



An Introduction to NLP

On the first NLP course I attended I knew that I had found some of the most powerful techniques for personal development and achievement available; and I began to use them from that very first course to take quantum leaps in all areas of my personal life, my business, my relationships, in fact just about everything in my life improved.

What is NLP?

NLP was created in the early 1970's by Richard Bandler and John Grinder, Richard Bandler was a computer scientist and mathematician whilst John Grinder was a linguist. They were both fascinated by how some individuals achieved success that surpassed others. They reviewed the field of therapy, studying people that were renowned for getting dramatic results in very short periods of time.

Among these were the hypnotherapist, Milton Erickson, the creator of gestalt therapy, Fritz Pearl and Family Therapist, Virginia Sirtir. Using modelling techniques to discover how they managed to create their results. Modelling their physiology, how they used their body; internal thought processes and the way they structured their language.

When Richard Bandler and John Grinder used the model they created for themselves they achieved the same results as those people they modelled. From this they created a series of techniques and they called them NLP.

They began by modelling therapists and NLP has applications way beyond the field of therapy. Therapy is an extreme form of persuasion and influence. A therapist enables someone to change their mind about something they have held onto for many, many years.

NLP has been described as an attitude and a methodology that leaves behind a trail of techniques. The attitude is one of curiosity and experimentation. Curiosity that drives you to discover how someone does something and then a willingness to personally experiment, a willingness to do anything just to discover what would happen when you did. The methodology is the very same modelling that created NLP in the first place. These provide a set of techniques that produce specific results.

NLP has also been described as soft wear for the mind, you have the most powerful computer on the planet between your ears but no one gave you an instruction manual. Imagine buying the most powerful computer on the market at the moment

and when you unpacked it there was no instruction manual. Up until recently there wasn't one for your brain. So many people have the experience that their brain runs them. NLP is the instruction manual that teaches you how to use your brain and how to run your mind so that you can get the results that you want consistently in whatever you are doing.

The NLP Communication Model

NLP describes how we process information as a human being. It has been estimated that we received 2,000,000 pieces of information every second. If we were consciously aware of all that information we'd probably go crazy, so overwhelmed; to stop this your mind filters the information as it comes in. We filter this information in three ways; deletion, distortion and generalisation.

For example: for those of you wearing shoes - you're probably not aware of the feeling of your right shoe on your right foot, well at least you weren't until I mentioned it. Before it was brought to your awareness your mind asked "do you need to be conscious of that information right now" and probably you didn't so it deleted that information from your awareness. This is also what is happening when you can't find your keys anywhere until someone show you they are right in front of you all the time. For some reason your mind literally deleted the visual information coming into your eyes. When we are communicating this is happening all the time; can you remember a time when you said something to someone and they acted as if you never said it. They deleted what you said. The filtering system inside our mind literally changes the information coming in making something of it that its not.

A great example of this is when you wake up in the middle of the night convinced the noise you hear is a burglar. You search the house and there's no one there you then realise that the sound is just the central heating system in your house cooling down, just like it has every night you lived there. Yet at that time, for some reason your mind distorted it so well your heart was pounding with fear but it wasn't real. When we are communicating distortion is usually the reason for someone reacting in a totally unexpected way to something you said. They literally created a whole new meaning for it. Generalisations are the filters we use to create isms ... like ageism, sexism, racism etc.

When someone does something people generalise the behaviour across to all the people of the group that they belong to. People generalise that the young don't listen; that things are just too hard; that change wont happen because its always been that way. Generalisations usually contain words like always, everybody, never, everyone, no-one every time; and usually prevent people from achieving their goals.

As we experience life we create filters, values and beliefs and these affecting our way of thinking and responding. All these are created without even thinking about it as a result of our life experiences and since we have all experienced a different life we all filter the information in different ways, so we live in a different world our own world. As we all have different filters, no one lives in quite the same world as you do. So is it any wonder that communicating is so difficult?

Have you ever wondered why the people we are closest too, our parents, loved ones, children let alone our business associates can be so difficult to communicate with.

NLP teaches us how to recognise our own and others deletions, distortions and generalisations enabling us to cut through the filters, enabling us to create the results we want.

Take control of your mind.

One fascinating area of NLP is called sub-modalities. Through sub-modalities we teach you how to change the way you're thinking.

There are 6 ways in which we think, we can be aware of images, hear sounds, feel feelings, smell smells, taste tastes, and talk to yourself. We call these modalities, and every thought you have consists of one or more of these. Take a moment, stop now and notice what you are thinking. Do you notice you are using one of more of the modalities?

Now the sub-modalities are the finer distinctions in the modalities. For instance, sub-modalities in the visual modality will be things like the size of the picture, the brightness, whether the picture is in black or white or colour. Whether its a movie or a still. Examples of auditory sub-modalities will be the volume the pitch the speed the quality and the location of the sound.

The sub-modalities determine what the pictures, sounds, feelings and self talk mean to you. The meaning of your thoughts determines how they affect you and how you behave. Learning how to change the sub-modalities of your thoughts enables you to finally take control of your mind.

Lets experiment with these; remember a time in your past when you were really really motivated. A specific time. As you think back to that time now, step into your body in the memory and see what you saw, hear what you heard and notice what you noticed and begin to bring back the feelings of motivation that you had then. Keep going until you really get the feeling.

Now using your imagination I want you to take the picture you have in your mind and shrunk it down into to a tiny dark dot and put it in the furthest corner of the room. When you do that what happens to the motivation? Has it decreased? Or maybe disappeared altogether. Now you know how to de-motivate yourself.

Here's the next step. Now imagine that small dark dot in the corner of the room move towards you. Getting bigger and brighter the closer it gets to you until it hits you and you are back in the picture. Now you're motivated again. Now repeat that a few times very quickly. This is a very simple technique that can help you be motivated when ever you want to. You're beginning to learn how to run your brain.

Another experiment; do you have a voice in your head you use to give yourself a hard time? Most of us do. Get that voice back right now and notice whereabouts around you the voice is located. Is it in front of you or to the left or right or maybe

behind you. Just pay attention to where the voice is located - now put that voice away for a while; and imagine the most seductive, sexy attractive voice ever and hear it in your head right now.

Notice the location of that voice. Is it different to the first one. If its not you didn't come up with a sexy enough voice. So when you have a voice that is in a very different voice than the one you use to give yourself a hard time and make a note of its location.

Now get your hard time voice back and have it say your favourite beating yourself up line - you know the one. Now move that voice to the same location as the sexy seductive attractive voice, just move it around you into the same location. What's the difference? Does it decrease the negative impact it had or maybe it makes it disappear all together. If that didn't work, what about changing that voice to Mickey Mouse's voice; you could never take Mickey seriously as if he was trying to give you a hard time could you?

The way that we think about things, the sub modalities we use for specific things and experiences in our mind creates how we feel about them. One person could think about a roller coaster about something scary that makes their heart beat faster, their breathing rate change, their palms to feel sweaty, the stomach to churn; whilst someone else will think about this as something exciting, thrilling having coded their experience differently inside their mind.

By changing the sub modalities you can change the way that you are feeling. One way to do this is with the NLP Fast Phobia Cure.

How to let go of fear/anxiety

When Dr Richard Bandler was investigating ways in which to help people get rid of their fears/phobias he advertised for people who had already done this. He spoke to hundreds of people and found out what they did. They told him they got to a point when they had, had enough; they looked at their fear and realized just how ridiculous it was. When working with my clients I first of all have them access a positive state, laughter is perfect for this. When they have that state I'll anchor it.

Anchoring a positive state.

Anchoring is the term we use when referring to a learned association between an external stimulus and an internal response. We are constantly creating and using anchors. It is an unconscious behaviour, one that we can make use of create anchors that are more useful to us.

In the late 1900s a Russian scientist called Pavlov conducted some experiments where he would offer food to his dogs and at the same time ring a bell. After a while the dog associated the bell with food and within a short while he would only have to ring the bell and the dog would salivate. He had created an association between a bell and feeding time. There was no logical connection between the two

things, but through constant repetition, a neurological connection was created in the mind of the dogs.

Whenever we do something new, we create a new neural pathway so we can re-access that experience again more easily. Each time we repeat a particular behaviour, we strengthen the associated neural pathway, just as when you walk down a path through a field it eventually becomes a clearer path.

To create a positive humorous anchor.

Remember a joke or something that made you really laugh. Fully return to it now - remember, see what you saw, hear what you heard and feel how good you felt. As you go through this memory, remember that time and all the feelings associated with it, imagine making it brighter and more colourful, the feelings getting stronger, and any sounds become louder. As you feel these good feelings, squeeze the thumb and middle finger of either hand together.

Now squeeze the thumb and finger together and relive that good feeling. Repeat steps 1 - 4 several times with different positive memories until just squeezing your thumb and finger together brings back those good feelings.

Once I have the anchor set its time for the NLP Fast Phobia Cure.

NLP Fast Phobia Cure

I ask my client to think about what has been scaring them, if they can remember the first time they became scared we use this incident or one of the incidents when they were really scared/anxious and ask them to evaluate the incident. "On a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is that you are very scared and 1 is that you are feeling calm where are you now as you think about that incident?"

Now put that incident to one side for a moment and close your eyes and imagine walking into a cinema/movie theatre in your mind and sit down in the front row. In a moment you will watch a movie of that incident on the screen but before you do, float up out of your body into the projection room at the back of the theatre. You are now looking down from the projection room watching yourself in the front row watching the screen.

On the screen the film begins, as you get to the beginning of the incident freeze the film so you have still colour picture. Staying in the projection room watching you, watching the film; look at yourself on the screen whilst the film now runs all the way to the end. To the point where you are OK, now freeze this last frame into a still picture and drain any colour out and make the picture black and white.

From your place in the projection room run the black and white film backwards 3 times. Everything is going backwards at triple speed. When you get to the beginning, freeze that picture and then jump to the still frame at the end of the film and run the whole thing backwards again.

When you have done this 3 times, stop at the last frame of the film where you are OK and float out of the projection room and into that last frame. Re-associate fully into the still picture and one it backwards once more whilst firing off your positive anchor.

Now walk out of the screen and sit back down in the cinema and white out the screen. Turn the screen white, then black, then white, then black. Repeat this a further 6 times. Now check how you feel on a scale of 1 to 10 and if necessary repeat.

Future Pace

Once the evaluation is at a comfortable level its time to future pace the next experience and think about a time in the future when you repeat a similar experience only this time you do so calmly and in perfect control. Run through a few occasions in your mind whereby you are calm, confident and in control.

Thank you for taking the time to read this introduction to NLP. If you would like to discover more about how NLP can help you, or if you would like to learn how you can use NLP to coach others then please contact us at your earliest convenience or go to our website at:
<http://www.wchn.org.uk/cms/index.html>