mythos: A map to myths, metaphors, and dreams*. Her award-winning research has revolved around discourse and literary patterns, while some of her other professional experiences involved document analysis, key word analysis, and communication efficacy in conversation. She loves providing people with word-level and big-picture insights so they can communicate their meaningful messages. She owns and runs her communication consulting company, Temme Meil, with her husband, Neil Wright, who is a psychotherapist, and author, as well.

Why Psychology + Linguistics

Behaviors + Beliefs + Culture + Emotions + Language Use + Mindsets = A Personal Equation

It is an equation that either remains Stagnant, or it Evolves with Our Interactions

One of the most interactive ways of communicating is through the use of Metaphor

Shakespeare Metaphor That's Reality

**"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts..."**

-William Shakespeare, As You Like It Believed to have been written
in 1599 and first published in the First Folio in 1623

Outline of What's to Follow: Diversity

- Describe metaphors
- Discuss metaphor evolution
 - How they are embedded in our language & affect how we see, experience, and engage our environment
- How to evolve metaphors in conversation (metaphorical maneuvers)
- How to know your psycholinguistic processes better
- Refining metaphor use to match modern problems
- Discussion on metaphors and modern myth

The Power of Mindsets and The Runway To Our 2020 Reset

- **“The practice of this art lies in the heart: if your heart is false, the physician within you will be false.”**
-As found in: The Collected Works of Jung, C.G., Vol 15: the Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature. p. 30 (1942)
- **“Even if the whole world were to fall to pieces, the unity of the psyche would never be shattered. And the wider and more numerous the fissures on the surface, the more the unity is strengthened in the depths.”**

-Carl Jung, Civilization in Transition ('64)

Moyers: So when we say, "Save the earth," we're talking about saving ourselves. Campbell: Yes. All this hope for something happening in society has to wait for something in the human psyche, a whole new way of experiencing a society. And the crucial question here, as I see it is simply: With what society, what social group, do you identify yourself? Is it going to be with all the people of the planet, or is it going to be with your own particular in-group? This is the question, essentially, that was in the minds of the founders of our nation when the people of the thirteen states began thinking of themselves as of one nation, yet without losing consideration for the special interests of each of the several states. Why can't something of that kind take place in the world right now?

-The Power Of Myth: Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers (1988)

What is a Metaphor?

- Language that uses imagery that is applied to an object, person, or action to which it can not be literally applicable
- A deviation from literal speech that takes one's mind from the literal to the figurative to better describe one mind's eye in greater detail
- Artistic speech, often portraying variability within our reality
 - More specifically variability within people's mindsets
- Often metaphors are found most within religions and artistic descriptions
 - A metaphor can assign responsibility or it can deflect it
 - A metaphor can build autonomy or it can oppress it
 - A metaphor can create evolution opportunity or it can stifle it
 - A metaphor can develop adaptability or it can maintain rigidity and stagnant frames of mind
- "We must be willing to get rid of the life we've planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us."

- Joseph Campbell

What's In a Metaphor?

- What does a metaphor do?
 - Takes us outside our normal thinking box
 - Shows people the figures inside of our thinking
 - Enhances our understanding of situations/mindsets
 - Affects the way we see and experience the world, and the orientations within our mind's processing
 - For example:
 - Left/Right/Up/Down vs. Cardinal Directions

Explicit:

- The office was a zoo today
- Anne is a walking encyclopedia

Implicit and Implied:

- When I walked in late, they pounced on me
- He flew through his homework

“I had to climb a mountain. There were all kinds of obstacles in the way. I had now to jump over a ditch, now to get over a hedge, and finally to stand still because I had lost my breath. This was the dream of a stutterer.” -

Joseph Campbell

What is a Metaphorical Maneuver?

- An adaptation of your speech or communication based on the receiver: Their emotions, mood, and mind. Everything you say and do affects metaphor.
 - This includes nonverbals.
 - Remain calm (reset) when someone else is sad/angry/upset or “manically metaphoring.”
 - Eye contact variations when you move from one person in the conversation to another.
 - Talking on similar level (literal/metaphorical) as those who are participating (i.e. not being too lofty, not being too metaphorical, not in too literal a mindset with descriptions, etc).

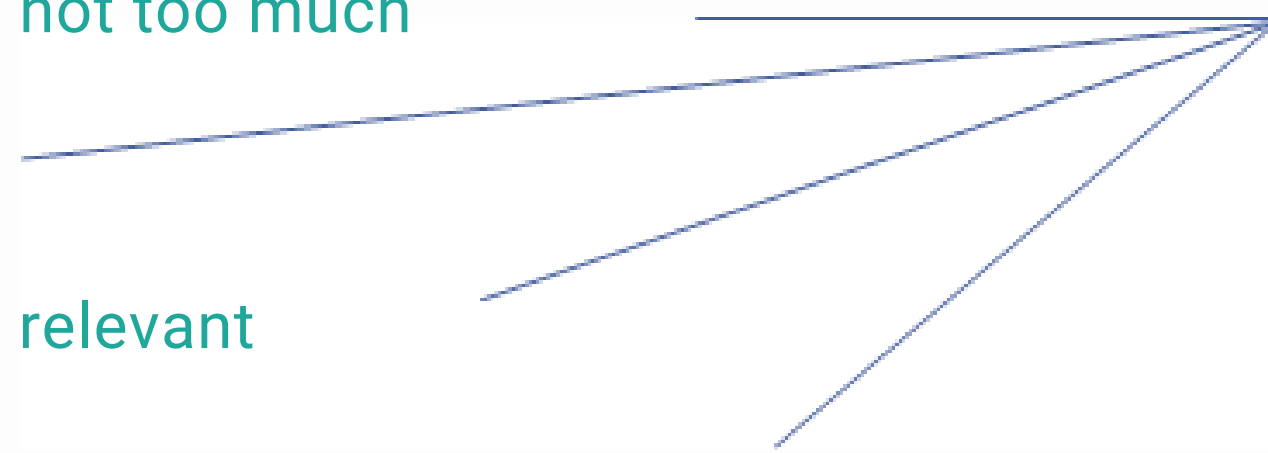


- These maneuvers can also include:
 - Delaying or exiting a conversational topic based on their or your needs (consider all focus levels, emotion levels, energy, etc.)
 - Directing the direction of the literal and metaphorical conversation (making sure it stays on a similar course, having some specific timeframe allotted, extending the timeframe to make sure clarity solidifies)

What Happens in Conversation

- Certain rules happen inside conversation in order for metaphors to work:

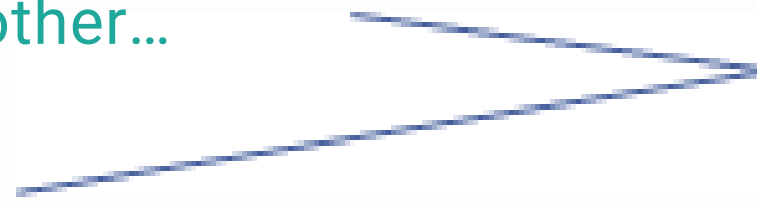
- Say enough but not too much
- No lying
- Say only what's relevant
- Don't be obscure or ambiguous



(These rules can be violated but only according to the receiver/listeners capability of processing talk; always consider whether sarcasm is receivable...)

- Electricity & Emotions (energy in motion, Dr. Watkins) are exchanged

- Nervous systems feed off each other...
- Emotions influence one another

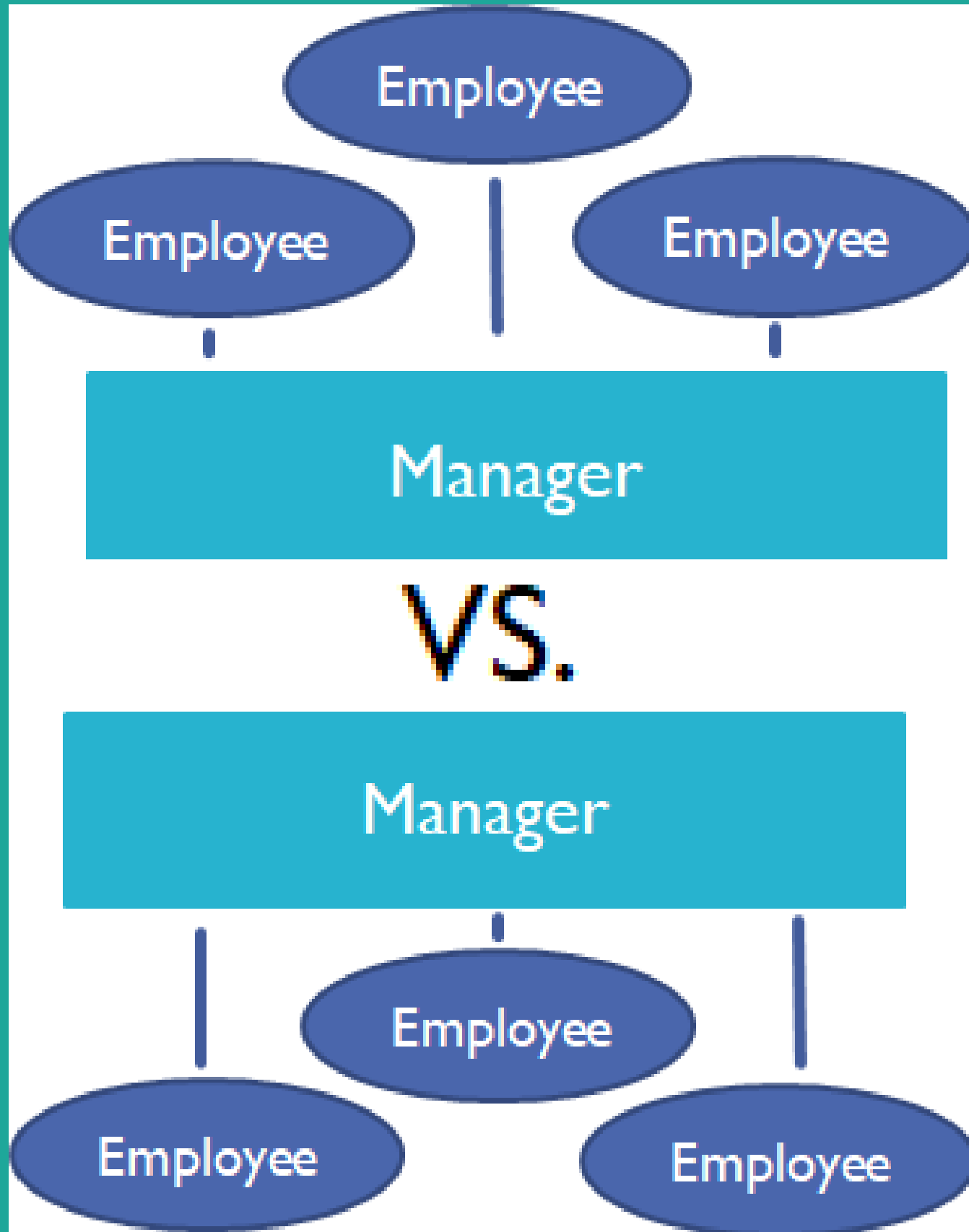


(This is where the maneuvers come into play)

- Mind Mapping/Mind Masking

- We mask when we feel threatened or unsure
- We map others' minds and they map ours according to safety
- We provide our own maps and map more when we feel open and safe

Implied Self-Manager Metaphors

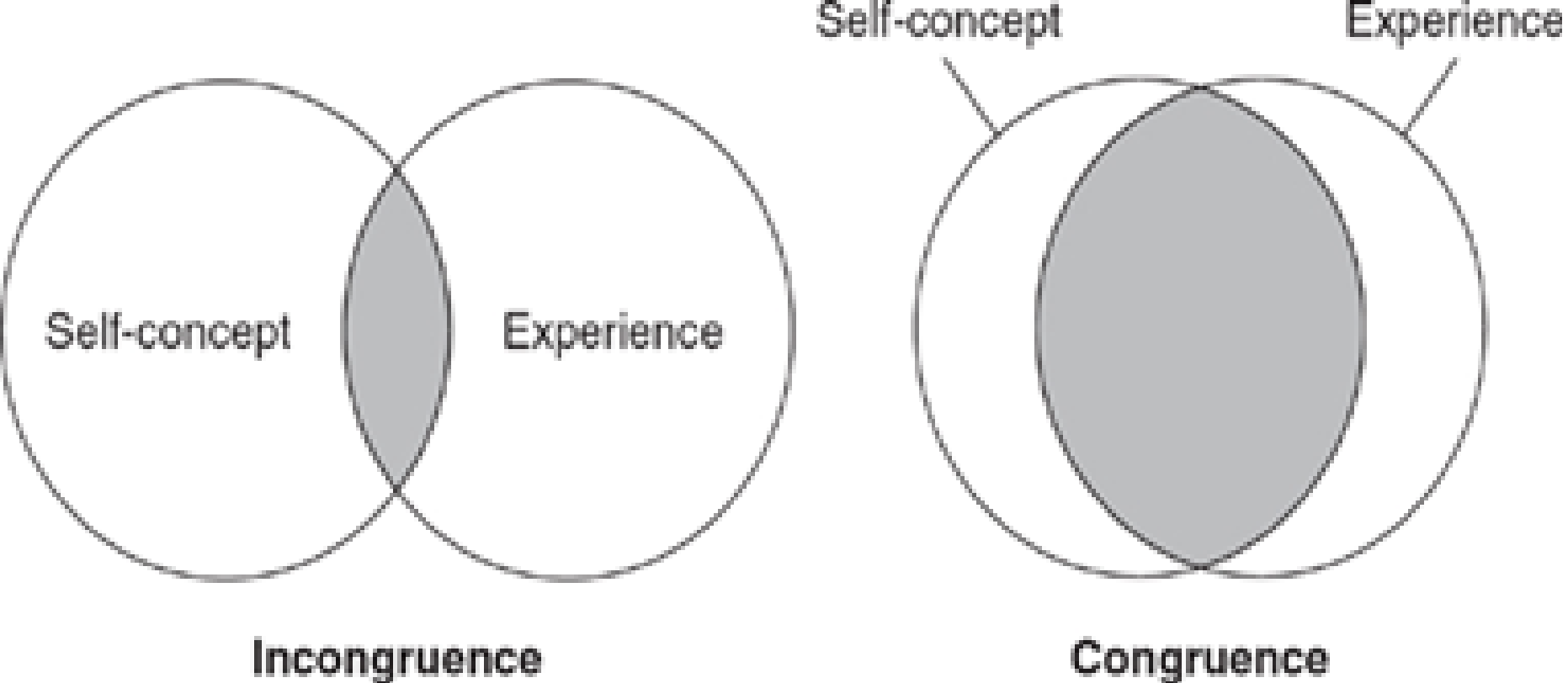


- Consider managerial metaphors
 - We did research recently where there were many mentions of managers as people who “support” their employees/team/co-workers
 - e.g. The Scaffolding, The Foundation of the Organization
 - There were also many mentions of managers as people who are “leaders” or who hold “the responsibility”
- The first is a top-up metaphor (a support system model)
- The second is a bottom-down metaphor (a hierarchical model)
- There were disconnects and incongruencies when applied incorrectly
 - For example: Managers needed authority and leadership to direct their team, but they also needed to be approachable and empathetic to support all their team’s efforts & evolution's
 - They were also assigned to align with other managers and still be co-workers
 - People’s “managerial leader” role is stagnant, but their managerial identity needs fluidity
 - Recognize this dual role conflict within metaphorical talk involving people’s workplaces

Support Systems Go Both Ways and Are Foundational

- Many managerial metaphors indicated managers support their team; it also indicated that all managers relied on support from their managers, too, indicating all metaphors are based in systemic thinking – however – the system of mind can be naïve to the extent to which secondary levels of support are relied on (IT'S COMPLICATED!)
 - This indicated a revolving door of support (inter-exchange of energy)
 - This helped us create a new metaphorical model for these teams
 - When they evolved the metaphor, they evolved their minds together
 - This opened doors both metaphorically, literally, and conversationally
 - Metaphor Foundation: Revolving Door to Evolution
- The clinician-patient relationship must work cohesively within itself, similarly, so of course this includes our metaphorical thinking:
 - If one level is thrown off, then negative reciprocations follow
- Ask yourself: How does this play out in my conversations? How do I tend to direct the meta portions of my conversations (meta-talk, meta-analysis, my-metaphors)?





Metaphorical Congruence

- Many indicated “ideal” as: Decisive, confident, but no one explicitly identified themselves as such; indicating to us that there was an embedded incongruence. This had to evolve first, or nothing could.

Incongruence – Spectrum - Congruence

- Carl Rogers said, in order to achieve self-progress we must be in a **State of Congruence**.
- **Congruence is flow, incongruence is not.**
- This means that self-progress occurs when a person's “ideal self” is **congruent** with their **actual outward behavior** (self-image).
- People indicate feeling most confident when they are prepared, have time to prepare, and are sure they have the knowledge for the situation at hand
 - A.) Reset
 - B.) Consult your “Congruence Maps”
 - C.) Do the metaphors match?



Refining Our Metaphors to Match Modern Day

**"The greatest and most important problems of life are all fundamentally insoluble.
They can never be solved but only outgrown."
*-Carl Jung***

Metaphors and Modern Myth

- USE THE MYTHS WITHIN PEOPLE'S MINDS:

“There are two types of myths: Little fibs, and large metaphors for illustrating what is within humans.

The first type of myth, the little fib, immediately brings to mind things like whether tongues stick to frozen poles, Big Foot, and everyday beliefs proven to be false.

They are false beliefs about our personal selves and the personal experiences around us.”

-Melissa Wright, Mythos: A map to myths, metaphors, and dreams (2020)

Metaphors and Modern Myth

- IT IS ALWAYS A GOOD TIME TO REFINE:
- “The second type of myth, the large metaphors, refer to stories told by large numbers of people that reflect intuitions about the purpose and creation of humans. They are the stories, intuitions, and foundations within each person that are transferable and illustrative of the people within a larger group.
- The little fib myth can be unhealthy or healthy for the person to whom it is true, and it encapsulates an individual belief system. The large metaphor myth is neither healthy or unhealthy, it merely is so that we can understand how we are and how to be; it represents a larger, unconscious, belief system.”
- -Melissa Wright, Mythos: A map to myths, metaphors, and dreams (2020)
- Evolving Metaphors = Evolving collective mindsets
- It is always a good time to refine and evolve

Metaphors and Modern Myth

"This thing up here, this consciousness, thinks it's running the shop. It's a secondary organ. It's a secondary organ of a total human being, and it must not put itself in control. It must submit and serve the humanity of the body."

-Joseph Campbell, The Power Of Myth (1988)

We think we're running the show and that we're in control, but, as we've learned, we are at the mercy of our metaphors and our collective myths

Metaphors and Modern Myth

“If we don’t refine, think of where we will be years from now.
If we do refine, think of where we can be now and years from now.”

-Neil Wright, Myths of Mind: Volume 1 (2020)

If we don’t prioritize evolution with our metaphors, they will continue to revolve our mindsets and our interactions



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QUESTIONS?

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THANK YOU

