

Gestalt Memories

The way we store thoughts and emotions of past events.

Our memories as we store them are arranged in 'gestalts' - strings of collected memories of thoughts and emotions, often connected around a particular event, theme or stimulus, in the same way that pearls might be connected on a string.

The gestalting of memories often takes place around a certain emotional experience. A gestalt of old pains, hurts, traumas and negative experiences can be accessed by the firing of some trigger. When we hear or feel something that we code as similar to the original trigger, the entire gestalt can fire. In this situation we become reactive to stimuli we receive from the outside world. Accessing the gestalt will often bring up a constructed memory that is a synthesis of all the memories of that state.

Most negative gestalting begins from a significant emotional experience of pain and distress in one of our developmental stages. Our major developmental stages have been described as:-

- **The Imprint Period** - from birth to approximately 7. We have not yet developed mental filters. Everything we hear and experiences tends to go straight into the mind which primarily operates unconsciously. We then imprint all the events that we experience as sights, sounds, feelings, thoughts, tastes etc. Most of the learnings during this period unconscious, and so many of the memories will lie outside conscious awareness.
- **The Modelling Period** - from 8 till 13 years. We begin to model the behaviours of people around us - parents and significant others we admire. This modelling occurs at both a conscious and unconscious level. As such, we look outside ourself at the goings on in the world. It is at this stage that we form our major values.
- **The Socialisation Period** - from 14 to approximately 21 years. We are now socially interacting with other human beings. It is during this period that we form relationship and social values.

Limiting formative events in our lives often revolve around significant emotional experiences of pain within these developmental periods. To cope and come to terms with those negative experiences we developed beliefs and understandings as we drew conclusions and gave various meanings to the experience. Working with timelines allows us to create major change by assisting a re-experiencing and readjusting to past events. Using this model, making individual changes in memories can change an entire Gestalt, therefore possibly changing a person's entire history in a matter of minutes.

NLP time lining processes aim to remove the negative emotional component of the gestalt by defusing the trigger. When this occurs, the person's entire mental / emotional strategy can change significantly.