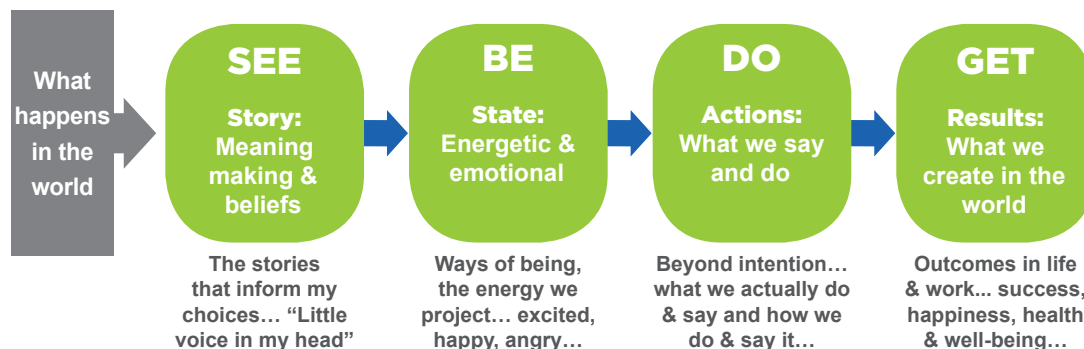
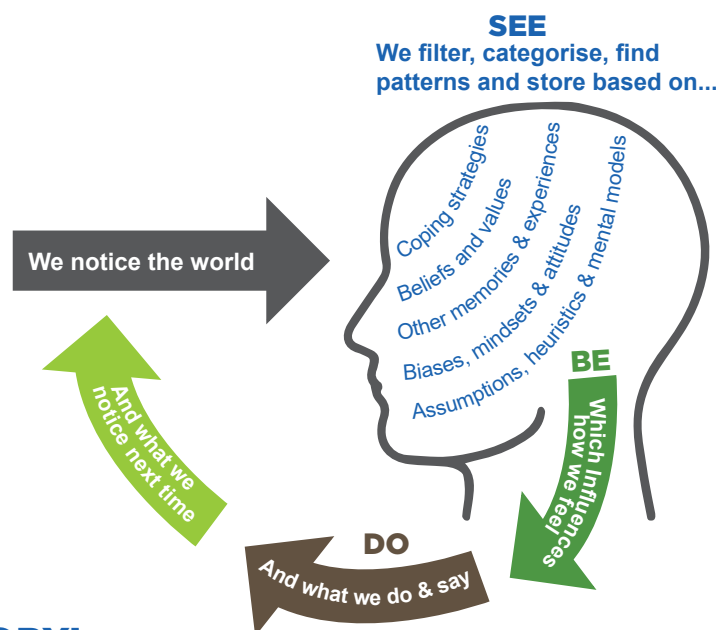


BUILDING MASTERY OF STORYLINE

“ We are what we think... All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts we make the world. – The Buddha



We are always making interpretation and meaning of the world around us. That world around us is so complex that we can't help but to simplify it and to create our own 'maps' of what is happening and why it's happening. We tend to see the world through these 'maps' which are built from our beliefs and values; experiences and memories; mindsets and attitudes; and assumptions, heuristics and mental models.



‘THE MAP IS NOT THE TERRITORY’

By ‘map’ we mean any abstraction of reality, including descriptions, theories, models, frameworks, etc. These maps are necessary; our brains are simply overcome if we try and hold all the complexity of our context at once. They are necessary but inherently flawed because every map lacks detail; it's a representation of reality rather than reality itself. In a seminal 1931 paper on mathematical semantics, Alfred Korzybski presented this notion that ‘the map is not the territory’. That is, the description of the thing is not the thing itself. In Korzybski's words:

- A map may have a structure similar or dissimilar to the structure of the territory.
- Two similar structures have similar ‘logical’ characteristics. Thus, if in a correct map, Dresden is given as between Paris and Warsaw, a similar relation is found in the actual territory.
- A map is not the actual territory.
- An ideal map would contain the map of the map, the map of the map of the map, etc., endlessly... We may call this characteristic self-reflexiveness.

THINKING, FAST AND SLOW

We mostly behave as though our ‘map’ of the world around us is the world around us, rather than just the map we have created in our minds. This is partly because our minds work quickly, we use our filters and maps of the world in a flash without even realising we are doing it, *Thinking Fast* as Daniel Kahneman calls it. We can often benefit from thinking more slowly, questioning our thought patterns, asking if the way I am making sense of the context, if my beliefs, assumptions and models about this situation, are helpful or unhelpful in relation to the results that I want.

- Are you aware of your unhelpful storylines?
- Can you think of a time when you were sure you were ‘right’ but it turned out your map was not the territory?