# Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP)

NLP stands for Neuro Linguistic Programming and it works with the interactions between the mind and language (neuro linguistic). NLP looks at how these interactions affect our bodies and the patterns of behavior that have been learned through experience (programming). It proposes that the effective behavior patterns of exceptional people can be modeled and then acquired through reprogramming.

Neuro Linguistic Programming was an effort, by its originators (John Grinder, whose background was in linguistics and Richard Bandler, whose background was in mathematics and gestalt therapy), in "finding ways to help people have better, fuller and richer lives". [*Neuro-Linguistic Programming: Volume I: The Study of the Structure of Subjective Experience*]
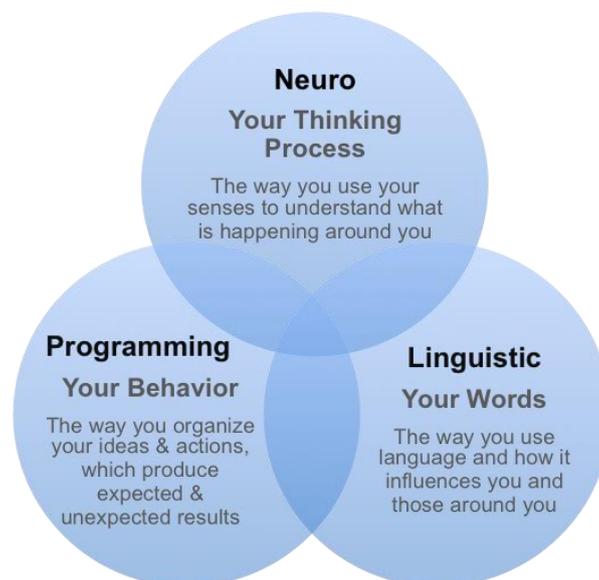
The originators believed that through studying the behavior patterns and language (verbal, body language, eye movements, and more) of successful and effective people, patterns can be observed, noted, and modeled to others to be learned.   As these actions and communication styles of mind and body are imitated, patterns of thinking can be tied to them.   Strategies and techniques can then be developed and employed to bridge to a

learning that can be picked up through symbols by the unconscious mind. The originators' theory held that the learning, by the brain, of these behaviors and patterns of successful people, can cause positive physical and emotional effects, and a similarly enriched life and approach by the learner.

NLP recognizes that we each construct a map of reality, and that we can become self aware about this map. As we do, and if we choose to make changes, we can live fuller lives. If we step into the reality-map of truly exceptional people, learn and copy their ways of communicating and their actions, this can be of great import in our own growth. NLP is often described as a "whole body mind system" which draws on a number of tools and concepts and rests on the premise that much of reality is constructed and therefore we are able to construct reality differently. In this sense, NLP practitioners align themselves with constructivist learning theories.

Coaching and NLP

NLP has clear connections to what coaching refers to as "perspective taking". There is something to be gained by "walking in another's shoes", as the saying goes, to see what life is like from there. NLP offers a kind of radical perspective taking that is an entering into the total experience, body and senses, words and non-verbals, of a respected other's excellence in their way of being and behaving – an entering into their skin.

NLP practitioners propose "acting your way into a new way of thinking", by taking on the ways of being associated with excellence without trying to think your way there. Behave first – inwardly and outwardly – and be quite attentive to the very specificity of this behavior, and see what results emerge. It is the "act as if" approach to change.

Visualization is a tool of coaching that is compatible with an NLP perspective. When coaches invite clients to envision a future self who has realized whatever a client's hope/direction/goal might be, and who is embodying that reality, the coach is inviting the client into an inside-out view of this "other" self that they can imagine, embrace and embody today. Powerful questions that invite a client to speak about what the specifics of what a future with "x" in it would feel, taste, sound, touch like – and what their behaviors and language, perspectives and beliefs would be – move the client to create a bridge to that reality now. NLP's anchoring strategies, which speak of anchoring positive concepts to self, are very similar. The variety of methods that NLP practitioners have developed may be a

treasure-trove for curious coaches looking for more tools for their toolboxes.

Article Excerpts

The following excerpts provide a deeper understanding of NLP.

1. What is NLP?
By Robert Dilts

"NLP provides tools and skills for the development of states of individual excellence, but it also establishes a system of empowering beliefs and presuppositions about what human beings are, what communication is and what the process of change is all about. At another level, NLP is about self-discovery, exploring identity and mission. It also provides a framework for understanding and relating to the 'spiritual' part of human experience that reaches beyond us as individuals to our family, community and global systems. NLP is not only about competence and excellence, it is about wisdom and vision."[1]

2. What is Neuro-Linguistic Programming?
By Richard Bandler

"Neuro-Linguistic Programming was specifically created in order to allow us to do magic by creating new ways of understanding how verbal and non-verbal communication affect the human brain. As such it presents us all with the opportunity to not only communicate better with others, but also learn how to gain more control over what we considered to be automatic functions of our own neurology."[2]

Self Application

If you are not already acquainted with practicing visualization, try this now with an area of your life in which you wish to see development. These skills help us obtain a clearer picture of what we want, rehearse or imagine our success, and create a self-confident frame of mind. You may find that positive visualizations create the right physiological and neural conditions to boost your success and achievement.

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[1] http://www.nlpu.com/NewDesign/NLPU_WhatIsNLP.html

[2] http://www.neurolinguisticprogramming.com

Visualization compatible with NLP allows us to set clear and detailed goals. Try it now with regard to your coaching practice.

1. Find a quiet and comfortable place
2. Close your eyes and think of your goal in being a coach.
3. Visualize your work as a coach as clearly as possible.
   a. See yourself in your work.
   b. See your own successes.
   c. See how it makes you feel.
4. Practice this for 10 minutes a day. Continue for one week, and then reflect:
   - How has the visualization assisted with drive, motivation or goal setting?
   - Did the visualization come easily?
   - Was your visualization vivid?
   - Are there learnings in what you imagined that can inform your studies and your business development?

Coaching Application

There are many concepts within NLP that have immediate application and appeal to the workplace. NLP coaches refer to excellence, modeling success, improving communication and building rapport. NLP provides fast, easy and immediately applicable solutions to a number of workplace challenges. NLP techniques are relatively easy to study and apply. Visible and tangible improvement, achievement and success can be almost immediate.

Anchoring is a common tool within NLP. The concept is borrowed from the shipping world and it conjures a feeling of strength, stability and safety. Anchoring allows an emotional state to be associated with, and triggered by, a word or action or movement. A changed emotional state can be created within ourselves, or others. Watch the anchoring videos listed below and take notes on what you think might be useful in coaching clients.

NLP Anchoring Technique for Success and Wealth (Simplified NLP Part 1)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WODlCY4w83Y&feature=related

NLP Anchoring Technique for Success and Wealth (Simplified NLP Part 2)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CivjAQo4cgs

- How is the practitioner using non-visual cues to create an association?

· How can this tool be used in a coaching context?

Many NLP strategies require seeing in order to imitate. If an NLP trained coach were to invite clients to implement some of these techniques, in person or video sessions may be advisable. As noted in this module, and easily searched on youtube, there are a wide variety of video resources that can also be used to supplement a coach's modeling.