

Modeling: Not Just for Anorexics Anymore

*From the book Don't Make Me Slap You
by Barbara Grasse.*
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I sit through a lot of seminars. Some I attend because they're connected with my career and I've got to go. I attend others because I'm searching for information that can help me and my career. I have spent thousands of hours and dollars over the years attending seminars. Those thousands have made me tens of thousands. I expect to spend thousands more.

Sometimes you hear the same thing in several seminars told in different ways. And the first couple of times I hear something maybe I scribble it in my notes but by the third time I am thinking, "Yeah, already heard that. Come on, give me some meat here, some real information." But at some point, something is said a little differently or something has happened in my life where all of a sudden, the value of that chunk of information becomes very clear to me. I've finally heard the nugget *inside* the words.

A few days ago, I was sitting in a training session and I heard about the four types of knowledge for the umpteenth time. I didn't even bother to write them down. I thought, "Yeah, I know that. Get to something new that I can use." And this morning, when I woke up, that chunk fell into place in my brain. There's an adage that I hear constantly, "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear." Sometimes that is true in the literal sense. Someone shows up at just the right time to guide you.

There's a second meaning to that adage. Sometimes the teacher (a person or information) has been with you for a while. You just haven't

gotten to the point where you can utilize this person or information. But when you are ready, the information reveals itself to you. You finally get it. That is, the meaning of something becomes visible when the student has advanced to that level.

So here's what I didn't bother to write down in my notes last Saturday. It's the four methods of attaining knowledge.

1. Book Knowledge
2. Activity Knowledge
3. Modeling Knowledge
4. Teaching Knowledge

Let me use an example to illustrate these four categories. I saw a video in my local library titled "Teach Yourself to Swim." Think about this. Have you ever tried to learn a foreign language by using language tapes? How successful were you? So ask yourself, if you couldn't swim, would you jump into the deep end of a pool after watching a "teach yourself" video? Exactly. So, using swimming as an example, you can get **Book Knowledge** by reading about swimming or watching a video or even listening to a swim instructor. Would you be able to swim after that? Maybe, but would you bet your life on it?

Which brings us to **Activity Knowledge**. This is what you learn by actually doing the activity. Doing the activity gives you experience which adds a different dimension. In theory, you knew how to swim; now you know what it is like to be swimming. It's another layer or level of knowledge.

But how do you get good at swimming? Part of it is practice. But, if you practice using the wrong form, you're not going to get much better. So you study people who are good at it. You watch how they swim. Ask for advice from someone who is a strong swimmer. Maybe you see an article on an Olympic swimmer and she talks about her workout routine or her diet so you copy her regime. This is **Modeling Knowledge**. You model or copy their activities so you can achieve what they've achieved.

The fourth method of learning, **Teaching Knowledge**, provides the most insight. When you teach, you have to break down and slow down the components of what you do in order to explain it to others. That gives you a thorough understanding of how you do what you do. Sometimes you'll discover things in your routine that you weren't even aware of. Sometimes a student will ask a question that will give you an idea and stair-step you to another level. Sometimes the student has the brilliant idea. Because teaching involves two or more people working on the same subject, ideas tend to flow in an exponential manner. I can think about a subject all day long and come up with a few ideas. Or I can bounce them off a friend (especially a friend with a different background or perspective) and get a river of ideas flowing.

Each type of knowledge brings another level of understanding. Modeling Knowledge is what I call "tweaking to greatness". You have an idea of who you want to be, whether it's in your career, hobby or home-life. Now look around and see who is one of the very best at what you want to do. Your job is to find out what this person did to bring herself to the upper echelons of her field.

I've known about Modeling Knowledge for years. Who hasn't heard of having a role model or "being a good role model"? It was sort of a peripheral thing for me. Then I joined a company where a lot of people were doing a lot better than I was. A lot. And I didn't get to hang out with the "cool people" because I wasn't producing at their level. And not being in that group of people was hurting my income (as well as my pride) because they had access to company information and special programs, sales leads and bonus levels that I didn't. They had earned that access.

I realized that if I was going to be allowed to hang with the company's top echelon, I was going to have to earn it. So I chose someone who was at the top who was similar to me – a female about my age with a comparable level of education. And I went to the trainings she taught. I listened to what she had to say on company conference calls and in speeches that she gave. And I was lucky enough to be able to meet with her and learn what she does on a daily basis. And then I did it. Because she wasn't going to waste her time with someone who wouldn't work as hard as she did. And she was right.

So you don't have to be nineteen years old, rail thin and flawless to become a model or even a model's apprentice. But you do have to step out of your comfort zone, ask for help and allow yourself to do something poorly before you do it perfectly. My book, *Don't Make Me Slap You* (<http://www.dontmakemeslapyou.com/sales.htm>) provides an action exercise with each chapter. Here is your Modeling Exercise:

Where do you want to be? Who do you want to be more like? Follow these steps on your path to a new, improved you.

1. Choose what you want to improve upon in your life.
2. Choose a person who is excellent at it. Not just good, but excellent.
3. Start your research on them.

How did they get started?

Did they go to school to learn?

Take outside courses?

Hire a coach?

How many hours a day do they practice (or write or make sales calls, etc.)?

What is their daily schedule? Weekly schedule?

Have they written any books or articles?

What are some of the books that they've read?

There's a reason why people sew from a pattern or build from blueprints. Modeling yourself after someone who has succeeded in an area that you want to conquer will speed you towards your goal. So stand up tall, hold your head high and step out on the runway of life.

About the Author



Barbara Grasse is a professional instructor, speaker, writer and stand up comic. She's jumped out of airplanes, touched a whale in the wild, and sailed internationally on cruise ships. She's lived many of her dreams and is committed to helping others achieve their dreams.

What causes one person to pursue her dreams while others spend their lives wondering "What if"? It starts with a deep need to not settle for an ordinary life. And, says Barbara, a "totally misplaced sense of self-confidence."

The biggest step is learning to face fear. "I know what it is like to wake up at three a.m. in a cold sweat with my head spinning, worrying about how I am going to pull off my latest deal. I also know that no one is going to do it for me so I have to figure out what to do to make it all work. Sometimes there is no logical reason for me to think something is going to work out, except for the fact that I have made things work out before. If you have done something once, you know you can do it again. Self-confidence is built through experience, good and bad. I show women how to stair-step small victories into major triumphs."

She is the author of three ebooks on real estate: *Fast Money In Real Estate: Secrets of a Bird Dog*, *Hard Money* and the *Hard Money Directory*.

Barbara has written dinner theatre shows, sketch comedy and musical reviews as well as comedy routines for herself and other comics. Her 1930s interactive hot box review, *Tommy Gunn*, showcased at the MGM Grand Casino in Las Vegas.

Barbara received her B.A. in English from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She currently resides in Clearwater, Florida. You can find her on the web at <http://www.dontmakemeslapyou.com>