NLP

a Practical Guide to the Basics

By Richard Butler

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NLP – A Brief History and Introduction

Neuro-Linguistic Programming was first conceptualized and put together by John Grinder, a professor of linguistics at the University of California - Santa Cruz, and Richard Bandler, a student at UCSC who was working on his undergraduate degree in psychology and philosophy. They were modeling how successful people learned and communicated their particular skills.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) takes the point of view that a person's perception of the world comes from their mind, body and language. This concept is used by dissecting the input to the mind and rearranging it to alter the beliefs a person holds and the outcomes of their endeavors. That sounds more complicated than it needs to. More simply put, by changing the way a person perceives things and events in their lives, that person can change their life. By studying successful people and modeling their behavior and outlook, you can become more successful in your life.

NLP is the study of the underlying structure of how people think and experience life. There is no single way to define this because of the vastly different ways that people live, their behavior, how they are raised and many other factors. The way around that complication is to build 'models' and develop techniques to effectively change the beliefs, behaviors and thoughts that limit them.

There is a lot to absorb in the previous paragraph. Individuals who excelled at particular tasks were studied to create the ideal model for that task. For example, if you wanted to learn how to get rich, you wouldn't learn how a rich person counts their money, you would study how they view money, their beliefs about money and strategies they used in their money making decisions.

To better understand that you need to realize that how someone 'views' money is not just a visual concept. Vision is one of the modalities of NLP. Modalities simply are the ways that people relate to things and they are based on our five senses.

5 Modalities of NLP

1. Visual (sight) – I see what you are saying.
2. Auditory (sound) – I hear you.
3. Kinesthetic (feel) – I'm feeling good about that.
4. Olfactory (smell) – That smells like victory!
5. Gustatory (taste) – I can taste the success already.

You have to try to step back from your own experiences and preferred modality for a moment to really understand how other people are experiencing what you are experiencing. I am more visual, but you may be more auditory. When you go to see a musical performance, do you close your eyes and listen or are you watching the musicians? This is an indication of your preferred modality. When you want to perceive something in a different manner you need to change your modality by altering the sub-modalities, meaning the factors that make up the modality.

That might sound a bit confusing, so let me clear it up. I am going to stick with 'visual' as the modality. Take the last incident that really had you emotional, good or bad emotions; for this illustration it doesn't matter. For me the event was getting a large contract. It was a good event. I picture this event in the form of the awarded contract and in the form of money. I see the money. Visualize the money. It is about 17 centimeters by 8 centimeters, and mostly green. (US dollars) the sub-modalities to this are the size, the colors, the distance from my eyes and that sort of thing. To change my perception of the money and therefore the contract, I might picture the money blowing away and getting smaller and eventually disappearing from my view. (Sadness replaces the happiness of the contract.) Another sub-modal alteration might be to have the money turn to dust and blow away. If I wanted the sensation to be increased, the size of the bill might turn into a billboard. (Ouch, that pun was unintentional, I can assure you.) Or the money might be perched on top of my nose to give the appearance of largeness.

If your preferred modality was smell, you might smell money, and the scent gets stronger to increase the impact, or the smell might shift to something unpleasant if you are averse to money, or feel the contract is unethical. This might help you turn down a contract, even though you could use the work. (Something about this smells fishy to me.)

Uses of NLP

NLP can be used in group sessions, workshops or in a one-on-one (client/practitioner) setting. It can be used to deal with a variety of issues including addictions, depression, phobias, self-esteem and many others. It can also be used to enhance personal performance in sales, public speaking, sports, motivation and communication. Simply put, the applications for NLP are pretty much without limits.

How you view your world is called your presuppositions. This means the mental picture you have built in to your processes give you predetermined thoughts on how things are supposed to be, do and act. Richard Bandler said NLP is "an attitude…which leaves a trail of techniques" in other words your method of handling things is defined by your attitude towards the world. One way of understanding how you view things is by:

Mapping your world (Supposition 1)

The way your mind is "programmed" to perceive the world is known as your *map* in NLP. Our minds and bodies interact to form this perception of our environment. The way we react and interact in the world determines our behavior. In order to modify or change our behavior we need to change our maps, and that is what NLP is all about. Your map was determined by your parents, teachers, environment, peers and self.

Re-shaping your map will help you change and become the person that you long to be; the person you were meant to be. The things that hold us back from our peak performance and our personal development are often subconscious road blocks that we place ourselves or that we received by modeling those around us as we were growing up, or as adults. You can rewrite your map or you can get assistance from an NLP practitioner.

It is very important to understand that you created your map, and you can change it. You need to remove barricades that are blocking your personal progress. The way to do this is to recognize the blockades that are internal and changing those to bridges to success.

The Map is not the Territory!

There is a phrase in NLP that says "The map is not the territory" and you should take that to heart. This phrase means that the map you have is only a representation of the reality of the area; it is not the area itself. Put another way, you can view the map like the menu at a restaurant. The pictures or descriptions of the food are not the food itself, but merely a representation of what is available to eat.

So, what does this really mean to you in your life? It means that everyone reading this has their own map; their own representation of life. This is why two people seeing the same event come away with completely different stories about what really happened. If you saw a man grabbing a purse out of a woman's hand, you could think he was stealing it. While that could be true, it could be that he was recovering it, and that she had stolen it from someone else. It is all in the circumstance and how it fits into your map.

Do you see a glass as half empty or half full? It depends on your map; the way you represent things. This is an important and useful tool of NLP. You need to step back and realize that everyone views situations from their own programming and representation. We have five senses which help us interpret what is going on around us. Our brains convert the received information and we sort that information to help define our maps. They get updated all the time and the updates depend on the new input and how we integrate that into our existing map.

Taking a step back and allowing yourself to view a situation from the other person's point of view can eliminate or at least minimize the number of arguments and disagreements that go on. If you can see the other person's perspective, it might completely change your point of view. Too often we just assume that others see things as we do; assumptions are the cause of many disagreements. Understanding is not taking place because of the other person's map.

Let's take another example. A person walks into a room and sees another guy "chatting up" his girlfriend. His map sees this as his girlfriend flirting with another man. That is the way he perceives the reality of the situation. Of course the reality of the situation may be very different.

Always stop, look and listen to what is going on, and try and see it from another view point. Is the situation really as it seems or is it

your interpretation of it? Sometimes that's all it takes to stop a huge or small argument.

Using Maps

Just as you have your map, so does everyone else, and everyone's map is unique. By understanding that everyone uses maps, you can develop a better understanding of people by learning their preferred modality. There are different ways of engaging people. The most common way in NLP is by gaining rapport with someone. By gaining rapport you are stepping into the other person's shoes. You are gaining insight and trust through seeing the world through their eyes (or whatever their preferred modality is.) By mimicking their physical aspects and modelling their thoughts you will be better able to understand them and relate to them.

A second method of using the mapping is to try to expand their map of the world. This is also known as 'leading.' In this method you take their map and try to stretch it a bit to allow them to grow their perception to make it more like yours, or like a more generally accepted world model. This can be very useful to them, especially if their model (and/or map) is unconventional and sometimes constructs social barriers for them. This sort of thing is done only with the full cooperation and consent of the individual. You always need to keep in mind that the individuals view is real in their mind and their view needs to be respected as such.

Someone's map defines who they are at the present time, but does not define who they will be in the future. That is one reason why the previous two points are important. When I was younger I had the habit of biting my nails when I was nervous. That pattern did not define who I was, but was a part of my map. The nail biting helped me deal with insecurity. Through a change in my mapping, I was able to drop that behaviour. People are not defined by their actions; with effort they can change their actions by redefining their maps.

No Failure only Feedback (Presupposition 2)

There is a difference between what we believe and what we observe. This goes back to the previous supposition, but if the actions of what we do and what we observe are noted for their outcomes only, and not labeled as success or failure, then it is easier to learn from them. Thus defines this presupposition; we do not fail at what we do, we only take the feedback from an action and use it to get closer to the desired outcome. We will get more into this in the section labeled 'cornerstones,' but suffice it to say that everything you do has an outcome and each you can learn from the feedback.

An example of this would be if I wanted to type an essay, and I neglected to turn on my computer. I could type all day, and perhaps type the masterpiece of my life, but at the end of the day when I went to print, nothing would happen. Instead of dwelling on the undesired output (no document) I would take the feedback (remember to turn on the computer) and next time I would be able to print my document. This could be step one. The next feedback might be that I should research my subject before I start to type. And so on.

The concepts of feedback and outcomes take the judgment out of the activities you undertake. This enables you to attempt more things without prejudging your outcome or post-judging it. The outcome is what it is, and what can I learn from this experiment?

Behind Every Behavior is a Positive Intention
(Presupposition 3)

People do not do things unless they feel there is some benefit to them for doing it. Nor do they act in a certain way unless they feel the same way. If a father threatens a child with a spanking, he feels his behavior will modify their behavior and the child will benefit. An outside observer might bring their map to the situation and see cruelty. If the father is confronted about his behavior without regard to the reasoning, chances are he will be less than receptive to someone interfering with what he sees as protecting his children.

On the other hand, if he was approached in a manner which would preserve the desired outcome the father maybe open to new methods of educating his child. Example, a child is caught playing with matches. In some circumstances it might be considered a good idea to let the child feel the heat of the flame to help the child to understand the possible consequences of the action. Approached with a video tape

of a house fire starting with a match carelessly dropped and ending with a favorite toy in flames, the parent may well embrace this different methodology of education.

What is sometimes missed in circumstances like this is the **why** behind the **how**. If an alternate more acceptable **how** is presented and the **why** is preserved the person often feels more in rapport and will follow the new model.

Modeling

The theory of modeling in NLP states that the easiest way to acquire a skill set or to learn a desired behavior is to observe someone doing it, learning their thought process as they approach the process (whatever it happens to be) and to imitate those items. This is, of course, overly simplified. There are many different aspects of the persons thought process as they approach their enterprise, many of which they are probably not even aware of. This is one of the reasons that some of the 'greats' aren't good at teaching their skill set; they aren't aware of the nuances of their behavior which cause the greatness they exhibit.

This is where you really need to get into the modeling and approach it from an analytical prospective. You need to observe what the practitioner is doing and study their actions. Discuss the actions and the thoughts that are going into the process. Figure out the "why's" of the actions involved, and then try to duplicate those actions. Through the analysis of the studied process the underlying reasons may or may not become apparent to you, but the skill set will be learned.

This is not to say that anyone can learn any skill set and become proficient or professional at it. Not everyone has it in them to become a Michelangelo or an Einstein, but everyone can take modeling to improve their aptitude at a given activity. Modeling Michelangelo will not make me Michelangelo, but it would make me a more competent artist.

An important thing to note is that you must try to drop your own habits as you approach a new skill. If you try to incorporate your techniques, you are corrupting the model, and negating the value of modeling. What I mean by this is; if you are a pretty good basketball player and you try to combine your style while modeling Michael Jordan, you are not going to emerge with a Jordan model. It is going to be a hybrid and the results are not going to be what you are after. You are trying to learn skills that are transferable from Michael to you. This is not to say that the hybrid style is not an improvement over your pre-modeling skill set. Your skills can definitely be enhanced in that fashion.

For the point of a universal illustration I am going to describe driving a car to help with understanding of the following points.

Points to consider when modeling

1. Beliefs – You need to release your preconceived beliefs on the 'best way' or even 'how' to drive a car. To learn "at the foot of the master driver" you need to start with a clear slate and drop personal knowledge, to the best of your ability. Only by adopting the total model of the expert can you expect to have the same outcomes as the expert.

2. Values – In the same way that your beliefs can prevent you from learning, your values can also filter information. For example, if someone suggested that your journey could be safer if you first **visualize** the trip and **intend** it to be safe, and your value system did not feel that visualization techniques were valid, you might completely disregard the possibility without giving it a chance to prove or disprove itself.

3. Strategies – Strategies are the system of processes you use to figure out the model. You want to observe the master driver without the influence of your presence changing their way of driving. Do you use a hidden camera? Do you ride with them in such a way that they don't realize you are analyzing their techniques and read their kinesthetic posturing?

4. Outcomes – Do not fall into the trap of thinking about how to move your foot to a pedal when the true outcome is getting to your destination safely.

5. Modalities and sub-modalities – Paying attention to the visual aspect of driving is important, but just as important is depth perception, peripheral vision, focus of vision (mirrors, side views, front view) etc.

6. Physical Aspects – Does the optimal driver grip the steering wheel tightly? Is the pressure applied to the brake pedal varied? Is the posture upright and tense or relaxed?

7. Attention – Is the focus on the road? Other vehicles? Internal aspects?

One thing to realize is that you need to have a willingness to and a desire to change. This may sound basic, but many times the reason that people don't change, even with years of trying is that they insist on holding on to a portion of their map that doesn't reflect best practices, no matter what evidence is presented to the contrary. All processes in your life have been molded over time, and to gain competence in the process, it is easier to start from scratch than from somewhere in the middle of the learning process. Unfortunately, we are in the middle of a work in progress and are forced to unlearn behavior to learn correct methodology.

Steps to Mastery of a Process

1. Unconscious incompetence – This is where you are unaware of the need for a skill. IE – someone is available to drive you around.

2. Conscious incompetence – This is where you are aware of the need, but have no skill at the task.

3. Conscious competence – This is where you are skilled at a task, but need to consciously think about the task as you are performing it.

4. Unconscious competence – This is where you are skilled at a task and can perform without actively thinking about each step.

5. Personal Mastery – This is where you have totally mastered a skill and people use you as the "model." (very few people attain this level at any task)

Any process you learn follows the above steps. The driving mastery of a formula one race car driver is well above that of the average driver on the street. Granted it is a different set of skills, but the formula one driver does not think about shifting gears or banking and cornering on a turn. He (or she) just does it perfectly without thinking. You or I may get to some level of unconscious driving, but that often can get us into accidents. How many times have you heard of someone who has had an automobile accident who literally never saw it coming? It has happened to me, as it has to many.

Meta-model

The Meta-model of NLP is a method whereby the client is induced to provide answers to questions regarding their model of the world. The reason it is such an effective tool is that it is person-specific, meaning there are no generalizations and the information is unique to each individual based on their own experiences and generalized view of human interaction. The answers provided are helpful because they are not only based on the individual's world-view model, but because they are also phrased in the language of the individual; therefore there can only be total understanding.

The meta-model is a method of helping people to either expand or change their personal mapping. Simply put meta-mapping helps people to see the limitations (blocks) that they have put on themselves and allow them to overcome or eliminate those limiting patterns. If you can overcome the limitations you have placed on yourself obviously you will be able to be more successful in your life. The biggest obstacle to your success can be self-limitations, but with NLP those can be eliminated and then your map will take you to the stars.

Generalization, deletion and distortion

The presuppositions to getting rid of those barriers are many. One perception that can be used is deletion. One example of deletion is when you are reading a good book and gradually the noise around you diminishes. The level of sound is certainly the same, but you no longer are paying attention to it. In NLP we reduce the barriers to a level we can more easily deal with.

Another perception would be distortion. This is a way of altering our perception of reality to concentrate on that which gives us the most benefit or the least negative impact. This might be something along the line of seeing only the positive in your appearance and focusing on that, instead of the negative. Think of how you first saw an actor or an actress and thought them flawless, but then starting noticing one characteristic and that characteristic started to define the person. Maybe the shape of their nose suddenly seems more important than the passion of their acting. You can distort your view and get back to their acting, (which is the important part in the first place.)

The third perception is generalization. This is where a person's initial experience becomes the basis for their point of view, even though it may have become detached from reality as the amount of time grows. A chance encounter with a stranger in your childhood can become a nightmare after years of separation from the incident. All strangers become the one of your initial experience and this causes you to distrust everyone you don't know.

The purpose of the Mata Model is to allow you to identify these perceptions and alter or revise them to enhance our current life.

This is extremely powerful. There is not someone trying to force their words or concepts down the client's throat. The practitioner (or the individual themselves, in the case of self-analysis) is guided by the principals of NLP, but the solutions and the language is that of the person who is going to use the knowledge in their life. The Meta-Model is the foundation of NLP.

It is this very familiar basis of language and personal ownership that allows the person to get past the surface issues and really dig into the 'meat and potatoes' that makes up their core underlying issues. In this manner the limiting and restrictive underlying beliefs and values can be overcome or (better yet) eliminated.

Application to Business

The meta-model can be used to better understand the details of issues that are facing a client. A strength of the meta-model is that details that were unintentionally left out can be brought to the surface. For example, when a team leader on a project would state, "We decided the oxygen content was too high," the response for detail might be 1) Who is "we"? and 2) How was the "too high" ratio determined? The pronoun 'we' is very non-specific and 'too high' is very vague. Drilling down to root out the core issues helps to minimize preconceived conclusions that are not necessarily supported by fact.

Milton model

The Milton model forms the other part of the basis of NLP, the yin to the yang of the Meta-model, if you like. Whereas the Meta-model drives toward eliminating the fuzzy vagueness of language, the Milton tries to eliminate the specifics of language to attempt to unveil the underlying subconscious levels (unconscious model) rather than the conscious (cognitive) model. The Milton model was named after Milton Erickson, the founding President of the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis who is generally recognized as the originator of clinical hypnotherapy.

The Milton model is most often used to gain and build rapport. This is useful in many situations, whether they be casual social situations, meetings at work or in a sales type environment. In any of these situations you will have an advantage when you build rapport. To do this generalities are used instead of specifics and nouns are most often nominalized. This is another way of making your conversation as non-specific and non-threatening as possible.

If you are making conversation with someone and you ask about the previous weekend you would want to keep the conversation general and then try to steer them into defining the direction it takes. For example, if the person you are talking to says they were out with their friends, you might ask what friends they were with. Your end of the conversation would be more mirroring what they were saying to build the rapport and gain their confidence.

Application to Business

In a business context the Milton model is very useful in public speaking. When one uses more generalities one has more rapport with a crowd. Think about the last speech you heard. Probably it was from a politician. If there was a press corps and the politician was taking questions, odds are very strong the answers were vague. This is classic Milton, where the politician can't be too specific about 'things' because specifics might come back to haunt them. The same thing happens in many business meetings, especially board meetings and public meetings, such as annual stock holders meetings.

In more intimate settings individuals can match and mirror a client or colleague. You can try to match a person's physical stance, their vocabulary, the tonal quality of their voice, and try to imagine what they might be thinking. If you are imitating them closely enough

you will start to pick up on their general thought, at least minimally. As you are talking to the person you can lead them slowly and softly in the direction you wish to go, and if they are in true rapport they will go along with you. This is not to say that you are going down a path they would object to, but one that will benefit them. When in rapport the two of you will more likely see eye to eye.

Representational systems

Representational systems are how we relate to the world. Everyone has a preferred modality and sub-modalities and these are part of the representational system. To refresh your memory the five sub-modalities of NLP are visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory and gustatory (for details look back to page 2)

These represent how we interpret the world around us. The most common sub-modalities are visual, auditory and kinesthetic, so those are the ones that we are going to detail. The "How" people view the world is the tool that is used to build rapport with them, and sensing the "how" lets you shift into the mode they are most comfortable relating to.

People's auditory methods give you clues to how they relate to things internally and that is really the crux of what we are looking at. If someone says that they see what you are saying, they are internally forming a picture of what you are talking about. If they 'hear' what you are saying, they are likely building on sounds inside as well. The table below lists some of the words or phrases to listen for in someone's speech to give you clues to their sub-modality.

Visual	Auditory	Kinesthetic
look	talk over	jumpy
I see	I hear	that's hot
show	listen	heavy
clear picture	tune in	pass over
illustrate	loud	cool to that
insight	call	get a hold of
paint	resonate	I'm not feeling…
look	the buzz	soft
imagine	sound	touch upon
colorful	static	grab
focus		fuzzy

This is, of course, just a partial list to give you an idea of what to listen for; do you hear what I am saying? Or is it too fuzzy to grab a hold on? <|:-)

You're probably wondering "well, that certainly is interesting, but what am I going to do with this information?"

When you know what to listen for in someone's speech patterns you gain a deeper understanding of how the represent the world and you can adapt the same sub-modality to gain a deeper rapport. You may think that by mirroring someone's behavior, speech pattern and tonality, they might think you are mocking them, but this is not the case. Most people are totally unaware of their body language and speech traits, so they will only get into a deep state of rapport not really at a conscious level, but at a subconscious level. When you are done with a meeting, they will be thinking...'I don't know what it is about that person, but I like them.'

Getting more specific, once you realize what method they prefer, you need to start using those words and that sub-modality. For the person who says, "I can see where you are going with this" you recognize the visual sub-modality and respond with something like, "yes, this really looks good to me, I am getting the picture" or words to that effect.

With an auditory person, they may say "I hear you" or "I can hear what you're saying and it sounds good to me." Your response might be, "I hear you as well. Your message is coming in loud and clear." This is comparable to going into a foreign country and speaking their language.

With these examples, I have given two people that are in agreement, but what if you aren't? Still try to make your points in the same manner. If they don't "hear what you're saying" let them know to use you as a "sounding board and bounce some ideas off of you to try to come to a clear understanding." Or if they are visual try to get them to "see another point of view." Kinesthetic folks need to feel warm and fuzzy about an idea, if they don't, try to massage the data to smooth out any misunderstandings. They'll be sure to play ball if you throw some good vibes their way.

I know the above paragraph sounds a little funny, but it just demonstrates how easy it is to slip into a mode. There are so many words in any language that fit the different sub-modalities, and just as you will find yourself using new phrases when you learn new technology, so also can you speak the language of NLP.

Another key to this is to not only mimic their particular sub-modality but also their intonation. If the other person gets a quiet whispery quality to their voice, you do the same thing. If they are leaning forward in their chair, you lean forward. All of these points are

bringing you into more and more rapport. Take note, if they stutter, you might want to leave that one alone. :)

All of these points are part of the way that people represent themselves. Using any one of the above methods will bring you into more rapport and will likely cause people to like you better and to do more business with you. This is not misrepresenting who you are, or what you can do for them. NLP simply allows you to get into a better understanding and help avoid confusion. All of these methods have been around for many, many years, but it wasn't until NLP did they really get grouped and taught as effective tools for better understanding and rapport.

Cornerstones

There are four cornerstones that make up the foundation of NLP. By understanding the cornerstones you will be in a better position to understand NLP and why it is so effective at changing lives. The four cornerstones are Outcomes, Sensory Acuity, Flexibility of Behavior and Rapport.

Cornerstone #1 Outcomes

Outcomes are the desired intentions of your activities. Whether the activity is a business meeting, a marathon or a personal goal; the outcome is what actually happens. Anything you do has an outcome, whether it is the desired one or not is what we are looking at.

You can take all of your past experience and the outcomes of those experiences and use that outcome as my 'oh, so that's where those actions got me, what can I learn from that?' launch point. All of your past experiences have given you knowledge and you can use that knowledge to propel yourself to amazing future outcomes. Something important to realize is that you are not defining the outcomes as success or failure, but merely as outcomes.

This is also an important point, so make sure you absorb that. Thomas Edison had great difficulty inventing the light bulb. There were many cutting edge technologies involved in that creation; the use of a vacuum, different materials for filaments, alternating or direct current electricity and others. When he was asked about his "failures" he refused to accept that term. He just considered the experiment a learning experience on the road to his desired outcome; a bulb that burned brightly and lasted for a length of time. Each experiment brought him closer to his desired outcome.

As the outcome of the experiments were important to Edison, so should your outcomes be important to you. Without knowing what you want as your outcomes you are floating along on a pointless journey. You define your desired outcomes and put processes in place to help you reach them and achieve your goals. When you define your outcomes and are living 'on purpose' NLP defines this as a "Well Formed Outcome."

Know that having a well formed outcome is going to positively effect your whole life in some way. It is important to understand that when you have a defined well formed outcome there is a price you have to pay to achieve it. If your outcome is to get a promotion at your work, you may need to work harder and put in more hours. This can affect your personal and family life, but the promotion can be a positive effect on that same personal and family life down the road a bit.

Cornerstone #2 - Sensory Acuity

How much do you really notice about a situation? Some people are more "in tune" to fine details, while others remember very little about the situation.

To see what category you fall into take the following exercise:

Exercise #1

Take two minutes to describe your watch in detail without actually looking at your watch. Use the following questions to help guide you.
1. Does your watch have a second hand?
2. Does it move smoothly or does it tick incrementally?
3. What color is the face of the watch?
4. Does the face have writing on it?
5. Is your watch digital?
6. Does it tell time in 12 hour increments or military (24 hour) time?
7. Is there a date function? If so…
8. Where is the date function located on the face?
9. What does the watch strap look like?
10. What is it made of?
11.What color is the strap?

For some people the above exercise is easy; for others difficult. A watch can be something you look at everyday, but don't notice the details. Sensory Acuity looks at making you more aware of details in things around you. By looking at things with increased sensory acuity, you tend to see things that other people miss.

Applying this to a business situation you will be more aware of small movements in the body, change in voice tone, or maybe when you meet with a client you will notice something in their office that gives you a clue to understanding them better. You may notice rapid breathing or a change in skin tone that will make you realize a client is

experiencing an adrenaline rush or hesitation. The more observant you are to the details, the more they can help you judge someone's mood or change in attitude. These details may let you know when someone is open or closed to your presentation and allow you to change tactics.

Cornerstone #3 Flexibility of Behavior

There is an old saying credited to Benjamin Franklin that says the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results, but that is the way many people live their lives.

In order to reach your desired outcome you have to be flexible in your behavior. If a particular process you are using is not working, reflect on what is going wrong and change your behavior. If it is still not working, change your behavior again! Behaving the same and expecting different results is the downfall of many people.

Application to Business

Tom works in sales and has a very successful pitch, but often has trouble closing the sale. He wonders why it happens, but doesn't realize the problem is with the process he is running. After dealing with this and being frustrated, he decides to get help and is shown where he can improve. By changing one small part of the process (his behavior at a certain point) he can close sales in an effective manner.

In this fictional example Tom was doing the same thing and getting the same results. When he decided to change part of the process, he reaped the rewards. It is important to realize that you should continue to use what works for you, but be prepared to change what doesn't work. Remember that every client and every business meeting will be different and there is no 'one size fits all' solution.

Cornerstone #4 – Rapport

Have you ever met with someone and things just seemed to click. You don't know exactly why, but you just get on very well. On the other extreme, there are people that you *can't* seem to get along with, also perhaps for no apparent reason. Maybe it is someone in your workplace or at a regular social event.

As long as you are going to be interacting with people, you need to develop the skill of rapport. In the first statement above, when you just clicked; NLP calls that being in **rapport** with the person. You both were comfortable in each other's company.

From an outside point of view, if you see two people in rapport, you will often notice they walk at the same pace or have the same posture or body language. When people are not in rapport, it is easy to tell by their contrasting body language.

NLP sees rapport as an essential part of human communication, and believes that there are subtle ways of ensuring you build rapport quickly and easily. When you develop your rapport skills you will see people are warming to you easily and instantly.

Application to Business

When you learn to build rapport quickly, you will see that it will be easier to communicate with people and close the sale or finish the project. Good sales people are masters of building rapport – although they often do it subconsciously. Once you are in rapport with someone they are more open to your suggestions.

It is important to study the four cornerstones and to internalize them. They are the key to your success with NLP and your life.

Techniques

There are techniques.

You create your future by the actions you take starting today. My launch point (today's position) was created by my past and the actions I took then, but I am not defined by those actions. I can take all of my past experience and the outcome of those experiences and use that outcome as my 'oh, so that's where those actions got me, what can I learn from that?' launch point. All of my past experiences have given me a wide range of knowledge and I can use that knowledge to propel myself to amazing future outcomes.

To communicate about techniques we are going to re-visit the chart with the three main sub-modalities, but we are going to make achange to the data in the columns. I shall list choices within the data and we will use these choices to strengthen or weaken events.

Visual	Auditory	Kinesthetic
Big or Small	Loud or Soft	Smooth or Rough
Near or Far	Near or Far	Constant or Varied Texture
Associated/Disassociated	Clear or muffled	Near or Far
Focused or Blurry	High or Low pitch	Light or Heavy Weight
Still picture or moving	Words or sounds	
Fast or Slow	Fast or Slow	Hot or Cold
Bright or Dark	Verbal or Tonal	Motion or Still
Color or Black & White	Rhythm	If motion: smooth or jarring
Location	Clarity	

Once again, I will say that the choices listed in the above table are only a small sample of what choices you can use in your life. You will be able to relate to these and find ones that are, perhaps, stronger for you. In all of these, find what works for you, when you are working on your state, and seek what works for others when you are looking to

help someone gain control for themselves. It is different for each of us, although we all hold some things the same.

As you are experiencing something and you want that sensation to be enhanced or lessened you can alter the sub-modal states. As an example, relax in your favorite chair. Make sure you are comfortable and the environment is quiet and you won't be disturbed. Now picture someone you really care about. Notice the details in your mental picture.

Are you in the picture with the person or does the picture seem like you are viewing it? (Being in the picture is called being associated with it, and is generally seen as being a more intense level of feeling.) Do you feel good about the person? Try adjusting the levels surrounding that person. If it is a well lit picture try making is darker. If the person is far away, bring them closer. If you imagine it is a summer day, try making it a winter day and imagine the change in temperature. How do these changes make you feel? Adjusting the surroundings of any scene will impact your feelings toward the main character, action or event.

Let's try that with an event. Do you enjoy public speaking? Many people don't. You can alter your feelings toward that by changing your mental picture. Relax again in that comfortable chair. Picture yourself in front of a large crowd having to give a short speech. Do you already feel tenseness in your chest, or your throat constricting? Relax. Is the crowd close to you? Take the mental image and push the crowd away. Does that ease your tension? Is the crowd loud? Quiet them down. Are they in focus, can you see individual faces? Make them blurry. Is the room hot? Cool it down. Get yourself to a point where talking is as easy as a quiet conversation with your best friend or a close co-worker and take the tension out of the speech.

As you do this exercise, make the experience as real as possible in your mind. This will make giving a speech much easier the next time you actually have to do it. Try adjusting all the factors listed above. If you adjust the light and that makes you feel more tense, take it back the other way. Maybe the dark is more comforting for some people, but for you a bright environment is better. This all needs to be adjusted to you. If your preferred sub-modality is kinesthetic, adjusting those factors will probably have more effect than the visual, but maybe not. Give all of them a chance and see what works for you.

These exercises can work for anything. If you have negative feelings toward a co-worker and you want to help lessen them, try picturing that person in a different light or a different setting. If driving makes you nervous, try making the picture of you driving more comforting. Picture yourself on top of a tall ladder and have the ground seem very close instead of far away. Do not limit yourself with this. It is a very powerful technique to alter your perception of things.

My Top Five Tips

Rid yourself of negative thoughts. There are so many good things going on in the world and in your life, but many people choose to focus on the negative. You only have to watch the news programs or read the paper to realize how true this is. But you don't have to follow the crowd. Find the positive things both in your life and in the world. Read uplifting books, not sensationalized garbage. I'm not saying ignore what is going on in current events, but don't dwell on it. Look at graduations and awards, not deaths and destruction. There are positives in your life. Be grateful for what you do have and more will come into your life.

Don't dwell on the past. We all have things that have happened to us that we are not happy about, but the wise thing to do is to let them go. Does thinking about how someone wronged you help to right the wrong? No. Let go and forgive the person, at least in your own mind. Take the positive from your past and build on it, and let the negative go.

Concentrate on the present and future. Everything that has happened in the past, is past. Your actions today determine how your life goes in tomorrow and into the future. Whatever you are doing, do to the best of your ability. If what you are doing isn't your ideal job or calling, take steps to get to where you want to be. The future is what you make it, make it the best it can be!

Think positive thoughts. It may sound a bit repetitive, but you mold you future. You create your reality. Bring positive things into your life by concentrating on positive things and thinking positive thoughts. This doesn't mean you have a Pollyanna mentality. You have to deal with reality, but you don't need to embrace it. Keep you thoughts on what you want and it will happen, fi you take action to make it happen.

Change how you think of problems - see them as challenges! Problems can be seen as things you don't want to face. As a matter of fact many people spend their lives avoiding their problems. When you do that, they never go away. Have you ever heard of a bill that just paid itself or debt that just disappeared? No. Those are problems that go away when you face them. Pay them and they will eventually be gone. If someone has trouble walking, they look for solutions rather than lamenting their mobility issues, or their life will be limited severely. They can look for lifts, or wheelchairs or wings. They can pursue cures rather than sitting about complaining about the unfairness of things.

Take these suggestions and exercises and really think about them and put them to use. You are the creator of your life and the master of your destiny!

I hope you found this booklet to be both entertaining and informative. Part of using the tools of NLP is to put people at ease and I feel a bit of humor helps take people down the road and helps make the transference of information less dry. Some things have been repeated a few times. That also is a common tool in training and something you might want to keep in mind when teaching someone or telling them about what you can do for them. Effective speaking is made up of three sections. First you tell someone what you are going to tell them. (Introduction) Next you actually tell them the information. (Body) Lastly, you tell them what you just told them. (Summary)

I haven't gone that far, because obviously you can go back over this a few times to gain better understanding of any sections that might be complicated, and because you always have access to me through the internet and e-mail. Thanks for taking the time to read this and please give me any feedback or comments you like.

Sincerely,

Richard.

For more information about Richard please visit:
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