

Pattern Analysis and Training - Model and Methodology

The foundational document of Pattern Analysis and Training. Defines the model, the mapping methodology, and the training methodology, with a fully worked example.

The model and methodology

The term pattern might sound abstract, but most people already know what it means intuitively. A pattern is simply a repeated way of thinking, relating to others, solving problems, or responding to situations. Everyone has them. Oversleeping, drinking, lying, talking behind someone's back, overthinking decisions, or never asking for help are all examples of patterns.

We usually notice our patterns only when they conflict with what we consciously want. That's when they become a problem, and that's when we start calling our oversleeping, drinking or lying "dysfunctional."

The word dysfunction means a function that is not working properly, not the absence of a function. Yet we usually treat dysfunction as if it means there is no function at all. We see it as something useless that needs to be removed.

We normally see those patterns only as something that costs us. But let's look at the examples again: Oversleeping costs reliability, but it also buys time offline. Drinking costs health, relationships, and freedom, but it buys relief from anxiety. Lying costs trust, but it gets someone out of trouble. The cost of talking badly about someone is being subject to the same rule — others can talk badly about you too. What it buys is a momentary sense of superiority.

What you pay and what you gain do not even have to be visible for the transaction to be there.

So the function of a pattern is what it buys. It is what that way of thinking, feeling, or acting provides. The cost is the consequence of getting that benefit — what is paid in exchange for what the pattern supplies. This cost is usually the part that gets noticed and labeled as the problem.

pattern = what is gained + what is paid.

We judge patterns by their outcome. The outcome is what we experience directly, and that is what we want to eliminate. The cost is therefore mistaken for the whole pattern.

The cost is visible, while the pattern itself is not, for the same reason discussed earlier. What makes something “dysfunctional” is the clash between what is wanted and what the pattern produces. Nobody thinks about their plumbing when it works. It becomes a problem only when it breaks during a shower. And even then, barely anyone thinks about the whole plumbing system — everyone wants the no-water problem to go away.

Patterns are really difficult to see. They are not directly observable the way consequences are. They are the “how” rather than the “what”.

In adults, most patterns have been operating for decades, becoming “just the way things are.” They also run under consciousness “by design” — their purpose is to make reactions fast and automatic. Patterns are what the saying “under one’s nose” describes: they are too close and familiar to be noticed.

But this is also where the trap lies. The cost is downstream from the gain, so eliminating the cost does not cause the root of the problem to disappear. Blocking a subscription payment without canceling the subscription does not remove the cost — it only moves it somewhere else in time.

So we try to eliminate the cost. Meanwhile, the pattern reproduces, morphs, and adapts. And we end up in the same place again.

Pattern analysis and training is the way to see the patterns, map their function, and address the source of what we call problems.

The Simplified Model

A pattern is an automated way of achieving a fixed result: learned early, by observation and trial and error, as a solution to a repeated problem. The mind reads a situation and deploys a stored reaction without having to decide in the moment. It is built early in a limited environment (mostly the family home), generalized to all environments, and persists because it achieves what it is supposed to. Each execution trains the next.

It optimizes for predictability, avoidance of uncertainty, easy fulfillment of a need, and avoidance of whatever this particular system finds most intolerable. Each execution is an exchange: something is obtained and something is paid, simultaneously. Both sides are usually invisible.

Structural blindness is the natural result of patterns. A pattern runs under awareness because its value is speed, and deciding consciously costs time. Nothing is hiding the patterns on purpose.

Problems as we see them are normally downstream from the original gain.

Patterns do not run one at a time. They form a system: elements that depend on each other, where changing one changes the rest. The system holds its position. Each element is buying something — predictability, comfort, a coherent identity — and each element is held in place by the ones around it. What the person sees is the output the system produces, particularly its downsides.

All patterns work the same way: something is deployed in order to obtain something. What differs is what gets deployed, and what position the pattern occupies in the system:

- Behavioral patterns. An action deployed to obtain something.
- Thinking patterns. The same mechanism, but what gets deployed is thinking.
- Beliefs. An assumption about reality, held as fact. It determines what solutions are considered possible within the system.
- Identity. The model of who one is, particularly defended.

Beliefs are a particular type of pattern because they carry a verdict about what is acceptable and what is not, what is right and wrong, what one can do and what one must not. Beliefs are rarely stated out loud, and therefore equally rarely checked. Where a belief makes something unacceptable, the system optimizes against it. This is why oftentimes the belief has to move first.

The Methodology

Mapping

Mapping uses the same method as differential diagnosis.

Initial mapping starts with gathering the data: the problem, its onset, the situations it appears in, and a first hypothesis about the pattern forms. The hypothesis is then tested the way a diagnosis is tested: by whether anything contradicts it. If the hypothesis is true, the pattern should behave in a specific, predictable way, appear under certain conditions and not others, and have origins that explain it. Each claim is checked. If one doesn't hold, the hypothesis is false and gets replaced.

Hypotheses are stated as keywords. A keyword is similar to an analogy or a metaphor that implies a whole structure. It is easiest to understand through an actual example. When someone says “what a circus!” they obviously do not mean the literal circus. The analogy points to something whose structure and mechanics match what is being described. The word “circus” immediately brings up the whole picture — spectacle, chaos, performance, multiple people, loud noises, and so on.

The keyword works in a similar way. It is not just a label for the pattern. It is an analogy that captures its mechanics: its meaning, structure and neighboring elements reflect how the pattern actually works.

Identifying and naming one element of the structure naturally supplies names of the neighboring elements. If the predicted neighboring elements are nowhere to be found, the mapping is wrong.

If a pattern is a circus, there should be monkeys, lion tamers, lights, and crowds. If nothing like that is there, the keyword is the wrong one for that pattern. Once the right keyword is discovered, it turns visible fragments of a pattern into a complete picture. This is why the keyword is found rather than invented.

Why it works: “a nagging inner voice” is a heavy phrase. Abstract, a bit shameful, and there’s nothing to do with it but feel bad. Once you know which one it is — a neighbor with a complaint, an evangelist, a vacuum cleaner salesman — you know what to do with him. You know when he comes by, who’s on his side, and what he’s going to say next. You can laugh at your salesman, whereas laughing at negative self-talk is almost impossible.

Mapping means understanding each of the patterns separately, but also patterns in relation: what they do, what the priorities are, how they influence each other. A pattern system is mapped the way a TV series would be diagrammed. Who is who, who does what to whom, and how it changes over time. The elements get names — keywords — and a short annotation of origin, current function, operating conditions.

Mapping makes the system addressable. Once it’s clear what an element is doing, it’s also clear how to work with it.

Training

Training is not always necessary. Understanding the elements of the system and what they are achieving very often makes the solution apparent. Keywords also provide what one could call an “instruction” for addressing the pattern, as mentioned above.

Some persistent patterns require training, though, because a pattern is not held in place only by itself. Three things defend it:

Beliefs. The belief above the pattern is what made the pattern necessary. While it stands, the situation still reads as requiring the pattern, and the pattern is reinstated as the obvious and correct response.

Emotions. The pattern was built to avoid a specific discomfort. Moving against it produces exactly that discomfort, and the discomfort is read as a signal that something is going wrong — which

returns the person to the pattern.

Habit. Every execution deepens the pathway. The pattern is not competing on merit with an alternative; it is the response that arrives first, before anything else is available.

The point of the training is to address all of the above.

It works in low stakes, lets the client see the machinery for themselves, registers as something figured out rather than given, and turns observation and change into a challenge rather than grinding — important for high-volume processing that needs dopamine.

The training works on what pattern analysis can identify but not change: the needs, assumptions, beliefs, and habits that keep a pattern going. If overpreparation is used to create peace of mind, for example, the training works on the intolerance of uncertainty that makes overpreparation necessary.

Worked Example — The Case of Mary

Mary comes to me because her friend confronted her and said:

“You act so sweet towards me when we are alone, but then you challenge me when we are in a small group, and you completely change into a superstar when we are in a large group.”

Conventional interpretations: social anxiety, status sensitivity, shift in self-perception.

Mapping

Step 1. Collect the visible data

The variable between the situations is the presence of other people. The more people are present, the stronger the behavioral change becomes. This suggests that what matters is not simply social interaction, but being observed by others. The first keyword is therefore: **audience**.

Step 2. Gather more data around the pattern

I ask Mary how much she notices the difference in her behavior across situations. She says she is probably just “more fun in social settings.” I point to the incoherence: she would not bring this up for analysis if she did not notice something was off.

Mary admits she used to be “bitchy” as a teenager, but does not see much connection to the current situation. She says she likes the friend and does not perceive herself as challenging her.

Step 3. Gather historical data

We examine what “bitchy” meant in Mary’s past behavior. Mary has no problem talking about it: she describes low self-esteem, wanting to be the center of attention, and sometimes acting above others when feeling below.

Step 4. Form a working hypothesis

This might be the same pattern. In the past, Mary used social positioning to feel better about herself, so her “shining” in company might be serving a similar function: buying some self-esteem.

Step 5. Find a keyword

Because Mary already has a name for a previous version of the behavior, we use her own term: “bitchy girl.” The term refers to a recognizable pattern, not just a single action. Using her own term avoids imposing an external label. The keyword becomes a testable model: does the current behavior function like the old “bitchy girl” pattern?

Step 6. Discuss the keyword, look for gain, check against the data

We examine the keyword itself: what makes a “bitchy girl” bitchy? The gain is already clear — it makes them feel better about themselves. But the behavior still needs to be defined. I ask Mary what bitchy girls do. She says they attack other girls they do not like.

This reveals an inconsistency. Mary likes her friend and does not consciously see her as someone she wants to attack. The keyword explains part of the pattern, but does not fully explain this situation.

Step 7. Refine the keyword

When Mary is very nice on the surface while subtly undermining her friend, the friend is placed in the position of someone who does not see what is happening. Mary, in contrast, becomes the person who sees more and is above the situation. Mary agrees with the observation.

At the same time, Mary keeps the image of being kind and supportive. The pattern therefore combines two elements: maintaining a positive facade and gaining a higher position. The combination of a sweet facade and hidden status positioning suggests a new keyword: **court games**.

Step 8. Check if the keyword produces correct predictions

We check whether “court games” predicts the observed variations of the pattern. Does the behavior differ between men and women? Does it appear more with potential “throne pretenders” than with “maidens”? Does it depend on the presence of the “court”? The pattern fits these predictions.

Step 9. From the keyword extract the gain

The keyword “court games” reveals what the pattern is trying to achieve. The gain is not simply attention or approval; it is the feeling of holding a higher position within the social hierarchy compared to other “throne pretenders”.

Step 10. Look for the origins

We go back to Mary's history and check whether anything could point to the origins of the pattern: experiences where social position depended on comparison with others, or where a sweet exterior was combined with hidden competition.

Mary's father was a sort of local "Casanova" and often invited friends, including various female acquaintances. Mary's mother was very sweet and welcoming toward them publicly, and then privately talked with Mary about how these "trollops" were stupid for not noticing her little needles.

Step 11. Specify the gain from the origins data

Because this is her mother's behavior rather than her own, Mary can identify the gain more easily. The gain is a double win: maintaining the image of being kind and welcoming, while also feeling above the people who do not notice the hidden moves.

This confirms the gain extracted from the "court games" pattern.

Step 12. Identify the cost

Because Mary came to me only after her friend confronted her, the cost appears as the final part of the pattern. The gain is already clear from the keyword: maintaining a positive self-image while gaining a higher position.

The cost becomes visible when the whole pattern is considered: court games require everyone to be treated as a potential player. Whoever gains an advantage through the game is also vulnerable to losing within the same game.

Step 13. Look for neighboring patterns

The gain of the court games pattern is twofold: appearing like a nice person while gaining a higher position. This can operate in two ways: the person may know that the niceness is only an appearance, or they may genuinely believe they are a nice person.

In the second case, a conflict appears between the nice person identity and the behavior. This suggests looking for compensatory patterns: for example, someone may become especially helpful, caring, or generous in other situations to strengthen the belief that they are a very nice person.

This is a step toward mapping the whole system.

Step 14. Continue pattern analysis

"Court games" becomes the model used to analyze the pattern. Instead of approaching the issue through labels such as competitiveness or insecurity, the pattern is examined through the internal logic of the court game itself.

This creates distance from a direct identity judgment. Mary does not have to accept "I am a bad person" or "I am insecure." She can examine the structure: in a court game, different positions exist,

and different roles have different behaviors.

The model therefore allows deductions. A queen does not need to play court games because her position is already established. The game is played by those who need to gain, protect, or prove their position. Mary can see it for herself and agree with obvious logic, without turning the pattern into a statement about what kind of person she is.

The court game model naturally supplies the next elements to be examined:

- **What is the throne?** → What exactly is the position that has value in this game?
- **Who are the competitors?** → Who gets placed into the comparison system?
- **What creates the hierarchy?** → Which characteristics or rules decide who is above or below?
- **What activates the game?** → Under what circumstances does this comparison system turn on?

The structure of the model can be used to extract the underlying beliefs: what makes someone valuable, what makes someone a threat, and what defines winning or losing in life. These beliefs can then be tested against the data.

The same process is applied to neighboring patterns, analyzing their gains, rules, beliefs, and maintaining conditions. Together, these patterns reveal the person's recurring gaps and compensations: for example, where they lack a stable sense of worth, where they try to compensate by being liked or admired, and what they are actually seeking from others, such as appreciation, recognition, or status.

Training

Training runs on two tracks:

Track 1 (general capacities): self-observation, impact-tracking

Track 2 (Mary specific):

1. **Comparison-game structure** — valuing herself instead of borrowing self-worth from position.
2. **Emotions connected to the nice-person model** — building an objective self-image, with the understanding that not always being nice does not make her a bad person.
3. **Beliefs (two)** — one, that only one woman can be a winner in social dynamics; two, that missing other people's needles means being naïve.
4. **The need** — to be seen, noticed, and appreciated in social settings.

How the training looks for Mary:

1. Changing the charge With my guidance, we find humor in the pattern. We call the character “the court diva” and keep using it because the idea of being a court diva makes Mary laugh. Defensiveness is replaced with lightness.

2. Introducing curiosity The through line of the whole training is the observation of the “court customs,” both her own and those of others. We discuss this before Mary receives multiple homework assignments, where her role will be to observe and describe the social dynamics from the court-model perspective.

3. Introducing belief work We first talk about each of the beliefs, and then Mary has to observe them “in the wild” and make notes afterwards:

Is a person who misses a joke, does not notice sarcasm, or misses a slight needle actually naive? Does the court allow only one person to be in the top position, or can several people occupy a high position at the same time? Who actually seems like a winner in social situations, if anyone? What makes them seem like a winner, and what does “winning” actually consist of?

4. Trying the opposite habit Mary gets her first official challenge: she will deliberately stay out of the spotlight the whole night and observe both the social dynamics and her own reactions to being in the corner. She gets a list of things to watch for beforehand and has to write a report afterwards.

5. Replace the habit Mary reports boredom. We examine what could replace the slight maliciousness while still allowing for fun in social situations. I propose mischievousness, which Mary very much likes. It keeps the playful element while removing the status component. Mary has to report each mischievous move that works.

6. Explain, discuss and train the pattern in context We devote a session to a shared discussion of comparison games as described in the article, so Mary can see that comparison games indicate some lack of “self-worth,” while at the same time being absolutely common. Mary introduces self-valuing as a concept.

Her two-week homework consists of exercises in letting go: on every occasion possible, she has to let go of the opportunity to be right, to be above, to respond to a comment, or to make a joke about someone. At the end, she reports back whether letting go makes her feel better or worse about herself.

7. Ongoing adjustment At the end of each session, we discuss how Mary is feeling, what she thinks of the exercises, whether she wants to make any changes, and whether she herself has any ideas for the training. She does — she proposes that after each party or social outing, she will write down, or just think to herself, a list of reasons why everyone there was cool. We add it to the training.

8. Summarize The last session is a summary of the progress. We go through the reports, and I ask questions to check if Mary sees the difference herself. I point to visible changes. Mary decides for

herself what she will keep doing going forward, and can ask questions about what steps I propose. She receives a written report, with resources that might be helpful. Mary can book extra sessions if needed.

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