

Interrupting the pattern in relationships

- Published on October 17, 2023



To thrive and lead a fulfilling life, I believe we need to nurture the most important relationship in our life - the one we have with our Self! Thus, my intention here is to share with you matters I hope you'll find useful to guide you on your journey to create a loving relationship with yourself and others, and to build a life you desire.

It's autumn already. You can see it in the nuances of yellow when you look around...and... hear it, too, as you walk over the dry leaves... and feel it, in the freshness of the morning air. The patterns that make Fall beautiful 🍂

Let's begin...

This month I allowed myself to be late with the newsletter, and that is okay. **Imperfect perfection** is what I strive for.

As I reflect back on September, it was an intense month of different types of relationships: from colleagues, to friends, family, clients and acquaintances, to some relationships without a specific category to belong to. **We are always in relationships! We are impacting and being impacted by them.** And, like every relationship, all of mine and

yours are filled with patterns. From how you greet each other in the morning, to meetings at work, rituals as you come home to your family, to the beginning and ending of fights, to triggers and expectations looping around - **our relationships are made up of patterns!**

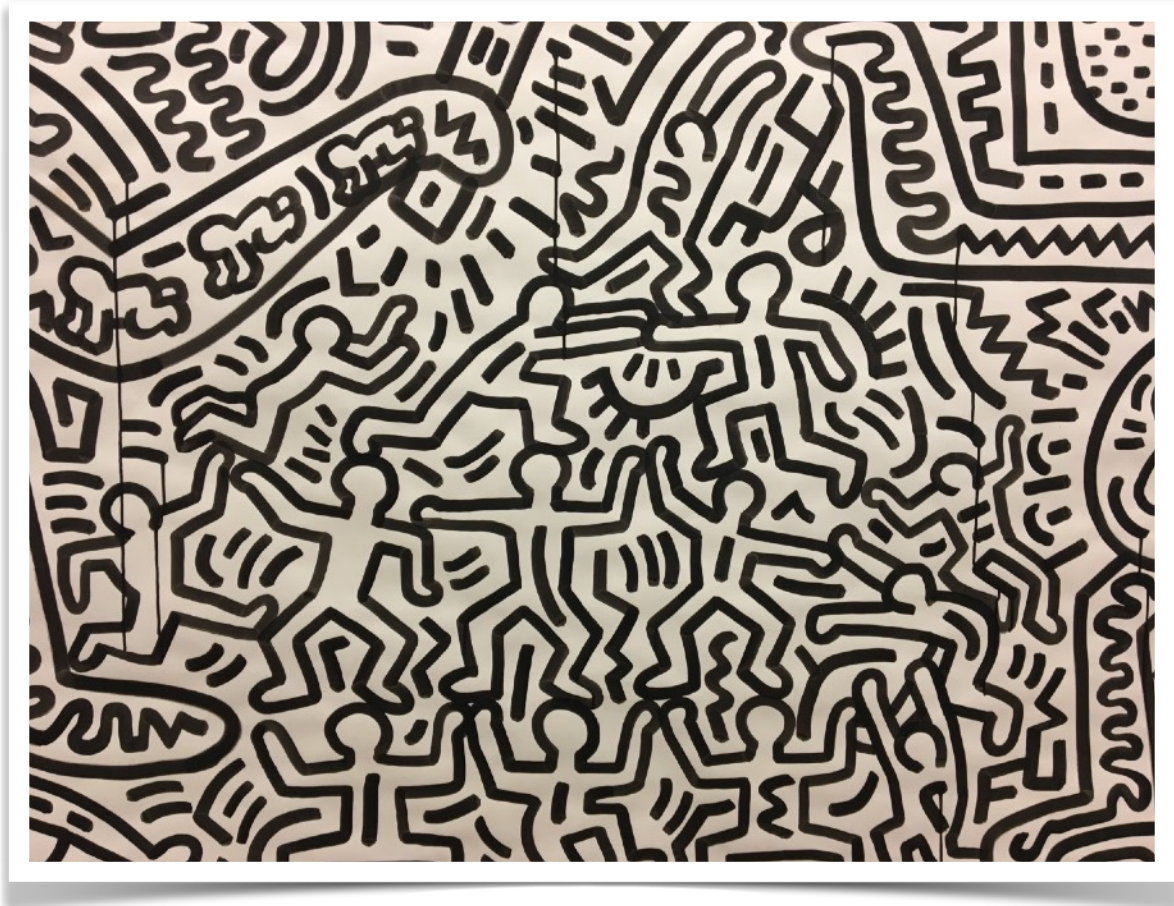


Photo from a Keith Haring exhibition in Albertina Museum, Vienna.

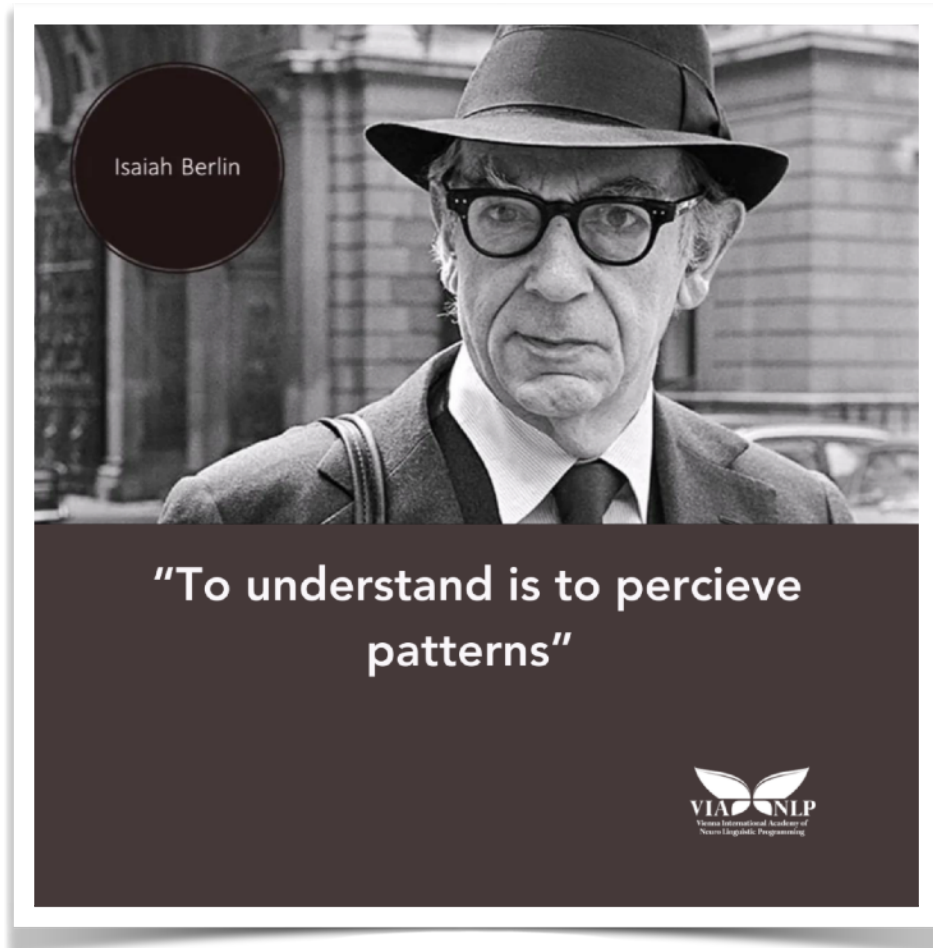
What are patterns in the context of relationships?

*"**Patterns** in the context of relationships are the unconscious repetition of behaviours that will perpetuate what we expect from the world and other people based on how we were raised and our previous relational experiences (what was imprinted/programmed into us)."*

These patterns can be harmonious, fostering intimacy and understanding, or they can become ruts, leading to stagnation and disconnection in our relationships.

Have you noticed that even when you are aware of the fact that relationships are a tapestry of patterns, even when you are working on yourself and you are highly aware of your behavior, you still sometimes get caught in a harmful pattern? It happens to me

sometimes, too. This is very normal, because patterns are highly unconscious. They are feedback loops and once you get caught in them, it becomes difficult to leave. I sometimes call them enchanted circles, because it feels like you have entered this circle and there is no way out. But, fortunately there is!



Becoming aware of a pattern might not be that easy, but *awareness is key* if you want to change one that doesn't serve you. Once you recognize it, there are different tools that you can utilize to break a pattern. One such amazing tool used for interrupting or disrupting a habitual thought or behavioral pattern is an **NLP** (Neuro Linguistic Programming) technique known as a "**Pattern Interrupt**". It can be a transformative tool in revitalizing your relationships.

What is a Pattern Interrupt?

A Pattern Interrupt is a deliberate, often unexpected action or statement that disrupts the usual flow of interaction between two or more individuals, (or, a pattern within an individual). Simply put, it brakes the current state (mental, emotional,

behavioral) and brings up a different one. It's like a pause button, providing an opportunity to step back, gain perspective, and potentially redirect the course of the conversation or interaction.



This interruption creates an opening for change, allowing us to break free from unhelpful or limiting patterns and explore new possibilities.

As a tool it has a wide use in all spheres of life and is often used in marketing or sales, for grabbing the attention of customers and closing a sale.

So, **what are the implications of pattern interrupts in relationships?**


1. **Breaking the Routine:** In long-term relationships, it's easy to fall into predictable patterns. While predictability provides comfort, it can also lead to complacency. A pattern interrupt injects novelty and unpredictability, infusing a sense of excitement and curiosity.
2. **Encouraging Mindfulness:** By interrupting habitual responses, individuals are prompted to be more present in the moment. This can lead to deeper, more meaningful connections as both sides are actively engaged in the exchange.


3. **Facilitating Growth and Change:** In relationships, growth is often a mutual endeavour. Pattern interrupts can serve as catalysts for personal and collective development. By challenging established patterns, individuals have the opportunity to explore new perspectives, behaviors, and ways of relating.
4. **Resolving Conflict:** In times of disagreement or tension, patterns can become particularly entrenched. A well-timed pattern interrupt can de-escalate a situation, preventing it from spiralling into a full-blown argument. It offers a chance for both parties to gain composure and approach the issue from a more constructive angle.


Some examples include: an unexpected compliment, a physical contact, humor, active listening and validation of the other persons perspective, changing the environment, body movements and so on. I believe that once you begin using this tool, you will become more creative and playful with it. Simply, **do or say something out of the ordinary!**

Here's how the Pattern Interrupt works:


☞ **Recognition of the Pattern:** The first step involves recognizing the pattern you wish to interrupt. This could be anything, from a specific behavior, communication style, response that is hindering effective collaboration, to a negative thought loop, an unhelpful habit, or a limiting belief.


 **Choosing the Interrupt:** The interrupt can take various forms and should be something unexpected. Carefully select and make it appropriate for the context - if it is work context for example, choose an interrupt that is subtle, professional, and relevant to the situation. It could be a change in tone or pace of speech, a shift in body language, or an unexpected question or statement.


 **Timing is Key:** The interrupt should occur at a strategic moment, precisely when the identified pattern is in play. This could be during a meeting, a discussion, or any interaction where the pattern is causing difficulty. This is crucial for maximum effectiveness. It's about catching the mind off guard.

 **Implement the Interrupt:** Execute the chosen interrupt in a natural and unsuspecting manner. *For example, if you have a colleague that always dominates a*

conversation and you want to interrupt the pattern, you might raise your hand (shift in body language) as the colleague starts to dominate the conversation, and calmly say, "I'd like to add something to the discussion."

 **Creating Dissonance:** The interrupt creates a moment of dissonance or confusion in the mind. This prompts the individual to momentarily pause and reassess their habitual response. It also sparks curiosity, encouraging them to consider alternative perspectives or behaviors. *Like in the case of the colleague, they will momentarily pause and consider your input.*

 **Offering a New Direction:** Following the interrupt, it's important to introduce a new thought, behavior, or perspective - of course in line with the context. This is where the real change can take place. Here you can reframe the issue, propose a different solution or action, or encourage open dialogue.

 **Observe and Adapt:** Pay attention to how the individual responds to the interrupt. Be receptive to their feedback and adjust your approach accordingly. Remember that the goal is to facilitate positive change and improve the working relationship.

This technique is a powerful tool within NLP that can lead to profound shifts in behavior and thinking.

By disrupting established patterns, you have the opportunity to break free from limitations and explore new, more empowering ways of experiencing the world.

To continue, a few announcements:

- New batch of the **live 2024 Vienna NLP Practitioner** is forming! We are beginning in January. Early bird is available until the end of October! Get the offer now and join us.
- If you can't make it live Vienna, then you can join us for the online NLP diploma beginning in early February 2024. Click **here** to learn more.

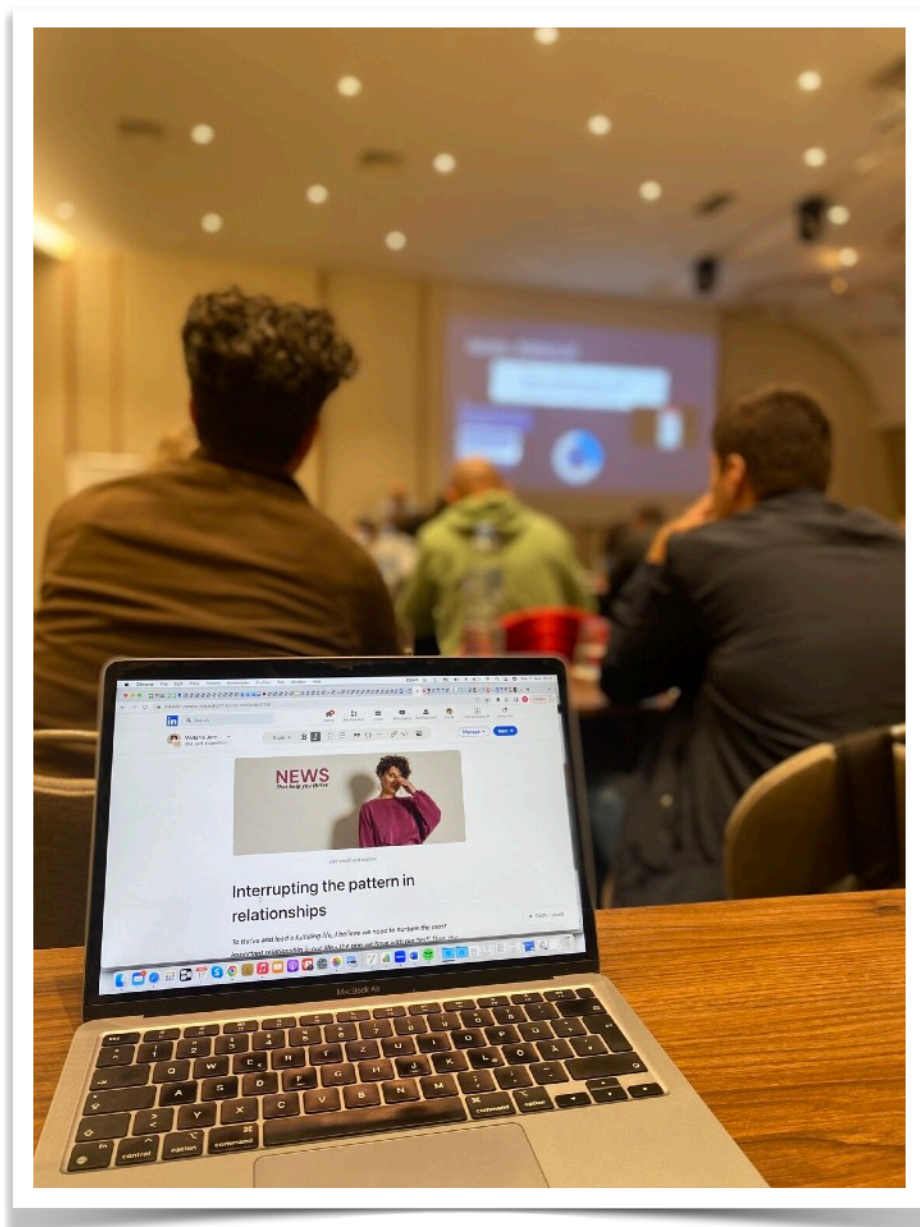
- Or, maybe you like one-on-one coaching to discover what your values are, what drives you in life and finally make the decision to reach your dream. Read more how it can help you and get in touch [here](#).

To finish,

I am getting ready for a workshop on communication skills with a group of faculties and students for the **IFAMP** - Institute For Applied Medical Physics, this newsletter got me thinking - how do I break the pattern of "boring" presentations and create something out of the ordinary?

My message for the month of October is:

Get out of the pattern, do something to surprise yourself and others.



Inspiration and Information Sources:

I'm watching, reading and listening to:

- Check this interesting research by Gallup on **Employee Wellbeing** worldwide, you'll see 56% are struggling and 9% are suffering. Still a lot of work to be done. NLP can help!
- **BeWell: a group coaching model to foster the wellbeing of individuals**, by Ana Paula Nacif published in the International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring
- **Turning Points: History at a crossroads** - by ARTE TV.