



DECIDE. ACT. MAINTAIN. SUCCEED.

## **Tip #7 of 12 Mindset tips for improved performance: The map is not the territory.**

The words we use are not the event or the item they represent.

Allow me to be literal for a moment. When you look at a map – you are not looking at the actual land – you are looking at a 2-dimensional representation of the land.

The map is an illustration of the land, not the land itself. Words are the common tools we use to describe and try to explain an event to another person. Some use eloquent words – others use simpler language. Either way – the words are a tool and a tool only to represent an event.

The words we use to describe an event are like the map depicting the land; they are a way to represent an event – not the event itself. And your representation of the event is affected by your unconscious filters - the meaning you give to the event. We call this your Internal Representation. More accurately, words are the tool we use to communicate our internal representation of an event to another person in a way that they can hopefully understand.

And if that event reminds you, at some deeper level, of negative emotions from memories you have; your account of the event will be influenced by those memories whether they are conscious or not.

Think about “eye witnesses” to an accident. Each sees the accident, and each has a different version of what happened. That’s why it’s important for investigators to get eye-witness reports quickly.

To add confusion to the process; the only time you recall an actual event is the first time you think of it after it happens. Each subsequent time you recall it you



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are remembering the event plus your memory of the event. A great example of how your mind distorts memories is to visit your childhood home, or neighborhood. Or better yet, your high school cafeteria! *"I remember it being soooo much bigger!"*

As time goes on, your mind can delete and distort parts of the memory.

What does this have to do with sales or communication?

Be careful when talking to prospects about their problems or "pain points" and remember the words they use may be distorted or exaggerated. Someone else may give you a completely different account. What can you infer, from any non-verbal signals you are reading about the authenticity of the comments? What can you guess about the intensity the person feels? Are they mitigating or exacerbating the problem at that moment?

Gather as much information as possible to get a bigger, more accurate picture. And use their wording to describe it back to them so you can demonstrate that you are seeing it the way they are. Be curious when you probe for more information. Don't ask leading questions – be open and non-judgmental. And ask open-ended questions (those without a yes/no answer) to gather more information.

Genuine curiosity is the key here so be sure your body language and words are consistent with curiosity. Ask so you can learn more and help. You'll be surprised at how much information will come your way.