

3 Mental Models

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81mJnpKJlc4>

“Viewer-friendly” Transcript

<u>Time</u>	<u>Content</u>
00:00	I'd like to talk to you today about one of my favorite processes which is called the mental models process.
00:07	It was developed by Chris Argyris and Donald Schon and it's a spectacular model for accomplishing a lot of things.
00:17	I use it a lot at the place of the Enneagram to go much deeper to understand the tensions point and to really unsurface the underlying issues around mental models, around beliefs - what I call governing paradigms or restraining patterns that keep teams and whole organizations kind of stuck in a habitual way of operating.
00:41	And so the beauty of the model is that there are four sequential phases that you go through in the conversation.
00:50	You start off at the bottom of this model and you work upwards in terms of really understanding what's currently going on.
01:00	And so the phases that you're going to walk through are like the current events or could be the negative results. Is the way I often use it.
01:11	And then you want to go from the negative results to the behavior patterns that are actually causing these negative results.
01:30	And then deeper still, you go to the structures, strategies that exist within an organization or a team that cause people to behave in certain ways that end up creating these negative results. So I'm just going to label these structures, strategies, could be processes that could either exist or not exist in an organization.
01:57	And then you unsurface one more layer, which is what were the original beliefs or mindsets of individuals, the architects who created these structures and strategies that in today's world causes people to behave in certain ways that are actually generating these negative results.
02:20	So in this process we call these the mental models. So those could be beliefs, paradigms, ways of thinking, perspectives. I like to use this in framing it as the original architect's design, though. So that could be years and years ago.
02:38	So, the sequence of using this process is you start off with identifying a negative result or a series of negative results that's actually measurable. So, it could be, you know, a particular kind of negative sales pattern, or we're not hitting the sales that we need and we've tried lots of different things.
03:00	It could be in a school system over representation of African American males in special education which is a lack - it's an undesirable result.

- 03:11 So it's actually measurable. It's key that what goes here, and you'd actually charted against the side, is the negative result.
- 03:20 The conversation occurs with a large group of diverse stakeholders. To make this process work, it's critical that all of the people who are in this particular issue are actually sitting in that room having this conversation or at least representatives of those stakeholder groups.
- 03:40 And so they then talk about "well we have this negative result, what are the behaviors of each of us?" Now they tend to talk about other people, so if we're talking about an educational issue, the teachers are talking about students or parents. The parents are talking about the teachers. They all might be talking about administration.
- 04:01 But you end up having a conversation and charting those issues that they're talking about over to the right-hand side of this box. The actual key behavioral patterns that cause this result.
- 04:13 And then in framing this, the facilitator would then go "so people don't wake up in the morning just trying to behave in these ways." It's something – they behave in these ways in response to the system that they find themselves in. The structures and strategies that are there, or processes, or the lack of some of those structures and strategies.
- 04:33 So the conversation goes into this next phase and people talk about "well, what are those structural issues that cause these behaviors?"
- 04:43 So a whole conversation occurs there and these all get charted along this side.
- 04:48 And then the final step is "who created these strategies? Why did these strategies and structures get created?" They probably at sometime in the past actually worked. But this gets us to a whole conversation that surfaces the values, the beliefs, the perspectives, that keep the system locked in its habitual way.
- 05:18 And it's through this conversation, taking all of these, that we actually eventually identify those underlying tensions on the Enneagram.
- 05:29 Once we have identified these new values, beliefs, and perspectives, then the conversation moves on to talk about "so what would be the ways we structure the organization and the work that actually models and reflects these values and beliefs and is compatible with the supports."
- 05:51 And then the conversation moves down, "so what are the principles, the ways that we as people agree to operate that actually is walking the talk of these new values, beliefs, perspectives, and supports these structures and strategies."
- 06:05 And then the final phase is we actually have a conversation of confirming "so what are the new kinds of outcomes, the objectives, the results that we'll see from operating in these new ways in the future?"
- 06:19 And in this way you have a complete plan that gets generated from this mental models process. So the process can either be used to identify just the tensions, the restraining

patterns, which is often the most common way I use it. Or it can be used for an entire planning process.