

# Emotional and Psychological Strokes as a Tool for Business Growth

**Definition of a Psychological Stroke:** *Strokes* are the recognition, attention or responsiveness that one person gives another. Strokes can be positive (nicknamed "warm fuzzies") or negative ("cold pricklies").



A key idea is that people hunger for recognition, and that lacking positive strokes, will seek whatever kind they can, even if it is recognition of a negative kind.

We test out as children what strategies and behaviors seem to get us strokes, of whatever kind we can get. People often create pressure in (or experience pressure from) others to communicate in a way that matches their style, so that a boss who talks to his staff as a controlling parent will often engender self-abasement or other childlike responses. Those employees who resist may get removed or labeled as "trouble makers".

## 4 Types of Strokes

**Verbal Strokes** – can be given to make someone feel good about himself

**Touch Strokes** – Touch strokes are physically given. In a business environment, you need to be mindful of what forms of touch strokes are appropriate. For example, a hug, a pat on the back, a handshake, a touch on the forearm, and a high five are all touch strokes.

**Written Strokes** – Written strokes can make you feel good or not so good – they can be positive or negative. Have you ever received a congratulatory note from a friend or an associate? How about a note from a teacher?

**Time Strokes** - Time strokes are given when you take time to listen to your client and show an interest in understanding his situation.

For Salespeople: whether or not you get strokes, it is important to give strokes to your clients/ customers and prospects.



## Warm Fuzzy Strokes:

A stroke which makes you feel good is called a positive stroke. For instance, a genuine compliment, a pleasant phone call and a pat on the back are all positive strokes. These positive strokes are also called “warm fuzzies”. For strokes to register as fuzzies, they must be sincere. Here are some examples of what fuzzies can sound like: “I love your tie, where did you get it?”

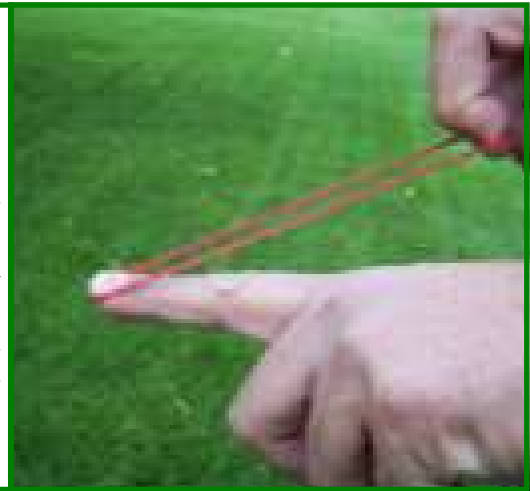


## Cold Prickly Strokes:

A negative stroke is a “cold prickly”. People don’t like these, but if they can’t get enough fuzzies, they will find a way to fill up their psychological stroke counters with pricklies. For example, a co-worker says, “Wow, did you actually buy that tie? Or is that a gift from your mother-in-law?”

## Rubber Band Strokes:

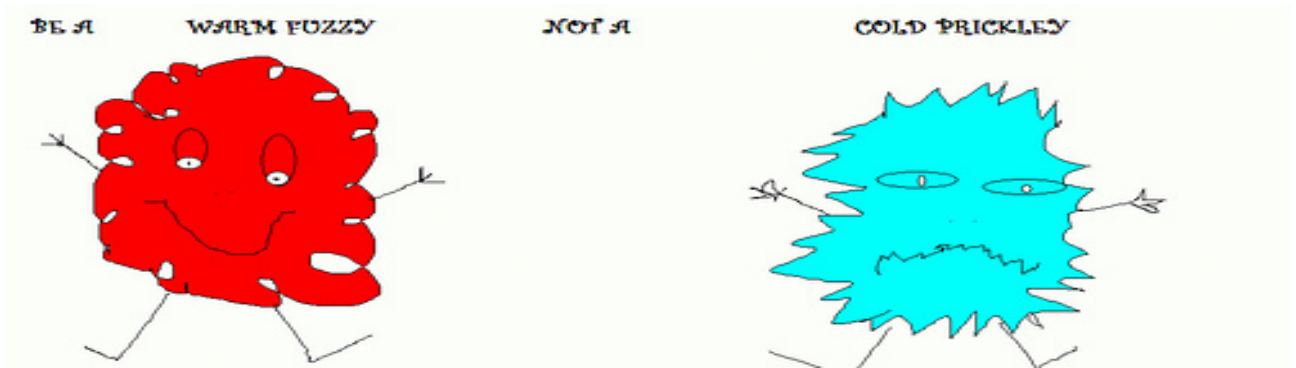
These strokes start out seemingly positive, but quickly become negative. For example, if someone says, “Gee, I love your tie. I remember when I had one just like that back in the 80’s.” It started off sounding like a fuzzy until the rubber band was yanked and it turned into a prickly. While it makes Henry feel Not OK, the person dishing out the crack gets a cheap OK feeling. Later, that same person might experience his own Not-OK feeling – guilt.



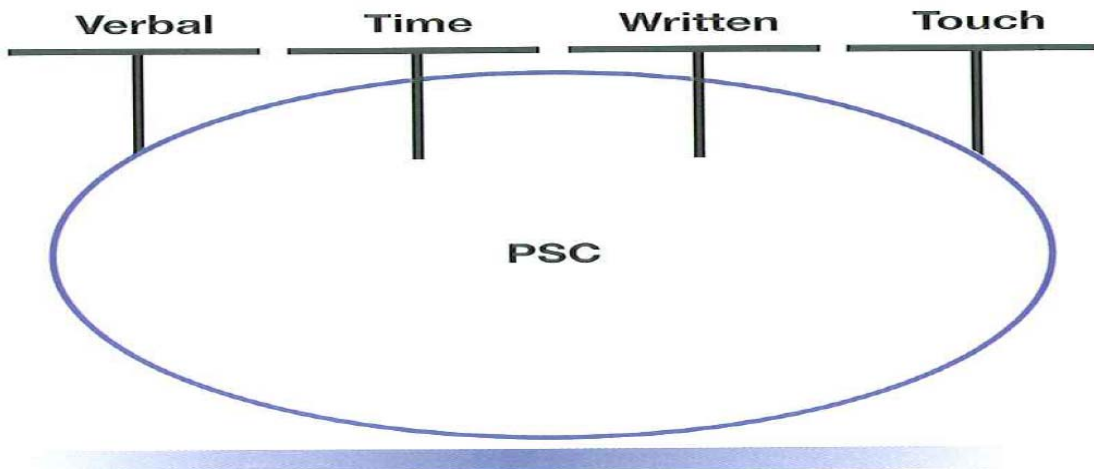
## Conditional and Unconditional Strokes

**Conditional Stroke:** A conditional stroke is received for something you did rather than for who you are. Suppose you have just spent a considerable length of time completing a detailed report and your boss says, “Great job.” You have just been given a stroke but it was in exchange for something you did; it was conditional. (relate to your **ROLE**)

**Unconditional Stroke:** If someone tells you that you’re a nice person, an unconditional stroke has been given for who you are instead of in exchange for what you did. Most people place a higher value on, and have a greater need for, unconditional strokes. (relate to your **IDENTITY**)



Psychological Stroke Counter - make a goal to increase the number of strokes that you give to people.



' Frank always had trouble picking the exact moment when a business relationship would move from a handshake to a hug!'