

## Positive Intent - Another Visit

by

Dennis K. Chong & Jennifer K. Smith Chong

In this paper the masculine pronoun will apply to either gender.  
The nominal pronoun will apply to the first author  
The plural pronoun will apply to both authors.

It is our view that it was a most fitting thing of Wyatt Woodsmall to raise the issue of “Positive Intent” and to challenge the implicatures as they emerged to take those unique semantic forms in the mythology of NLP. We respectfully submit this article to you, not because we have anything to add to what Woodsmall wrote, but because we too had enquired into it. We believe that our resolution of the problem is a worthwhile adjunct to his contribution on the subject.

In their seminal work, *The Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour*, John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern were very clear about the *raison d'être* of human behaviour. They were very sure that people act and do what they do because of the PAYOFFS that they hope to get. This has been:

**. . . stated traditionally by assuming that the consumer's desires to obtain maximum of utility or satisfaction and the entrepreneur a maximum of profits.**

**John von Neuman & Oskar Morgenstern:** *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour* Princeton University Press 1994 page 8.

We subscribe to the Neumann-Morganstern position without reserve because there is much to suggest that it is probably one of the critical ontological determinants of human behaviour. As a generalization there are of course exceptions. It is the supreme altruistic act when a person gives up his life for another. In his/her death there cannot thereafter by any possible lived gain to be had. In the finale of Star Trek, The Second Generation, all three starships of the past, present and future sacrifice themselves to save humankind. Can you wonder that one of us (D.K.C.) wept when he saw this final episode and his tears were one of humility and joy that what was imputed about us is this facility to entertain such a logical level of self-sacrifice! It is awesome.

The word “motivation” comes from the Latin word “moveo, movere” meaning I move or to move. As a word, motivation is used normally with the accepted semantics that there exists some

external force that moves or can move a person. However, this is absolute drivel because such a proposition:

1. accepts the ontological equation of the semantic ill-formedness of Cause-Effect as true-to-fact in matters relating to and about human behaviour. To do so, as we know from the logical positions taken in the Structure of Magic, would inevitably mean the conditions of irrationality and illogicality that are contingent to the condition of semantic ill-formedness.
2. human beings are inherently and intrinsically self-initiating and self-actualizing entities. This is an evaluation and a conclusion that can be self-validated. Therefore, there is NOTHING external than can exist to motivate a human being.
3. the bio-neurology of the limbic system is clear - an organism only moves when it is HUNGRY and if it not, it stays put. There are too many cases of 25 year olds and plus who stay at home and have never done a day's work in their lives and their good parents decry the state of affairs, but how well they continue to carry the burden.
4. as sentient and semantic entities, we conform to the Neuman-Morganstern description - when we do something we do it for some payoff. It is our determination of what constitutes an acceptable payoff that indexes the nature of our sentiency and semantics.

We are, therefore, “bothered and bewildered” by what possibly can be the logico-semantic basis of “motivation seminars”?!

The payoff is the intent. It may be something that a person is aware of. He may, however, NOT be aware of it.

If we accept the Neuman-Morganstern assertion as first principle, it follows logically that all behaviour has connected to it a payoff and this pay off, therefore, is the positive intent. Therefore, with the exception of the ultimate act of self-sacrifice, all behaviour is connected to positive intent(s). However, what is clear is that the payoff or the positive intent is true only within a restricted domain. It is not true to say that it applies to all possible semantic domains in a person's life. Thus, smokers smoke because if they do not, they climb the wall and can be utterly impossible to live with or relate to. The payoff or the positive intent is to secure immediate relief from an impossible ontology - one that even the smoker cannot endure, let alone those who are in a relationship with him/her. This, however, is all the engine of human ontology is interested in, i.e., what compels the smoker to attain relief from an ill-formed ontological state.

But, the engine of human ontology is also the mother of ill-formed behaviour, i.e., smoking or nail biting or child molesting or over indulging in alcohol etc. To us, if we wish to resolve ill-

formed behaviour, we now are moving to another logical level of consideration in which the enquiry is not about what is the payoff or the positive intent, but what is the ontological syntax or construct for the behaviour to exist. This is about the critical question: How does the person know to behave the way he does, even when he knows the evidence that it is to his detriment?

Thus, we are looking at two things here. On the one hand is the payoff or the positive intent of the behaviour that can be achieved within a restricted domain. On the other hand what is at issue is (or are) the secondary ill-formed consequence(s) that are entailed in the piece of behaviour. You may be late for a very important date and, therefore, the positive intent by your driving as fast as you can is to get there on time. It is a potential secondary ill-formed consequence that such a positively intended act may entail a speeding ticket or a fatal car accident. Such secondary ill-formed consequences are clearly not the immediate positive intent of the behaviour *ab init et ipso facto*.

In one sense, Bandler and Grinder were accurate to postulate the idea of the positive intent that attends all behaviours (conscious and unconscious) when it is applied to the logical semantic domain of an act (except when it entails the ultimate act of self-sacrifice). However, Woodsmall was accurate to question its application beyond the validity of the restricted logical domain of behaviour.

In submitting this article to you, we do not think that we can end without this observation. There will be new and evolving ideas that will be proposed to the existing corpus of concepts in the field of NLP. Some of them have their roots in pre-existing propositions. However, there will be those that will be novel. Whatever, the category, it seems that all practitioners of whatever level, owe it to NLP to remain alert to the possibility of errant developments. To permit such things to be, places NLP in at risk position of intellectual ridicule. (Errant development: We define this as any proposition that whilst it may be plausible, is in fact, inaccurate-to-fact or false-to-fact; and fact is defined as ultimately whatever it is that can be validated in experience or whatever can be determined by sound logical argumentation.)

THIS ARTICLE IS INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND IT CONTAINS PRIVILEGED INFORMATION INTENDED ONLY FOR THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUAL/OR ENTITY TO WHICH IT IS ADDRESSED AND MAY CONTAIN INFORMATION THAT IS PRIVILEGED, CONFIDENTIAL AND HAS EXEMPTION FROM EXPOSURE UNDER APPLICABLE LAW.
--

