



## Maybe



The meaning that any event has depends upon the “frame.”

A very old Chinese Taoist story describes a farmer in a poor country village. He was considered very well-to-do, because he owned a horse which he used for plowing and for transportation. One day his horse ran away. All his neighbors exclaimed how terrible this was, but the farmer simply said “Maybe.”



A few days later the horse returned and brought two wild horses with it. The neighbors all rejoiced at his good fortune, but the farmer just said “Maybe.”

The next day the farmer’s son tried to ride one of the wild horses; the horse threw him and broke his leg. The neighbors all offered their sympathy for his misfortune, but the farmer again said “Maybe.”

The next week conscription officers came to the village to take young men for the army. They rejected the farmer’s son because of his broken leg. When the neighbors told him how lucky he was, the farmer replied “Maybe.”

## Interpretation

“The meaning that any event has depends upon the ‘frame’ in which we perceive it. When we change the frame, we change the meaning. Having two wild horses is a good thing until it is seen in the context of the son’s broken leg. The broken leg seems to be bad in the context of peaceful village life; but in the context of conscription and war, it suddenly becomes good” (Bandler and Grinder, 1982, p. 1).

## Reference

Bandler, Richard and Grinder, John. (1982). (Edited by Steve Andreas and Connirae Andreas). *Reframing: Neuro-Linguistic programming and the transformation of meaning*.

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