

W E R N E R E R H A R D

Why We Do What We Do

A New Model Providing Actionable Access to the Source of Performance

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You know, you're really supposed to say nice things at the beginning of a talk, but I do want you to know that I actually mean that I'm thrilled to be able to talk to the people who are participating in the programs here, and that's based on my experience with them in the past, and so it really is a privilege to be here with you today, and thanks for taking the time to come.

And, what, well, let's see. Let's see what the slides say.

So the objective of the talk is to leave you with something to think about, rather than something to agree with.

I'm still in the process of exploring this particular new model that gives me some access to why I do the things that I do, and I don't do the things that I don't do. It gives me a little bit more access, rather than just a better explanation.

So that's what today is about. Give you an opportunity to think about what we talk about today, experiment with it, try it out, and try it onto yourself.

The topic is performance, and it's not a very well-defined word.

It kind of means almost anything, really. Sometimes when people talk about performance, they mean an outcome, a desired outcome or an undesired outcome. Sometimes when they talk about performance, they mean what got, what happened to produce that outcome, or what happened not to produce a desired outcome.

So whichever way it is for you at the moment is fine, and when we get a little bit more precise, we'll worry about what it is we're talking about exactly. So this is about, you might talk about the quality of your life as a performance issue. You might talk about the quality of a community.

You might talk about the quality of an organization. So it's performance in the broadest sense of that word, and it means performance in whatever way you choose to define it in a given situation.

So, the focus is about access.

Access is a really big word for me, and if you're around me a little bit, you hear it a lot, because what interests me is access.

On the way to access, I often need some explanations, but if I get left with just explanations, I'm unhappy. I want to be able to get my arms around whatever it is I'm dealing with.

I want to provide access to getting my hands on the levers and dials. So today, the focus is about access to the source of performance, that which provides actionable access to producing performance intended or to transform existing performance.

So first of all.....let's see, how am I going to explain this?

We're going to start off with the prevailing way we explain performance. And, well, we didn't need you, Werner, to come do that. You already know the prevailing way we explain performance, so why are you going to do that?

I'm going to do that because... I'm a student of Heidegger.

Heidegger had a new way of looking at it all, and he had the problem of having to use the words from the old way of looking at it to try to create some access to his new way of looking at it. And I have the same problem.

I have to use the prevailing terminology from the prevailing explanations for performance to give us an opportunity to take a look at an alternative way of looking at performance.

So we are going to go through the prevailing way of explaining performance first, and this is all about the current access, our current attempts to create new or to transform existing performance, however performance may be defined in any given situation, based on and constrained in shape, big words from me, constrained in shape, you'll hear me use those a lot, by our current explanations for performance.

And pretty obviously our current explanations have been derived from and are constrained in shape by the prevailing model of performance, and so we come to the obvious conclusion that our access to creating or transforming performance is constrained in shape by the prevailing model of performance.

And so we're going to take a look at the prevailing model.

The prevailing model of performance says that performance is an effect. Most people don't talk about it that way, but if you look at it carefully, you come to the conclusion that however it is you're defining performance, it's an effect of something, where the cause of that effect is the internal characteristics and attributes of the performance.

So the way I like to talk about it, if I'm going to understand why I am performing at this level rather than that level, or why I'm incapable of performing in this regard and capable of performing in that regard, I'm going to look in there.

So it's the in there that that's talking about the cause of performance, the cause of the effect. The internal characteristics and attributes of the performers and or the external circumstances with which the performers confronted.

Now that's all pretty obvious I think, but it's not something that we think about in the plethora of explanations that exist about performance.

Let's see, what was the last thing I read? Oh yes, it was about game theory and the explanations are about advantages and the foregoing of advantages in favor of fairness, etc., etc., etc. But when I look at it, it's all a matter of, it's all explained by or inside this model that it has to do with what's going on in-there and the performers, or it has to do with the external circumstances with which they're confronted.

So I spent, I don't know, the last.....when did I start with this thing? I've forgotten. Maybe eight years ago, taking a look at this and I've read numerous explanations for performance and different situations explained this way, another situation explained another way, but they all boil down to and they're all constrained within the current model, which as far as I can tell leaves nothing of the current explanations out and that is something in-there or something out-there.

So the prevailing model, to put it in more formal terms, is a cause effect, psychological, physiological, epistemological, circumstantial model of performance.

So epistemological is added in there because it seems that a lot of the way we explain performance, our own performance, others' performance, a group's performance, has to do with knowledge or know-how. Still part of, you could say, the psychological domain, but it deserves its own word.

So that's the kind of formal name, but for sure it's the in-here, out-there model. And what I'd like you to do is just to kind of see if you can think of something about the way in which we explain performance that doesn't fit within that model.

I mean I've been looking and looking, I can't find anything.

It all seems to me that all the explanations, whether it's from game theory or neuroscience or evolution or whatever it may be, it's all pretty well explained by the in-there, out-there model.

Either my performance has something to do with my makeup or my knowledge, my education, my training, my experience, intuition or know-how, like that. Or, I got unlucky.

The circumstances got in my way. It's interesting for mostly the circumstances get in my way. When I'm lucky, that's talent.

But when it doesn't work well, the circumstances got in the way. Okay. Then what's the access to performance provided by the current model?

As a consequence, the prevailing model of performance constrains and shapes our current practices for creating or transforming its performance to one of an attempt to alter the internal characteristics and attributes of the performers, and or attempting to alter the external circumstances with which those performers are confronted.

If I take a look at what goes on in most business organizations and charitable organizations, particularly in business, a lot of the focus is on enhancing performance by altering the circumstances, either new IT support systems or new business processes, etc., etc.

But in any case, I've said now two things, that the way in which we explain performance is based on the in-there, out-there model, and our attempts to create or generate or produce performance or transform performance are based on doing something in-there to the performers or doing something out-there to the circumstances in which the performers are performing.

And that's pretty much the limit to what's available.

Now, I hope this next slide says... Oh yeah, good.

So, nothing wrong with the current model. It's been around for about a hundred years. Let's see... Charles Taylor.....

Peter Drucker gives Charles Taylor credit for having started this focus on performance, and that's about a hundred years ago. And the prevailing models produced some remarkable results over the years of its span.

However, there's starting to be really potent evidence for whatever can be derived from the current model in terms of creating breakthroughs in performance or dealing with the persistent problems in performance where they exist have been pretty much used up.

And that's kind of what the impetus was for taking a look at is there another way of looking at performance that might not do away with the old model, but be in addition to the old model that would give us some access that the old model doesn't provide. I think I said all that. Yeah, so I'll just read this part.

While the current model provides satisfactory explanations of performance, today's widespread failures of leadership to invoke effective performance are evidence that the current model of performance provides insufficient access to the source of performance.

I thought you were going to hear access a lot, huh?

So the access provided by the current model for improving or altering performance and certainly for transforming performance is simply inadequate to meet the challenges of today's environment.

And I don't know about you, I start out the morning reading the newspaper and then I have coffee to get over having read the newspaper. And sometimes I make it, sometimes I don't. Sometimes the coffee works and sometimes it doesn't work and then I kind of have a problem.

But that's kind of what hooks me. What hooks me is what isn't working. And when I find something that isn't working, I want to find out how it's not working is being explained because I assume that in the explanation for it's not working is the persistence of it's not working.

So I want to find a new access to what doesn't work. And obviously there's a lot of performance that does work.

There are a lot of very, very high performing people in this room. People who are accomplished and able to perform at a very high level. People with extraordinary track records who are actually in the presence of some giants. So this makes my talking more difficult. You have to talk in the presence of giants, but too bad. That's the way life goes, huh? Okay.

So now, I don't remember what this slide is.

Oh yeah, here's the problem.

The problem is that there is what I'm going to call a paradigm cascade that ends with a model.

But at the top of this cascade so if I am going to look at any model, I suggest that any model of anything exists inside of a paradigm cascade.

Now what do I mean by paradigm cascade?

I mean that at the top of the cascade is one's world view or model of reality.

And my world view, my model of reality constrains and shapes my perception of the world, my understanding of the world, the way I explain the world.

And then in the way in which I think about paradigms, then there's a frame of reference relative to the specific thing I'm dealing with.

So I've got this world view about everything.

About the world, about people, about just everything.

And then underneath that, I've got a frame of reference or a mindset relative to something, some specific something. So in this case, there's what I call the everyday common sense world view.

And then that constrains and shapes my frame of reference, my mindset relative to performance. And then that frame of reference relative to performance constrains and shapes my model of performance.

So why did I go through all of that?

Because if I am committed to exploring the possibility of modeling performance in a way that it hasn't been modeled, I've got to go all the way back up to what needs to be adjusted in my everyday common sense world view.

And then from there, I've got to go down and get adjusted whatever my frame of reference relative to what I'm modeling might be, because that frame of reference constrains and shapes the way in which I'm going to model it.

Is that followable so far?

Good.

So now, let's see what's next in the rest of this slide.

So all models are derived within a certain paradigm.

A truly new model will in some way violate the current paradigm, violate my everyday common sense world view, and violate my frame of reference or mindset relative to performance.

And the current paradigm of performance, I already said all that.

So a truly new model of performance will require an adjustment or an expansion of our everyday common sense world view.

By the way, notice the words everyday common sense. That's a kind of get away with it phrase. If I suggest that you alter your world view, that's a little threatening.

But if I suggest that we alter our everyday common sense world view, the one we don't think about, the one we just kind of take for granted, at least that's a little less threatening for me.

So we're going to talk about the everyday common sense world view and the prevailing frame of reference relative to performance, because they are what will make any truly new model at first counterintuitive and maybe even unintelligible.

So I'm going to switch from the...I just want to read something with you, and I apologize for reading with you, but I don't know how else to do it, so this is the way I'm going to do it. This is only a couple of pages, so just bear with me. We'll read it together.

“The Current Paradigm of Performance. While surpassed by 20th and 21st century science and philosophy, the Newtonian-Cartesian world view model of reality remains fundamental in our everyday common sense world view, which world view constrains and shapes our current frame of reference relative to performance, which frame of reference in turn constrains and shapes our current model of performance. So the Newtonian cause-effect aspect of our world view, everyday common sense world view. The Newtonian world view assumes a mechanistic universe built on a ubiquity of more or less linear sequences of cause and effect, a clockwork view of the world. The cause-effect world view model of reality, while surpassed by 20th and 21st century physics, complex system science, this simple causation world view remains our everyday common sense world view.”

So let me just give you a little bit of an example of what I'm going about there.

I said that the current paradigm of performance was a cause, sorry, the current model of performance was a cause-effect model, that performance is an effect of some cause. And, you know, if I were sitting with you, I would say, well, obviously, because everything you and I encounter, we assume, is caused by something. I don't have to stop and think that what I encounter is caused by something.

It's kind of like I am, that whatever I encounter is caused by something. Now, we all know about entanglement, and causality breaks down there, and then in complex systems, causality kind of breaks down there, and it gets a little dicey and chaos, and we all are hip to all of that. But even though I'm hip to all of that, when I see something, I assume it's caused by something.

And that's what I mean by an everyday common sense world view. And that's why I took the time to point out that the prevailing model of performance is a cause-effect model of performance. That cause-effect works really well, almost all the time.

But it also constrains and shapes the current paradigm, the current model of performance.

So, in plain language, an aspect of everyday common sense world view is that whatever we encounter has been caused by something.

That is, whatever we encounter is the effect of some cause.

Cause-effect world view.

David Hume, footnote is great, but it would take too long to read it.

Trust me, it's great.

That's the cause-effect.

He explains it perfectly a long, long time ago.

That it's an assumption.

Ok Anyway, this aspect of our world view cascades through the current paradigm of performance, constraining and shaping our prevailing frame of reference relative to performance, resulting in a cause-effect frame of reference for human performance.

This frame of reference, mindset, in turn constrains and shapes our current model of performance.

This is the cascade.

This results in a cause-effect model of performance. As a consequence, the current model of performance is explained as the effect of some cause.

Okay, never mind Margaret Wheatley and David Hume.

Okay, now the Cartesian psychological, physiological, and systemological aspect of our world view.

The Cartesian world view assumes a dualism of mind and body, where the mind is non-physical and the body is physical, and action is a product of mind. That would be a psychological, physiological world view of human action.

Now, we all know that duality doesn't work.

We've all read it, and we've studied it, and thought about it, and yeah, it breaks down, and there's no little man in there pulling the shots, and so forth.

Never mind.

That's our informed world view.

The everyday, common-sense world view says that my mind is something different.

Just what Descartes said.

In addition, since this world view assumes a dualism of mind and the external world, one's concept of others as performers becomes a product of one's assessments and interpretations of others' actions, thoughts, thought processes, knowledge, and feelings.

Same explanation.

The result of the psychological, physiological, and systemological world view of human action.

Likewise, one's concept of oneself as a performer becomes the product of one's assessments and interpretations of one's own actions, thoughts, thought processes, knowledge, and feelings.

And if you think about it, yeah, I know what kind of a performer I am just by doing that kind of interpretation of my thoughts, and feelings, and my actions, and the results I've produced, and so forth.

While surpassed by 20th and 21st century neuroscience, evolutionary psychology, cognitive science, behavioral economics, philosophy, and probably a couple of fields I left out, and fields in the physical area such as exercise physiology, the psychological, physiological, and systemological cause of human performance world view remains our everyday common sense world view.

I want you to know why I'm belaboring this. I'm belaboring it because somehow I have to stand in it to see what's not allowed by it. I don't know how else to do it.

I can't stand except where I am, and where I am is in the current model, the prevailing model.

So bear with me, we're almost done with this (inaudible) .

And let's see, as Malcolm...

I think I read that sentence. I probably did. Okay, so we'll read this sentence.

As Malcolm Gladwell of 2002 says in his book, the tipping point, "there's something in all of us that makes us instinctively want to explain the world around us in terms of people's essential attributes." In short, what's in there? In short, a psychological, physiological, and systemological world view of the cause of human performance.

As with the cause-effect aspect of our everyday common sense world view, this aspect of our world view cascades through the current paradigm of performance, constraining and shaping a prevailing frame of reference relative to performance, resulting in, again, the same thing, frame of reference. This frame of reference in turn constrains and shapes our current model. This results in a model of performance that ascribes the causes of performance to the realm of the psychological, physiological, and systemological.

As a consequence, in the current model, performance is explained as an effect of a performer's characteristics and attributes, specifically the performer's psychology, including knowledge, and physiology, and even more specifically, the performer's internal non-malleable mental and physical traits, sorry, non-malleable mental and physical traits, and malleable mental and physical states, and the performer's know-how.

That gets you down to the nitty-gritty in the current model.

Okay, last one.

The external circumstances is the cause aspect of our world view.

The final aspect of our everyday common sense world view is that everywhere in nature and in life, external circumstances serve to constrain and shape action.

It's a subset of the Newtonian world view of the mechanistic universe. In short, external circumstances as cause world view. And what the rest of that paragraph says, it cascades down through the paradigm, through the frame of reference, down into constraining and shaping the model.

Okay.

Okay, we've said all that.

Okay, now we're going to do the new model, and we're going to do it in short, and there are terms in here I'll have to explain, and then I'll have to explain how they relate to each other, network together.

So, performance is exclusively a product of action or inaction.

So I'm going to keep saying action, but every time I say action, you should hear or inaction, okay?

And let me show you what it says next here.

The current model of performance would all likelihood acknowledge this. However, given the psychological, epistemological, circumstantial focus of the current model, the fact that performance ultimately comes down exclusively to action is often obscured.

I want to talk to you about that for a bit.

I changed my mind.

I was transformed.

I went through a blah, blah, blah, blah, and everything was different in-here.

That doesn't mean anything happened to performance. And I'm arguing that the fact that performance ultimately comes down exclusively to action or inaction is often missed in our explanations for performance.

We kind of jump from, this is the outcome, or let's call it performance outcome, I either like to achieve or we're not yet achieving, and oftentimes the investigation jumps immediately from what's supposed to happen and not happening, what is happening, or what is happening, right over to why it's happening. (Werner coughing) And why it's happening is either something in-there, you know, in the performance, or something in the external circumstances. And the fact that performance outcomes are exclusively a product of action often gets missed.

(Werner coughing) I have water in the pot. Thank you. I was meant to drink it, but I didn't have it.

So the new model makes a big deal out of performance as exclusively a product of action, because we believe that that's central.

And then action is a correlate of something. Now I need to quickly say that by correlate we don't mean a statistical correlation, and whatever we do mean by correlate I will get to.

In the meantime, you can understand the definition of action as a correlate of something, that action is connected with something.

But once the point at, the connection is not one of cause and effect, and what it is, as I said, we'll get to, okay?

But it's pointing at something, a connection between action and something that's other than cause and effect, but is directly connected.

Okay, that's something with which action is correlated, is the way in which the circumstances on which and in which the performer is performing occur, or show up to the performer.

Now, we're going to have to talk about occur, and this occurring is really at the heart and soul of this model, so we'll spend a good deal of time with that.

But for the moment, just so we can keep moving here, you can say, okay, he's saying that from the perspective of this new model, my actions are a correlate of the way in which what I'm dealing with occurs for me, and he shows up for me, and the environment in which I'm dealing with it shows up for me. I'm going to go into this a lot deeper.

I know it's not even close to followable yet. I just want to get it up there, okay? This is kind of a subset of number three. When the occurring with which action is correlated is altered, the action correlated with the occurring is also altered.

Okay, now here's what makes this model have whatever power it has. The last aspect of it. Whatever power this model provides to people in creating or transforming performance is right here, because here's where the access is.

The way the circumstances occur for the performer is constituted in language, or at least shaped by language, and is in any case accessible through language. Now we're going to get into that deeply, but I want to go through this kind of... I just want to do this and get into all the gruesome, fun stuff in a minute. The access to performance provided by the new model of performance.

If in fact, as the new model of performance says, action is the sole determinant of performance, if that's true, and if action is a correlate of, or directly connected to, the way in which the circumstances occur for the performer, the circumstances on which I'm performing, or the circumstances in which I'm performing, and by the way, the circumstances in which I'm performing include who I am for myself.

So who I am for myself, and performing in this manner, in this matter, is part of the circumstances in which I'm performing.

We say a lot more about that, I know that's kind of weird to say more about that as we go along.

Anyway, if in fact, as the new model of performance says, action is the sole determinant of performance, and action is a correlate of the way in which the circumstances occur for the performer, and the way in which the circumstances occur for the performer is accessible through language, if all of that were true, then the new model of performance provides direct access to the source of performance, since the source of performance is the way in which what I'm dealing with and the environment in which I'm dealing with it occur for me, and I've got access to it with the one thing over which I have absolute dominion, and that's my mouth.

I can't make myself feel a certain way, I can't even make myself, I can't even make my attitude in a certain way, I can't even make my thoughts in a certain way.

I've tried to think about things that I'm incapable of thinking about, but I have something to say about what comes out of my mouth, and if it's true that what comes out of my mouth can alter the way in which the circumstances with which I'm performing and in which I'm performing are accessible through language, then I've got a way of shaping, creating a greater access to the source of my performance, giving others an opportunity for a greater access to the source of their performance, and while I keep talking kind of like at an individual level, this works just as well for groups of people and really whole societies of people, and I've actually watched it work in the work that I did over the last five years in Northern Ireland, and watched groups of people who were absolutely for sure intractable alter their own behavior and do it on their own without anybody forcing them to do it.

Okay, let's see, where are we here?

I don't know, what's next?

Let's see, the current model of performance provides explanations for performance, which gives us a certain access to managing performance, and by contrast a new model provides access to the source of performance, and I think we've got one last slide, then we're just going to have fun for the rest of the time trying this stuff out and seeing how it works.

Oh yeah, we call this the correlative ontological linguistic model. Our new model of performance we term correlative ontological linguistic.

Correlative in the sense that action is correlated with something.

Ontological in the sense that action is a correlate of the way in which the world, others, and we ourselves occur show up for us. And linguistic in the sense that the occurring with which action is correlated is powerfully shaped by and is in any case accessible through language.

Okay, now I have to go back and make some sense out of all of this.

I assume that in this audience, look, is action caused?

No damn question about it.

All you have to do is to talk to a neuroscientist and they will tell you that your actions, what you do is generated by a pattern in your brain, a pattern of cells in your brain, a pattern of neurons in your brain that are associated with some pattern of perception.

But I want you to notice something. They will tell you that neuronal patterns of action are associated with neuronal patterns of perception. They're not there like on their own.

All the patterns of action, all the neuronal patterns of, now why am I belaboring this?

Because it fits with this, it's allowed by this model. It doesn't prove the model.

But it is allowed, what neuroscientists tell us about the cause of action is allowed by this model.

That patterns of action are associated with patterns of perception.

So the model doesn't say there's no such thing as causes of action.

It allows for causes of action, but because the model's purpose is to give us access, I can't get access to my brain.

In fact, I understand if somebody put a pencil through my brain, it wouldn't even feel it.

Well, I'm thinking, inside my skull will start to break.

So the new model says that action is a correlate of something, and the something with which it's a correlate of, and this is the precise wording, it's a correlate of the way in which the circumstances on which I'm performing and in which I'm performing occur or show up for me.

And it's important to make the distinction about on which and in which. I know it's annoying, all these words, but it's actually important to distinguish between on-which and in-which.

And I said that the current model was an in-there or an out-there model.

It's either internal attributes, internal characteristics and attributes, or the external circumstances, and that's the confines in which I have to explain performance, that's the confines in which I have to develop interventions to alter performance.

This one says something different, and I want to get to that in a second, but I want to do a little kind of simple-minded demonstration of something.

So if I go like so, (Werner gets an empty plastic bottle from podium and tosses it to a student) it goes like so.

Perfectly correlated with the way the bottle occurred for him.

Now, if I go like so, (Werner fake throws same bottle more aggressively) he doesn't do that, he does this.

Yeah, they start, but trust me, if the bottle went that way, it would have gone like that.

Why? Because his actions are correlated with an untouchable object.

And so that gives you a little sense of what we mean by correlated.

Heidegger ultimately said, after volumes of writing, that he thought the truth was best left to the poets, because he was not able, ultimately, to express it in the way in which he needed to express it to give people access to it.

He thought, leave it to the poets.

So I'm going to give you the poetic action is a correlate of something.

My actions are in advance with the way the world occurs for me.

Now, my actions include my emotional state.

So in this model, we think about action as including my emotional state, my mental state, my train of thought.

That's all we would say a correlate of the way the world occurs for me.

So if the world occurs for me as threatening, I'm probably going to feel threatened.

If the world occurs for me as wide-open opportunity, I'm probably going to feel some energy and aliveness.

Likewise with emotions and mental state, and also even my thoughts. You know, I walk out into London, and it's not quite fall there.

So when you walk through here, you know, you can't help it. You have to look at the trees.

And a little later, I'm going to show you how infected we are with language.

But, you know, I don't need any language to look at that tree and to be in the presence of that tree. I don't need any language. But I'll be damned if I look at the sunset or a beautiful woman or a tree, if I don't say to myself something like, wow, isn't that great.

Somehow I'm infected with language, and as soon as I see my friend, I say, man, did I see this great sunset. So we're going to talk more about that.

In fact, I'm going to bother you with a little quote.

This was Lera Boroditsky. She did a series of, she talked to people about what did you change your mind about this year.

So I'm going to read from a neuroscience psychologist person.

Let me get the right thing.... I don't want to read you this whole thing, but I'm going to read...oh, yes, here we go.

"I had set out to show that language did not affect perception, but I found exactly the opposite. It turns out language is meddled in very low-level aspects of perception and without our knowledge or consent shaped the very nuts and bolts of how we see the world. " Now, the whole article goes into some lengths of the experiments she did to try to prove that language did not alter perception.

She knew that language altered mood, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, and there's good neuroscience research that re-evaluating experiences can alter the patterns in our brain from this response to a different response.

Never mind all that.

Okay, now I need somebody to do a little demonstration with me.

Would you be kind enough to do that demonstration with me? Yeah, great, good. This won't hurt, I promise.

Yeah, please. So, you don't get much out of this.

May I ask your name?

AMIT Amit

WERNER ERHARD I'm sorry. Anil?

AMIT Amit

WERNER ERHARD Amit. Thanks, Amit. Thank you. I appreciate it. I like brave people.

So, you won't get much out of the demonstration if you just watch Amit.

You have to do it with him. So, you do it while he does it and you get a lot more out of it.

And this is really the wellspring from which this model arises.

So, I want to do my very best to really share with you what there is to get here. So, first of all, I'm going to ask you a lot of dumb questions. So, there's no trick in these questions.

Okay? Do you see me?

AMIT Yes, I do.

WERNER ERHARD Okay, so Amit sees me. And Amit, where are you? Amit, where are you?

AMIT I'm here.

WERNER ERHARD Yeah, so here. And if I ask you where you are, you're going to tell me here. You know, you might say I'm at the end of the table, but we really...

Wherever you are, that's here, huh? And where am I? No, and where am I?

AMIT You're there WERNER ERHARD I'm there, right? So, you're here. I'm there.

Everybody got that? You're here. I'm there.

And you see me and Amit sees me. Now, here's the question.

The question is, where is seeing Werner happening?

Where is seeing Werner happening?

That's the question.

Where is seeing Werner happening? (Amit points to himself in the chest area) In here. Okay. Perceptions.

Perceptions, okay.

Now, you pointed here.

Do you experience seeing me someplace in-here? (Werner gestures to Amit's chest area) AMIT No, in my eyes.

WERNER ERHARD In your eyes, yes. Okay, now look.

So, I've done this, you know, a lot of times. And if you're talking to someone smart, they will tell you to start with my eyes. Now, I want you to see...

I want you to be looking at me. And see if you have any sensation where your eyes are located called seeing Werner.

You know, I know you can't see without your eyes.

And I know that there's retina cells and rods and cones and the optic nerves. I know all that. But that's not the question.

That's an explanation about what it is to see something. In this case, just me. There's no little Werner in one's eyes.

So, now take a look again on it. And see where... This question is very specific.

Where is seeing Werner happening?

AMIT I see through my mind, but I feel it through my body.

WERNER ERHARD Okay. So, somewhere in your... Most people will say their brain.

And like I said, if I put a pencil through your brain, you wouldn't even feel it. You have no sense.

And I want you to check with me and tell me I'm wrong if I am.

You have no sense of seeing Werner in-there.

That is not where seeing Werner is happening for you.

And we're going to stick with this until Amit and I get it straight about where his seeing Werner is happening.

And I don't think if you look through your body... You may have some sensations in your body. Because I'm, you know, a nasty, frightening person.

And so, I produce those kind of sensations with people.

But I doubt that what you call seeing Werner is any place in there. See, it always starts in-there.

Remember, that's the first half of the prevailing model. We all explain it all with something in-there.

You do.

And I do. Unless I catch myself. And I only catch myself when I'm unsatisfied with performance.

And I need some access I don't already have. And that's all this whole conversation is about. So, where is seeing Werner happening?

Take a look. Actually, you do see it, right?

AMIT Yeah

WERNER ERHARD Where is that seeing happening? You're thinking. I want you to look

AMIT It's happening relative to me....in the space (Amit waves hands around in a circle in front of his body)

WERNER ERHARD Well, that's a different answer than before.

You're on the right track. Now, I want you to point to where seeing me is happening.

You do see me, all of you, right? And you could point to where seeing me is happening. Because it is happening.

So, it's got to be happening someplace. I know it's supposed to happen there. And if you're a little smart, it must be happening there.

And if it's, I don't know where, well, somewhere. And that's where Amit and I are at the moment. But where is it really happening?

Where do you see me?

AMIT I see you at such a distance from me relative to where I am.

WERNER ERHARD You're seeing has nothing to do with relativity. You just see me, don't you? See, I don't want you to explain it.

I want you to tell me where Amit seeing Werner is happening. Just point.

Yeah, go ahead. (Amit points in front of himself) Yeah. He said that was there.

Something doesn't make sense. He said he's here. And yet, he said that seeing Werner is happening there.

Maybe. Now, here's the whole shot. This is what this is all about.

Maybe here and there is a little mixed up.

Maybe. So, I'm not telling you that it is.

I'm asking you to be in a bit of an inquiry about this here and there stuff.

You couldn't have done anything better.

You went through every shot that it goes through and got to the exact place we needed to get to.

Otherwise, I'd look like a fool. Yeah, this is really interesting. I don't see Dean here. (Werner points at himself) I see Dean here. (Werner points at space in front of himself) I can't say there because it's me seeing him.

But I would say I see Dean here.

Okay. So, here's the suggestion. Here's what I'd like you to do.

Remember that first slide? Let me see if I can get back to the first slide. There we go.

So, remember this is to leave you with something to think about, to experiment with, to test out, to try on for yourself. So, it took me, I don't know, something like five months of spending a few hours every day trying to see what is it to be conscious.

What is it?

I mean, I've heard all the theories, but I want to know what it is. And what Amit and I just shared with you is where it came out for me. As far as I can tell, I know that you're supposed to be here (Werner points at himself) and everything else is supposed to be there (Werner points out in front of himself) .

And that works really well a lot of the time, but not all the time.

So, for the times when it doesn't work as well as you'd like things to work, I'd like you to try on today, maybe for the rest of the week.

Try this out.

You are, you, that you, are a clearing in which it all shows up.

You are a clearing in which it all occurs.

So, you're here (Werner waves a circle in front of himself) , and what you are referring to when you say, I, is something in that clearing.

Now, that's a little tough, because it's through self-referential. You know, it's true if it's false, and false if it's true.

So, bear with me for a little bit.

Isn't it true that you do occur for yourself?

Isn't that true?

Isn't it true that you do exist, you do occur, you do show up for yourself?

So, you can think about, I can think about Werner. I can assess Werner. I can have ideas about Werner.

I can do interpretations about Werner. I can do a lot of stuff about Werner. So, I'm asking you to try out for a couple days, you know, whenever you think about it.

You won't think about it all the time. I know you're busy and got a lot on your plate. But whenever you think about it, see if you can think about, yeah, I'm the clearing in which it all shows up, in which all of it occurs.

And one of the things that occurs in that clearing is that which I am referring to when I say I. But who I am, the clearing in which it all occurs, and this thing I'm talking about, is just something in the clearing. Okay.

Now, here's what the new model says.

The new model says that I have something to say about the way what shows up in the clearing shows up. I have something to say about the way it occurs for me.

I read you Lera Boroditsky's insight from the research she did to try to prove that language didn't alter perceptions. So, I'm suggesting that there's really two kinds of language. In the normal course of events, you and I speak in, I'm going to get it right language.

In the normal course of events, I'm going to get it right. In the normal course of events, I use language to represent. And my job is to get my language to be as consistent with what it's representing as I possibly can.

That is to say, my job is to get it right. Okay. There is another kind of language.

There is another use of language.

Sorry. The formal name for that language is word-to-world fit.

To get my words to fit the world.

But there's another kind of language that the language philosophers call world-to-word fit. So that the world matches my words.

For instance, if I say, I promise to deliver X to you by tomorrow morning. Something existed that didn't exist before I opened my mouth. And I wasn't representing, what came out of my mouth didn't represent something.

What came out of my mouth was a promise. It brought something into the world that did not exist before. It wasn't something I had in mind that I represented with my mouth.

Because what I had in mind was not a promise.

It's not a promise until I say I promise. Or I will.

There's a lot of very good recent neuroscience research to demonstrate that reinterpretation or the interpretations we put on experience. Sorry. The interpretations we put on what happens alters our experience of what happens.

And if... let me see before I get into real trouble here.

Oh. Thank God. I might finish this talk on time.

The first time. Yes. So here's the last thing.

A little practical.

A little bit of practical.

By the way, I just want to share with you that the whole model came out of that one insight about where my seeing you happens.

And that it happens here. And that who I, this I, is in advance with what's in the clearing. And the way what's in the clearing occurs or shows up for me really is for human beings.

Either constituted in language... Look. Somebody give me difficult because I want to see it.

I want to see difficult. I want somebody to hand me difficult. You can't do it.

Because difficult is a phenomenon constituted exclusively in language.

Whales don't find anything difficult.

Now, you want to say, oh yes, but how about all the feelings?

The feelings are correlates of the linguistic entity called difficult. Is that making sense? Huh?

Yeah? Good. Um...

You know... I was staffed with really great people who were discussing breakfast are under constant demands for being great. And one of the things that gets in the way of them being great is they definitely have too much to do.

That gets in all ways in their way. Now, I know they have too much to do because I gave them too much to do. I know I gave them more to do than they could possibly do in any reasonable amount of time devoted to doing it.

But that's a pure linguistic phenomenon. Whales do not have too much to do. The only thing you ever do is what you do.

Sorry that that's so stupidly obvious. But it's very hard to get.] You only have to do what you do.

Because that's all you're ever going to do.

Now, I don't ever have too much to do. I have things I'm not doing.

But I'm not doing those.

I am not doing those. Not a verb in that case.

I'm not doing those.

I'm always doing, and as far as I can tell, as far back as I can remember, all I've ever done is what I do.

And if I can constitute what there is for me to do in that way, it leaves me able to be fully and totally with what I am doing.

I don't have anything hanging over my head.

Okay, last thing.

Did I put my watch back there?

Last thing, and then I'm going to...

If there are any questions, do I have to answer some questions?

The last thing is...

Ah, so, something's not going well for someone on my staff, but something's not going well for me. And my question is, okay, what's the action, xxx, and with what...how is what you're dealing with occurring for you? How does it occur for you? And how does the environment in which you're dealing with it, including who you are for yourself as part of the environment, occur for you? And you'll see that the actions are entirely appropriate, that is to say, are perfectly dancing with the way what you're dealing with occurs for you.

And if I want my actions to alter, I need to alter the way what I'm dealing with occurs for me, or the environment in which I'm dealing with it, and or the environment in which I'm dealing with it, and or the way I occur for myself in dealing with it. And it works really, really, really well. So, you know, you have to stop and think every once in a while.

If things aren't going the way you'd like them to go, just try it out.

See if you can say to yourself, you know, there's A, B, C.

How does what I'm dealing with occur for me?

How does the environment in which I'm dealing with it occur for me, including how do I occur for myself in dealing with that? So, my colleague is a very widely respected guy, probably going to win a Nobel Prize one of these days, economist. And, you know, economics has now become really shot through with behavioral economics.

And a Nobel laureate economist and a professor from, I can't remember, some economics, I think, wrote a book called Animal Spirits. And Keynes invented animal spirits way back when. And they kind of went out of fashion in efficient markets.

But here's the word I want to leave you with. Here's the word you've heard that I want to point to. Irrational.

Now, that explains people's stupid behavior perfectly.

That explains why people do things that are not in their economic best interest perfectly.

They're irrational. In-there. So, I'd like you to think, oh, never mind irrational.

I mean, that's one way of explaining it. But let's say that the way the circumstances that they were dealing with and the environment in which they were dealing with it and who they are for themselves in dealing with it occurred for them such that that behavior is totally appropriate. It's perfectly correlated with the way in which what they were A, B, and C occurred for them.

Okay. I can talk to people to death. I can talk to them a long time.

So, I'm going to shut up and see if you have any questions.

Dominic, please.

DOMINIC I have a few questions. Please. I want to go into Carl Jung's work on the conscious and subconscious mind.

And I think what he says is that the conscious mind is a very small part, but the subconscious mind actually is very powerful because that creates your habits and the world you create. A lot of times people say, I'm going to do this. But consciously, they're trying to get to an objective.

And subconsciously, it's sabotaged because they're passing through this and telling them, no, you can't do it. So, in a way, they're like, do you have a reverse gear and you're stepping on the accelerator to go forward. And your conscious mind and your subconscious mind are completely not the same.

And actually, performance happens when you're conscious. And performance happens when your subconscious mind is in alignment with your conscious mind. So, both your conscious and unconscious world actually move in the right direction.

WERNER ERHARD That's a great explanation for how people behave.

Here's my problem with it.

It doesn't always give me access to doing anything about it.

So, here's the way the new model would say. That the way in which what you said you were going to do occurs for you, and the environment in which A, B, and C will determine, because your actions will be in a dance, not with your intentions, not with your New Year's promise, not with your, not committing, but your actions will be a correlate of the way A, B, and C occur for you. Try it out. See what happens.

But with Jung's, there are a lot of great explanations. As I said, as far as I can tell, the ones that are around are consistent with the prevailing model, which I call the in-there or out-there.

The new model is out-here and linguistic. Try it out. See what happens.

Anybody else have a question?

That's great.

You know, I talked at the Oxford Union once.

I got almost nothing, no questions. I think that what I talk about, you have to think about that question, and you need a little time to think about it.

So, listen, can you tell I like doing this?

I'm excited about the stuff I think about.

I had no fun doing it in the closet, and your time and your attention is a gift, so thank you very much.