

"A magnificent book"

Gene Early, PhD

A Personal Guide to

NLP

**Change your thinking
Change your life**

TRISTAN SOAMES

International NLP Master Trainer

How to get the best out of yourself and others

Throughout the writing of this book I've been blessed with the support, encouragement, and wisdom of many remarkable people. Without them, these words would never have made it to the page.

First and foremost, to Gene, my coach and mentor for well over a decade, thank you for your unrelenting commitment and belief in me. You've challenged me, guided me, and held me to the vision I now share in these pages.

To Victoria, my PA of fifteen years, who has been by my side through countless projects and chapters of life, you deserve a very special mention. Your steadiness and loyalty have been a quiet force that has enabled me to keep showing up.

To Rosie, my editor, who sat with me week after week, month after month, patiently helping to craft the story, sharpen the message, and bring clarity to my words, thank you. You helped me express my deepest truths in a way that others can recognise their own.

To Toby, my dear friend and collaborator, who is far more than a book designer and illustrator. You've walked this journey with me tirelessly, creating beautiful graphics and breathing life into ideas that would otherwise have remained abstract.

To Sue Knight, my teacher and mentor, who opened the door to NLP for me in such profound ways, and to Rich Litvin, whose wisdom and commitment to the craft of coaching has shaped not only my work but who I am becoming.

To my clients, past, present, and future, thank you for your courage, your honesty, and your willingness to transform. The stories in this book are inspired by you, and by the journeys of growth, healing, and possibility that I've had the privilege to witness.

And finally, to the communities I've worked with across the globe, from the townships of South Africa to the beaches of Ibiza and Goa, thank you for reminding me, again and again, why this work matters.

This book is the product of many hands, many hearts, and many voices. While only my name is on the cover, it truly belongs to all of us.

*With gratitude and love,
Tristan*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Tristan Soames is a Master Trainer of NLP who trained with the NLP greats and has himself trained numerous aspiring and experienced NLP Practitioners. For the last decade, he has run certified courses, online programmes and NLP retreats at locations from Spain to India, Mexico to Malaysia. With a capacity to engage a broad array of personalities, his clients run the gamut from NGO leaders in South African townships to corporate leaders in the UK. He is currently focussed on modelling 10x mindset and action, so as to create exponential transformation in lifestyle and professional settings. In writing *A Personal Guide to NLP*, he shares his many insights and processes for tapping untapped potential, which we all have but don't always recognise.*

WORDS FROM THOSE TRISTAN HAS WORKED WITH

Over the past four years, my journey with Tristan through his coaching, NLP programs, and retreats has been nothing short of life-changing. Each experience has left me with profound insights, a renewed sense of purpose, and a deeper connection to myself and others. **Joseph B**

I got so much more than what I had dreamed of. I am realising my vision and my dream as we speak. I have learned so much about myself, others and the structure of it all that I feel very empowered to contribute and make a difference in the world now. **Laetitia M**

A self development experience introducing a literal treasure trove of practice behavioural insight, tools to help guide and understand limiting behavioural patterns. **Emma O**

I have the Power. The power to help myself and others; to go into the deep structure and problem solve. Now the future is firmly in my hands. Life is one powerful journey. **Justin S**

I'm truly grateful to be connected to you and the like-minded community, it felt like a beautiful safe space where I can be authentic. **Jodie M**

It's been hugely transformative in so many different ways. I needed to make some changes in my life and to gain some clarity. I feel a lot stronger, a lot calmer. I feel like my mind has been decluttered. **Chrissy F**

Tristan Soames is a NLP maestro. A veteran Practitioner and enlightening personal development coach. I would absolutely, wholeheartedly recommend him to anyone. Life can be really difficult at times and Tristan really wants to show people that there's a better way of living. **Alex C**

Have you ever felt that something is missing? That you are succeeding but that your life is somehow a little bit empty? Then this is where you need to be. Tristan has a way of creating an intimate and trusting space where you can just be yourself and discover what's missing, and where's next. **Sue S**

It's time to stop playing small! I'm stronger, braver and much more confident than before. I can achieve anything I want! **Daniela F**

Expect the unexpected! What I've experienced is a soul nourishing journey of self-discovery. **Jo B**

Tristan helped me to discover my 'embodied knowing' and connect to my higher self! **Vicki T**

Making the leap from the corporate world to running my own business was one of the most transformative decisions of my life. It was a journey toward freedom, but also one filled with personal and professional challenges. I first met Tristan about 15 years ago when I began my NLP journey at his “NLP by the Sea” events in Bournemouth. At the time, I was navigating massive personal change, and Tristan’s coaching and courses became a really important part of my transition.

Over the years, I’ve had the privilege of being coached by Tristan and attended many of his NLP courses and retreats, including retreats in Ibiza where he famously captured my words “Wow...what a week. I come home tomorrow with a head full of insights, a heart full of love, a soul full of knowing and a stomach full of food!” His unwavering support and deep expertise led me to become a certified NLP Master Trainer.

Over the last decade, I’ve worked with some of the world’s top brands, coaching at the highest level, facilitating leadership development and empowering executives and teams to embrace and drive change in profound ways that ripple out way beyond the organisation or individuals.

Tristan has an incredible ability to hold space, ask the right questions, and work his magic both in coaching sessions and during retreats. Much of my coaching style is inspired by Tristan. His unique approach has had a profound impact on my personal growth and life, and I now pass on that same deep, transformative experience to my own clients.

Thank you, Tristan, for everything you’ve taught me over the past decade. Here’s to the next decade and chapter of our lives.

Louise S, NLP Master Trainer



FOREWORD BY GENE EARLY

Gene Early, PhD, is a co-founder of Europe's first Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) training institute and is currently a partner of Leaders' Quest, Virginia. He is the author of 3 Keys to Transforming Your Potential: An Accelerator's Guide to the CEO Within.

This book is a beautiful illustration of how a person who commits to developing an NLP mindset and practice can change their life. It is a story beginning with trauma leading to self-sabotage. As in all good stories, the plot intensifies to the point where something has to happen. The weight of embodied memories of grief, pain and loss cause the breakdown and the breakthrough. With diligent attention and application of the basics of NLP to himself, Tristan woke up and discovered his essence. Today, he reawakens each morning, remembering who he truly is, connecting to his body, mind, spirit and emotions. And then, he brings his whole self to you, me and everyone who is privileged to be in his presence.

The beauty of this book is that it fully integrates Tristan's personal journey with the masterful use of NLP as the study and practice of leveraging subjective experience for transformational change. I would venture to say that most everyone who has been with him in person or on Zoom has experienced this integration. His use of experiential learning to instil NLP principles, presuppositions and practices intuitively uses adult learning theory to optimise the experience of those he coaches and trains.

I have had the great privilege of being involved with NLP from the very

early years when NLP was considered 'far out' – when Bandler, Grinder and their study group were extending their learnings to those of us in the first wave of Practitioners, Master Practitioners and Trainers. I had the first of many defining moments in Santa Cruz, home of NLP. I remember Bandler saying something to the effect of, 'Whatever models you come with, put them aside if you want to learn NLP. You can model Gestalt, Ericksonian hypnosis, Transactional Analysis, but to know and use NLP, you have to come with a beginner's mind.'

I took that exhortation seriously and committed to let NLP form my internal operating system. Tristan has done the same. In our long and fruitful relationship, I've seen him embody the core structures of NLP, most notably the process of modelling which is at the heart of NLP. It has become a lifestyle for him.

His story reminds me of my own when I became the first NLP trainer to live and work in Europe, co-founding the first NLP training institute in Europe. We learned as we taught and trained, especially the value of what we call 'apply to self.' It is the process of mirroring the work we do with others in and through our own internal system.

Tristan has modelled this from his NLP mentors and offers it to you, the reader in this magnificent book. It is a guide to your own inner journey which, if you follow Tristan's lead, you will continue on until the end of your life. The richness within continues to be unlocked. As he once said to me, 'My work has been a spiritual journey, full of intellectual, conceptual stuff as well as deep emotional transformation. It has helped me run a business even as I worked through my early childhood trauma.' This is exactly what this book offers: a remarkable methodology and roadmap for your journey.

I am attracted to Tristan's authenticity as a person and the humble wisdom that he demonstrates which manifests in his training as well as his everyday life. I think you will be too as you share in his narrative, associate with it into your own, and see how NLP can further your own growth and development. This book is a rare window into what wholeness as a person looks like and how you can travel from where you are to a place you once could only imagine: a place of peace and power, presence and purpose. Enjoy the read!

INTRODUCTION



*Change your thoughts and you
change the world.*

—— **NORMAN VINCENT PEALE**

What is it that you want most in your life? What do you want to create? What would you like to accomplish that looks impossible but if it were achieved would change everything? What's missing from your life or your business? If you were living the exact life you wanted, how would you know?

The purpose of the book is twofold. The first is to help you ask and, more importantly, answer powerful questions like these, so that you can awaken to and step into your full potential; so that you can live a life that is full of passion, purpose and possibility.

The second is for me to share the remarkable insights and wisdom that I have gained on my NLP journey. The process of writing this book has helped me clarify my thinking, develop my business and will, I hope, enable me to have more of an impact in the world.

We live in challenging times. As I write these first few sentences, we face spiralling inflation across much of the world, potentially catastrophic climate change and fear of geo-political conflict spiralling out of control. Stress, anxiety, overwhelm and depression have never been so high in the West. And the truth is that many people are living a life that is not truly fulfilling. Many of us have learned to settle for less than we can be.

If this seems uncomfortably familiar; if you've been experiencing stress, overwhelm or even depression; if you know there is more to life but you can't quite unlock it, then you've come to the right place. Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a remarkable methodology for helping us overcome the fears, patterns and limiting beliefs that hold us back. And we all have our fears and limiting beliefs! But NLP provides us with a remarkable framework and the capacity, moment by moment, to shift from feeling stuck to feeling free; from being overwhelmed to being in flow; from living in fear to living with a sense of confidence, purpose and passion. This is the promise of NLP and my promise to you: that you can, and that if you commit, you will unlock and step into the vision you have in your heart.

I know this from my own personal experience. NLP has helped me shift

from a life of mediocrity to a life of abundance where I can now do what I want, when I want, where I want, with whomever I want.

I had a pretty traumatic childhood and grew up with a lot of unresolved issues. I found myself in relationships that weren't fulfilling. I struggled with anger, anxiety and depression. I set up businesses that failed and took unrewarding jobs. When I finally came across NLP, it not only gave me hope of a better future, it gave me a tried and tested process to create the life I wanted, despite all my shortcomings. It showed me beyond any doubt that anything was possible once I got out of my own way and let go of my old beliefs and patterns. In short, it showed me that if I changed my thinking I could change my life.

My NLP journey started with reading a book like this one. I went on to attend events, receive one-on-one coaching and go on courses with many of the NLP greats. These days, I'm one of a small number of NLP Master Trainers in the world. I run courses and retreats across the globe, and coach a wide variety of people from senior managers in international banks to leaders of communities from townships all over Southern Africa. I'm proud to help those who are stuck, struggling or uncertain, to find a better way forward. And I'm inspired to coach those who are at the top of their game but ready for the next level, along with international business owners and even other NLP Master Trainers.

This book is full of stories, practical models and techniques that will inspire and help you to create meaningful change, whether that's in your work, finances, relationships or health. Think of it as a toolbox to build your dream life. I've included everything from the basics of NLP to advanced models and techniques.

So, whether you're completely new to NLP or an NLP Master Trainer

looking to level-up your knowledge and skills, this book is for you. If you are a coach or a trainer you'll find a ton of practical insights and models to go to the next level of impact and success. If you're a business owner you'll discover models and tools to help you and your organisation excel and become a model of excellence in the world. And if you work in a business or any kind of organisation, you'll find models to help you become increasingly influential, successful and fulfilled.

My hope and expectation for this book is that it will transform your life. That's why I have included not only the theory and many NLP models, which are transformative in and of themselves but also lots of exercises and examples of how to use the theory. The purpose of the exercises and questions at the end of each section is to give you an experience rather than just the theory of how deep and lasting change works. I encourage you to work through these exercises so you can see for yourself how NLP works and how it can really help you. If you can find someone else to do the exercises with, that would be even better!

I hope and expect this book will help you find more passion, purpose and direction in your life and resolve old issues or patterns so that you can show up for yourself and others in powerful and meaningful ways. That is certainly my experience with NLP. And that is why I have included a flavour of my own journey throughout the book.

If you want to accelerate your journey with NLP, you'll find more information about my coaching, courses, community and retreats on my website here: www.tristansoames.com. In the meantime, enjoy the read!

MY PATH TO NLP



*Hope is being able to see that
there is light despite all of the
darkness.*

—— **DESMOND TUTU**

GROWING UP IN CHAOS

The day my mother found out she was pregnant with me there was a knock at the door. Two policemen asked for Mr Soames, who was my father. They promptly took him off to prison where he spent the next 18 months. Whether it was for drugs or for fraud I don't know. My dad was an alcoholic for much of his life and a drug dealer for part, in and out of prison for fair chunks of time. So I grew up with a single mum and my sister who was three and a half years older than me, practically homeless, my mum struggling to make ends meet. And with a father who didn't come out of prison until I was about nine months old.

Trauma, I would later come to learn, was deeply ingrained in my family system. Both before and after I was born my dad was violent. I had a challenging birth: my mum was screaming at the doctors saying that there's something wrong. And so I was born into a relatively traumatic, dysfunctional home. There was a fair amount of depression and even suicide in my family. Of course, I was not aware of that growing up but I became increasingly aware of the violence and unstable nature of my life, because we constantly moved or were evicted from houses until I was about six years old when I moved from England to Spain.

Southern Spain at that time was vibrant and up and coming and – most importantly for my dad – had lots of opportunities to deal drugs. He would have been bringing them across from Morocco on speedboats making pretty good money back then.

I have vivid memories of Spain. My sister and I were, for want of a better term, like little feral gypsy kids. We were happy and free, and we spent our days outdoors in the warmth of the sun. We lived for a time in a house by the beach which we would go to with our two dogs. We then moved up into the hills to a tiny little village called Benahavis. We used to enjoy walking in the orange grove or sitting on boulders in the stream with tortoises going by. I remember once being at a roadside cafe with a guy playing a guitar, looking out at the mountains and thinking ‘this is just so beautiful’. Despite the somewhat nomadic lifestyle, I was free. And I remember being happy in Spain.

However, things were going downhill for my mum. We moved a lot while in Spain and ended up squatting in a shell of a house with no windows or doors, sleeping on what I recall were sun loungers. That was until my dad picked my sister and I up early one morning and drove us back to England. I remember that morning vividly: being picked up by my dad and carried across the stream, not knowing that that would be the last time I’d see my mum for a long time and how devastating that separation would be on my psyche.

My father dropped us off at my grandparents’ back in the UK. It was a profound and unwelcome change. My sister and I went from a life in the sun (which while somewhat chaotic, dysfunctional and unstable was home and we were with my parents) to the cold, grey English winter and a home that was run somewhat like a military institution. My grandfather Arthur and my step-grandmother Mary, who we went to live with were

both Colonels in the army and lived a highly regimented and formal life. I didn't see my parents for a long time after that. In fact, the next time I saw my dad, I didn't recognise him. Losing the connection with my parents and going to live with my grandparents was traumatic. I remember looking at Mary one day, asking where my parents were. We were sitting at a long dining table with Mary at one end, my grandfather at the other and my sister sitting opposite me. And when I asked Mary where 'mummy and daddy' had gone her response was, 'Oh, you won't be seeing them for a long time.' That was it. I guess she knew that my dad was in prison. My mum was not in a good place. And so I didn't know where my parents were, or why they had left us. And I found myself in a household where my grandparents attempted to love me, but not with the kind of parental love that comes naturally or that I so desperately needed.

That was a defining moment in my life. Losing my parents and not knowing where or why they'd gone, led to a whole set of beliefs: I'm not safe, I'm not loved, I'm not wanted, I don't belong, I don't fit in. And this is what happens to us as children, or even as adults. We have these powerful 'reference experiences' which set up beliefs or generalisations about our lives or the world which we then live with unconsciously, affecting much of our behaviour. These sorts of beliefs become the glue that hold our mental maps and models of the world together.

I grew up a very confused, angry, scared little kid; not very self-conscious, although in time I did become quite conscious of being aggressive. I'd learned to fight to resolve conflict because that's what my parents did. I'd fight a lot as a child. I started to become increasingly aware that violence isn't the best solution. But it was an established pattern: you fight to win. I found a small circle of friends who I could trust and whom I loved. If and when they were ever to betray my trust, it would be devastating. My

grandparents did the best they could, but they just didn't know how to love me in the way that I needed. How could they?

As I got older I realised that I was very unhappy. I started to hear this word 'depression' and recognised that was what I had. And so I started seeking solutions. I tried antidepressants for a couple of months, but that didn't do a lot. I tried counselling with a woman who didn't help at all. And I stumbled across things like Tai Chi, meditation and Yoga. I was seeking something to heal a broken heart from a broken home. Eventually, I chanced upon NLP through a series of coincidences and ended up on a Tony Robbins course.



***We do not create our destiny;
we participate in its unfolding.
Synchronicity works as a catalyst
toward the working out of that
destiny.***

—— **DAVID RICH**

FINDING NLP

The one good thing my dad did teach me was to do my own thing. The message I gleaned from him was 'why work for others to make them rich but be poor yourself and do work you don't enjoy?' I grew up with the belief that I wanted, and I could do, my own thing.

I ran a number of different businesses including a film production company. Of course, the reality of running a successful business is very different to the idea. We were on the cusp of securing a really big contract to do multimedia: we were going to produce a corporate video and a website. But we really didn't know what we were doing and I was getting deeper and deeper into debt. Looking at my bank account I felt that I couldn't carry on funding the business, because I was running it on credit cards.

We decided to shut the business down and I then moved to London and got a job in sales. The manager there said to me if you're going to read one book, read *Awaken the Giant Within* by Tony Robbins. I saw it in a charity shop sometime later. It was a big book and I felt at the time that there was just too much there for me to digest. So I didn't buy it and I didn't read it.

A couple of years later, I came back from spending the summer in Ibiza

and had the idea of running a clothing label. I set one up with a friend, and it was then that I decided that I'd need to know how to sell and succeed in running this new business. So I bought myself a copy of *Awaken the Giant Within* and started reading it.



Success leaves clues. Go figure out what someone who was successful did and model it. Improve it but learn their steps. They have knowledge.

—— **TONY ROBBINS**

TONY ROBBINS



***Your past does not equal
your future.***

—— **TONY ROBBINS**

Tony Robbins came across NLP in the 1970s when it was being pioneered by John Grinder and Richard Bandler. He spent a lot of time learning how they did what they did and developed his own version of NLP that he called Neuro Associative Conditioning. He's now recognised as one of the people who have spread NLP and coaching around the world. He's written a number of books about peak performance and is hired as a coach by top athletes, celebrities and billionaires.

The book was a page-turner for me, with Tony sharing his story and talking about his brand of NLP. In the back of the book was a little card

inviting me to find out more. I sent it off and then got a phone call from someone from Cyprus telling me about a course that would change my life, and that I just had to go. I told him I'd just paid off my debts and was doing okay. But he persisted, insisting that there was more to my life than running a little clothing label.

I eventually decided to go on the course at London's Excel Centre. I turned up to a massive conference centre with 10,000 people and loud music playing with people looking happy and open to a new experience. Tony Robbins is a six-foot-seven American guy, with incredible energy and a big personality. From the moment he arrived on stage, he had command of the crowd. It was four days of immersive experience from about eight in the morning until ten at night, with him taking the crowd through a process of transformation. He shared his journey, his story, his limiting beliefs and how he overcame them, and he pulled people out of the crowd to work magic on them by changing their thinking and beliefs. He set up group exercises where we learnt how to change our state or to model someone else's state, to develop intuition and to let go of the past.

It was a high-energy, high-impact experience with lots of movement, jumping up and down, having fun, laughing and doing crazy stuff that got us out of our patterns and conditioned way of being. While Tony's approach is quite unconventional, that's really what NLP is and does – the unconventional or the exceptional. NLP is sometimes referred to as 'the difference that makes the difference'. Tony Robbins and his approach were certainly different to anything I'd experienced before.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming is about programming. Whether it's our childhood and upbringing, society, culture or our schools, we pick up programmes and patterns from the environment around us. And those four days were about changing those programmes and having a

profound experience and such remarkable energy, joy and connection with others; along with letting go of fears and stepping into this powerful way of being, so that as Tony would say 'life will never be the same again'!

It was a defining experience for me. The contrast between my old patterns and programmes and this new way of being was like an awakening. As I looked into the world, I saw that people were unhappy. People were in jobs they didn't enjoy to make money, but not to make happiness. As Robbins would say, success without fulfilment is failure. I saw that we lived in a superficial world where the really deep conversations weren't being had. And I needed to have those because it didn't make any sense to me to live in a world that didn't have meaning, purpose, connection, love or authenticity. So NLP came as a revelation. It opened my eyes to how I could live and how I could be in the world. As I went through the weekend, I felt really at home. I could be myself and be energised and connected; have fun and be spontaneous and present. I came out feeling empowered, excited and inspired about a future that I could create.

NLP WITH SUE KNIGHT



*A man is but the product
of his thoughts. What he
thinks, he becomes.*

—— **MAHATMA GANDHI**

Tony Robbins wasn't claiming to teach NLP (even though in effect he was), but he mentioned it a couple of times that weekend. I felt I had to find out more. So shortly after that, I found a course run by Sue Knight who was one of the best NLP trainers in the UK at the time. I signed up to an NLP Practitioner programme not knowing much about it, other than that this was the space where I needed and wanted to spend my time to feel connected, to learn and grow and have a joyful, meaningful life – rather than what seemed to me, in the UK, to be a pretty bland existence.

2.4 children, the house, the mortgage, the car, the job, the commute, the pursuit of money, the English culture and weather – none of that spoke to me. Tony Robbins puts it like this: People wake up in a box. They eat a box of cereal. They then get into a box car, drive to a box office, and sit in front of a box. They talk to people via a box, leave their box office, and go back into their box home. They make a box meal and turn on the box to watch TV. And then maybe, just maybe, they crack open a cylinder to change their state. And that's how I felt: like I was living in a culture that just wasn't healthy. I didn't necessarily know that consciously but I knew intuitively that there was something not right. I'd had a flavour of freedom when I lived in Spain and I wanted more of that. I wanted sunshine, freedom, joy and happiness in nature – not being stuck in a box.

The NLP Practitioner course with Sue Knight profoundly changed my life. I found myself in a very safe, supportive, open, loving environment with an incredible facilitator who was able to hold the whole group and set up exercises and experiences for us to learn how to support and coach other people – and of course, how to be supported and coached ourselves.

At one point on the first day or two, we were instructed to ask each other some very simple 'clean questions'. It's a technique involving repeating back important words in the language a person is using to find out more. I was paired with a guy called Dom, who went on to become a good friend. I don't recall the exact conversation now but I would have asked him things like, 'What's an outcome that's important to you?' And he would have shared that he really wanted A, B and C. I would then have asked, 'Oh, A, B and C in what way?' with him responding, 'Well, you know, X, Y and Z.' I'd then come back with, 'Is there anything else about X, Y and Z?' And so we had this ongoing dialogue, with Dom exploring more

and more about what was important to him and pulling up from his unconscious more of the details of what he wanted.

Within a few minutes, I could see his whole state change. He was happy and beaming with a smile as he was becoming increasingly associated with the outcome and believing in it. It was beautiful to watch and observe that I'd helped him in a way that I just didn't know how to before.

The course went on for several weekends over a period of a few months. Each time it would be like going into an oasis of tranquillity: a place of calm, love and possibility. And it would give me the space to completely revamp my internal world. It was like having a spring clean where what was impossible now became possible; where what I didn't quite believe, I now did; and where things that had made me feel uncomfortable now felt comfortable. It was a profound life-changing experience and it set me on the path of learning to learn, love and lead.

QUESTIONS

1. When you reflect on your own life story, what are some of the most important defining moments you've had?
2. What learnings and core competencies have you developed as a result?



Language shapes the way we think, and determines what we can think about.

BENJAMIN LEE WHOFT

FINANCIAL CRASH - BACK TO THE VISION



If you don't design your own life plan, chances are you'll fall into someone else's plan. And guess what they have planned for you? Not much.

—— **JIM ROHN**

I kept on dipping back into NLP and going on courses because I was fascinated by what happened as a result of being in that kind of supportive environment. Every time I went into that space it helped me, and it helped me to help others.

I ended up running a property investment business prior to the financial

crash of 2008. We were pretty successful. We were a team of fourteen committed individuals, turning over £100,000 a month. Without NLP, I can guarantee I wouldn't have done that. NLP provided me with everything I needed to manage and run that business successfully. But my heart wasn't in making money or the property industry. My heart was in learning, growing and supporting people to do the same. Building buildings didn't inspire me; building and developing people to be their best did.

A lot of what NLP does is help people focus on creating change, for example by asking questions like, 'What do you want? What's your vision?' Most of us know more about what we don't want than what we do want. Even when we do know what we want, it's often not clearly formed or represented in a way that means we can achieve it with ease.

When I first went on the Tony Robbins course, I had a vision to be free to travel the world. I spent some time getting really clear on what I wanted. And what I wanted was to be able to travel, to live where I wanted and do what I want, when I want, where I want and with whomever I want. It seemed like a congruent vision, but very far off – and I had no idea how to achieve it.

Then the global financial crash came in 2008. I was like a rabbit in the headlights, not sure what to do. My business partner and I battled on for about six months. And then I realised that if I stopped the business I would actually be in a position where I was free to do what I wanted, where I wanted, when I wanted. So we decided to shut the business down. We paid everyone off, and I ended up having enough money to take a couple of years off and travel the world while following my heart.

I started my travels in India where I did my NLP Trainer Training. But I

fell in love with India and stayed to do another course. And then another one! The third course found me supporting some chief executives who flew to India to do some NLP training with Sue Knight. I realised over a period of three courses that NLP and coaching were my calling. I was clearly good at coaching people. And I just loved being in that space. So that was the start of me running an NLP business.

I ended up moving to Ibiza – and my dream came true. I could do what I wanted, when I wanted, where I wanted and with whomever I wanted. That said, I was clearly not free internally. I still carried baggage from my childhood, my limiting beliefs and patterns, and emotionally I found myself quite stuck.



We can no longer afford to ignore the fact. We must learn that our beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes about the world create the world.

—— **R. C. HENRY**

QUESTIONS

1. What do you dream of?
2. And what would you need to let go of to move in that direction wholeheartedly?
3. What would you like to accomplish that looks impossible, but if it were achieved would change everything?

INTRODUCING NLP



*We are shaped by our thought;
we become what we think*

—— **BUDDHA**

WHAT IS NLP?

NLP is a methodology that provides a way of understanding the essence or structure of our subjective experience. In simple terms, it's the study of our individual experience. It's a way of exploring and modelling how we do what we do. It's the study of what works; and in particular the study of excellence.

If you look at a car you see the surface of the car. But beneath the bonnet, there's an engine, pistons, clutch, gearbox, driveshaft and so on. All these different components make the car function. If you change the oil, the spark plugs or the filters you can upgrade and improve a car's performance. And if you don't maintain it, its performance will be compromised and it will eventually break down.

Humans are similar, in a less mechanical way. We have within us an internal structure. We have beliefs, memory, imagination, language, emotion and so on. NLP is the study of how these different aspects of our experience interrelate in ways that enable us to function optimally. And if we're not functioning optimally, just like a car, it's important to understand what changes we need to make to our internal world to get the results we want and to improve our performance.

If we take the three components of NLP:

N stands for neuro – how we think;

L stands for linguistic – how we communicate;

P stands for programming – habits or patterns of behaviour.

NLP then, is the study of how we think, communicate and operate in the world. It's sometimes referred to as 'an attitude of openness and curiosity'. When we become open and curious about how people do what they do, we can discover the unconscious strategies they have for creating the results that they want in their lives. And we can then model those strategies so that we can learn from what works for others and get the same results for ourselves.

As coaches, we can also use NLP to model someone's 'present state' and learn why and how they're not achieving what they want. We can then help them to get clear on what they really want, change their internal representation of the future and therefore transform their behaviour.



*The world of reality has
limits... the world of
imagination is boundless.*

——— **JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU**

WHY LEARN NLP?



Inherently, each of us has the substance within to achieve whatever our goals and dreams define. What is missing is the training, education, knowledge and insight to utilise what we already have.

—— **MARK TWAIN**

Growing up in England I was largely unhappy. I saw conflict in my family and unhealthy relationships all around me. The bigger picture I was aware of, was of a society that didn't nurture or nourish excellence, but instead, put people through a school system that often stripped children

of their natural talents and gifts. And in today's world, there are still so many people who are not fulfilled, not living their dreams, not uniquely expressing their talents and who struggle with ever-increasing levels of depression, anxiety, medication and ill health.

NLP directly counters this kind of dysfunction where we're disconnected from ourselves and from each other; where we're not happy, not healthy and not living in a way that is authentic and inspiring. It does this by providing a framework that helps us to move away from feeling stuck, disempowered and unfulfilled. It gives us fantastic models, tools and techniques for creating the change we want, whether that's in our relationships, families, health and work, or in our businesses, environment and community. NLP doesn't remove the challenges that we as humans face, it provides a remarkable framework for learning to deal with and transcend them consistently.

Change starts with us as individuals. As we begin to change ourselves, we can then create change in the world around us. When we tap into our internal resources, we discover that we have so much more untapped potential. But many of us were conditioned not to believe in ourselves and to live in fear, anxiety and stress. When we start to access a deeper truth and begin updating our beliefs and mental models of the world, we realise – as Linda, a client once said – that we're actually quite limitless. We can create whatever we want.

I remember Gene, my mentor, once saying at the start of a course that NLP is a way to live a profound life. That really struck me. And the more NLP I did, the more I realised that it really was a way to live a profound life. In many respects, NLP is a never-ending journey of being curious and open, learning and transforming, and moving towards what we desire. As we embody this attitude of openness and curiosity, we realise

that life is abundant. When we honour the essence of who we are, move towards our vision, and nurture and share our talents with the world wholeheartedly, we can live a truly remarkable life.

In some respects, I'm evidence of that. While I still have my challenges and imperfections, I live an incredible life. I travel the world. I do what I want. I run my own business. I've run retreats in places like Ibiza where I live, Mexico, South Africa and India. As a child I'd never have dreamed that I would be doing that, I was so repressed, limited and insecure. And I've seen the same kind of deep and profound transformation in many of the people who have come on my courses and retreats. They change, grow, and go on to start living their dreams, making a deeply meaningful and unique difference in the world.

Of course, we can revert back into old patterns. I still experience anxiety, fear or stress. But when I do, I know I've got a framework to give my engine a service or reboot my mental computer and update the operating system.

I remember someone asking my mentor many years ago why he liked NLP so much. His response was, 'Because I can have a breakthrough every day of my life.' We can upgrade our internal software every day of our lives, with ever-increasing possibilities opening up to us and for us as a result. When we commit to doing the internal work, we can – as Gandhi said – be the change we want to see in the world.

QUESTIONS

1. What would you like to happen that is within your control?
2. What's a simple next step you could take, right now, to get the ball rolling?

APPLICATIONS OF NLP



Everyone has his/her own vocation or mission in life to carry out a concrete assignment which demands fulfilment. Therein he/she cannot be replaced, nor can his/her life be repeated. Thus, everyone's task is as unique as his/her opportunities to implement it.

**VIKTOR FRANKL, MAN'S
SEARCH FOR MEANING**

NLP starts with us, and the effects then ripple out. As we begin to learn exponentially and change our lives, we can apply this learning to create changes in our relationships, family, workplace and the wider world. There really are no limits to where NLP can and does make a difference.

NLP is often used in businesses to help with communication, leadership and team development. For several years I coached a remarkable woman who worked as a senior manager at an international bank. NLP helped her to become a standout leader rather than just a manager, to change the culture in her team and help them flourish.

NLP is used everywhere from social and healthcare to teaching children and University students. Many years ago I provided some training and coaching for Birkbeck University. I remember spending an amazing day taking a group of about 30 people through the Disney Strategy in order to help them develop a vision that the whole team would be aligned with. It was transformational for us all. By the end of the day, they had come up with a truly inspiring vision that had many strategies and processes to facilitate movement towards that vision. They left inspired and excited about the future, rather than operating on autopilot and being defined by the never-ending challenges. You can read more about and experience the Disney Strategy for yourself in the chapter on NLP Models.

So whether it's in finance or government, business or healthcare, education and leadership, NLP is used to create meaningful and lasting change. And that is what I trust you will get by reading this book: stories, ideas, models and the inspiration to begin really transforming your life in the way your heart desires.

NLP FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS AND NGOS

There are so many examples of where NLP can make a difference, but one close to my heart is with NGOs and community-based projects aiming to help the disadvantaged. I've had the privilege to work in some of the most impoverished townships in South Africa. These are places badly affected by crime, guns, drugs and sexual violence.

I went there to provide NLP and leadership training to individuals committed to supporting people out of mental, emotional, financial, psychological and even spiritual poverty. They run the most incredible projects, from rehabilitating people out of prison and gangs to children's literacy programmes; from art therapy and teaching people how to grow hydroponic plants; to teaching children to surf and thereby learn life skills and discover important lessons in how to create a better life beyond their township.

Working with these people changed my life and I returned there every year for many years until the pandemic struck. Watching them learn to use language and to coach people in their organisations and communities in ways that amplified and deepened the change they were already creating, was richly rewarding for us all.

NLP FOR ANXIETY AND STRESS

I used to experience a lot of anxiety and stress. When I was attending my first NLP course over a series of weekends, I noticed that I would go in with a certain amount of anxiety and come out feeling empowered. How? Because NLP helps us to shift from our present state to our desired state. It's all about learning to be congruent, open and in flow.

Most of us at some point in our lives feel depressed, anxious, fearful or confused. These are sometimes referred to as 'stuck states'. NLP can be used to model our present or stuck state and shift to our desired state: for example, from fear to faith, from anxiety to flow, from stress to enjoyment, or from overwhelm to clarity. It helps us manage and change our internal state. And as we learn to manage our state rather than being stuck in and repeating old patterns over and over, we can begin to do things very differently. We really can change.

QUESTIONS

1. What are some examples of times when you have changed?
2. How do these examples serve as resources and evidence of your capacity to continue changing in meaningful ways in and through your future?



*The deeper the sorrow
carved into your being, the
more joy you can contain.*

—— KAHILIL GIBRAN

THE BASICS OF NLP



What we see and hear is what we think about. What we think about is what we feel. What we feel influences our reactions. Reactions become habits and it is our habits that determine our destiny.

—— **BOB GASS**

PRESENT STATE/ DESIRED STATE

Most of us live, most of the time, in what you could call our 'present state'. If it feels good, natural and in flow then there's no problem. However, we can often feel stuck, frustrated, anxious, overwhelmed, angry or depressed.

Being able to understand or model the structure of our present state is core to NLP. When you learn how you create frustration, anger, depression or whatever stuck state you find yourself in, you can change it. But if you don't know how you're doing what you're doing, it can be difficult to change.

Many of us have deeply unconscious programmes that are running our lives: habits or patterns that keep us in a stuck state (or a less-than-resourceful state). This means that we're not in control of our lives or emotions to the degree that we might want to be, or could be.

The magic of NLP is that it gives us the capacity to override these programmes or patterns and shift from our present state to our 'desired state'. Once we release ourselves from the shackles of the past (the emotions and patterns that don't serve us) we become

PRESENT STATE /

DESIRED STATE



free to live a life of joy and happiness, full of rich meaning and a deep sense of purpose. That's a very different kind of state to how many people find themselves in much of the time.

I worked with someone in the corporate world over a number of years who, when we first met, was feeling quite stuck. Over time, she began to coach and lead her team more effectively, gain promotions and pay-rises. She eventually went on to set up her own coaching and consultancy business. She is now flourishing, doing work she loves and making an enormous difference in the lives of many people. By consistently addressing and learning from her present state each time she came on a course or had some coaching, she found a way to move towards what she truly wanted in her life – the freedom to be herself!

What do you dream of? What do you want for your life? How do you want to feel each day? What's important to you? What do you want your life to amount to?

These are the questions that as humans we have to ask ourselves if we are to live in – and move towards – our desired state. When we get clear about the kind of life we want and change how we think about our dreams and ambitions, that then becomes the fuel which allows us to move towards our desired state. It starts with thinking. As we change our thinking, we change our lives.

Change doesn't have to be difficult. It doesn't have to be painful. It doesn't have to be slow. It often feels that way because we get in our own way. We can become our own worst enemy. But change can be fun, dynamic, enjoyable and easy when you know how.

NLP is a profound methodology for creating meaningful, lasting, deep change in every area of our lives: from wealth to health, and from work to our relationships. It provides a unique way of learning, growing and changing how we think, what we believe and how we relate to ourselves and to the world around us. Learning how we create our present and desired states – and more importantly, how we can shift from one to the other – is at the heart of why NLP is so powerful as a framework for change.



Your life is a reflection of your thoughts. When you change your thinking, you change your life.

———— **BRIAN TRACEY**

QUESTIONS

1. Where are you currently stuck in your life?
2. What's important to you?
3. What do you want to change?
4. If money were no object, what would your ideal life look like?
5. How would you love to start each day? And how do you want to feel each day?
6. Who do you want to become and be remembered as?

NLP COMMUNICATION MODEL

The NLP communication model is a way of thinking about how we take in information from the outside world and how that in turn affects our behaviour.

As a matter of experience, people have an **internal world** and an **external world**. As we experience the external world, we take in information via our five senses: what we see, hear, feel, taste and smell. And we then represent the external world in our internal world. We simply can't process everything that's going on around us, all of the time, so we **filter** our experience. We delete, generalise and distort an enormous amount of information about what's actually happening in order to represent what we perceive internally.

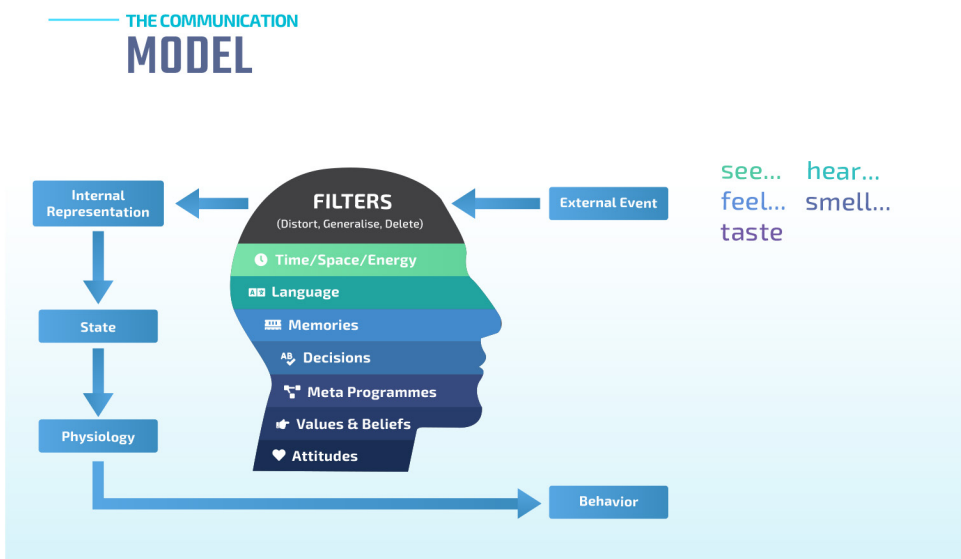
One way to think about this is in terms of primary and secondary experience. **Primary experience** is what happens before experience goes through our five senses and we make sense of the world. It is the world before we filter anything, a world of undifferentiated experience; independent of consciousness where no meaning and no emotions are attached to the experience.

Secondary experience is the product of us making sense of the world

(or our primary experience) by filtering what is happening through our senses. We live in a world of secondary experience where we represent what we perceive has happened in the outside world. Reality and our perception of it are two very different things. Secondary experience exists because of our subjective consciousness. It's where we construct or represent what we perceive through our senses. It's where we organise our experience into categories and put language to it.

The diagram here shows the different ways we filter information from the outside world. One is through language, which is a particular focus of this book. You can't separate language from experience. We use language to describe and make sense of the external world. But in doing so we distort, generalise and delete a lot of information.

I sometimes ask groups that I'm working with to imagine a tree. I'll then ask them, 'Who here thinks that they're imagining exactly the same tree as someone else?' Of course, no one does. Everyone has a different image in their mind. Someone may be thinking of an oak, someone else a



bush and another a holly tree.

We think we're communicating using the same language. But we're not. Everyone's tree is different. We think we live in a shared, external world with a unifying reality. But, we live in an internal world. And we represent how we perceive the world through language that is unique to us and often very different to others.

If we're not describing the external world accurately – but instead we are unconsciously distorting, generalising or deleting – that has implications. It can create conflict, misunderstanding and keep us in a stuck state (or a less than-resourceful state) and stop us from achieving our dreams and goals.

Another way that we filter what's going on in the world around us is through our beliefs and values. Personally, I put a high value on learning but not so much on the accumulation of material possessions. I'm going to have a very different experience and trajectory in life compared with someone who values accumulating material possessions over learning. Similarly, someone who believes that they can learn is going to have a very different kind of experience – both internally and in how they behave in the world – compared to someone who believes they are not very good at learning, as I once used to.

We live in a world of internal representation that affects our state and how we feel, that in turn affects how we behave and what we do in the world. The change that we're seeking to make through NLP is very much at the internal level. Change starts within us: within our language, our values, our beliefs and attitudes, how we store memories, how we make decisions and the kind of programmes or meta programmes that we have running at an unconscious level.

QUESTIONS

1. What are some of your most significant reflections from reading this chapter?
2. How might these reflections and insights be useful in the coming days?



Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.

—— **ALBERT EINSTEIN**

SURFACE VS DEEP STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE

Most people get seduced by the content of what someone is saying rather than being aware of the structure. **We communicate at the 'surface level' but there is a 'deep structure' to language.** As the Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar explains: 'Deep and surface structure are often used as terms in a simple binary opposition, with the deep structure representing meaning, and the surface structure being the actual sentence we see [or hear].'

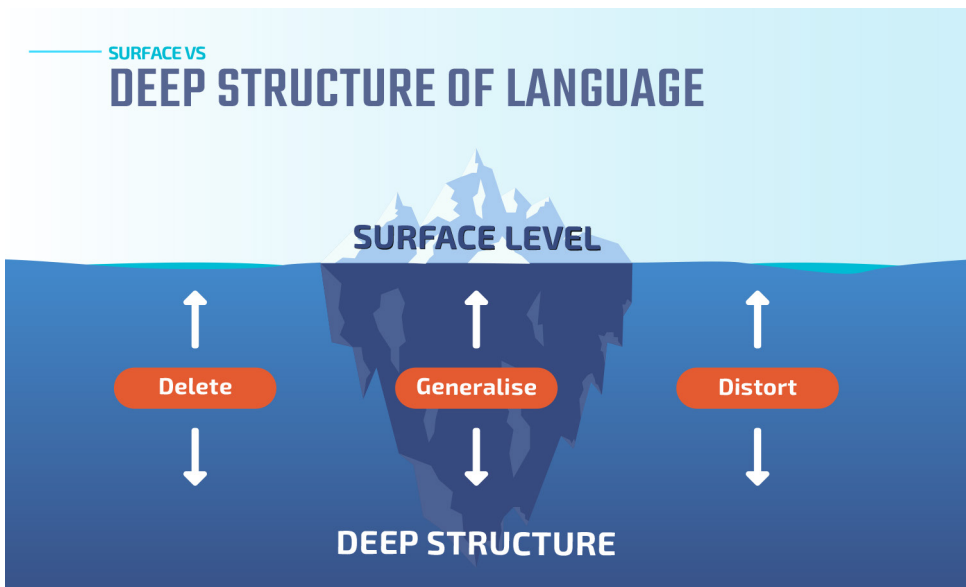
As we put language to our experience – whether we are describing our fears, a stuck state, or our desired state – we delete information. We often use language that omits the details of what we really mean. And this process of deletion can cause problems. Being able to pinpoint what's been deleted can release enormous potential. It can unlock insight, creativity and possibility.

Similarly, with distortion. **We're constantly making meaning out of what's going on in the world, and we're often distorting things by the way we filter.** We say to ourselves 'this means that,' or 'if this, then that'. These kinds of distortions can get us in trouble and keep us stuck in our present state.

We also generalise a lot (which by the way is a generalisation!). People say, 'I always do this' or 'I never do that' or 'You always do this.' But these generalisations are often factually untrue. They can reinforce our limiting beliefs and cause us to stay stuck.

Understanding how and where we delete, distort and generalise – and that there's a deeper structure and meaning to language – gives us the capacity to change our language, thinking and lives in ways that we want. It allows us to cut through the distortions, deletions and generalisations and have the breakthroughs we need to achieve our desired state and goals.

To give a very simple example, when we meet people we'll often ask them, 'How's it going?' And they'll typically respond, 'I'm fine' or 'Not bad' or 'I'm OK.' This kind of superficial exchange is often quite natural and can be part of developing trust or rapport. Of course, we know there's far more beneath the surface that people aren't sharing. These kinds of vague non-specific statements mask what's really going on for them: they



delete the details. 'Fine in what way?' could be a way of digging beneath the surface to get more detail.

We can use clean language and precision questions (covered in detail later in the book) to get beneath the surface, rather than take a person's words at face value. I once had a coaching client who recognised that he had a pattern of hypochondria. I asked what was beneath the surface, and he replied, 'There's a part of me that wants to prove that there's something wrong with me.' I wanted to dig deeper to understand the positive intention behind this seemingly unhelpful pattern. Rather than ask a question, I stayed silent just to see what came out. Silence can often be the best kind of clean question! After a pause, he added, 'Oh, actually, no, it's more than that: it's the need to be seen.'

I responded by repeating his words back at him, 'Oh, that's interesting. So actually, there's part of you that wants to prove that there's something wrong with you. In other words, constantly worrying that there's something wrong is actually about wanting to be seen.' He replied, 'Yeah, and I know where that comes from. It would be the only time that my mum would soften. You know, when something was wrong with me, when I was not well, my mum would soften.' I responded, 'So that part of you that wants to prove that there's something wrong with you, was really seeking love from your mum?' He replied, 'Yeah!' It was a breakthrough insight for him and an example of the deeper level structures at play when we put language to our experience.

Deep structure can be thought of as what you wish to express, and surface structure as how you express it with the help of words and sentences. This process of digging beneath the surface of what someone is saying to discover what they really mean is at the heart of the Meta Model, which we cover in detail later in the book.

QUESTIONS

1. Understanding that there is always more beneath the surface, imagine being curious to explore more about what people really mean and want to express and the effect that has on them.
2. How would that curiosity and commitment to dig beneath the surface enhance your life and the lives of those around you?



Language has evolved and is designed as a mode of creating and interpreting thought.

—— NOAM CHOMSKY

STIMULUS RESPONSE

Much of the time we operate at an unconscious level, whether that's making a cup of tea or in the way that we communicate. The same is true of how we react to things. There's a **stimulus** – say someone cuts us up while we're driving – and we **react** by getting angry. I know I have!

In my case, while I've improved the relationship with my mother enormously over the years, we can still trigger each other. She may say something or look at me in a funny way, and I might react with frustration. These emotional reactions can be detrimental both to ourselves and others.

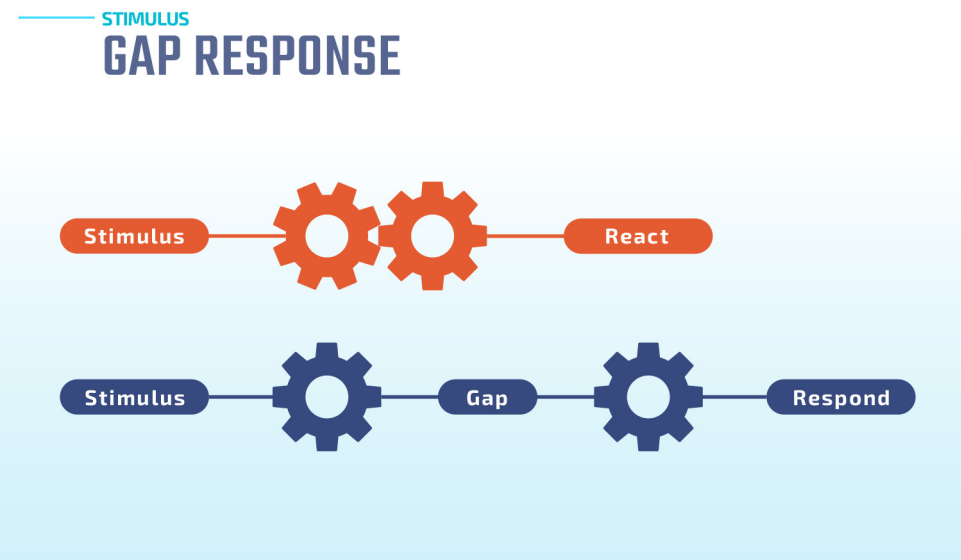
These kinds of states are indications that there's something going on internally. It's not just the external event that's causing us to feel frustrated, angry or overwhelmed: it's an internal process. **Between the stimulus and the reaction, there's a gap.** The question is what's in that gap?

What we find is that there are unconscious beliefs, filters and processes that cause our reactions or habits in these contexts. Maybe we learned those ways of reacting when we were younger, for a particular purpose. **When we explore and change what happens in that gap between**

stimulus and response we find that we can actually respond differently rather than react unconsciously.

Take the example of getting angry when another car cuts us up. We see the driver as selfish. But what if he's on his way to hospital? Maybe his daughter has just had an accident? We navigate the world full of assumptions and beliefs, which often simply aren't true. When we pause in the gap (between the stimulus and reaction) and notice those unhelpful beliefs, we can learn to respond differently instead of going into some sort of frustrated auto-pilot.

By exploring and creating space before we react, we can release ourselves from the habitual reactions and ways of being that hold us back, and create remarkable freedom and presence.



QUESTIONS

1. Where do you find yourself reacting, rather than responding in a less-than-resourceful way?
2. What would have to be true in order for you to respond resourcefully instead?
3. What does it look and feel like to imagine yourself responding resourcefully now?



When you react you are giving away your power. When you respond, you are staying in control of yourself.

—— **BOB PROCTOR**

RESOURCEFUL & LESS THAN RESOURCEFUL STATES



The ultimate resource is resourcefulness. That's what makes someone successful.

—— TONY ROBBINS

In NLP, people sometimes refer to a person's state as being **'resourceful' or 'less-than-resourceful', rather than positive or negative.** That's because NLP is the study of what's useful, or what works – not what's good or bad. **What's useful, helpful or resourceful for one person in a situation, may not be helpful for someone else in another.** It's very subjective. For example, stress could be deemed as negative, but it can be a resource, especially in short bursts. Likewise, fear can sometimes be a resource to reorient behaviour.

The distinction between resourceful and less-than-resourceful is important because we have many states that can be less-than-resourceful, or unresourceful. We all have situations or moments in our lives where we find ourselves stuck in frustration, overwhelm or stress longer than we'd like.

These can be habits or patterns. But we don't have to remain a victim to our patterns. We don't have to remain stuck. We can learn how to change the belief or the underlying structure so that we can be resourceful where perhaps we weren't before. **When we access the internal and external resources that we need to accomplish what we desire, we can achieve remarkable results.**

I used to hate speaking in front of people. I would have an almost phobic response. It's somewhat ironic, as I now run courses and retreats in front of groups of people around the world.

I managed to overcome my phobia by unpacking my fear. I realised I had a belief that I didn't want to be seen. I didn't want to be judged. I had an internal representation for public speaking, where I would see all these eyes just looking at me ... with judgement. And my coach at the time asked me, what if people are looking at you like that because they're really interested? It's in these moments where we start to create some confusion and change the meaning we attribute to our experience that profound change can happen.

I started to think that perhaps people looking at me like this doesn't mean they're judging me, maybe it means they're actually genuinely interested in what I have to say. And what if what I have to say is important?

This is how **we shift from unresourceful to resourceful states, by challenging the unconscious and unresourceful beliefs that we navigate the world with.** By understanding the structure of my fear, I was able to overcome it and learn how to be vulnerable and authentic while running retreats and courses with groups around the world and online.



When you rule out the impossible, everything can be believed, thereby making available a limitless and infinite array of new possibilities.

—— **TONY ROBBINS**

QUESTIONS

1. What is a less-than-resourceful state you can get yourself into? And what's the underlying belief?
2. How might you choose to address the deep structure of this less-than-resourceful state and find a way to respond resourcefully? What would a simple next step be in order to address this?
3. How would your life be different if you were to release this pattern and instead find ways to be resourceful instead?
4. What are some of your most resourceful and creative states? How, when and where do you activate these?



*Confusion is the state
before learning.*

—— **TONY ROBBINS**

THE FOUR PILLARS OF NLP



*Life itself is your teacher, and
you are in a state of constant
learning.*

——— **BRUCE LEE**

The founders of NLP, John Grinder and Richard Bandler identified four pillars of NLP: outcomes, rapport, flexibility and sensitivity. Learning how to master these four pillars can give us shortcuts to success in any endeavour.

Outcomes are important because knowing what we want enables us to achieve what we want. Being mindful of where we're headed is at the heart of NLP.

In order to get to where we want, we have to be **flexible**. If we only have one way of doing things, we are going to limit our capacity to achieve what we want. So flexibility is essential to achieving what we want.

It is also vital that we are **sensitive**, moment by moment, to our state and to whether we (and our clients) are moving towards or away from our desired outcomes.

Rapport is also fundamental. Having rapport **with others** – our clients, friends, family, business associates, even with people we don't particularly like – enables us to develop and maintain trust, communicate more effectively and resolve conflicts in healthy and enriching ways.

Having rapport **with ourselves** is just as important. That may seem like an odd concept. It might make more sense if you think of the times when you have bad rapport with yourself. In my case, I had a bad rapport with myself as a child: I was depressed, angry, frustrated at the world and unable to achieve what I wanted. My inner critic or inner voice was constantly judging. When we're in conflict with ourselves, that holds us back from achieving our desired state. When we develop a good rapport with ourselves, we can be much more resourceful, effective and happy.

QUESTIONS

1. How are you flexible and sensitive?
2. How does this serve you and the world?
3. What outcomes are most important to you and for you right now?
4. How do you see yourself developing increasing rapport with yourself and others in the coming days and weeks? For what larger purpose?

NLP MODELS

Mental maps and models are the lifeblood of NLP. There are a plethora of NLP models which are the result of many people over the last 50 years going into the world and modelling excellence. Below you'll find some of my favourites. These have made an enormous difference in my life and in the lives of the clients I've had the privilege of working with.

MODELLING



The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing.

— **ALBERT EINSTEIN**

If models are the lifeblood of NLP, then modelling is at the heart of NLP. In the context of coaching, we can model someone's present and desired state to great effect. Noticing the underlying beliefs, meta programmes or filters that keep someone in a stuck state can provide simple feedback and insight that catalyse change. By then modelling the structure of someone's desired state, for example at the level of identity, purpose and beliefs, we can create another level of profound transformation for them.

So, **modelling, and in particular 'modelling excellence', is at the**

core of NLP. All of the models in this book – well-formed outcomes, changing frames, eye-accessing cues, the Meta Model, hypnotic language and so on – are the result of people modelling strategies that worked, ones proven to create meaningful change. My hope is that you will work through these models, especially with other people, so that you can benefit from them and deeply enrich your life. And if you choose to join an NLP course, you can expect to learn and integrate these models in ways that expand and develop your potential.

NLP gives us the capacity to model excellence for ourselves. One thing I realised when I was younger was how much fear held me back and stopped me from going for my dreams and goals. One thing I was particularly aware of was my fear of speaking in public. I identified that as a significant barrier to my success, growth, potential and employment. I realised that I had a very stuck state (deep fear) in relation to speaking in public and that I had to deal with it one way or another. I identified trainers and facilitators who were authentic, influential and comfortable speaking in public and decided to model how they did that. Over time I updated my internal mental maps and models of the world related to speaking in public and took on much more of theirs. The result? I now run online courses for groups almost every week of the year and I love helping others in this way.

Explicit modelling is the process of being deeply curious and using things like clean language to get beneath the surface of what someone does and says, to unpack the structure of how they do what they do.

Implicit modelling is the process of taking on someone's behaviours, beliefs and so on simply by being around them and embodying what they do. It's how apprentices learn while working alongside their mentors, and how children become like their parents.

Over the years, I've spent a lot of time with the people that I admire, unconsciously and implicitly modelling their way of being: their demeanour, pacing, language patterns and so on. I learnt how they functioned in the world and that helped me be more like them, more successful. I realised that a particular issue for me was the initial moments of speaking in front of a group. Once I got going, I was OK, but that moment at the start was where I used to freeze and feel deeply uncomfortable and self-conscious. So, I spent time with my mentor Sue Knight, asking her questions and explicitly modelling how she started courses. I discovered that she would open by sharing something quite vulnerable and personal so that the group could identify with and relate to her. That would create a space for others to be vulnerable, open, honest and share their present state. It's a model that I have found works for me, too.

In this way, I developed a model for myself for how to communicate effectively in front of others, in ways that are authentic and influential. I hope that you, too, will be able to use the tools in this book to go and model – both explicitly and implicitly – and learn how people do what they do with excellence so that you can, too.

EXERCISE

1. Identify what you want to model in the world. What's the thing that's going to really take your life or your business to the next level? Is it public speaking? Fearlessness? It could be anything. The question is, what result do you see others achieving that you would like and that would make a real difference in the quality of your life?
2. Now identify three people who have that skill, talent or ability to achieve those results in the world. Go and spend time with them. Explore their behaviours, skills, beliefs, sense of self and purpose· in other words, explore their model for achieving these results using different Logical Levels of Change (you'll find a section all about Logical Levels later on in this chapter). What strategies do they use to achieve this outcome? Use 'clean language' (you'll also find a section on clean language in this chapter). Dig beneath the surface. Discover the difference that makes a difference, for them and for yourself.

THE DISNEY STRATEGY



*All our dreams can come true
if we have the courage to
pursue them.*

——— **WALT DISNEY**

The heart of NLP is modelling strategies that work – finding the difference that makes a difference – and applying those strategies to our own lives or organisations. **The Disney Strategy is an example of a model of excellence. It's the strategy that Walt Disney applied to pursue his vision and ideas in ways that changed the entertainment industry and millions of children's lives around the world forever. It's a strategy for creating success – in his case a remarkable organisation that changed the world.**

Disney recognised that there are three components to the creative process: the dreamer, the realist and the critic. **The dreamer** is the person with their head in the clouds. It's the child looking out the window. It's the creative, the visionary, the Steve Jobs of this world. They have brilliant vision and ideas but are often not so good at implementing them.

That's where **the realist** comes in. The realists keep it real. Their response to the dreamer will be, 'OK, I get the vision, but how are we going to get this done?' They're great at getting things done. They develop the strategies and follow through by making the vision a reality.

Then there's the critic. **The critics** are the lawyers or accountant-type figures who will respond, 'What if that doesn't work? Have you considered this pitfall?' and so on.

Disney recognised that we all have these different voices within us: we all have a hope or a dream, an inner critic questioning that, and then the desire to plan and get on with it.

He saw that these three different forces also exist within organisations. This can often be a source of conflict: with the critic saying, 'Well, I don't know if that can be done,' while the dreamer is sure that it can be. Disney recognised that all three parts are important, they all have value and they all have a role to play. Instead of being in conflict, which they often are, it's important to honour and give each one the space to be heard and integrated.

Disney came up with the strategy of bringing everyone – dreamers, realists and critics – into the dreamer room. The dreamer room is no place for asking how we're going to do something, or for looking into the

pitfalls. Instead, it's about asking, 'What could we make? What do we want to create? What could be possible? What if ...?'

Once everyone has explored the vision fully, he would take them into the strategy room. That's where they would come up with strategies for realising the ideas they had talked about in the dreamer room. After that, everyone would move into the critic room to consider the pitfalls and what might go wrong. Having spent time there, they would all go back into the dreamer room to think about visionary solutions to address the challenges that they might encounter. And then, finally, they would move to the strategy room to consider how to implement everything.

The Disney Strategy is, then, a way of honouring each different part of the creative process and of getting the different voices or archetypes to work with each other rather than – as often happens in organisations – have them disagree with each other.

There are many models in NLP and my hope is that the Disney Strategy provides a flavour of how NLP is a process of modelling excellence in ways that create real change.

I mentioned earlier in this book how I used the Disney Strategy to help a team from Birkbeck University develop a vision that everyone aligned with, that had many strategies to facilitate movement towards that vision. It's also a great model for us to use as individuals, as a way to develop our personal visions for what we want to achieve.

EXERCISE

1. Take a moment to identify three distinct spaces around you in which to explore your vision: one for the dreamer, one for the realist and one for the critic. For example, if you are reading this at home, those spaces might be your garden, your kitchen and your office space.
2. Step into the dreamer space and dream big. What would you want to achieve if there were no limits? You might want to record yourself so you can listen back later and make notes.
3. Now, step into the realist space and be the realist. How can you move towards this vision?
4. Step into the critic space and explore what might go wrong.
5. Having spent time in each of these spaces, you can now go back to the dreamer space and imagine all of the ingenious solutions to solve the challenges brought up in the space of the critic.
6. Finally, go back to the realist space and plan/strategise how you are going to implement this vision.

THE LEARNING CYCLE

The technical definition of NLP is that it's the study of the structure of subjective experience. Put simply, it's the study of how our individual experience is constructed. Experience is the key term here. We have to have a conscious experience in order to learn.

How many books have you read that haven't really changed your life? We often read books that give us energy, inspiration and ideas while we are reading them. But the degree to which they change our lives in the long term – if at all – is minimal compared to the amount of theory they contain. All that information should help us to change and embody that wisdom, but more often than not it doesn't. Why?

A study by Edgar Dale in 1969 found that after two weeks of reading a book we only retain about 10% of the theory. But if we learn something through an experience we retain significantly more as the diagram below shows. So, I can give you all the theory you want in this book. But theory alone is not going to change your life. You need to have experiences.

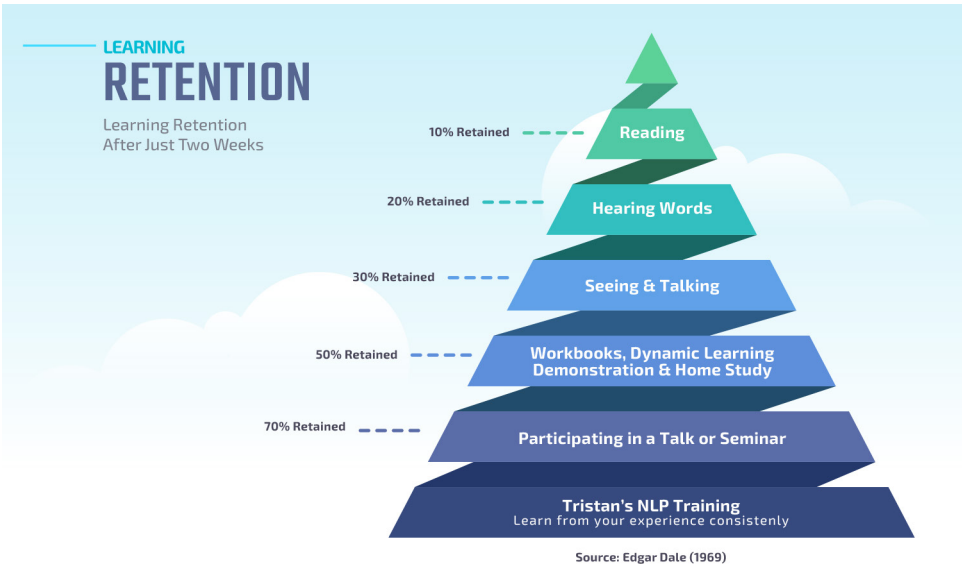
Once we've had an **experience**, we can then **reflect** on it. That reflective process integrates the experience at another level. It's then useful to have a **theory** that backs up the experience and reflective process. Once

we have that, we can then **plan** to take all of this forward into another experience. The learning cycle is an ongoing dynamic process, not always as simple and sequential as this diagram suggests.

I have included lots of exercises in this book because I want you to have experiences of your own that will really help you learn about NLP and how it can transform your life. I also invite and encourage you to get involved in events and courses that will likely give you even more powerful experiences.

My personal NLP learning journey began when I first read Tony Robbins' book 'Awaken the Giant Within'. I was gripped by the book which made me start to realise how much language, beliefs and my unconscious patterns had an impact on my life. It taught me that I could change my life and it gave me the theory of how to do that. What actually changed my life though, was attending his event shortly after – and all the subsequent learning experiences that I had after that.

It was through the experience of being at an event in London with



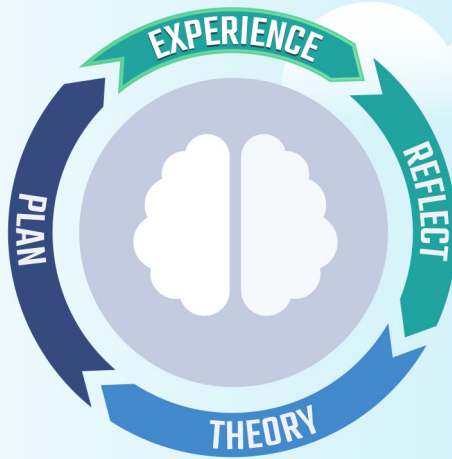
thousands of other people that I began changing my thinking and my life for the better in a meaningful and empowering way. I began to change my beliefs about myself and what was possible. I'm not sure I would have got any of that from just reading his book.

I saw my old life for what it was. I had been experiencing what Robert Quinn calls 'slow death' in his outstanding book *Building The Bridge As You Walk On It*. This is where we exist but we're not really living or flourishing, we're just surviving and getting by. I saw that I had been like the proverbial frog in a pot of water, slowly being heated up, not realising that I had to jump out of that patterned way of existing or it would slowly boil me to death. Apparently, if you put a frog in boiling water, it immediately jumps out. And that's what I needed: a wake-up call or a paradigm shift in how I was living.

The event awakened me to the possibility of a much richer, more hopeful, beautiful, vibrant and loving way of living. I knew that if I spent time in that kind of environment, where I immersed myself in being open and honest, in learning for myself and therefore able to help others, I could change my state, my thinking and my life and leave the world a better place.

In terms of the learning cycle, I had read the **theory** in the book and **reflected** on it, but this was insufficient to really change. I went to the course in London where I had a profound **experience**. It gave me a very real embodied sense both of my present state (which I felt that I simply couldn't go back to) and of my desired state – a new way of connecting with myself and others that was fun and dynamic and gave me a sense of possibility. I learnt a ton of **theory** while I was there which made absolute sense given the experiences I was having, demonstrating that I could easily and quickly learn and change.

THE LEARNING CYCLE



It was an experience that I **reflected on** deeply. I knew I needed to continue learning and developing myself. I needed to get clear on the life I wanted and move towards it, so I signed up for a programme called *The Time of Your Life*. That gave me **more theory** to explore and another **experience**. It took me on an immersive deep-dive into my vision and what kind of life I wanted to create, and into **planning** for how to make it happen. And so the learning cycle continued – and indeed keeps on going to this day!

QUESTIONS

- 1. What's been your overriding experience of reading this book so far?**
- 2. What are some of your most significant insights and reflections?**
- 3. What theory makes sense to you?**
- 4. How do you see yourself taking this all forwards into more learning and empowering experiences for you in the coming days, weeks and months?**
- 5. What larger purpose does all of this serve?**

CLEAN LANGUAGE

Clean language is a remarkable way of having more impact by doing and saying less.

Often, when talking to someone who is struggling, people will try to give advice, solutions or their thoughts on how they might respond in that situation. They say, 'Why don't you do ____?' Or 'What about trying ____?' People often impose their perspective onto someone else's present state or challenge. And we use our language and maps of the world to try and help them, rather than using their language and internal resources to help them explore, expand and enrich their mental maps and models of the world.

Clean language is a very different, unique and powerful approach to helping people get unstuck. It was originally developed by David Grove, who worked with traumatised war veterans. He discovered that by working at a metaphorical level and by avoiding 'polluting' his client's thinking (or internal representation) with his own language, he could create remarkable results.

The principle behind clean language is that we put as little of 'our own stuff' into the other person's experience as possible when

CLEAN LANGUAGE

Full Syntax & Five
Developing Questions



we talk to them. We don't 'contaminate' their experience (or their internal representation) with our own beliefs, language and 'filters'. Instead, we use clean language which enables others to access their unconscious and create profound change easily. Essentially, we repeat back some of their words and then ask very simple but specific questions.

To give an example, if we're talking to someone who's stuck in their thinking or their 'present state', we can respond by being curious. So, if they say 'I'm feeling stuck,' we could ask them, 'You're feeling stuck, in what way?' Or, 'What kind of feeling stuck?' Another example could be, 'Is there anything else about feeling stuck?' Or, 'Whereabouts is that feeling stuck?'

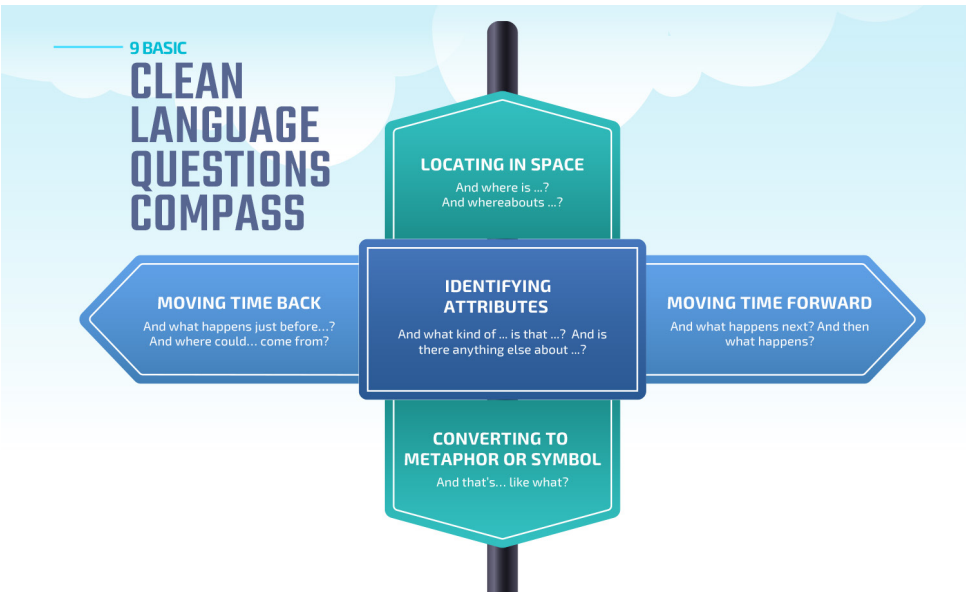
All these questions invite them to go deeper into their experience so that you can unpack and elicit the deeper structure of their experience. And within that deep structure, you can help them discover insights and learn

from what's 'beneath the surface', which can then enable them to shift into their 'desired state'.

Similarly, if we're talking to someone who's really inspired or excited by something we could ask them, 'Inspired in what way?' or 'Excited in what way?' And they'll then reveal more of that desired state, which gives them even more access to what inspires or excites them and the state that will move them in that direction. In this way, we are accessing the almost limitless pool of resources available in that person's unconscious by digging beneath the surface of what they are saying.

The principle behind clean language is that we respect the other person's 'internal mental maps and models of the world.' By staying 'clean', we allow them to explore and navigate their internal world without distorting, deleting or generalising it from – or with – our own perspective.

You might imagine that the person you are conversing with or coaching is



navigating a computer game and they can't see the full map of the game. In real-world terms, they can't see the full spectrum of their potential experience. Essentially, they're just finding their way through their experience as best they can.

With clean language we can ask a question based on their 'map' or experience, but which takes them in different and unexplored directions within their internal world. This can be deeply revealing and incredibly enriching for the person we are talking with. Rather than showing them, we can ask and invite them to explore. It can be profoundly liberating and transformational. And it's remarkably simple!



*Language is more
than just a means of
communication, it is an
organ of perception.*

—— **JULIAN JAYNES**

EXERCISE

1. Be deeply curious about what's beneath the surface of what people say for a day.
2. Practice using one or two of the clean questions above and notice what impact it has.



*The limits of my language
mean the limits of my
world.*

—— **LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN**

LOGICAL LEVELS OF CHANGE



*Whether you think you can or
you can't, you're right.*

—— HENRY FORD

Logical Levels of Change (or 'neurological levels of change') is a remarkable model created by Robert Dilts. It was based on the work of other pioneers such as Gregory Bateson. The premise is that **our experience of the world can be perceived and experienced at**

different levels.

Environment

We live within an environment. As you look around you now, you can see your clothes, the space around you, this page in front of you, and so on. Together these comprise the level of environment where you are. Our environment is everything from the skin out.

Behaviour

Within this environment, we do things, and we see people doing certain activities. This is our behaviour. **Our environment and our behaviour are observable to the human eye. They are different external levels of our experience.**

Skills and Capabilities

What we can't see is what's going on internally for people. We can't see the internal strategies and resources that facilitate how someone is doing what they're doing. We have strategies for everything we do, but these are not normally visible. These strategies consist of many

LOGICAL

LEVELS OF CHANGE



components including thinking and language patterns which often operate at the unconscious level.

Beliefs and Values

At first sight, we can't see beliefs and values: the presuppositions that people operate from and what's important to them. But these are like the glue that holds our mental maps and models of the world together, affecting every aspect of our experience.

Identity and Purpose

It can be difficult to observe someone's identity or sense of who they are. And we can't necessarily observe their sense of purpose as they go about their lives. But again, these aspects of someone's experience can have a remarkable impact on their experience and behaviour.

How to Use this Model

Logical Levels of Change can be used to model the structure of someone's present state at each neurological level. For example, if someone is depressed, we could ask them questions like:

- What are you **doing** when you're depressed? (behaviour)
- **How** are you experiencing or creating depression? (skills and capabilities]
- What do you **believe** as you are feeling depressed? (beliefs and values)
- Who are you **being** as you experience being depressed? (identity)
- For what **purpose** are you depressed? (sense of purpose)

Often you'll find that the structure of their present state, elicited at these different levels, can be deeply revealing. You might discover that they

have a belief that they can't do something, they don't deserve something, they are not enough, or that they won't be accepted or loved. These are the kinds of **limiting beliefs** that most of us have in certain contexts; they normally operate at the unconscious level. Being able to notice our limiting beliefs and change them into empowering beliefs is life-changing.

Einstein famously said, 'We can't solve problems using the same kind of thinking we used to create them.' One of the principles behind this model is that you can't solve a problem at the same level you created it. You have to shift to at least the level above.

So, if you have a problem at the level of behaviour, you're often not going to solve it by trying to do something different. You're more likely to solve it by changing how you're doing what you're doing: your skills and capabilities.

Similarly, if you have a challenge with how to do something (related to your skills and capabilities), solving it at the level above (your beliefs about what you are capable of) will release the potential to find the resources in order to accomplish that goal.

Getting clear and aligned at the higher levels – your beliefs and values, your identity and your sense of purpose – is key to how you can create deep and lasting change.

A DEEPER DIVE INTO IDENTITY

I've already mentioned how noticing and changing our limiting beliefs can have a profound impact on us. The same goes for our sense of our identity. Behaviour is an expression of identity. Once we develop a clear sense (internal representation) of who we are, or who we want to be, it can catalyse real and lasting change in our behaviour. Once we recognise ourselves as, say, an honest person or a leader, our behaviour becomes honest, or we find ourselves leading. In other words, the behaviour looks after itself once we are aligned with a congruent identity.

Logical Levels of Change: Lou

I first met Lou about 10 years ago, when she joined one of my NLP Foundation Events. At that time, she was in a job and a relationship that were unfulfilling. Like many people, she was struggling. But she was also ambitious and ready for change.

She volunteered to do a demo with me in front of the group. I took her through Logical Levels of Change for about ten minutes while the group watched on. During that time, we saw something profound change within her. She had access to something deep within herself – a vision; a dream; an essence of who she could be and wanted to be. And she had that fully activated in the present so that she felt connected and committed to it.

She was expressing her vision very clearly. As she did so, she was smiling, her eyes were sparkling, and her whole body expanded as she stood taller. Her state had changed, her beliefs had changed and her sense of herself had changed.

It took her a few years to fully manifest the changes and that vision she had articulated so beautifully and congruently. Fast forward a few more years and she's now an international businesswoman; a successful coach and consultant who works with multinational corporations and executive teams teaching them to transform and lead effectively. And I'm privileged to have her as one of my NLP Master Trainers. She is eternally optimistic, happy and healthy, and continues to do the deep work required to be a stand-out leader and a coach in this day and age.

A DEEPER DIVE INTO PURPOSE

Our sense of purpose is what connects us to the wider world and the systems beyond ourselves. We all play a part in the unfolding of this remarkable Universe, whether we like it or not and whether we know it or not.

The question we need to ask ourselves is, for what purpose? Why are we here? What impact do we want to have on the world beyond ourselves? Once we get clear on the larger purpose behind our behaviour or goals in life – whether it's a spiritual calling or a deep sense of what's important in our work or our relationships – this can drive a powerful sense of being and behaviour in the world: one that is full of energy, meaning, vitality and love. And that's a way of being and a life worth living!

When I started my NLP journey, I had a moment when I realised that my family (and the wider world) seemed to be pretty self-centred and largely focused on how they could get what they wanted. I realised that what I needed for myself was to have a sense of purpose in the world beyond myself. I needed to shift from 'self' to focusing on 'others' and developing relationships based on connecting with others and serving. That was a revelation that led to me changing my life and becoming a coach.

This model can help align people with a deep sense of purpose, as it did for me. It can give us a sense of personal congruence where we live in a way that is in harmony at all levels. We can be true to ourselves, do what we love and express our natural talents while focussing on what's important to us. We can be the person we are meant to be, whether that's a coach, a writer, a storyteller, a leader, a manager or a parent.

Getting aligned with who we want to be, or who we really are in our essence, is profoundly transformational. It allows us to create the kind of life we want and move towards living in the kind of world we want.

Happiness and Balloons

Imagine a room full of 500 balloons, each with a person's name on. 500 people enter the room and are told if they find their balloon in 3 minutes, they are guaranteed a happy life! Of course, you can imagine the ensuing chaos; people pushing against each other frantically grabbing and accidentally balloons. And at the end of the 3 minutes few people have found their balloon.

And yet this is how many of us live our lives. Most of us are struggling to find our own happiness. We're desperately seeking what fulfils us and what can bring us joy.

Now, imagine another scenario. These same 500 people are now told to help each other find their balloons, their happiness; to pick up each balloon, call out the name and give it to its rightful owner. You can imagine the scene now, an orderly and seamless experience where everyone finds their balloon within those 3 minutes.

This is the alternative reality we could embrace, one where we help

others find their happiness, and in so doing discover our gift and contribution to humanity. The resulting abundance amplifies our own happiness and embraces the needs of others.

As Gandhi said, “the best way to find yourself [your happiness] is to lose yourself in the service of others”.

EXERCISE

1. Think of an outcome that is important to you and for you.
2. Now work from the bottom (environment) all the way to the top (purpose) answering the questions in the diagram above, in relation to this outcome of yours.
3. In other words, as you are achieving this outcome, where are you, what are you doing, how are you doing this, what's important about this for you, who are you being as you are achieving this outcome and what larger purpose does achieving this outcome serve? Take time to see, hear and feel the answer to each of these questions.

NLP PRESUPPOSITIONS

OR 'BELIEFS OF EXCELLENCE'



If you assume that there is no hope, you guarantee that there will be no hope. If you assume that there is an instinct for freedom, that there are opportunities to change things, then there is a possibility that you can contribute to making a better world.

—— **NOAM CHOMSKY**

When Richard Bandler and John Grinder were studying excellence in the 1970s, they discovered that excellent communicators, therapists, leaders and sports people had certain beliefs that were unique to them, and that seemed to be an essential component of their success. For example, great problem solvers really believe that there is a solution to every problem. Other high performers believe that there's only feedback; there's no such thing as failure.

From studying people who were exceptional, Bandler and Grinder developed these NLP Presuppositions or 'beliefs of excellence'. Think of them as a framework for us to increasingly access and live up to our full potential: a powerful set of beliefs for creating change.

NLP Presuppositions

- Each person is unique - the map is not the territory
- Everyone makes the best choice available to them at the time they make it
- There is no failure, there is only feedback and learning
- Behind every behaviour is an unconscious positive intention
- The meaning of communication is the effect - in the response you get
- There is a solution to every problem
- We have within us all the resources we ever need
- The person with the most flexibility in thinking and behaviour has the greatest influence
- Mind and body are part of the same system
- Knowledge, thought, memory and imagination are the result of sequences and combinations of ways of filtering and storing information
- What we recognise in others mirrors the structures we hold within ourselves
- If someone can do it – anyone can do it

As I said earlier, beliefs can be thought of as the glue that holds our mental maps and models of the world together. Beliefs drive our behaviour. And they become self-reinforcing. If we believe some problems can't be solved, we won't solve them. We'll never be able to achieve our dreams if we think we are bound to fail. By contrast, these beliefs of excellence can drive resourceful behaviour and help us become more and more successful in any area we want.

We often learn beliefs from our families, schools, peers and our culture that can drive unresourceful behaviour. Once we become consciously aware of the limiting beliefs and assumptions that hold us back, we can start to challenge and change them. And once we start to take on more empowering beliefs or presuppositions, we can change our lives. Your beliefs are like a magnet that creates your reality.

NLP Presuppositions: my first session with Gene

When I had my first coaching session with my mentor Gene, he asked me what I wanted from our coaching. I responded that I wanted to run a successful retreat in Ibiza and a course in South Africa and to achieve a number of other results. His response was, 'Well those are a given. So what do you want beyond that... what do you really want?' I responded initially with something like surprise, followed by, 'Well, I guess, I'm looking for trust. I want to really trust my capacity to create the results I want in the world. And I want to be able to trust life.'

His presupposition that those things I wanted to explore in our coaching and move towards, were already 'a given' changed my belief, provided me with the certainty I needed to get on and make them happen and enabled me to focus on something even more empowering. By inviting me to articulate what I really wanted – trust – I identified the resource that would be the key to achieving those outcomes and much more.

EXERCISE

1. Read through the NLP Presuppositions. Which ones challenge you? Which do you disagree with? Which ones do you agree with?
2. Choose two that you think would make a big difference in your life, if you were to live as if they were true. For the next couple of days, commit to living as if they were true for you. Notice the difference that it makes for you and others as you live with these presuppositions.

THINKING AND COMMUNICATION FILTERS



*We're not in a world of
information overload, we're
in a world of filter failure*

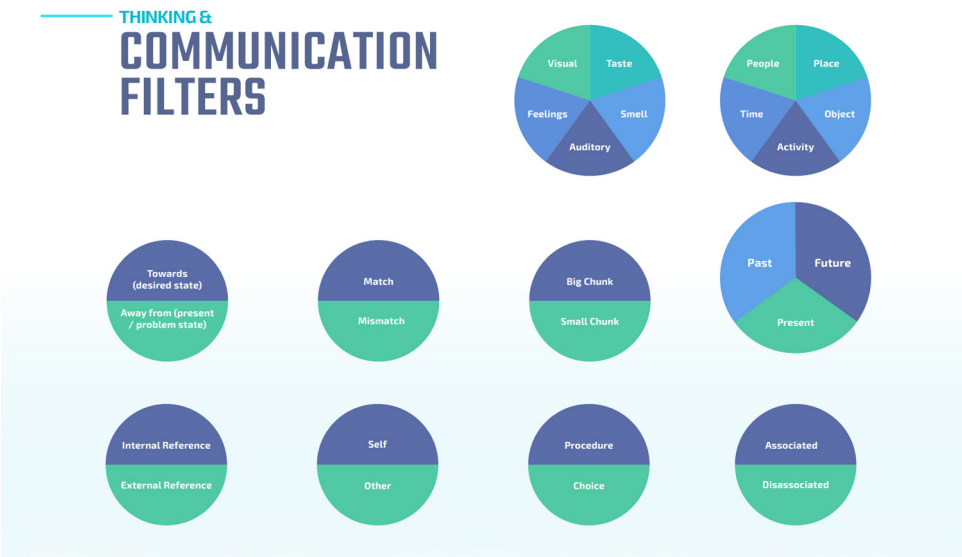
—— **MICHAEL LAZEROW**

Thinking and Communication Filters are ways in which we filter the world and construct our reality. In the field of NLP, they are also referred to as meta programmes. They are called meta programmes because they are underlying programmes upon which all the other programmes sit. They're the human equivalent of the most used apps on your computer or mobile phone. Once we notice the underlying programme (or which app we're using) at any given moment we can change it. This can profoundly transform our state, and ultimately the direction of our lives.

What does all this mean in practice? And how can this be useful?

Big Chunk/Small Chunk

There will be some people reading this who just want the big picture. They don't want the detail. They want to know that communication filters are about changing the underlying programmes and how they can do that quickly. Other people will be much more focused on the details. They want to know exactly how it works and what each component of



each circle in the diagram means and so on.

This is the distinction between a preference for ‘big chunk’ and ‘small chunk’. Some people, like me, tend to prefer big chunk. They want to see the big picture, stay focussed on the vision and not get bogged down in the details. They are often visionaries or business leaders. Other people are much more small chunk and detail-oriented, perhaps the mechanics or technicians in a business.

There’s no right or wrong approach. They’re just different preferences. However, when we become attached to one preference we can become inflexible. If all we see are the details, we miss out on the big picture. And if all we’re interested in is the big picture, we may well miss out on some important details.

Once we recognise our preferences we can develop more flexibility. If we identify that we have a strong preference for big chunk, we can learn to filter for small chunk and take care of the details, when and where that is useful or appropriate.

QUESTION

What is your preference, and what might change if you were to sway the other way consciously once in a while?

Towards/Away From

I used to be very ‘away from’. I was focused on what I didn’t want. I didn’t want to be stuck in an office, I didn’t want to be judged, I didn’t want to speak in front of people. That way of being was useful at some level. It gave me the motivation to move away from what I didn’t want. But I was missing out on what I did want. Over the years, I’ve become increasingly

‘towards’ focused, or focused on my desired state. It’s been a profound shift in my experience.

I had an ex-girlfriend who was incredibly ‘away from’ at a time when I was becoming increasingly focused ‘towards’. That became a real mismatch. So, these kinds of patterns can have enormous implications not only for ourselves as individuals, but also in our relationships with others and in our working life.

We can move towards what we want or continue looking in the rearview mirror focussed on where we have been and where we don’t want to go. Choosing to focus on and move towards what we want is an essential part of getting where we want in life, but we often don’t do this. You’ll notice this when people express ‘away from’ outcomes by saying things like, ‘I don’t want ____.’ Being able to honour the away from but also get clear on the destination is important if we are to be successful in any endeavour.

QUESTIONS

- 1. What are you moving away from?**
- 2. What are you moving towards?**
- 3. What’s important for you to move towards now?**

Self/Other

At any given moment we may be more focused on ourselves, or on others. For example, when I started out speaking in public, I was often focussed on myself and worrying about how people would judge me. But when I learned to shift my focus onto others and how I could make a difference in their lives. That helped me to get over my nerves and to speak authentically with confidence. The focus of attention and my

energy went from contracting towards myself to expanding into them in order to impact them positively: from self to other.

We are often focussed on ourselves, understandably so, but also to our detriment sometimes. By focusing on others, we can often, and somewhat paradoxically, achieve more of what we want.

That said, some people tend to be more 'other' focussed. Empaths and caregivers can often lose themselves or fail to give themselves what they need in order to flourish, by continuing to focus on others at the expense of themselves.

QUESTIONS

- 1. In what situation or context could you change your preference for self or other?**
- 2. How do you see that making a difference?**

Past/Present/Future

I used to be stuck in the past, constantly reminiscing on all the difficult things I had experienced or could have done differently. When I started to get a handle on that, I became more focused on what kind of future I could create. These days I'm increasingly present with what's actually going on. Of course, it's a balance; knowing when it's useful to be in a different time frame is important.

None of these timeframes are inherently better than the other.

Focusing on the past, reflecting and learning from the past, and accessing resources from our past can be enormously helpful. Getting clarity about the future and the vision you are moving towards can be motivating and helpful too. And living in the present is freedom. **It's a question of**

what's useful in order to move towards what's important in any given context.

QUESTIONS

- 1. Do you have a preference for past, present and future, and in what context? What happens if you change that preference now? How does that change your experience?**
- 2. Try consciously shifting the timeframe in a conversation and notice how influential you can be as a result.**
- 3. Apply this to yourself and notice how you can transform your own experience.**

Match/Mismatch

Have you ever played the card game 'Snap'? It's a children's game where the intention is to win by calling out Snap! When you turn over a card and have the same card as the other person. More often than not, they are not the same cards. They don't match.

As with the game Snap, matching is sameness: 'going with' someone or something. Examples of matching are agreeing, saying 'Yes', mirroring language and adopting another person's preference or body language. Whereas mismatching is about 'going against' – contradicting, doubting, saying 'Yes, but...' or flat out 'No!'

Often people will mismatch without meaning to or being conscious that it's a deeply ingrained pattern. Perhaps they want to get their point of view across, and they believe that they're right. So, they end up mismatching in ways that break rapport, or worse, they cause permanent damage to relationships. Similarly, many people may match out of habit. Potentially, that will not be helpful if they actually disagree with someone

or want a different outcome but match simply to maintain rapport or to people-please.

QUESTIONS

- 1. Is your preference to match or to mismatch? And what might happen if you were to change this habitual way of being?**
- 2. Do you have an unconscious habit of using ‘yes and...’ (matching) or ‘no but...’ (mismatching) when replying to people?**

Match, Pace, Lead

Match, pace, lead is sometimes referred to as the structure of influence. If you want to influence someone, typically you will need to match them. Once you match them, then you can pace them. When you’re going at the right pace, one that brings all parts (and especially the unconscious) along, then you can lead them.

We often try to lead people before we’ve matched or paced them. If someone is talking about what they want, and you focus on what you want or where you want to take the conversation (in an attempt to lead them), that would be a mismatch.

As leaders, coaches, parents, entrepreneurs, business people, salespeople, marketers and community leaders, it’s important that we learn to match and pace where people are at and go at their pace so that we can then lead them effectively.

Internal Reference/External Reference

People who have a preference for internal reference make their decisions without needing or wanting to go outside of themselves for feedback or input. Externally referenced people have a tendency to go external

to themselves and find out what other people think or believe before making a decision. This can have profound implications for decision-making and the direction of our lives.

QUESTIONS

- 1. Do you have a strong internal compass for making decisions? Or do you tend to have a desire to check with others, in other words, are you internally or externally referenced?**
- 2. Are you the driver of your life or a passenger? What would happen if you changed seat?**

Procedure/Choice

Some people love process, plans and procedure. They want to know what's next, how they are going to do what's next, and what happens after that. This can lead to them being somewhat inflexible. As Mike Tyson, the Heavyweight boxing champion of the world once said, 'Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face.' It's important to have plans and strategies. But then life comes along and throws us a curve-ball. And if you've only got your plan or process to rely on and you're not flexible, you will often fail to achieve what you want. So, while process and plans can be extraordinarily useful, without flexibility this preference or pattern can be limiting.

Other people prefer choice. They want options and freedom. I used to be like that when I first broke free and ended up living in India. But it then became quite limiting. I had all these options and choices but didn't commit to any of them. Switching into 'process' mode, making a decision and planning how to get on with it, could have helped in many ways by focusing my activities into meaningful actions and outcomes – like a laser rather than a scattergun approach.

Both of these ways of being can be less-than-resourceful or even debilitating. It's a question of what's appropriate or useful in any given situation and being flexible enough to change your preference when needed.

All of these meta programmes are useful in certain contexts and that's the key: learning to be increasingly flexible because the person with the greatest flexibility in thinking and behaviour has the greatest influence.

QUESTIONS

- 1. Where are you being too procedural and inflexible?**
- 2. Where are you being too 'options' or choice oriented?**
- 3. What do you see transforming if you were to change these?**

Associated/Disassociated

One could say that being associated is being fully immersed in an experience. As an example, if I am talking to a group, it's important that I'm fully there and present with them, as opposed to being disassociated, or not really present with them. On the other hand, if someone has experienced a traumatic event, they may live that traumatic event for years afterwards. They stay associated with it. They're seeing it in their mind's eye, feeling it in their body, living as if it was still happening, even though the trauma happened years ago. Being able to help them to disassociate from that experience can be life-changing.

At any moment in time, we're associated with one thing, and we're disassociated from something else. As I sit here writing these words, I'm associated with this book, and I'm disassociated from my partner. That's appropriate. But at some point, I need to disassociate from the writing and go back to being with my partner. Knowing how and when to

associate and disassociate from different things is an ongoing process that happens largely unconsciously.

The degree to which we're associated with outcomes that are important to us is often the degree to which we'll achieve them. If we're disassociated from an outcome, it's not going to happen. The ability to fully associate with what's important to us, and to disassociate from what's not, is an important life skill. And as leaders, coaches or even parents, noticing this in others gives us great insight into their internal world, including their state, motivation, commitment and congruence. And it gives us the meta programme to fully associate into and achieve what's truly important for ourselves.

QUESTIONS

- 1. Where are you disassociated in your life? Is it from your potential, your health, or taking responsibility for some area in your life?**
- 2. What's it like to imagine fully stepping into and associating with an outcome that's important to you and for you? (NOTE: Seeing, hearing and feeling the outcome as if it's happening now is associated)**

Visual/Auditory/Kinaesthetic/Taste/Smell

Most people prefer one sense over the others. Musicians, for example, might be more auditory. Carers might be more feelings-oriented, photographers more visual, and chefs perhaps more gustatory (taste-oriented). And this is often reflected in the language they use.

Noticing people's preferences can help us communicate with them more effectively. If we can recognise, respect and match people's preferred

senses we will be better able to teach, influence, coach or lead them.

QUESTIONS

- 1. Are you aware of your preference?**
- 2. What might happen if you paid attention to, and really honoured other people's preferences?**
- 3. When you think about an outcome or even a problem, what is your preferred way of representing it? Is it visually, auditorily or kinaesthetically, or a combination of all three?**

People/Place/Object/Activity/Time

This set of filters can affect anything from how we store memories, to what we value, prioritise and desire in our lives.

I knew someone who had an astonishing ability to remember what she was doing on any given date. She coded her memory in terms of time. When I try to remember something, I tend to think first of where I was (the place), then who I was with (the people) and then what I was doing (the activity). I might only then remember that it was the summer of 1999, if I was lucky!

When it comes to what we value, some people are object focused, dreaming about the next thing they want to buy. Others may prefer to spend their money on a holiday in a beautiful place. For some, being with friends or people is the most important thing. For others, it's all about doing the activities that they love. And then there are those who simply want to enjoy their time.

When we notice our preferences and change them, that can have a huge impact on our experience and orientation in life.

For example, I often find when working with people in a corporate environment that the task or activity is prioritised over people or relationships. That has serious consequences if left unchecked as the primary meta programme within an organisation. People know when they are not being valued. When I have brought awareness of this pattern to managers or leaders in businesses and they become cognisant of the pitfalls, they will often start valuing relationships and people over the task at hand. That goes a long way to working more harmoniously and effectively to the point that the tasks or activities are achieved with less effort, and more ease and enjoyment. We can, and in many ways we must, accomplish tasks through relationships.

EXERCISE

I hope that by now you have started to identify what some of your preferences are. What would happen if you changed them? For example, if you shifted from focusing on yourself to others, or from focusing on the past to the future? In the coming days and weeks, notice how you have a choice to shift your preferences in any given situation. Try shifting them from time to time and see how that changes your experience.

NOTE: To really master these distinctions, it can be useful to choose just one, each day, to pay attention to. This can simplify the learning process and help you master these distinctions in ways that make a real difference.

MODAL OPERATORS



Turn your obstacles into opportunities and your problems into possibilities.

—— **ROY T. BENNETT**

Modal operators are different ways or modes of operating in the world. This diagram represents two of the primary modal operators: necessity and possibility.

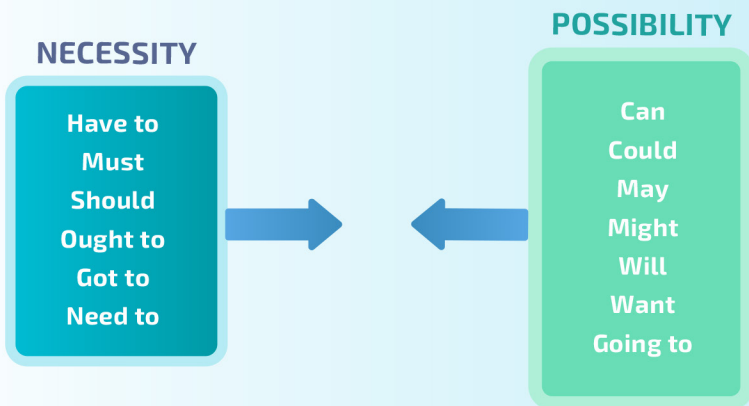
When we operate from the modal operator of necessity, we see things in terms of obligations and duties. And this is reflected in our language. We talk about having to do something. We refer to an outcome as something we should do or need to do.

When we operate from the mode of possibility, we will more often than not feel things in terms of choices and a sense of freedom. We talk about what we might or can do, what we want to do, or what we are going to do.

These are core patterns or ways of operating in the world that we fall into unconsciously. There’s no inherently right or wrong way of operating. But in any given context these habitual ways of living can be remarkably restrictive, limiting and unpleasant and create less-than-resourceful states.

When we operate from a modal operator of necessity – feeling that we have to do something, or we need to do something – there’s usually some kind of muscle tension attached. And as the co-founder of NLP John Grinder says, muscle tension is one of the three demons to personal effectiveness (the others being tunnel vision and ‘inner noise’, or what you might call internal dialogue). The modal operator of necessity can, therefore, be a less-than-resourceful way of being.

MODAL
OPERATORS



Ironically, we don't have to operate from the modal operator of necessity. We can choose to operate from possibility. This way of being does not usually have residual or unnecessary muscle tension associated with it. It's generally more resourceful than operating from a state of necessity but not always. For example, if I think and talk in terms of 'I might go to the gym' or 'I might get fit and healthy,' it's unlikely that I will in fact get healthy or fit. Operating from a state of necessity in terms of having to get to the gym or having to get fit and healthy is much more likely to achieve that outcome.

When we become aware of how we are using language and operating, we can identify whether we are operating from a modal operator of necessity or possibility. And if that is associated with feeling stuck (or a present state we don't want) we can choose to operate in a different way. The key with this is curiosity: testing out and exploring what works for us individually in different contexts.

As coaches or when we are with others who are in a stuck state, paying attention to whether they are operating from necessity or possibility can be a simple way of helping them change their state and motivation. We can support and challenge them to operate in a different way so that they can have more freedom and choice.

'Shoulding' and 'wanting to'

Many of us operate based on what we feel we should do or ought to do. I remember Tony Robbins saying in one of his courses that most people end up 'shoulding' and 'shoulding' so much, that they end up 'shoulding' all over themselves. Not a good look!

I often help participants on my retreats and courses to distinguish between the modal operator of necessity and possibility. I invite them

to feel the difference between the 'shoulds' and the 'want tos'. It's remarkable how everyone feels the difference between what they should do, and what they want to do.

The 'shoulds' normally come with some sort of tension: people look serious; have muscle tension in their faces and are somewhat rigid in their bodies. The 'want tos' come with a sense of freedom: people's faces soften, their eyes relax and twinkle; their breath and bodies soften and relax.



***There is a difference
between what you want
and what you need.***

—— **A. NASKAR**

EXERCISE

1. Think of something that you feel you ought to do. Or perhaps something that you feel you should or need to do.
2. Ask yourself: Can I do this? Might I do this? Do I want to do this? Will I do this? Am I going to do this? You don't have to follow the sequence of these questions. Be flexible and curious as you explore using different modal operators and notice the difference that makes a difference.
3. Over the coming days, pay attention to the modal operators that other people use. Lovingly, gently and with curiosity, challenge them to explore different ways of operating and see how that changes their state and their experience. You can do this through feedback such as, 'I notice you are using a lot of have to's or shoulds.' Or you might ask, 'What would happen if you didn't...?' 'Do you really want to...?' and so on.
4. Apply this to yourself. Notice your own unconscious preferences and choose to live with more possibility and freedom in the coming days. You don't have to do this, but you could! And what might happen if you did?

WELL-FORMED OUTCOMES CRITERIA



Deeper and more profound than sexuality... Deeper than the longing for social power... Deeper than the longing for possessions... Is a basic and more universal desire in human nature... The desire for an orientation... The right direction.

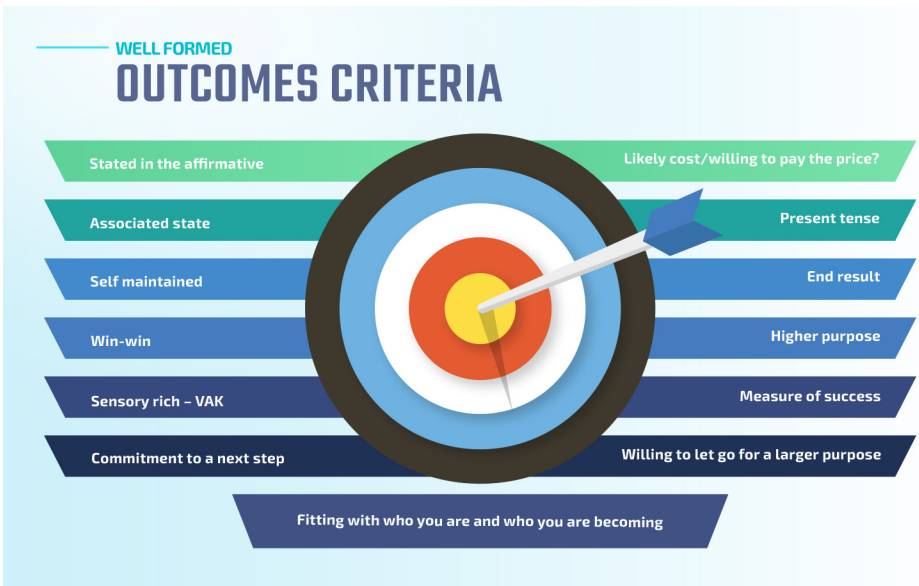
—— **WILLIAM SHELDON**

We all have outcomes that are important for us to achieve. We have intentions and goals that we want to move towards. How we represent and put language to these outcomes makes a big difference.

You might have heard of the SMART approach to setting goals. It's the idea that all goals should be: Specific, Measurable, Realistic, Achievable and Time-bound. It's one way of setting goals. But it's not statistically proven to be as effective as developing what are called well-formed outcomes in NLP. And the idea of setting realistic goals can be limiting. Do you think Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King or Nelson Mandela set realistic goals?

The well-formed outcomes criteria shown here were modelled from people who were successful at achieving what they wanted. Statistically, outcomes set using these criteria are more likely to be achieved.

Let's dig a little deeper into each criterion.



Stated in the Affirmative

It was found that successful people who achieved what they wanted stated their goals in the affirmative – what they wanted – rather than what they didn't want. In terms of filters, this is 'towards' rather than 'away from'.

Associated State

Successful people are also associated with their goals – they are fully immersed in and committed to their goals. They see, hear and feel themselves achieving them – rather than being disassociated.

Self-maintained

Self-maintained outcomes are within our control. Sometimes in business, for example, people talk about aiming to grow revenue by 50%, or increasing client acquisitions by 20%. But these things are not entirely within any individual's control. We need, then, to ask ourselves what is within our control? Which part of the system can we change? As Gandhi famously said, 'Be the change you want to see the world.' In this example, perhaps if we ourselves showed up in a powerful, engaging and supportive way with our clients, that would likely result in greater profits or client acquisition. The part that is within our control is how we show up; what the potential clients choose to do is up to them.

Win-win

The principle here is about ensuring that whatever we do is both good for ourselves and good for others.

In the lead-up to the 2008 financial crisis, the behaviour of the big banks was a 'win' for them, but it was a 'loss' for society, individuals and the poor. We all have the ability to operate on a win-lose transactional basis. Perhaps I lose and someone else wins, or perhaps I win and someone

else loses. These kinds of win-lose relationships are not sustainable or healthy in the long term.

When it comes to sustainability and what works, win-win relationships are essential. This book, for example, is a win for me – I get the satisfaction of creating something that shares my learning with the world and I may gain some clients from it. It's a win for readers who get to learn about NLP in a way that can transform their lives. And in fact, my thinking is that it's a win-win-win. The benefits of this process and book can go far beyond anyone reading this.

Sensory-rich – Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic (VAK)

A sensory-rich outcome is one that we can see, hear and feel. When we can see the outcome and have a sense of what it feels and sounds like to achieve it, that helps us to be associated with the outcome. It gives us an internal representation of the future that we can experience in the present; one that develops motivation, action and a resourceful state.

Commitment to a Next Step

We're far less likely to achieve outcomes if we don't work out what our next step is and commit to it. Taking the first step is like flipping over the first domino that sets the outcome in progress. As they say, a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step.

Likely Cost/Willing to Pay the Price

Every outcome we choose to move towards has a cost. That could be a cost to ourselves in terms of the time, energy or money we'll need to commit, or the loss of freedom to put those resources to work elsewhere. Any outcomes or projects that we move towards could have implications for our relationships. Being mindful of the likely cost and being willing to pay that price is an important criterion that can

determine whether we will succeed or not. Have you ever overcommitted or realised you've taken on more than you wanted to? Are you perhaps doing that somewhere in your life or business now?

Present Tense

Often, we talk about our goals in the future tense. We say, 'I'm going to _____' or 'I'd like to _____'. Expressing things in the present can give us a very different relationship to our goals. By saying 'I am' doing something – whether that's speaking fluently and confidently in public, travelling the world or having a child – we experience the outcome in an associated way. Stating it in the present rather than the future tense has a profound effect on our state and how we feel about moving towards what we want: it's happening now, even though we are talking about an outcome in the future. In this way, we remain associated with the outcome and bring the future into the present, rather than remaining disassociated about an outcome we 'want to achieve' in the future.

End Result

Being clear about the end result is important. For example, if my goal is to run a successful retreat, it will help me get there if I know the end result I am after: I can see people smiling and enjoying learning from and with me, I feel inspired and confident, I'm having an impact on the participants that ripples out into the world in meaningful ways. I can see others coaching and sharing and engaging others in ways that change their thinking, their state and the world around them. Now that I know the end result, I know how and where I need to change if I am not seeing these results.

The Higher Purpose

Having a higher purpose for what we do gives us a deep sense of motivation and meaning. It ensures our goals are 'win-win'. For example,

the higher purpose of my writing this book is to help people live out their vision and live with a deep sense of purpose and passion so that they can make the world a better place with more love and joy, especially for those who are less fortunate or suffering. So, the outcome is a book; but the purpose is to transform people's lives around the world.

Willing to Let Go for a Higher Purpose

This criterion requires us to be committed to, and clear about, what our higher purpose is in any endeavour. But it also ensures that we stay flexible. Take the example of me writing this book. If in the process I find that I am not enjoying it and it becomes a burden (for example, I find myself operating from the modal operator of necessity and in a stuck state), then it could be better for me to let go of the book project and find other ways of transforming people's lives. That's the larger purpose. How we get there is not as important as the purpose itself. And remember, it has to be a win-win!

Measure of Success

It's important that we have specific ways of knowing that we are achieving our goals. Taking the example of becoming a successful speaker, that measure might be seeing people smiling and nodding appreciatively, or getting positive feedback about the impact that the speech had.

Fitting with Who You Are and Who You're Becoming

It's important to check that our goals are a match with who we are, and who we're becoming. They must fit with us at every level. If they are not, we will be less motivated and less likely to achieve them and quite possibly unfulfilled when we do eventually achieve them.

EXERCISE

1. Think of an outcome that is important to you and for you.
2. Review the well-formed outcomes criteria list and check whether the way you are thinking about your outcome is well-formed. It's likely not going to be 100%.
3. For any of the criteria that are not met (in the way you are thinking about or expressing your outcome), explore how changing them makes a difference for you. For example, if you didn't have a larger purpose, how does thinking of the larger purpose make a difference? You might want to write down your outcome or say it out loud as you incorporate the well-formed criteria.
4. Now that your outcome is well-formed, how do you think and feel differently about it?
5. Make sure you take that next step right away!
6. What are your larger learnings from this exercise? How do you see this being useful in the coming days?

CHANGING FRAMES



*There is nothing good or bad
but thinking makes it so.*

—— **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

FRAMING AND REFRAMING

We're constantly framing and reframing our experience and other people's, often without realising that's what we're doing. When we bring conscious awareness to how we're framing or reframing experience we can create deep and profound transformation.

To take a personal example, I had a traumatic childhood. As I explained earlier, I experienced violence, emotional neglect and abandonment. When I used to look back on that part of my life, I thought of my suffering in terms of being in unbelievable pain and being alone. The frame – that my suffering was painful – was plainly true. But it wasn't very useful (or 'resourceful') for me to think of it in that way. It didn't give me anywhere to go with my experience. I was stuck in that frame!

So, I eventually took onboard the presupposition that my suffering had a purpose. And the question (rather than being why me?) became, what larger purpose does this suffering serve? And in that way, I completely changed the frame of those childhood experiences. I found a purpose behind my suffering: that it had given me the gift of empathy, of caring for others and of being able to help others through their suffering. The suffering helped me learn and grow in ways that I would never have

otherwise experienced.

Rethinking suffering as something that can actually help others is a powerful way of reframing our experience.

By way of another example, I've been working a lot with people recently who lost themselves in the process of grieving. Grief comes in waves and can be profoundly debilitating. I know because I've been there! Helping them reframe their grief has been vital for them to begin moving through their present or stuck state, and out the other side. Rather than seeing grief as loss, we can reframe it as a natural process and also as an invitation to connect more deeply with ourselves and to remain energetically connected with the perceived loss. That can bring real comfort. Rather than being in an unresourceful state, grief becomes a way to invite in, and be present with, the full range of emotions that we as humans get to experience. And that can help us connect and empathise with other people more deeply.

Being able to help others reframe experience is an important skill if we want to coach or lead people. When we recognise that someone is framing their experiences in an unhelpful or unresourceful way, we can help them enrich their internal representation of those experiences (be that grief, suffering or even outcomes). By helping them to reframe and make new meaning out of their experience, we can help them move through their stuck state towards a more resourceful state. How we do that is of course very nuanced and dependent on the particular person and their circumstances.

Pre-framing

Pre-framing is where you frame a future experience that you haven't yet had. For example, before delivering a course on leadership, you could say to the participants: 'I'm excited to be welcoming you to this

course on leadership where you'll be discovering many ways in which you can become increasingly influential. This is a challenging time in our history, and we need leaders like you, ready to step up, speak the truth and point to hope. We need leaders that have learnt to love and are ready to lead with love.' In this way you have set up (or pre-framed) the experience being about influence, stepping up, speaking the truth and leading with love.



Frames trump facts.

—— **JUDITH DELOZIER**

EXERCISE

1. Think of an issue you currently have in your life.
2. Now imagine all the ways in which this could be an opportunity in disguise, learning in progress, a path to greater awareness. How does considering these other frames change your experience?
3. Notice how you are constantly framing and reframing in your conversations. Be mindful of the frames you are choosing and choose powerful and expansive frames wherever possible.
4. Can you invite others into more powerful and expansive frames by chunking up and asking better questions? Of course, you can! (You'll find a section all about 'chunking up' and 'chunking down' at the end of this chapter.)

THE DRAMA TRIANGLE



Survivors are often good at both resolving and generating crises. While this capacity to handle crises can make you a good emergency room worker or ambulance driver, it can also be a way for you to keep yourself from feeling. If you are addicted to intensity and drama ... you may be running from yourself.

—— **ELLEN BASS**

The Drama Triangle is a model for understanding how relationships can function and, perhaps more importantly, how they often dysfunction.

The model was developed in the 1970s in a field of therapy known as Transactional Analysis, which focused on understanding the dynamics at play with adult-child relationships and within families. It's a model that can be applied to understanding relationships at many levels: from families and the workplace to international relations.

Within the Drama Triangle, there are three roles: the victim, the persecutor and the rescuer. Often, someone will fall into the role of victim and attract a rescuer. The rescuer will then come in (sometimes invited, sometimes uninvited) and offer solutions or try to solve the problem for the victim. But this has consequences. This kind of rescuing keeps the victim in the position of a victim. For example, if a child constantly calls on their mother to help them out, and she continues to, the child may never learn to be resourceful and stand on their own two feet. And the mother gets stuck in the role of always being the rescuer.

Often, though, the victim will shift from victim to persecutor. They might turn around to the rescuer and blame them because their suggestion or solution didn't work. And then the rescuer becomes the victim while the victim becomes the persecutor.

We tend to favour one role or another. And these roles are interchangeable depending on the context and people we are around. When I was a child, I was a persecutor. I was very aggressive. I was violent. I attacked people. That was how I managed to navigate relationships in the world.

THE DRAMA TRIANGLE



As I grew up, I realised that I couldn't go around bullying people and fighting. I then became a victim. I felt depressed and stuck. I didn't know how to navigate the world. And I would seek out people who could rescue me or help me.

When I first discovered NLP and coaching, I fell into the role of rescuer. I realised I had acquired amazing skills and wanted to rescue people from experiencing pain and suffering.

When I came across the concept of the Drama Triangle it illustrated how when we fall into these roles, we end up playing a transactional game. Each role gets a payoff. The victim gets attention. The rescuer feels important. The persecutor has a sense of power or control over others. But ultimately these roles do not serve us or others at a higher level. They're not aligned with us being fully functioning healthy humans in a healthy relationship with others.

The way out of the Drama Triangle is first through awareness:

recognising when we start playing a role. For example, I thought I had stopped being a rescuer many years ago until I caught myself breaking up a dog fight in India. It was a dangerous role to take on. If the persecutor who I pulled off the victim had turned around and bitten me, I could have gotten injured and ended up the victim. The incident was a wake-up call of how deep these patterns run and how unconscious many of our patterns are.

Once we recognise that we are playing a role, we can change. If our tendency is to be a victim, we can decide to be 'victorious' (for example, we can help ourselves deal with our own problems or ask for help explicitly, rather than simply expecting it and remaining a victim). If we have a habit of playing the rescuer we can become 'resourceful' (for example, learn to coach and help others find the solutions themselves). And if we see ourselves acting as a persecutor, we can decide to become potent, powerful and purposeful instead.

Ultimately, we escape the Drama Triangle when we stop playing the game. Instead of taking on a role, we can be ourselves: present, resourceful, open, curious, honest and committed to the truth.

When we notice that someone else is playing the game by acting as the victim, we resist our instinct of coming in as the rescuer. And that's where we set healthy boundaries. We make space for each of us to take responsibility for ourselves.

QUESTIONS

1. Think about your relationships with people – be that family, friends or at work. Where do you see yourself taking on the role of victim, rescuer or persecutor? Which is your preference, in what context and why?
2. With this new awareness, how do you see yourself stepping out of this transactional game and now setting healthy boundaries in ways that work for you and others?



*Perception is a mirror not a fact.
And what we look on is our state of
mind, reflected outwards.*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Z: TEST-OPERATE- TEST-EXIT



The person who fights monsters should make sure that in the process, he does not become a monster himself. Because when you stare down at an abyss, the abyss stares back at you.

—— **FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE**

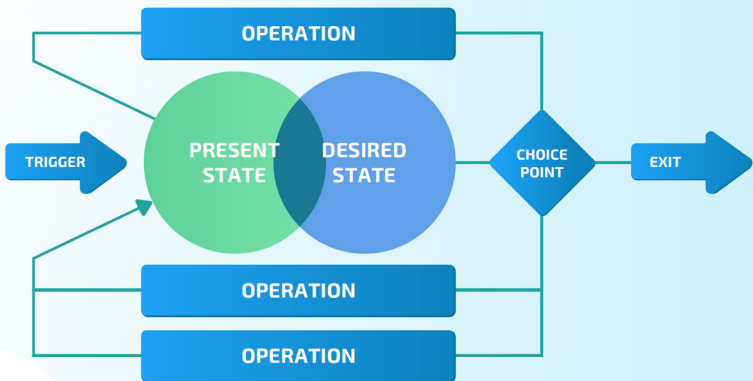
TOTE or 'test-operate-test-exit' is a model for guiding behaviour. It's based on computer science, with binary options determining different potential operations leading to different results. You could think of it like a computer programme that you can 'run' for yourself to help you reach your desired outcomes.

So how does it work? As we navigate the world, there will be times when we become aware that our present state does not match our desired state. There's often a **trigger** that gives us this awareness. Perhaps someone cuts us up in traffic and we catch ourselves reacting with anger or frustration. Or perhaps we find ourselves overwhelmed with all the work we have to do.

Once we notice this mismatch between our present state and our desired state, we can choose to do something about it. We can take a step – or **operation** – in order to bring us to our desired state. That could be something as simple as taking a deep breath.

With the TOTE model, we then **test** whether that action has had the desired effect by checking whether we are in our desired state. **If the answer is yes**, we can **exit** the process of testing and operating. **If the answer is no** – perhaps we're still feeling frustrated or overwhelmed – clearly, we need to take **another operation**. And we can keep operating and testing in this way until we have brought ourselves into our desired

TEST OPERATE TEST EXIT
TOTE



state.

It may be that taking the same step (or operation) several times – such as deep breaths – will work for us. But in general, the more operations or behaviours we have access to, the more likely we are to achieve our desired state. For example, if deep breaths don't work, we can ask ourselves, 'What might the unconscious positive intention behind the person's dangerous driving be? What if their daughter is ill in hospital and they are rushing to be with her?' Seeing things from a different perspective, and stepping into their shoes, might help us start to calm down. Another strategy might be to respond by thinking, 'Maybe it's a message for me to slow down.'

TOTE is, then, a model for helping us to expand our flexibility or number of operations, so that we can experience our desired state and achieve the outcomes we want. **The more operations we have and the more flexible we can be in our strategies, the better our chances of succeeding.**

As coaches, if a client says, 'I'm stuck. I can't do X, Y and Z,' often the first response or operation we suggest won't work. When people come to us with deep-seated beliefs or trauma that prevents them from moving forwards in the ways they want, we need to be extremely flexible in how we help them change.

The TOTE approach encapsulates the four pillars of NLP: sensitivity (when we test to see if the present state matches the desired state); flexibility (in exploring different operations); maintaining rapport as we support someone to move towards the various operations and outcomes (as a means to helping achieve a desired state).

EXERCISE

1. What is a challenge you currently face?
2. Now generate at least seven options for how you might begin to move towards a solution. This could be somewhat challenging. That's great! It's meant to be, in order to get you thinking creatively and beyond the limitations that were previously constraining you.
3. Notice how generating multiple options/operations opens up new possibilities in your thinking and behaviour.
4. Take some action to move towards a solution.
5. Enjoy and celebrate your ever-increasing learning and flexibility!



Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

NLP EYE MOVEMENTS



*The soul, fortunately, has
an interpreter – often an
unconscious but still a faithful
interpreter – in the eye.*

——— **CHARLOTTE BRONTE**

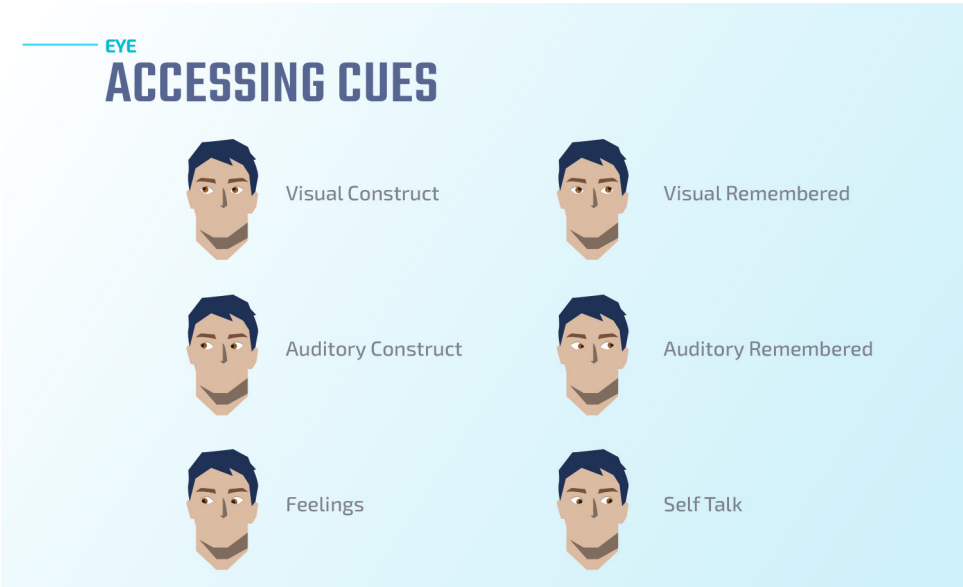
The founders of NLP John Grinder and Richard Bandler studied how people moved their eyes when they were in conversation with others. They discovered that people's eyes didn't move randomly when they were talking. Rather, they identified patterns and relationships between where people's eyes were looking and the sensory-based language they were using. **Their observations revealed that the different directions people moved their eyes (up, sideways, down) correlated directly with how they would process their experience in**

their thinking (visual, auditory or kinaesthetic).

The eye movement patterns are shown in this diagram. The patterns are not universal (there are always some anomalies) but Grinder and Bandler did observe strong correlations in the majority of the people they studied.

Typically, according to Grinder and Bandler, when people raise their eyes, they are seeing something in their mind's eye. When they look up and to their left (our right as we look at them) they are typically recalling something visually. And when they look up and to their right (our left) they are constructing a mental image of something in their imagination.

When people's eyes look to one side they're typically hearing something. If their eyes go to their left, they are remembering something auditorily: perhaps a sound or a song. When they move to their right, they are constructing something auditorily: perhaps they are imagining what something will sound like.



When people's eyes look down to their right, they are generally feeling something. And when they seem to stare down and to their left, they are generally talking to themselves (internal dialogue).

Understanding what is happening internally when people's eyes move in different directions allows us to match, pace and honour their mental processes. When we notice someone's eye movements, we realise that they are processing something, and we can give them the time and space to do that. It allows us to notice the way someone is processing their experience. Perhaps their eye movements indicate that they are visualising something (looking up) or that they are deep in their feelings (down and to the right). That gives us a deeper insight into and respect for what's going on for someone and allows us to be fully present with them.

As a coach, it allows us to be sensitive and flexible in the way we help them achieve their outcomes. We can develop rapport by matching their preference. For example, we can use visual language if we notice that they are constructing things visually. Where appropriate, we could help them change how they're processing; or find ways to enhance how they're processing using that particular filter. For example, if someone is talking about something difficult and their eyes indicate that they are feeling it, we could steer them towards thinking about it visually – reframe things by asking a question that prompts them to think about the outcome visually. We could ask them questions like, 'What would you like to see happening?' which changes the frame.

EXERCISE

This is an exercise for you to do with someone else. Ask them the following questions. Notice what they are doing with their eyes and what that might say about how they are processing your questions internally.

1. What colour is your front door? (visual recall)
2. How many windows do you have in your house? (visual recall)
3. What will you look like in 15 years? (visual construct)
4. What do you imagine you will be doing in a month's time? (visual construct)
5. What does your favourite music sound like? (auditory recall)
6. What would your voice sound like with marbles in your mouth? (auditory construct)
7. When you're frustrated and talk to yourself, what kind of

voice do you use? (internal dialogue)

8. What does it feel like to have a nice hot shower?
(kinaesthetic)

9. How do you feel about your loved ones? (kinaesthetic)



*The face is the mirror of the
mind, and eyes without speaking
confess the secrets of the heart.*

——— **ST. JEROME**

SUBMODALITIES



Working with submodalities involves learning a technology – a way of teaching your brain how to do something in a methodical and systematic way. This is all about utilising the mental processes which are yours to influence the direction of change in your life.

—— **RICHARD BANDLER**

Most of us are so consumed by the external world and what we want to change in our lives ‘out there’ that we’re completely unaware of how we’re organising our internal world. But NLP – being the study of how we’re doing what we’re doing – is particularly interested in the difference that makes a difference internally. NLP gives us remarkably helpful insights into the structure of the internal representations through which we navigate the world.

We filter the world with our five senses: sight, sound, touch/feeling, smell and taste. We call these our primary senses or modalities.

Having just discussed eye-accessing cues, we know that people process their experience internally, using these different modalities: visual (sight), auditory (sound) and kinaesthetic (feeling or touch). **The submodalities are the finer distinctions within those modalities.**

Visual Submodalities

As someone processes things visually, there are finer distinctions within the visual picture or movie they’re creating in their heads. The table here

— VISUAL
SUBMODALITIES

No	DESCRIPTIONS	A	B	No	DESCRIPTIONS	A	B
01	B/W or Colour			09	Associated?		
02	Near or Far			10	Focused?		
03	Bright or Dim			11	Focus Changing?		
04	Location			12	Framed or Panoramic		
05	Size of Picture			13	Movie or Still		
06	Movie Speed			14	Viewing Angle		
07	Contrast			15	Number of Pictures		
08	3D or 2D						

shows those visual submodalities. It turns out that how we represent, think about or visualise an outcome (or problem) makes a BIG difference in how we feel about it and therefore act. If, for example, we visualise something in black and white, far away, dim, small, or in two dimensions as opposed to 3D, the chances are this will make our level of association or our feeling about an outcome much diminished.

Whereas when we see things in colour, near to us, bright, right up front, big, as a movie rather than a still and in 3D, we're much more likely to have stronger feelings. And if it's an outcome, we're potentially much more likely to take action towards it.

Of course, we don't always want to increase our level of association or feeling with something we think about. I once worked with a woman who was traumatised because her daughter had been raped and she couldn't get over it. The way that she was thinking about that was in colour, near, bright, big, in a movie, in 3D and fully associated (in other words, seeing it through her own eyes as if she were there). I helped her change those submodalities so that she started to see it as dim, far off, small, disassociated and so on. Now she has the internal flexibility to disassociate from and frame that experience in a way that helps her feel resourceful as opposed to traumatised.

There's no right or wrong about how we represent things. It's all about noticing the difference that makes a difference in someone's state.

EXERCISE

Think of an outcome that's important to you and allow yourself to form a mental picture of it.

Notice how you have represented it in your mind's eye. Is it black and white or in colour? Near or far? And so on. Go through each of the submodalities in the table and note how you are representing the outcome in column A. This gives you an understanding of how you are visualising your outcome.

Now experiment with changing each of the submodalities and notice what kind of a difference this makes to how you feel about the outcome. For example, instead of seeing the outcome in black and white (if that was your initial preference) visualise it in colour. Does that make you feel differently? Make a note in column B.

Each time you experiment with a different submodality, bring your mental image back to how it was originally (for example, if you switched from black and white to colour, bring it back to black and white). In other words, only experiment with changing one modality at a time.

Continue through the list and notice which submodalities have the biggest impact on your state when you change them.

Make a note in column B.

Pick the submodalities that make the biggest difference· the ones that make you feel more associated and positive about the outcome when you change them. Perhaps that means changing your mental image into full colour, bright, big, 3D and a moving image. How do you feel now?



We can learn how to use our control over submodalities to manifest the kinds of feelings we need when we need them. I like to call this running your own brain.

—— **RICHARD BANDLER**

Auditory Submodalities

AUDITORY

SUBMODALITIES

No	DESCRIPTIONS	A	B	No	DESCRIPTIONS	A	B
01	Location			09	Pauses		
02	Direction			10	Cadence		
03	Internal / External			11	Duration		
04	Volume			12	Uniqueness		
05	Speed						
06	Pitch						
07	Tonality						
08	Timbre						



Thinking should always be an active process where you think in a way that gets you the results you want.

RICHARD BANDLER

EXERCISE

1. Now try exploring some of the auditory submodalities in the same way that you did with the visual submodalities. Take as an example your 'inner critic' or inner voice: the voice in your head that tends to judge you. Notice where it is located. Perhaps it's in front of you, behind or above you. What direction does it move? Front to back? Left to right? Is it internal or external? What's the volume? And so on. Make a note of this in column A.
2. Now try changing some of those, one at a time. Maybe turn the volume down or turn it up. If it's a low-pitched voice, change it to a high-pitched voice. If it's slow and judgemental, make it really fast. Or perhaps make the tonality sound like Mickey Mouse. Notice what difference each of these changes makes to how you feel. Make a note of this – and of the most significant ones – in column B.
3. Now try changing all of the modalities that make the biggest difference. How do you feel about your inner critic now?

Kinaesthetic Submodalities

We can use the kinaesthetic submodalities to explore how we can manage or change our state. Being able to model the kinaesthetics of a state then, can be very useful. If someone struggles with anxiety, for example, we can ask them how and where they feel it in their body. They might tell us it's located on their belly, it feels really tight, the movement is inwards, it lasts for quite a long time before it dissipates, it feels hot and so on.

With this information, we can experiment with different 'operations' to help get them out of that state (applying the TOTE model: Test-Operate-Test-Exit). We could ask them, 'What happens if you take a breath?' Or 'What happens when you release your breath?' In this way, we can find out what works for them and give them the tools and the flexibility to deal with their anxiety in different ways. It can also be helpful to model and anchor a resourceful state, like confidence.

KINESTHETIC

SUBMODALITIES

No	DESCRIPTIONS	A	B	No	DESCRIPTIONS	A	B
01	Location			09	Pressure / Heat		
02	Size			10	Weight		
03	Shape						
04	Intensity						
05	Steadiness						
06	Movement						
07	Duration						
08	Vibration						

EXERCISE

1. Remember a time when you were really confident.
2. Associate into this memory fully, as if you are there now. See what you were seeing, hear what you were hearing and feel what you were feeling. Notice where you feel that sense of confidence in your body. Is it a light or a heavy feeling? Go through each of the submodalities and notice the difference that makes a difference in how you feel.
3. Use this as a resource when you next want to access that feeling of confidence.



Learning is discovering that something is possible.

FRITZ PERLS

PARTS INTEGRATION



Integration is a basic law of life; when we resist it, disintegration is the natural result, both inside and outside of us. Thus, we come to the concept of harmony through integration.

—— **NORMAN COUSINS**

Parts Integration is a model for resolving internal conflict.

From time to time, most of us will feel some sort of internal conflict. One part of us that wants one thing and another part that wants another. As coaches, we can hear people presenting these kinds of internal conflicts when they say things like, 'On the one hand, this is important; and on the other hand, this is.' This sense of inner conflict may also be reflected in their nonverbals. Perhaps they're positioning the different parts of themselves in different hands.

Parts Integration is a process for integrating these different parts so that rather than being in conflict with ourselves, we can be at one with ourselves.

Here's how it works.

Step 1: Identify the parts in conflict with each other.

For example, maybe there's a part of me that's excited and wants to learn NLP, and there's a part of me that's a bit concerned and confused.

Step 2: Check to see if they are willing to communicate.

This is an internal check. I'd be asking if the part of me that wants to learn NLP is willing to communicate with the part of me that is a bit concerned and confused. Make sure they are willing to communicate with each other. This is pacing each part and can sometimes take a little time.

Step 3: Convert the parts to metaphor.

This might be a symbol, image or object. For example, I might imagine

the part of me that wants to learn NLP as a book, and the part of me that is reluctant as a question mark. As you elicit the metaphors, imagine placing one in each hand.

Step 4: Ask what the positive intention is for each part.

You may recall that one of the NLP Presuppositions (or beliefs of excellence) is that behind every behaviour is an unconscious positive intention. In this case, the positive intention behind my desire to learn NLP is fairly obvious: I want to learn, grow and help people. It can be harder to see the positive intention behind the part that is potentially sabotaging us: in this case, my concerns and confusion. But if I ask myself to really think about the unconscious positive intention, I may see that my reservations are because I want to protect myself or to really understand what it's all about before I commit.

Step 5: Ask what is the resource or gift that the first part (the book in this case) has that the second part (question mark) is willing to accept and embrace.

This can take time. To take my example, the part of me that wants to learn NLP could have the gift of trust or openness. Once I've identified the potential gift (or resource), I need to ask if the part of me that has reservations is willing to accept the gift of trust and openness. If it's a no, you'll need to keep exploring what gift would be accepted and embraced; again a pacing exercise. If it's a yes, we can move to the next step.

Step 6: Give the gift.

Step 7: Ask what happens as the second part (question mark) accepts the gift.

Continuing with my example, the metaphor of the question mark could change to a question mark with a smile. It's very significant when our metaphors change.

Step 8: Now reverse the order and ask what gift the second part (question mark) has that the first part (book) is willing to accept and embrace.

In my example, the question mark (now with a smile) perhaps has the gift of time for the book: it's an invitation to slow down rather than rush ahead and try learning everything all at once. Once I've identified the gift, I then need to ask if the book is willing to accept and embrace the gift of time. As long as the answer is yes, we then...

Then repeat Steps 6 and 7 for the other part.

In our example, the question mark (now with a smile) gives the gift of time to the book. Again, as with step 7, ask what happens as it accepts the gift. In my example, the book perhaps opens up and changes into a soft, gentle book. So again, the metaphor changes.

Step 9: Bring hands together.

Often our hands will naturally come together as these gifts are exchanged and integrated. If you are coaching someone and their hands do not come together naturally, you can invite them to bring them together. This represents the different parts that are now communicating. They have a gift for each other, they've exchanged and embraced the gifts and are now integrated.

Step 10: Bring your hands into your chest ... And ask 'that's like

what?’

When we put the different parts in our hands, we’re disassociating from the parts that are in conflict. When we bring them back inside (by bringing our hands to our bodies) we are associating with and integrating them back into ourselves.

By then asking ‘that’s like what?’ we are inviting another integrative metaphor. In my example, it might be that it’s like a breath of fresh air or sitting down in a meadow to relax and enjoy the richness of life.



Wellness is the complete integration of body, mind and spirit – the realisation that everything we do, think, feel and believe has an effect on our state of well-being.

—— **GREG ANDERSON**

EXERCISE

Identify an internal conflict. Follow these steps for yourself. If you can, find a partner to do this with. It can be easier and more powerful to have someone guide you through the process.

Feel free to reach out to me and my team if you feel that you would benefit from some support working through any of these models at www.tristansoames.com. We have a team of expert coaches able to help and guide you. We take pride in finding the right coach for everyone.

PERCEPTUAL POSITIONS



*Flexibility comes from having
multiple options; wisdom comes
from having multiple perspectives.*

—— **ROBERT DILTS**

Perceptual Positions is a model for resolving external conflict. Most of us at some point in our lives experience challenging relationships. The question is, how can we resolve these kinds of challenges? Sometimes we never do, which can be a real shame. Sometimes we just let time be the healer. Sometimes we end the relationship because we don't know how to resolve these conflicts or differences, or because we have decided to protect ourselves by setting healthy boundaries.

Perceptual Positions was modelled from people who were experts in conflict resolution. It's a quick and easy method for resolving conflicts or challenging relationships with other people.

This is how it works. Try it out for yourself and again, ideally find a partner to guide you through the process.

Before you start

Identify a relationship you have that's less than ideal, or a conflict you have with someone.

Step 1: First position

Consider your position in the relationship. What's your story? How does it feel for you? What's your perspective and why is it not working?

Step 2: Second position

Now step into the other person's shoes and describe what it's like for them from an associated perspective. This means rather than saying, 'They would be feeling X, Y and Z,' you talk as if you are that person. For example, you might say, 'As Linda (the second position person) I am feeling that Dave (the first position person) is not hearing me, and doesn't care about me.'

Fully stepping into the other person's shoes can be transformational. And it can also be quite challenging. When we're in conflict we rarely fully empathise with the other person and imagine what it's like for them. Instead, we end up getting stuck in our own perspective (first position). By letting go of our own perspective we get to see what's true for the

other person, what it feels like for them, and what they're seeing and experiencing differently. This can be insightful and very useful, as it offers up learning and solutions as to how we might change the dynamics of the relationship.

Step 3: Third position or meta position

Now adopt the perspective or position of a fly on the wall. Take a few steps back from the first and second positions and notice what you notice is happening from here. What insights can you glean from this objective perspective?

Step 4: What's 'the more – the more'?

Consider the systemic dynamic in the relationship, or 'the more – the more'. This captures the way that the more the first person does something, the more the second person does something, and vice versa. Once you identify 'the more – the more,' you'll see how the relationship is dysfunctional, and what the first position is doing to sustain this dysfunction. As they say, it takes two to tango!

It's important that you stay in the third position at this stage as if you were the fly on the wall. When you talk about your personal role in the relationship, refer to yourself as 'the first position' (or Dave in this case) rather than as 'me' or 'I'. This keeps you disassociated rather than getting sucked back into your own limited perspective.

Step 5: If there were a larger learning, what might that be?

Staying in the third position (the fly on the wall), consider what might be the larger learning for the first position: something that would

not only make a difference to the relationship but could also make a difference in other areas of their life. For example, being more trusting, compassionate or patient.

The question I would ask here is, 'If there was a larger learning on offer for Dave/first position from this experience (one that would make a difference here but also in other contexts) what might that larger learning be?'

Step 6: And is ___ able, willing and committed to taking that larger learning on board?

Stay in the third position and ask Dave/first position:

- a) Is Dave able to take on board this larger learning?
- b) Is Dave willing to take on board this larger learning?
- c) Is Dave committed to taking on board this larger learning?

Take the time you need to get a 'yes' to each question before moving on to the next.

Step 7: Having taken onboard the objective third position and got a commitment to a larger learning, now step back into your own shoes

Having taken the objective third position, now step back into your own shoes with this larger learning in place. And what's that like now?

The first time I ever used this model it was transformational. I stepped into my grandparents' shoes. We'd had a difficult relationship ever since I was sent to live with them. For the first time, I really saw things from

their perspective. I realised that they were doing the best they could for me with the resources they had; a powerful example of the NLP presupposition that 'people make the best choices they can with the resources they have'. They weren't giving me the kind of love or attention that I needed or wanted, but that was because I was looking for parental love which they simply couldn't provide.

The process allowed me to release the anger and judgement I felt and see my grandparents in a new light. My relationship with myself also changed as a result. I released a great deal of resentment and became much more accepting of my grandparents, and they must have sensed that.

I subsequently had many larger learnings. I learnt to become more empathetic, understanding and compassionate of other people's unconscious positive intent and perspective. I realised that I had to find other ways of getting the love that I was seeking from them. And I learnt that I had to be an adult in my life and take responsibility for myself rather than blaming others for my misfortune or feelings.

ANCHORING



We can endure almost anything if we are centred, if we have some focus in our life. You can endure if you have an anchor.

——— **RENITA J. WEEMS**

Anchoring is a way of linking our behaviour, response or emotion with a trigger. It's based on Pavlov's discovery that by ringing a bell before feeding a dog, and by doing this several times, the dog will start to associate the bell with food. Like dogs, humans can and do condition themselves to associate behaviours with triggers. This happens unconsciously much of the time, but we can also create these anchors

consciously.

Say you want to find a way to access confidence. You could start by remembering an occasion in the past when you felt confident. You would then choose an anchor – for example pulling gently on your small finger – and do this as you relive the memory of that time when you were confident in as much detail as possible.

The more intensely you feel that sense of confidence, the more you would pull your finger. This is a way of anchoring the feeling of confidence to the act and sensation of pulling your finger. The idea is that by repeating this exercise over and over you start to hardwire the connection between pulling your finger and feeling confident. Anchoring can be a useful tool to use with clients in order to access a resourceful state.

EXERCISE

Identify an internal conflict you have. Follow these steps for yourself. If you can, find a partner to do this with. It can be easier and more powerful to have someone guide you through the process.

Feel free to reach out to me and my team if you feel that you would benefit from some support working through any of these models at www.tristansoames.com.

CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE

The Circle of Excellence, like anchoring, is another powerful process for accessing and spatially anchoring a desired state. This is how it works.

Step 1: Think of a state that you would like to be able to access on demand.

Maybe it's confidence or the ability to be fully present. Maybe it's something completely different.

Step 2: Now in your imagination, draw a circle in front of you on the ground.

This is your 'Circle of Excellence'.

Step 3: Imagine putting into that circle all your memories or experiences of that desired state – any relevant resources.

Fill the circle with everything you can think of that represents your desired state.

For example, if you want to access confidence, you might put into the

circle memories of times when you were really confident, perhaps some energy and any mentors or people whom you admire for their confidence.

Step 4: When you're ready, step into the circle. As you do, fully embody and associate into all of these resources, experiences or memories.

Feel that state of, say, confidence in every fibre of your being.

Step 5: Step out of the circle. Are there any other resources or memories you might want to add into the circle?

For example, you might want to add a light beam coming up from the ground. Or perhaps you come up with more memories of feeling confident, inspired or influential. Add anything you like!

Step 6: Step back into the circle and fully experience your desired state with all the resources, experiences and memories.

Repeat step 6 three or four more times, making sure each time you are feeling fully confident/inspired/resourceful.

Step 7: Now imagine folding up the circle and putting it in your back pocket.

Anytime you need to, you can pull the circle out of your pocket, put it on the floor and step into it in order to have access to confidence, or whatever state you chose.

Step 8: Think of a situation in the future where you might be feeling less than resourceful, where you will need to access, for example, confidence.

Perhaps it's a meeting or a challenging conversation. Notice how you feel about that situation. Imagine it as a place on the ground next to your Circle of Excellence.

Step 9: Now step into your Circle of Excellence and fully associate into, for example, confidence. And from there, feeling fully confident, step into the future situation bringing with you all the resources and feelings. Notice how you feel.

Stepping into the Circle of Excellence will allow you to access the resource of, say, confidence. Perhaps you feel comfortable. Maybe your body posture changes and you feel calm. With these resources, you can then step into the future situation you had previously had concerns about. Notice what it's like bringing this confidence with you. How does it look and feel now, compared with when you first thought about it? It should be significantly different.

CHUNKING UP AND CHUNKING DOWN



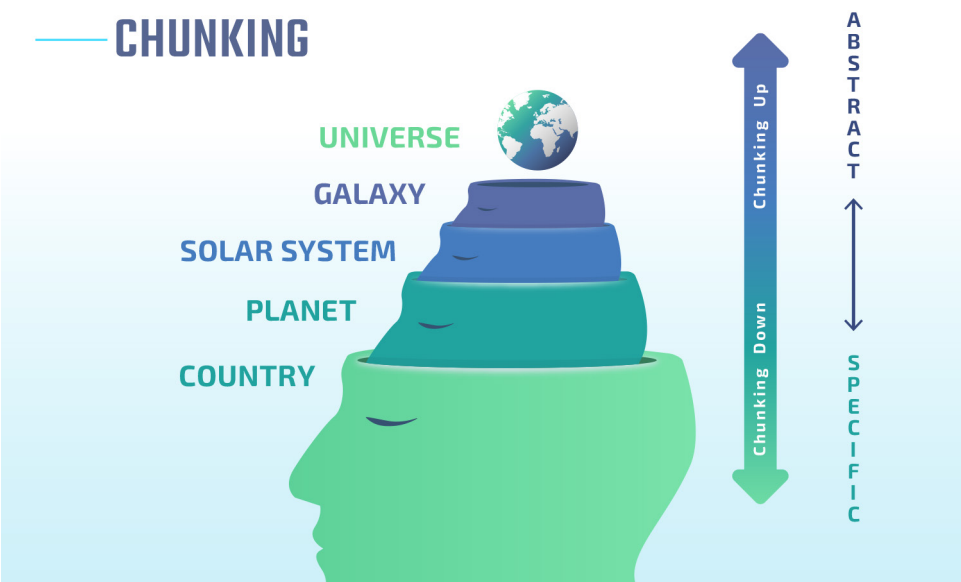
One of the first steps toward gaining expertise in maths and science is to create conceptual chunks – mental leaps that unite separate bits of information through meaning. Once you chunk an idea or concept, you don't need to remember all the little underlying details; you've got the main idea – the chunk – and that's enough.

—— **BARBARA OAKLEY**

I wrote about the distinction between big chunk and small chunk in the section on Thinking and Communication Filters (or meta programmes). Essentially, big chunk is focusing on the big picture and small chunk is focusing on the details.

People tend to have a preference either for big chunk or small chunk in certain contexts. If we are talking to someone with a preference for big chunk/big picture and constantly responding with minor details and questions, that's a mismatch that could cause problems for the relationship. Being able to shift the level at which you're chunking to better match the other person's preference is an important skill that helps us develop productive and healthy relationships.

But it's not always about matching the other person. Recognising what level someone is chunking at is important. It may not be the most resourceful chunk/level in order for them to achieve what it is they're trying to achieve. In those situations, 'chunking up' or 'chunking down' may be the solution to a problem, or the outcome that someone is



seeking. **Chunking up is about exploring the bigger picture or purpose behind something. Chunking down is what we do when we dig into the details and get more specific.**

Suppose someone's just talking big chunk. Perhaps they're telling you that everything is rubbish. Of course, that can't be true. It's too big a chunk. Something's got to be good. So, you can respond by asking, 'What specifically is rubbish?' In this way, you're inviting them to chunk down. They might respond by recognising that not everything is rubbish, it's just their work. That's chunking down from big chunk to medium. You might then ask them what specifically within their work is such a problem, and they might tell you it's their boss that's the problem. That's chunking down a little bit further. You could then ask them, 'In what way is your boss the problem?' and they might respond that their boss doesn't listen to them. You can then ask, 'Your boss doesn't listen in what way?' And so on. By continuing to chunk down, you can define the problem at a size where it can be managed and transformed into a desired state.

Chunking up and down is also helpful when setting outcomes. For example, someone might say that they want to change their job. You could then ask, 'In order to do what?' or, 'For what purpose?' By asking about the next steps (in order to do what) or chunking up to the level of purpose, you can explore the bigger picture, or higher level frame. That will create sequence through-time and a deeper meaning which can be transformational – creating direction, movement and motivation. (You'll find an explanation of 'through-time' in the section on timeframes and structures, below.)

Chunking Up: Sue

When Sue first came on a course of mine in South Africa, I'm not sure exactly what she expected but I think she was quite surprised. Each day

was revelatory and awakening for her.

At that time, she was in a job tackling fraud and financial crime for a multinational bank. There was a moment during the course that made an enormous difference in her thinking, state and behaviour: when she 'chunked up' to the idea of changing the world. By 'chunking up' in this way, she saw how she could have an even bigger impact by working to tackle financial crime as a global issue, beyond the confines of her organisation.

This high-level frame, or large chunk size of changing the world, really engaged her in the kind of change that she wanted to create. It allowed her to recognise her 'big self' as a leader with global influence, in contrast with her 'small self' as someone without an inspiring vision and constrained by her environment or role.

Her newfound commitment to a larger purpose to change in the world, and to stepping into the fullness of who she could be, gave her the motivation to leave her job and become an influential voice and transformational leader through her world-class writing, coaching and consultancy work.

QUESTIONS

1. What larger purpose does your learning in this book serve?
(Chunking up)
2. What's a simple next step you could take from your learnings, that would move you towards a goal of yours?
(Chunking down)



This process – in which the brain converts a sequence of actions into an automatic routine – is known as chunking, and it's at the root of how habits form. There are dozens – if not hundreds – of behavioural chunks that we rely on every day.

CHARLES DUHIGG

NLP AND LANGUAGE

In the words of the brilliant NLP Master Trainer Christina Hall, 'We swim in language, as fish swim in water – completely unconscious of how language affects every aspect of our experience'. In this chapter, we're going to take a deep dive beneath the surface and explore the language patterns that can both trap us, and set us free.

META MODEL



Speak clearly, if you speak at all, carve every word before you let it fall.

——— **O. HENRY**

The Meta Model is a model for challenging and changing the way people think and use language by chunking down into the specifics. It involves using precision questions to get beneath the surface and figure out what someone means in order to help them shift from stuck states to their desired state.

A good way to understand it is to try it out on yourself.

EXERCISE: PART 1

Before you read the rest of this section, find a piece of paper and write down two challenges you currently have. Use full sentences. One or two sentences per challenge are enough. You may not want to choose your biggest or most problematic challenge. But choose something important to you that you haven't yet resolved.

To give an example, if asked to do the same myself, I might write a sentence like this:

I'm currently struggling to find comfort and ease with my back, while at the same time working on all the things I need and want to do in order to make the retreat I have in a couple of months a success.

Now let's explore how the Meta Model works. In the section on the surface and deep structure of language, I introduced the idea of how we delete, distort and generalise when we use language. We can't avoid it. It's a natural way of filtering and making sense of the vast detail of our experience.

When someone is in a resourceful state and they are using language to express their experience, there's clearly no problem. However, from time to time we can find ourselves in a stuck or less-than-resourceful state. When we put language to our present state we start to see what are called **Meta Model violations**. These are the deletions, generalisations and distortions that are the very thing in our thinking that is keeping us stuck.

We can pay particular attention to the language patterns that people use – the particular kinds of deletion, distortion and generalisation – and use precision questions to get beneath the surface and release great untapped potential. As we dig beneath the surface and get beyond the ambiguity, that opens up new pathways, new possibilities, and new ways of thinking and moving forwards. Gently and lovingly, we can begin to challenge and change the way people think and use language, and therefore change their thinking and ultimately their life.

Deletion

We can't pay attention to everything all the time, so we filter information in order to reduce our conscious-mind experience to a manageable level. As our focus changes we 'tune in and out' of different aspects of our experience. This is how we 'filter' our experience.

In order to recover 'lost' or deleted information, example questions include:

- Where precisely ...?
- When exactly ...?
- What specifically ...?
- How exactly ...?
- Who specifically...?

Generalisation

Generalising allows us to make shortcuts in processing our experience. For example, we recognise an 'odd looking' chair as a chair, because we have a generalised template for chairs. Each time we approach a new door we don't have to work out what it is, we just open it!

Sometimes our generalisations fall short, for example, we see a person who looks like someone we don't much like, and we find ourselves interacting with them as if they were that person. Or, we make statements that seem true but simply aren't. For example, 'Everyone knows right from wrong' or 'You always say that.'

To expand the limits of our current perception or model of the world, some example questions include:

- All... really?
- Never... never?
- Always... really, always?
- What would happen if you did/didn't? ... If you could/couldn't?
- What stops you?

Distortion

Distortion is the process of making meaning and interpreting experience based on our past experience or imagination. We see someone smiling and assume this means they are happy. Someone doesn't respond to a

call and we wonder if we are not important or have somehow upset them when perhaps they are just busy.

To challenge making meaning in this way, some example questions include:

- Who says? According to whom?
- How do you know...?
- How does X mean Y...?

When asking precision questions like this, it is important to respect the other person's model of the world. Including phrases such as 'I'm wondering....' or 'I'm curious....' before the question can help to soften its impact.

Precision Questions (Meta Model)

I've provided a fairly simple and succinct explanation of the Meta Model. In their 1975, book *The Structure of Magic* (Volume 1) Richard Bandler and John Grinder set out the Meta Model in more detail, as shown in the tables below. They identified different kinds of language patterns that indicate someone is deleting, generalising or distorting; and suitable precision questions that can help us dig beneath the surface to understand the deep structure of their experience.

Deletion

Deletion is filtering out parts of an experience through selective attention.

Language pattern	Example statement	Example questions	Marker
Unspecified nouns	Let's make it simple	What is 'it'?	It is this document
Unspecified verbs	I'm learning lots	Learning in what way?	Learning
Nominalisations	I believe in collaboration	What kind of collaboration?	Collaboration
Comparative deletions	I want to be better at NLP	Better in what way?	Better
Lack of referential index	They say that I am learning fast	Who are they?	They

Generalisation

We create general statements by inferring from a specific experience.

Language pattern	Example statement	Example questions	Marker(s)
Universal quantifier	I always have difficulty learning	Always?	Always/never All/every
Modal operator of necessity	I need to learn this	What would happen if you didn't?	Need/Should Must/Have to
Modal operator of possibility/impossibility	I will learn I'm going to learn I can't learn I won't learn	When will you learn? Learn what? What would happen if you could/did?	Can/Can't Will/Won't Could/Couldn't Would/Wouldn't Want/Won't

Distortion

Distorting is the process of making meaning and interpreting based on past experience.

Language pattern	Example statement	Example questions	Marker(s)
Cause & Effect	If you are reading this then you are learning	How do you know?	If... then
Mind Reading	I can see you are confident/sad/angry	How do you know that I am....?	I can see/I know you are... they are...
Lost Performative	How does reading this make you learn?	When will you learn? Learn what? What would happen if you could/did?	Can/Can't Will/Won't Could/Couldn't Would/Wouldn't Want/Won't
Complex Equivalence	She is smiling, it means she is happy She didn't reply which means I'm not important	How do you know that? How does her not replying mean that you're not important?	Means

References: Richard Bandler & John Grinder (1975) *The Structure of Magic' Volume 1*

Now let's return to the sentence I mentioned at the start of this section (in Example: Part 1), about a particular challenge I'm currently facing:

I'm currently struggling to find comfort and ease in my back, while at the same time working on all the things I need and want to do in order to make the retreat I have in a couple of months a success.

To explain, I broke my back in a motorbike accident in 1997 and have had challenges from time to time since then. Once in a while, like now, I'm literally and metaphorically floored. I'm down and out on my back!

Looking again at that sentence, though, I can see lots of Meta Model violations where asking precision questions could help me shift state and feel more resourceful.

I'm currently **struggling** *[unspecified verb: struggling in what way?]* to find **comfort** *[nominalisation: what kind of comfort?]* and ease in my **back** *[unspecified noun: what part of your back?]*, while at the same time **working** *[unspecified verb: in what way have you been working, or do you need to work right now?]* **on all the things** *[universal quantifier: all? What's most important for you to work on right now?]* **I need** and **want** *[modal operators: how might or could you start ____?]* to do in order to **make** the retreat I have in a couple of months a success. *[unspecified verb: in order to make it a success in what way?]*

As you can see, there are many different places you could ask a question and create a different way of thinking. And when we change our thinking, we change our life!

EXERCISE: PART 2

1. Take another look at the challenge that you wrote down at the start of this section. How many examples of language patterns can you identify? For example, did you express your problem using unspecified nouns or verbs? How about comparative deletions, modal operators or universal quantifiers? Underline each example of a language pattern that you notice.
2. Which of these examples could you challenge? And in what way?
3. Ask yourself a precision question about each of your underlined examples. Notice what happens in your thinking. Being curious and constantly challenging the language patterns can and will expand your potential to think about things differently and to be more resourceful.

HYPNOTIC LANGUAGE AND THE MILTON MODEL



We swim in language, as fish swim in water – completely unconscious of how language affects every aspect of our experience.

——— **CHRISTINA HALL**

You could say that the Milton Model is the opposite of the Meta Model in some ways. The Meta Model involves using precision questions to challenge ambiguous language and figure out what people really mean; getting beneath the surface by chunking down. **The Milton Model**, by contrast, **is about deliberately and purposefully using language that is artfully vague. By using this kind of ‘hypnotic language’ we can take people on a journey to where they want to go and create pathways to new possibilities.** Essentially, it’s about chunking up. The Milton Model is named after Milton Erickson, a hugely successful therapist and healer. The founders of NLP – Richard Bandler and John Grinder – studied him in order to model how he did what he did so well. They noticed that he told stories and used language in a vague and ambiguous way with powerful results. Essentially, he was using the same kinds of language patterns as in the Meta Model – generalisations, deletions, distortions – and others shown below in the tables below.

Hypnotic Language (Milton Model)

Deletion	Example statements
Simple deletion, unspecified verb (Vague actions and subjects)	‘You are listening....’ ‘And you are learning so much’
Comparative deletion (Comparisons)	‘You are feeling more confident... more relaxed.... And happier about life’
Nominalisation (verbs that have been turned into nouns) (Abstractions... turning active processes into ‘things’)	‘Your communication is improving...’ ‘Relationships are important’
Lack of referential index (Unspecified people)	‘People can learn’ ‘They are good at this’ ‘They are quick learners’

Generalisation	Example statements
Universal quantifier (Universal statements)	'All things you have ever learned...' 'Every time you hear my voice....'
Modal operator of necessity (Drivers)	'You have to listen carefully...' 'Taking this to where it has to go...'
Modal operator of possibility (Limiters and stoppers)	'You will discover the secrets to life..' 'You can learn anything you want...'

Distortion	Example statements
Complex equivalence (Interpretation)	'Confusion means that you are learning new things' 'Sitting quietly means you are relaxing...'
Cause and effect (Cause-effect)	'Using these patterns makes communicating easier' 'Each breath will make you relax even more...'
Mind reading	'I know that you are excited to learn even more now...' 'You know what to do...'
Lost performative (Value judgements)	'It's important to do that now...' 'And it's good to notice...'

Other forms	Example statements
Tag questions	'Didn't you?' 'Isn't it?' 'Won't you?' 'Can't you?' 'Haven't you?'
Presuppositions	'As you begin using these patterns...' 'How can you make practising these patterns fun?'
Embedded commands	'Don't think about a pink elephant' 'I'm wondering if you feel curious about this...' 'I am just wondering how you are going to use this now'
Conversational postulates (Statements/directions posing as a questions)	'Can you picture your outcome?' 'I'm wondering if you realise that you already know how to use these patterns?'
Ambiguities	'NLP at Work...' 'Fascinating people can be fun...' 'Speaking to you as a student...'
Sectional restriction violation (Often metaphors)	'The sun smiled on us...'

You might notice that the example statements in the Meta Model are effectively Milton Model patterns, which means we are unconsciously using hypnotic language all the time!

What precision questions could you use on the previous statement?

You might [*modal operator: might, or you will?*] **notice** [*unspecified verb: notice in what way?*] that the example statements [*unspecified nouns: which statements?*] in the Meta Model are effectively Milton Model patterns, **which means** [complex equivalence: how exactly does this

mean...?] **we** [*lack of referential index: who exactly?*] are **unconsciously using** [*unspecified verb: unconsciously using in what way?*] hypnotic language **all** the time [*universal quantifier: all the time?*] !

To give you a flavour of how we can use hypnotic language:

You are reading this book now. And as you're reading, you'll no doubt be becoming more and more confident that you will understand and learn how to use hypnotic language with other people. Not only can you learn, you will learn how to use hypnotic language to influence your clients and anyone else you want to, in ways that can really help them. This means that you'll become increasingly influential, and as you become more influential, you'll find yourself becoming the kind of leader and coach that you've always wanted to be. And I know that you must be excited to step into this potential. It's important that you step up and you learn how to coach and influence people for the sake of humanity. More than ever before we now need leaders and coaches to help transform our organisations, our communities and the world – for the better!

Take a look at the tables and notice how many hypnotic language patterns I packed in the paragraph above.

Hypnotic language is a powerful technique for influencing people. Whenever we use language it has an effect on others because it creates an internal representation in their mind which is personal to them. The more conscious we are of our language, the more we can consciously influence the internal worlds of others. If we use language that is artfully vague, we can paint a picture for them, which they can then fill in with the colours and detail, to their own liking.

Hypnotic language can also be used in ways that I really don't like. Politicians and unscrupulous marketers have become masters of it in some respects. Advertisers, for example, use hypnotic language to persuade people that their product or service is the newest or the best, when often it is not. They're using language in a way that can be highly manipulative and isn't always a win-win. NLP got somewhat of a bad name in certain circles in the early days because salespeople would employ these techniques to make people buy what they were selling.

But hypnotic language is also an incredible vehicle for creating positive change. When we are working with clients, we can use it to take people on a journey to where they want to go; we can create pathways to new possibilities. We can help them feel associated with their desired state or what it would be like to achieve their goals by using language masterfully.

We can also use hypnotic language for good outside the coaching context. I've set out below what I consider to be an outstanding example. It's a deeply meaningful passage for me. I believe that we're at a juncture where we're being confronted with a choice as to whether we save our way of being and our environment, or whether we destroy it. And every year that goes by that we don't respect the earth, we're continuing to harm her, and ourselves.

EXERCISE 1

Read the passage below and notice how it affects you and how you feel as you read it.

Thich Nhat Hanh's Love Letter to the Earth

At this very moment, the earth is above you, below you, all around you, and even inside you. The earth is everywhere.

You may be used to thinking of the earth as only the ground beneath your feet. But the water, the sea, the sky, and everything around us comes from the earth. Everything outside us and everything inside us come from the earth.

We often forget that the planet we are living on has given us all the elements that make up our bodies. The water in our flesh, our bones, and all the microscopic cells inside our bodies all come from the earth and are part of the earth. The earth is not just the environment we live in. We are the earth, and we are always carrying her within us.

Realising this, we can see that the earth is truly alive. We are a living, breathing manifestation of this beautiful and generous planet. Knowing this, we can begin to transform our relationship to the earth. We can begin to walk differently and to care for her differently.

We will fall completely in love with the earth. When we are in love with someone or something, there is no separation between ourselves and

the person or thing we love. We do whatever we can for them, and this brings us great joy and nourishment. That is the relationship each of us can have with the earth. That is the relationship each of us must have with the earth if the earth is to survive, and if we are to survive as well.

Now, read it again as set out below. I've highlighted some of the hypnotic language patterns in the passage that might be having an impact on you.

Thich Nhat Hanh's Love Letter to the Earth

At this very moment, the earth is above you, below you, all around you, and even inside you. The earth is **everywhere** *[universal quantifier: everywhere?]*.

You may be used to **thinking** *[unspecified verb: thinking in what way?]* of the earth as only the ground beneath your feet. But the **water** *[unspecified noun: what water exactly?]*, the sea, the sky, and everything around us comes from the earth. Everything outside us and everything inside us come from the earth.

We *[lack of referential index: who exactly?]* often **forget** *[unspecified verb: forget how?]* that the planet we are living on has given us **all** *[universal quantifier: all?]* the **elements** *[unspecified noun: which elements?]* that make up our bodies. The water in our flesh, our bones, and all the microscopic cells inside our bodies all come from the earth and are part of the earth. The earth is not just the environment we live in. We are the earth, and we are always carrying her within us.

Realising this, we can see that the earth is truly alive. We are a living, breathing manifestation of this beautiful and generous planet. Knowing

this, we can begin to transform our **relationship** [*nominalisation: what kind of relationship?*] to the earth. We can begin to walk **differently** [*comparative deletion... differently in what way?*] and to care for her differently.

We will fall completely in love with the earth [*mind reading: according to whom?*]. **When we are in love with someone or something, there is no separation between ourselves and the person** [*complex equivalent: how exactly does being in love with someone mean there is no separation?*] or thing we love. **We do whatever we can for them, and this brings us great joy and nourishment** [*cause effect: how exactly does doing whatever you can for them bring you great joy and nourishment?*]. That is the relationship each of us **can** have with the earth [*modal operator of possibility: will you have this relationship?*]. That is the relationship each of us **must** [*modal operator of necessity: each of us must?*] have with the earth **if the earth is to survive** [*cause effect: could the earth survive without this relationship?*], and if we are to survive as well.



***You are the writer, producer
and director of your own mind
programmes.***

—— **ELIZABETH BOHORQUEZ**

EXERCISE: 2

Reflect on something that's important to you. Maybe it's your business, maybe it's climate change, or perhaps it's a cause or a charity that's dear to you. Write a couple of paragraphs about it, using some of the hypnotic language patterns. Explore how by using these patterns you become even more influential.

And feel free to send what you've written to me at tristan@tristansoames.com for some feedback. If you'd like to explore how to support your project at the next level, we have a remarkable community of learners and leaders who are fascinated by language and committed to making a real difference in the world. Feel free to join us at www.tristansoames.com.

NLP AND TIME

How we use and think about time, like language, affects almost every aspect of our lived experience. In this chapter, we will explore different ways of thinking about and using our understanding and concept of time to great effect.

TIMEFRAMES AND STRUCTURES



*The most precious resource
we all have is time.*

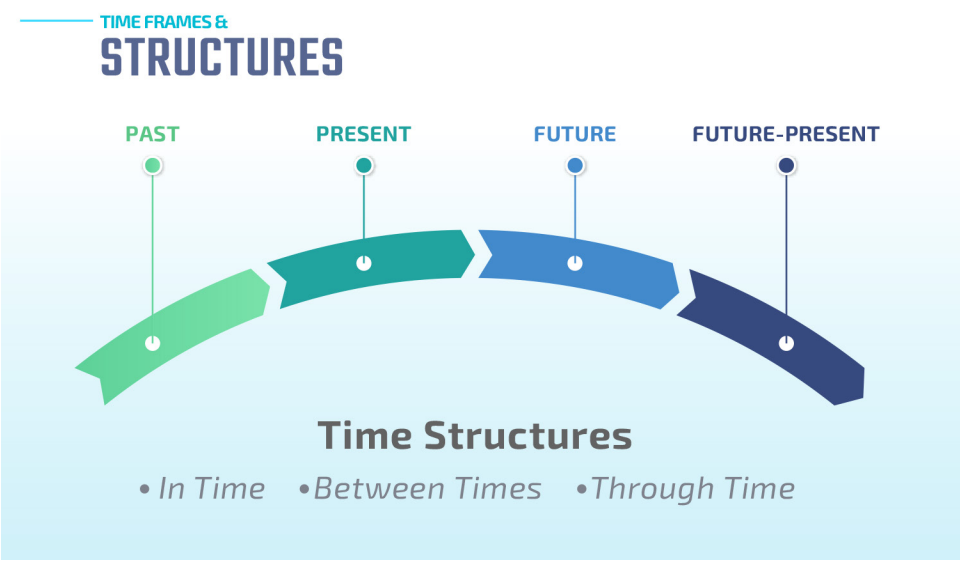
—— STEVE JOBS

How we experience, think and talk about time has profound implications for our health, our state and the choices we make. As coaches, having an understanding of different timeframes and structures increases our capacity to help people transform and achieve what they want. We'll come to some specific models that use these different structures in due course. But first, let me explain the concepts.

The difference between the past, present and future will be obvious to you. In the NLP context, we know that we can go back into the past to

dig up memories that make us feel bad, or access resources that can help us feel good and move forwards. And we know that we can visualise and construct a future that we don't want, or one that we do. **So, we have the capacity to be in the past, the present and the future in our thinking.**

In the coaching context, one of the most powerful ways to create change is by bringing the future into the present. We call this the future-present. I sometimes use the future-present to help people identify who they want to be in the future. Maybe that's healthy, vibrant, a leader, a great coach or a mature adult in a challenging relationship. Whatever it is, I'll help them associate and step into that future, and then bring it back into the present; and then live from that future self in the present. That's a powerful state shift based on changing someone's internal representation of who they are so that they can transform into their future 'best self'.



Beyond the past, present and future are what are sometimes called the structures of time. An 'in time' structure is a particular moment or occasion. It's like a snapshot or a photo taken at a moment in time. 'Through time' is ongoing, like a movie that progresses through time. 'Between times' is like a number of snapshots or something that happens from time to time.

Here's an example of how understanding the distinction between the different structures of time can help us create change. I mentioned earlier in this book a client I once had who was traumatised because her daughter had been raped. She was seeing it in her imagination playing out like a movie as if it was happening now. When she talked about how she saw it, her language was active: 'It's happening. I can see her being raped.' Understanding the different structures of time allowed me to model her present state. She was using that past experience in the present as a 'through time' representation. And that was not useful for her.

I was able to help her to experience the truth and say something to the effect of: 'It's not happening now. It happened. It was a moment in time in the past.' In that way I helped her reframe and disassociate from her experience and put the experience where it belonged as an 'in time' moment in the past. Of course, this is somewhat simplifying the process we went through but you get the idea, and how powerful it can be to understand and use the different structures of time to create more freedom and choice.

We can use hypnotic language to take people to the past, the present, the future, or the future present. And we can do this much more effectively once we understand how and where to use 'in time', 'between time' and 'through time' structures. By way of example, I might say to you: 'You've

learnt many important things, and as you're learning about NLP in this book I'm sure you can now imagine yourself being increasingly influential in a variety of different contexts, learning to use the structures of time, hypnotic language and reframing, in ways that help people learn, change and grow. And that can make a difference in the world, right now!

If you read that back you'll notice that I initially took you into the past, then brought you into the future present, with a 'through time' representation of the future as something continuous and ongoing (learning to use hypnotic language).

An 'in time' representation would be more like this: 'You can imagine a time in future when you will be influential.' There's not much movement or activity. It's a lot less compelling. A 'between times' representation might be: 'You can imagine yourself being influential from time to time.'

EXERCISE

1. Think of an outcome that's important to you. Now, notice whether you have it coded as 'in time', 'between time' or 'through time'. 'In time' will typically be a picture. 'Through time' will typically be a movie. 'Between times' will typically be a number of pictures.
2. Most people state their goals like this: 'I want to set up a business', 'I want to write a book', 'I want to XYZ'. That's an 'in time' structure. It's disassociated and in the future which violates the well-formed outcomes criteria. If this is how you set your outcome, try turning it into a 'through time' internal representation by adding movement. What are you seeing, hearing and feeling as you are setting up your business, writing your book or doing whatever your goal is? You may also want to identify some milestones, which is a 'between time' structure.
3. Now play around and see what works best to help you feel motivated and inspired to move towards your desired state.

TIMELINE TREASURE CHEST



*Time is the wisest
counsellor of all.*

—— **PERICLES**

Tony Robbins once said that the ultimate resource is resourcefulness. Being resourceful is the difference that makes the difference in rising above the inevitable challenges we will all face in our lives. People who are resourceful are able to achieve their outcomes. But we're all human, and sometimes we feel challenged or less-than-resourceful. From time to time (between times) we don't feel equipped with the resources, knowledge or experience that we need to deal with a situation or accomplish what we want.

Timeline Treasure Chest is a powerful model for accessing the resources we need to meet challenges and achieve important outcomes. It's based on the NLP Presupposition that we have within us all the resources we ever need. We each have a remarkable history of experience that we can often forget to draw upon. At an unconscious level, we have memories of times when we were confident, clear, excited or inspired. **This model allows us to access those resources from the past and bring them into the present so that we can use them in the future to create what we want.**

It's a simple yet powerful model to help people move towards their goals. And it's a great model to use on ourselves because it allows us to see just how resourceful we already are and to use those resources to move towards what we want.

Here's how it works. I encourage you to try it out for yourself and/or find a partner to experiment with. This can be done in your thinking alone. But using space to explore time can provide a richer experience in some ways.

Step 1: Identify an outcome

Identify an outcome that's important to you, but that you perhaps feel unsure about. Maybe you're lacking in confidence or feeling anxious about it.

For example, as I write this, I have a retreat in a couple of weeks' time that I really want to make the best of, so I want to be fully resourced and present as I show up there. There's a lot that goes on before my retreats, so feeling organised, in flow and connected are important resources for me to access. For you, it could be something like talking to

your boss about a pay raise, giving feedback to a work-colleague whose performance you're not happy with, calling a potential client or having a difficult conversation with someone.

Step 2: Identify three resources

What three resources do you need in order to achieve this outcome?
Taking the example of my retreat, I've identified a need for feeling organised, in flow and connected.

Step 3: Mark out a timeline

Find some space that you can designate as a timeline: with the past at one end, the present in the middle and the future at the other end.

Step 4: Step onto your timeline in the 'now'

Step onto the place on the timeline that represents the present, so you are looking forwards, with the past behind you.

Step 5: Walk back slowly, trusting your unconscious to bring to conscious awareness a time when you had _____

Choose one of the resources. For example, it might be confidence. Walk back slowly on your timeline into your past until you remember a specific time when you had _____. Trust that your unconscious will bring this to conscious awareness.

Step 6: And what's that like?

When you reach that point in the past (for example, perhaps it was when

you won something or graduated), ask yourself what that's like. Go back into that experience in your imagination, and be fully associated with it, as if it's happening now. What are you seeing? What are you hearing? What are you feeling? This will enable you to fully associate with the past memory and experience the resource state in the present.

Step 7: Continue back – access all three resources

Now, choose a second resource. Let's take clarity as an example. Go back in your imagination and find a time when you had clarity (or whatever your second resource is). Fully associate with that memory so that you're experiencing that state or resource in the moment. Notice what you're seeing, what you're hearing and what you're feeling. Do the same for your third resource.

Step 8: Bring the resources into the present

Now with all of these resources in place and fully available to you, walk forwards to the present. And what's that like now with all of these resources available to you in the present?

Step 9: Future pace

When you're ready you can take a few steps forwards into your future, with all of these resources fully available to you and embodied within you. And what's that like now? How does the outcome feel now?

Timeline Treasure Chest: Louise

When Louise was preparing to do a TED talk, she was understandably quite anxious and uncertain, even though she was passionate about what she wanted to share. We used the Timeline Treasure Chest process

to help her identify and access the resources she needed to make it a real success.

I asked her how she wanted to feel while doing the talk, and she expressed a desire to show up authentically and powerfully. I invited her to go back to a time when she was authentic and powerful, so she could access those resources. The shift in her thinking and her state as she went through the process was clear. I could see her relax and smile and hear the power and authenticity in her voice as she started to talk with purpose and passion. She changed from feeling quite nervous and fearful into a confident and congruent state.

She gave a great TED talk and has gone on even greater challenges because she knows how to access the resources within her.



***We are treasure chests
with more jewels inside
than we can imagine.***

—— **IFEANYI ENOCH ONUOHA**

TIMELINE FUTURE PACE



The future is not a scenario written, which we only have to act out; it is a work which we have to create.

—— **ROGER GARAUDY**

Timeline Future Pace is a way of setting goals that is rich, transformational, dynamic, full of movement and motivation. I learned it from Christina Hall, a brilliant Master Trainer of NLP who worked with Richard Bandler for many years. It's something I teach on all my retreats and courses, particularly towards the end, because it clearly maps out their future.

Here's how it works. Try it out for yourself, and again, ideally with a partner.

Step 1: Decide on an outcome that's important to you

Choose something that you want to achieve, ideally over the next six to eighteen months. If it's only three months away or even three years off that's fine. But don't choose something you want to achieve in the next few days. To give an example, in my case it might be writing this book which will clearly take more than a few days or weeks, but hopefully not more than a few years!

Step 2: Create a timeline for achieving this outcome

It could be a line on the ground near you. Having a real space for this can enrich the experience. But as with the previous timeline exercise, it could be done in your imagination if you prefer. Now map out where the past and future lie on your timeline. Where is the present? Where is the future? And where is the overall outcome on your timeline?

Step 3: Now add three or four intermediate milestones onto the timeline

This is a way of chunking down the outcome into manageable, bite-sized pieces. In my example the milestones might be: 1) mapping out the chapters; 2) writing the first half of the book; 3) writing the second half of the book; 4) reviewing and editing before getting to the outcome – a finished book.

Step 4: Step onto your timeline in the present. Now step onto your first milestone

First step onto your timeline in the present, looking forwards towards your future. When you're ready, step onto the first intermediate milestone. In a few words, describe what this milestone is. And when you're ready, turn around (on the line on the ground, or in your imagination). Look back and see and hear what you were doing in order to accomplish this. At this point, you're no longer going from present to future, you're going from future to past. You should be saying things like, 'I was doing this. I was listening to that. I was reading up on ____' and so on. In other words, try using dynamic language that expresses that you were doing something ('through time') and stated in the past, rather than describing something you did, which would be static language and an in time structure. The idea is that your unconscious will be responding, 'Wow! I've already been doing this!' It's a rich, vibrant, moving and fully associated internal representation of the future coded in the past through time. At some level, your unconscious believes you've already been in the process of accomplishing the goal!

Once you have finished expressing what you were doing, turn around and face the future.

Step 5: Step onto the second milestone and repeat the process above. Then step onto the third and fourth milestones and do the same

Each time you step onto the next milestone describe what it is. Then turn around (in your imagination or on the timeline) to face the previous milestone. See and hear what you were doing in order to accomplish the milestone you have just stepped into.

Step 6: Step into the outcome. What's that like now?

When you step into the outcome, ask yourself what it's like. This is your desired state. You should be feeling pretty good about it. Once again, turn around, see and hear what you were doing in order to accomplish the outcome.

Step 7: Step into your future

When you're ready, turn around to face the future. And now with all of this serving as a solid, secure foundation of success, resource and accomplishment, take a step into your future and notice what opens up to you and for you. If you want to, take another step or two into the future and notice what it's like to have your future in front of you with all the ever-expanding possibilities and opportunities available to you in and through your future.

Step 8: Come back to the present. What's your next step?

When you're ready, you can come back to the present with your future starting right now. What's this like? Ask yourself what's the very next step you're going to take in order to begin this process. Put it in the diary, schedule it or get started then and there so that you've got some movement towards this larger outcome. I sometimes think of this as a row of dominoes. Once you knock over the first domino the process has begun and will continue.

Timeline Future Pace: Laetitia

I once ran a transformational leadership retreat with my mentor Gene in Ibiza. There were about 18 of us spending five days in paradise, doing a

deep dive into what it really meant to be a transformational leader and how we could step fully into that identity. One of the questions we were asking and attempting to answer was: what's the story worth living your life for, for the next 20-30-40 years of service?

One of the participants, Laetitia had already done quite a lot of NLP training and had glimpsed a vision for herself as a facilitator of change. But she was dogged by fear and insecurities so the reality of being a transformational leader still felt a way off.

She explored her future timeline: one that went beyond her limiting beliefs. And as she explored, she began to see, hear and feel what she truly wanted in her heart. The more that she spent time in the future by using this timeline process, the more she embodied and believed in that possible future. By the end of the exercise, she was fully associated and bought into that vision. She was ready, able and willing to take action towards it with a sense of belief and purpose, and with a 'through time' internal representation that was hard-wired into every fibre of her being.

In a few short years, she had made her vision a reality. She now runs retreats in her own retreat centre, where she lives in France. She is fulfilled and fully aligned with who she always longed to be. And she creates remarkable change in other people's lives.

Laetitia is such a remarkable example of what can happen when we focus our mind, body and soul into a meaningful vision by using processes such as timeline future pace.

TIMELINE RE-IMPRINT



Everything changes when you start to emit your own frequency rather than absorbing the frequencies around you, when you start imprinting your intent on the universe rather than receiving an imprint from existence.

—— **BARBARA MARCINIAK**

Timeline Re-imprint is sometimes called ‘change personal history’. It’s a way of releasing old embedded patterns and emotions. **It allows us to resolve (often childhood) experiences that have established unresourceful or recurring emotions.** I have used this process to work on things like anger, fear and anxiety for myself. And I’ve used it as a coach to help hundreds of people to release all sorts of recurring emotions and patterns, whether it’s shame, inadequacy, humiliation, grief or fear.

As with many of these exercises, it’s a process that is best done with another person. **Be careful about what you choose to work on. If it feels that it could be something really deep, painful or emotional you may want to work this through with an experienced NLP Practitioner or therapist.** That’s because the process can take us back into very early childhood memories, which can reactivate trauma. Without the skill of a professional to be able to hold the space and take you through the process, you could retrigger and potentially get lost in some unresolved pattern or trauma.

If you would like support with this kind of healing or therapeutic intervention, feel free to reach out to me and my community of NLP Practitioners. We’d be happy to help.

With all of that in mind, here’s how the process works.

Step 1: Identify the recurring emotion

This should be some recurring emotion over which you feel you have very little control once activated or triggered.

Step 2: Identify your timeline and step onto/into the present

This could be in your imagination, or it could be on the ground near you. Mark out the past, present and future. Step into/onto the present moment on the timeline.

Step 3: Walk back to the first time you experienced this emotion

As you start walking back, trust your unconscious to bring to conscious awareness times when you have experienced this emotion. We're searching for the earliest memory you have of this particular emotion.

Step 4: Check for experiences before

Once you think you have found the earliest memory, go back in time before this memory to check whether you have an earlier memory of the emotion. This is to make sure that you have found the earliest memory, or what's called the original imprint experience. This is the occasion when you formed a belief based on an experience that set up the recurring emotion that continues to get activated or triggered, and where you have no real capacity to respond differently.

Step 5: From 'first position' ask yourself what's it like. What beliefs or generalisations did you set up?

As you stand on the timeline at the point of the imprint experience, ask yourself what are you aware of that's happening. What's it like for you? What beliefs or generalisations did you set up? That could be things like a belief that you're alone, that you're not safe, or as in my case that I can't trust others. This is about identifying the core generalisations or beliefs

that underlie the emotion.

Step 6: Step off the timeline. In third position, what do you notice from here. What resources are needed? Send resources back.

This step is about gaining some distance from the experience and having a disassociated and objective perspective. Notice the younger you and what was going on for them. What do you notice and discover from this perspective? What resources were needed back then, that you have now, that would have made a difference? Perhaps the younger you didn't have the resources of confidence, resilience or love. Now send these resources back to the younger you. This might be as a wave of energy, a light beam – whatever works for you, simply send back the resources. Notice what happens as the younger you receives these resources. Typically, there will be some sort of significant change. Perhaps you notice them relaxing, feeling comfortable or safe.

Step 7: Step back into first position. Receive these resources from this older, wiser, more resourceful you.

Step back onto the timeline as the younger you. Now turn around and see the older you (in third position) sending you the resources. Receive the energy, the light beam or whatever it is being sent, and notice what it's like to receive these resources. What happens and what changes?

Step 8: Step off the timeline into third position. Now with all of these resources in place, step back onto the timeline before the earliest memory. Slowly walk from there to the present, noticing what changes in your experience and your memories as you progress through time with all of these resources in

place.

Step 9: What's it like when you get to the present? What's the generalisation or belief from this perspective now?

Typically, there will be a very different belief and state in the present. The imprint experience will have changed. And as the memory has changed, so the emotion will change.

Step 10: Future pace

Finally, with all these resources in place, take a step or two into the future and notice what it's like in the future. Typically, people will start to imagine responding very differently to things that previously automatically triggered the recurring emotion.

Timeline Re-imprint: working with a client

I once worked with a client who suffered from depression, anxiety and self-loathing. He had done a fair amount of therapy and work before, but couldn't and wouldn't move forward in his life.

When we began to make contact with his inner child, we found a scared little boy that had been neglected and still not emerged from trauma: someone that needed love, self-care, trust and presence. He gave that little child a hug and saw him start to soften. That was the start of a fundamental change in his relationship with himself and led to him becoming more caring and sensitive.

TRANSFORMATIONAL TOOLS

NLP is a treasure trove of tools, techniques, models and profound wisdom that has many applications. There's almost no limit, but at some point, I'm going to need to finish this book. Before I do, I want to share a few transformational tools that are the bedrock of the remarkable work that my mentor Gene Early has been doing for many years. Gene shared these with me and a group who joined us for a Transformational Leadership Retreat in Ibiza many years ago. I feel they are important to share as foundational models or tools which can have a profound impact on the work we do as coaches and leaders.

FEEDBACK



The range of what we think and do is limited by what we fail to notice. And because we fail to notice that we fail to notice, there is little we can do to change, until we notice that failing to notice shapes our thoughts and deeds.

—— **R.D. LAING**

Feedback is transformational. The more we improve our capacity to give and receive high-quality feedback, the more we can learn and grow.

As a coach, it's crucial for me to be able to give high-quality feedback because coaching is all about change. I need to be able to bring my client's conscious awareness to unconscious patterns or behaviours that might be holding them back, or that might relate to their desired state. I want to notice as their state changes and their life changes, and share that with them so that they also notice themselves changing.

The quality of the feedback we give and receive is directly proportional to the change that we're able to bring about. But most of us have never learnt how to give or receive feedback in a highly effective way. We bump up against others and we feel offended. In businesses and organisations, there can often be a culture of not having permission to give feedback to our superiors. And when we receive feedback, we often feel that we're not really being seen or heard; but more judged.

So how can we give feedback in a way that will be well received?

A common pitfall is to use generalised language that can come across as judgemental. For example, someone might say: 'You're not a good listener', 'You always do this', or 'You never do that'. These kinds of statements typically don't go down well! I've found a better approach is to **give feedback at the sensory-specific level**. That starts with what we've noticed, specifically. For example, we might say, 'I've noticed you look out of the window sometimes when I'm speaking to you'. That way, we're avoiding judgemental statements like, 'You don't listen' or 'You're being rude.' It may in fact be the case that the person is looking away because they're thinking deeply about what we're saying. Giving specific feedback about what we've noticed allows people to match and reply, 'Yes, I do do

that' or 'I have done that,' rather than dismiss the generalisation which is based on meaning that's been made up, rather than what is actually happening at the sensory level.

It's also important to take onboard the feedback as being true of you, as well as of the person you're talking to. We often give feedback as if it's not true of us. One of the NLP Presuppositions is that *what we recognise outside of us mirrors structures within us*. Take the example of my girlfriend who has in the past had a habit of using generalisations and saying, 'You always_____' or 'You never_____.' As an NLP Practitioner, I'm trained to notice this: it's a habit of using universal quantifiers. But before I raise this with her, I can ask myself how and where do I generalise. If I recognise that I also generalise, I'm much less likely to give that feedback from a place of judgement and criticism, and she's much more likely to sense that. And yes, I also generalise in ways that are not necessarily true or useful!

When it comes to receiving feedback, it's important to bring an attitude of openness and curiosity. This means resisting feeling the need to defend, deny or argue against what the other person is telling us. Instead, we can use precision questions to get into the specifics of what someone's feedback is really about. We can respond with, 'Sorry, you say I'm inconsiderate [or whatever the feedback is]. Could you say more? In what way specifically?' Or, 'Can you tell me, when I was looking out of the window?' In this way, we can get to the data and come to a common understanding of reality, rather than there being two very subjective and often conflicting 'realities'.

If you want to learn and grow, why not invite feedback? It can be invaluable. Even when we're excellent at something, we can still improve. I remember the first time I met my mentor Gene, we were in a car

coming back from a course he had just been running with Sue Knight. One of the first things he did was to ask if I had any feedback for him. All I could say at the time was, 'You're amazing, just keep doing what you do.' I suspect he might have appreciated more detailed feedback so that he could understand what worked well and how he might improve.



***We do not learn from
experience ... we learn from
reflecting on experience.***

—— **JOHN DEWEY**

EXERCISE

1. If you open up your perception, what feedback is on offer to you from the environment? For example, is there something in your home that needs tidying or is annoying you? Or, is it sunny outdoors and you are missing the opportunity to be in nature?
2. What about feedback from those around you? Can you invite some feedback from others at work, or in your home, that could make you a better version of yourself?
3. How about within your body? Is your body communicating something important to you and for you?
4. How do you see yourself giving valuable and important feedback in the coming days, in ways that are well-received, and that could make a significant difference?

IDENTIFICATION



It is when you lose sight of yourself, that you lose your way. To keep your truth in sight, you must keep yourself in sight, and the world to you should be a mirror to reflect to you your image; the world should be a mirror that you reflect upon.

——— **C. JOYBELL C.**

The process of identifying with someone else's experiences, thoughts or beliefs is a natural way of building rapport, trust and empathy. A friend shares a story in a bar, and we respond, 'I know what you mean' or, 'Yeah, me too.' This can be rather limiting. By instantly identifying with someone else's reality, we avoid being curious about and exploring more of the other person's mental maps and models of the world.

This section, though, is about a different kind of identification. **It's about how we can shift our state and expand our sense of self by actively identifying with the world around us. The idea is based on the NLP Presupposition that what we recognise in others mirrors structures within ourselves.**

This is how it works. Try it out for yourself.

Step 1: Choose something in your environment that speaks to or appeals to you

For example, I'm drawn to the sky.

Step 2: Identify five attributes of that thing

I might describe the sky where I am as clear, colourful and bright. I can see some clouds. And it's vast.

Step 3: Ask yourself how are these attributes true of you. Notice how it feels to really identify with, and take on board the characteristics you identify outside of yourself.

In my case, I might reflect that I'm clear about what's important to me. Sure, there are clouds/ challenges in my consciousness that are not that

clear and that are obstructing my view. But that's okay. They'll pass. My consciousness is vast. I'm also vast. That's quite a thing to take on. It's a shift at the level of my identity, which is quite profound. And I'm colourful and bright. My state has changed in a few moments by shifting my consciousness in this way. And you can too.

We often navigate the world through a very restricted self-image. The point of this exercise is to expand our sense of self by allowing us to acknowledge the fullness and depth of who we really are.

When my mentor Gene first took me through this process it was profound in a way that I wasn't expecting at all. I don't recall exactly what I was struggling with at the time, but I wasn't in a great state. When he asked me to choose something, I identified the sea and described it as being rough on top, deep, vast, full of life and beautiful. When he asked me, 'How is this true of you?' I remember how powerful it was to identify with the list of qualities. My state shifted. It made me see that I have vast experience and depth to my being that I hadn't identified with before. I felt an overwhelming sense of resourcefulness and aliveness like there was so much inside me that was waiting and available to be expressed.

This process of identification is something we can do anywhere, anytime in a matter of a few seconds. It's a deeply revealing and profoundly transformative process.

IDEA » SKILL » WAY OF BEING

Once you have run the process of identification four or five times, you will realise that this isn't just an **idea**; it's a transformational **skill that you can practice**. And the idea that the outside world mirrors our internal structures may start to seem like a self-evident truth. As we commit to integrating this process, it ultimately becomes **a way of being**.

We become at one with the world and with the fullness of who we are.

This process of an **idea** becoming a **skill**, and eventually **a way of being**, is a structure that applies to many NLP models – even to NLP itself. The more we repeat and practise different techniques the more they shift from simply ideas or skills, to profound and liberating ways of being.

As coaches, the process of identification can be a remarkably useful, fast and effective tool that we can use with our clients. We can use it to help shift a person's state by asking them about something in the environment, in the way that Gene did with me. Or we can apply it in situations where a person is challenged by someone they are triggered by or don't like. By asking how the other person's structure is also true of them, we can help them release the judgement and energetic charge. For example, we can say, 'Yes, that person may be being small-minded. And how are you small-minded? Where are you being small-minded?' What this means is that the person who's acting as the trigger, or who is upsetting them, actually has a gift for them, in allowing them to recognise and release that pattern in themselves.

The process of identification can also be helpful for people who externalise their greatness and only see it and other people. As coaches, we can ask, 'How is the other person's greatness true of you? How are you intelligent, clear or beautiful?' When we act as if the world is a mirror for ourselves, it can be, and is, deeply revealing.

METAPHOR



Metaphors have a way of holding the most truth in the least space.

—— ORSON SCOTT CARD

We navigate the world through metaphor. Barely a sentence goes by when we don't use a metaphor to explain what we mean. Most people use them unconsciously, unaware of how metaphor and language affect so much of their lives. **Developing an ability to work with the metaphors by which people navigate their internal worlds can be transformational.**

How do we work with metaphors in practice? **As a coach, the first step is to notice the metaphor.** To give an example, people sometimes say

something to the effect of, 'I feel like the weight of the world is on my shoulders.' In this example, it's a metaphor for someone's present state. You would most likely also notice that sense of being weighed down in the person's nonverbals; perhaps they are looking down or slouched over.

This is where you can **get curious and model their metaphorical landscape by using clean language.** To continue the example, you could ask questions like, 'And what kind of weight is that? And whereabouts is that weight? And the weight of the world is on your shoulders... What happens just before/after?' As you do that, **often something will emerge or change that you can use as a resource to help develop their metaphorical landscape.** For example, if you ask, 'What happens if you take a breath of fresh air?' someone might respond, 'It lightens up a little bit.' Again, that's metaphorical. It could be to do with weight, or it might be that things lighten up visually. Again, you can continue to explore and develop the metaphor, 'And it lightens up a little bit... In what way? And... then what happens?'

To give another example, you might think of the techniques and models in this book as powerful or transformational tools. Equating techniques or models with tools is clearly a metaphor. You could get curious and respond, 'What kind of tools?' Or, 'Is there anything else about these tools?' You could then develop the internal representation of learning NLP using metaphor and hypnotic language, by saying something like, 'So you're developing an incredible range of practical tools which you can take into the world and become something of a wizard. You'll be able to pull out your toolbox at any moment and create magic in the world.' It's no coincidence that Bandler and Grinder's first book was called *The Structure of Magic*. NLP is a little bit like magic. And as Practitioners of NLP, we are like wizards. We're using the power and magic of language to

create remarkable change.'

We live in internal worlds that are deeply metaphorical. The more enriched, colourful, emotive and beautiful the metaphors we live our lives by, the more inspired, connected and driven we are to move towards our desired state. It's like climbing a mountain. Take in the landscape. Pause once in a while. And most of all, enjoy the journey!



We are prisoners of our own metaphors, metaphorically speaking.

—— **R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER**

EXERCISE

1. As you reflect on your experience and all that you have learnt by reading this book, that's like what? (You may recognise this as a clean question that invites someone to convert their experience into a metaphor.) What metaphor comes to mind for you? And how does that make you feel?
2. Think of someone you would like to help. What metaphors might you use with them in the coming days that could 'hold the most truth in the least space'?
3. Try exploring and developing the metaphor in a variety of different ways.

STORYTELLING



It's like everyone tells a story about themselves inside their own head. Always. All the time. That story makes you what you are. We build ourselves out of that story.

—— **PATRICK ROTHFUSS**

Stories are how we make sense of the world and shape our experience. We're constantly telling each other stories. I started this book by telling my own story. I hope it will serve as a model or example of how, if you explore and learn NLP, you too can and will change your life. We can all draw inspiration from stories about the lives of people like Nelson Mandela, Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., even many years after their deaths.

Storytelling is a powerful tool to help people change their internal world and become more effective, influential and fulfilled. Stories can serve as examples and inspiration. They can be rich in metaphor and have underlying messages that are instructive and offer hope.

To give a simple example that I've already used once in this book, I love the story of the frog in a pot of water. It's said that if you heat the water slowly up to boiling point the frog won't jump out. It simply won't notice that the water is getting warmer and warmer until it's boiled to death. But if you drop a frog in a pot of boiling water it will jump out immediately.

It's a powerful story that people share because it can be used as a metaphor about change. Most of us are experiencing what Robert Quinn calls 'slow death'. Like the frog in the pot of water, many people are drifting through life, not inspired, not living to their full potential, with old patterns that hold them back. Sometimes it takes that wake-up call, that jolt, that painful or perhaps even near-death experience, to really snap them out of their patterns so that they can experience life to the full.

The ability to tell the right story at the right time is a great skill for us to hone as coaches, leaders and managers. I mentioned the therapist Milton Erickson in the section on hypnotic language. He was a remarkably good story-teller. A story is an example of where you can

use hypnotic language to paint a picture in someone's mind that induces a trance, changes their state and how they make meaning of the world. John Grinder and Richard Bandler modelled Erickson because he was an exceptional storyteller. By telling remarkable stories that people could identify with, he was able to reframe their experience and change the stories that they were telling themselves, about who they were in their life. Suddenly they could see that there was hope after all.



Stories constitute the single most powerful weapon in a leader's arsenal.

—— **DR. HOWARD GARDNER**

QUESTIONS

1. What's a story or film that's touched you deeply and why?
2. What's a story you love telling other people? What about your own life story, in what ways is it remarkable?
3. What other stories could you share that would catalyse change?
4. Notice how and where you can use stories to support change in others in the coming days and weeks.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY



The most beautiful people I've known are those who have known trials, have known struggles, have known loss, and have found their way out of the depths.

—— **ELIZABETH KÜBLER-ROSS**

Having just covered chapters on feedback and storytelling, I thought I'd share a little story based on some feedback I recently received.

I shared the first draft of this book with a handful of friends and clients. One of them shared some feedback that the book starts in a very personal way and ends in more of a technical, less personal way. I really

valued that feedback but wasn't entirely sure how to take it on board.

I spent some time reflecting and eventually decided that it could be a great opportunity for me to share a little bit more about feedback, storytelling and my personal journey. And perhaps also what you can expect from your journey with NLP.

Joseph Campbell who wrote 'A Hero with a Thousand Faces' discovered that most great stories and fables follow a similar structure.

In short, there is a hero who feels that they don't belong, that they don't quite fit in. They then feel a calling which they try to resist. However, eventually, they honour the calling and leave their village to embark on a quest.

On this journey, they have to face demons and dragons; almost insurmountable challenges. But they meet a mentor, a wizard or a wise teacher on their travels who shares secrets and lessons to overcome the challenges. Eventually, the hero returns to the village to share these gifts and wisdom with the other villagers.

Many films and stories follow this kind of structure loosely, think Lord of The Rings, Star Wars, Jesus or the Buddha.

And in fact, this is our story. We are all called to the hero's journey. Many of us resist. Some ignore the calling, but some will eventually answer the call. And as we do, we encounter profound challenges, but eventually we rise above them, we learn and grow into the fullness of who we can be and of who we were born to be. We find our gift to bring back and share with our village, tribe or community.

When my client shared the feedback, one of the things he asked was

what happened to my parents, did I see them again? The simple answer is yes. When they returned from Spain, I didn't recognise my dad. It took some time to realise that I was back with my parents and to re-establish a relationship with them.

What then ensued was a power struggle. My grandparents, understandably, wanted to protect me from bad influences and to minimise the time I spent with my parents. My parents obviously wanted me to spend time with them. I ended up spending my teens living between my grandparents, my parents, boarding school and my sister's. I lived a very nomadic and unsettled life.

As life moved on I found myself seeking something beyond 'my village' where I didn't feel I belonged. I was trying to make sense of the world, and while I didn't know at the time, something to help me heal a broken heart from a broken home. As I came across things like meditation and tai chi, I realised that there was a way to wholeness. I just hadn't found it yet, or the vehicle that would help me get there.

Eventually, I happened upon NLP, which immediately spoke to me... and as they say, the rest is history!

What we've covered so far in this book is essentially an NLP Practitioner syllabus and some of the most powerful foundational models that have helped me on my journey. But NLP is so much more than what you've read in this book. This is really just a start. It's a bit like climbing an enormous mountain, there is always more to experience and more beauty to take in and appreciate.

The fullness of who we are yet to become, the vision and purpose that we are yet to fully realise, emerge from our experience and can always

become richer, brighter and more beautiful. And that is why NLP is so profound. Because it gives us direct experience to the depth of experience available and enables us to begin to truly co-create within this remarkable Universe that we are part of.

So NLP and in particular my NLP journey hasn't been about a course or reading a book or certification. All of those were a part of the journey but it has been and is much more profound. NLP is about studying excellence, consistently opening up to new vistas and possibilities, updating and enriching our mental maps and models of the world and embracing life for ALL it can be. That has certainly been the case in my life. I sincerely hope it is the case for you.



***Think bigger. Forget limits.
Embrace the idea of endless
possibility.... It will change you.***

—— **MARIANNE WILLIAMSON**

FINAL THOUGHTS



When your life flashes before your eyes at the end, make sure it's a good movie you're watching.

—— **STEWART STAFFORD**

I could never have imagined what riches NLP would bring me or where it would take me in my life. And it's pretty remarkable where I've ended up. I live in Ibiza, one of the most beautiful and inspiring islands on earth; I travel the world and do work that I love and that makes a difference. I have a sense of passion and purpose in my life that fuels me and my ever-expanding vision; and my conversations on a day-to-day basis are rich with meaning, purpose and possibility.

I continue to grow, learn, contribute and make a living that sustains the kind of lifestyle I treasure. Of course, life isn't always perfect. Challenges continue to arise. That's the human experience. But I have ever-increasing resilience and resourcefulness as a result of my NLP journey. And that's the promise of NLP: that no matter what challenges arise or mountains we want to climb, when we tap into our resources and potential we can achieve remarkable results.

Just as life is full of unexpected challenges, gifts and beauty, so NLP is an ongoing journey – it doesn't end with this book. You'll find information in the **Annex** about opportunities to continue your NLP journey if you'd like to: from one-on-one coaching to retreats and online courses.

As my mentor Gene said to me all those years ago, NLP is a way to live a profound life. At the time, I thought that sounded pretty cool. But it took me a while to realise he was absolutely right. It *is* a profound path.

So many of us are caught up on the hamster wheel of life. Our lives are like Groundhog Day. We're stuck in old patterns and habits, whether that's to do with our relationships, emotions, finances or our work. But it doesn't have to be that way. NLP gives us a different level of awareness and access to what's really possible for us. And so, my hope is that this book lights that flame of possibility and passion in your life and that you

will embark on your own profound journey. As Helen Keller said:



*Life is either a daring
adventure or nothing at all.*

—— **HELEN KELLER**

ANNEX: NLP COURSES AND NEXT STEPS

*The future depends on what we
do in the present.*

—— MAHATMA GANDHI

If this book has spoken to you and NLP feels like something you're interested in exploring further, there are lots of opportunities to continue your learning journey. Experience is a key part of the learning cycle, which is why I encourage you to try out the exercises in this book for yourself, ideally with another person.

NLP retreats, courses, online events and resources, like my high-impact community, can offer even more powerful ways of learning NLP because they provide a different level of experience and immersion. I offer a wide range of online courses and retreats around the world, and I'd love to see you on one of these sometime. I have an amazing community and support network. We love welcoming people who are open-minded and open-hearted and who are looking to learn and make a difference in their lives and the world.

You can find out more about my courses, coaching, retreats and online community at www.tristansoames.com.

NLP Courses

I offer NLP retreats, courses and Online Accelerators (dynamic, interactive and transformational webinars) that provide certification from Practitioner right up to Master Trainer levels. My NLP courses are all certified and recognised by the Association of NLP (ANLP) which is one of the most reputable international NLP bodies. You can find more information about ANLP here www.anlp.org and my membership programmes, retreats and courses at www.tristansoames.com.

NLP Introduction or NLP Foundation Event

Attending an NLP Introduction or NLP Foundation Event is a great way of dipping your toe in the water and getting a feel for what it's like to be with a group of people learning NLP. These are typically two or three

day events. With the advent of technology and post-COVID, lots of these courses are now available to attend online and over a shorter period of time.

NLP Practitioner

If you've had a good experience at an Introductory or Foundation event, the next step typically would be to do an NLP Practitioner course. Many people jump in and start with a Practitioner course. This usually involves about 60 hours of training, including group sessions and some one-on-one work, going through many of the models that we've touched on in this book. At the end of that process, you would be certified by the trainer as an NLP Practitioner. The certification should be recognised by one of the international NLP training and accreditation bodies. You would then be able to set up as an NLP Practitioner and coach people professionally if you choose to.

NLP Master Practitioner

Once people have completed their NLP Practitioner, they will often move on to do their NLP Master Practitioner training. This is a certified course typically involving 60 hours or more of immersive and experiential training.

These are also focussed on supporting participants to complete a modelling project. You would be invited to identify something that you would like to model. I sometimes refer to this as your 'IT'. It's a model that would be very significant for you to have for yourself, that would take you and your life to the next level. You would identify three people who have this quality, talent or skill (your 'IT'), and you'd then go and model them to create your own model of excellence, based on your experience with the exemplars.

You would typically write up your modelling project, although other approaches such as video content can also work. Essentially, you would need to produce something that demonstrates you have modelled something successfully and have instilled it successfully in yourself and others.

Doing an NLP Master Practitioner can be a profound pivot point in people's lives. It represents a profound shift in someone's capacity to learn and model. It gives them what they really want in life, having identified that in others. And it gives them something to teach others. People who have done modelling projects have gone on to write books, set up charities, organisations, and businesses and create a remarkable impact in the world. They have a model that they can offer as something that has changed their lives, and that can change the lives of other people.

NLP Trainer Training

NLP Trainer Training is often the natural progression after the Master Practitioner course for people who are interested in becoming trainers, leaders or better coaches. It's typically a 60-hour course with some follow-up homework, where you demonstrate that you have the attitudes and skills of being an NLP Trainer. This is judged against a range of criteria such as whether you can truly be yourself in front of a group.

NLP Trainer Training is all about stepping into the fullness of who you are and facilitating group transformation to the same effect. People coming on the course will already be qualified coaches and they will be learning how to coach individuals and groups systemically, at the next level.

If you complete the course with me, you'll be certified as an NLP Trainer, recognised by ANLP, one of the main international training and

accreditation bodies. You'll then be able to run NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner programmes yourself.

Not everyone chooses to be a trainer. Funnily enough, I wasn't interested in becoming one myself. But from early on, I recognised that NLP was the thing that made the biggest difference in my life. I'd tried yoga, tai chi, meditation and so on, but none of that really helped me transform from the inside out, to the same degree that NLP did.

Once I'd done a fair bit of NLP and gone on different coaching programmes, I assisted on a Practitioner and a Master Practitioner course. It's something that you might also want to try when you reach that stage. I got to the point where I'd done a lot of training and thought I might as well do my NLP Trainer Training because I really enjoyed the environment and the learning that came as a consequence. But even then, I had no real desire to be a trainer. However, as I did my Trainer Training I realised that I had a gift. I was a really good coach. I had the capacity to help people at a profound level, not just one-on-one, but also with groups. I wasn't just changing lives one at a time, I was able to help them change each other's lives. I was becoming increasingly influential. And it was an incredible journey that deepened my own learning, transformation and impact in the world but also facilitated others being great coaches and leaders.

NLP Master Trainer

There are not many Master Trainers in the world. I'm proud to be one of them. Being a Master Trainer means that I can train NLP Trainers. It also means that I can certify other Master Trainers.

To become a Master Trainer, you need to be recognised as such, by two different NLP lineages or schools. You have to do a lot of training and be

able to demonstrate that you're a real master in NLP.

One-on-one Coaching

If you're more interested in working one-on-one, I have an outstanding community of coaches, from NLP Practitioners right the way up to Master Trainers. Whatever your budget, we can find someone with a suitable level of experience who can help and support you on your journey. You'll find a questionnaire on my website to fill out to apply for a free powerful coaching conversation with myself or one of my coaches.

For more information or to apply for a powerful coaching conversation you can go to www.tristansoames.com.

Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life!

"This book is a rare window into what wholeness as a person looks like and how you can travel from where you are to a place you once could only imagine: a place of peace and power, presence and purpose."

Gene Early, PHD

What if you could shift from
feeling stuck to living with
passion, purpose, and power?



In A Personal Guide to NLP, Master Trainer

Tristan Soames shares his deeply personal journey from trauma and uncertainty to freedom and fulfilment. Through honest storytelling, transformative models, and practical tools, he guides you to unlock the potential that lies dormant within us all.

This book is far more than theory, it's a hands-on guide to rewiring your mindset, updating outdated beliefs, and stepping into the life you long for. Whether you're a coach, a leader, a professional, or someone simply hungry for change, you'll find insights and techniques to help you create breakthroughs - fast.

Whether you're brand new to NLP or already on the path, this book will meet you where you are - and take you further than you imagined possible. Scan the QR code for special access to free events and resources.

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