

Information on Neuro Linguistic Programming

NLP Is...

Neuro-Linguistic Programming: The study of the structure of subjective experience. That means it's a field of study (not a technique, brand name, theory, therapy method, passing fad, or anything else). What we study in NLP is how people learn, think, communicate and make changes.

Neuro: the workings of the human brain

Linguistic: verbal and non-verbal communication

Programming: patterns in thinking and behaving

Through the study of highly successful people, we in NLP have discovered common patterns that exist in effectiveness. We have isolated, refined, and taught these same patterns to many other people wanting that same effectiveness the "experts" have. NLP training provides the real nuts and bolts of human functioning and communication necessary to achieve success in any field where people must perform or work with one another.

NLP is full of practical applications, aimed at everyday situations, needed by everyone. It can be learned by anyone, regardless of technical training or academic background. Over the past twenty years Neuro-Linguistic Programming has helped many thousands of people become more effective in both their professional and personal lives. These people have learned to communicate better, perform more effectively, and live much more full and rewarding lives with the changes NLP has brought to them. This technology has proven itself in psychotherapy, business and organisational development at all levels, education and training of all kinds.

Gwen Carter-Powell

Certified Master Practitioner of Neuro Linguistic Programming

Licensed Training Specialist of Neuro Linguistic Programming

Licensed Trainer of Neuro Linguistic Programming

A Brief History of NLP

NLP was developed in the early 1970's by Richard Bandler, Ph.D., an information scientist, and John Grinder, Ph.D., a linguist. Bandler and Grinder were interested in how people influence one another, and in the possibility of being able to duplicate the behaviour, and therefore effectiveness of highly influential people. Their early research was conducted at the University of California at Santa Cruz. What made their search special was their use of technology from linguistics and information science, combined with insights from behavioural psychology and general systems theory, to unlock the secrets of highly effective communication.

The actual technology, or methodology, that Bandler and Grinder used is known as human modelling; actually the building of models of how people perform or accomplish something (anything--the usefulness in benchmarking best practices should be immediately obvious). This modelling process actually means finding and describing the important elements and processes that people go through, beginning with finding and studying a *human model*. This is a person, who does something in a particular, usually highly skilful, way. For example, if you want to know how to teach some particular skill or concept, you'd first find someone who does it extremely well. Then ask him or her lots of questions about what they do, why they do it, what works and doesn't work, and so on. At the same time, observing this person in action will often lead to new and better questions to ask in the process. Most of us do this already, though perhaps not systematically.

The addition of specific NLP technology makes it possible to discover much of what this human model does that he or she is *not aware of*. To do this well means to actually study the structure of people's thought processes and internal experience, as well as their observable behaviour.

During their early studies Bandler and Grinder developed a unique system of asking questions and gathering information that was based on the fields of transformational grammar and general semantics. Later they and their colleagues discovered certain *minimal cues* people give that indicate very specific kinds of thought processes. These include eye movements, certain gestures, breathing patterns, voice tone changes and even very subtle cues such as pupil dilation and skin colour changes (training of Practitioners of NLP includes the skills and knowledge to use these information gathering techniques and to notice and interpret the subtle cues).

NLP is this gathering of information to make models, based on the internal experience and information processing of the people being studied and modelled, including the part that is outside of their conscious awareness. The word *neuro* refers to an understanding of the brain and its functioning. Linguistic relates to the communication aspects (both verbal and non-verbal) of our information processing. Programming is the behavioural and thinking patterns we all go through. There is a relationship between perceptions, thinking and behaviour that is neuro-linguistic in nature. The relationship is operating all the time, no matter what we are doing, and it can be studied by exploring our internal or subjective experience. The *formal* definition of Neuro-Linguistic Programming is: *The study of the structure of subjective experience*.

So, now to the question of our basic theory in NLP. We don't really have one. NLP is not based on theory. It is based on the process of making models. There is a big difference. A model doesn't have to be "true" or "correct" or even perfectly formed. It only has to be useful when applied to what it's designed for. If it isn't, it can be discarded in any situation where it fails. NLP is really an epistemology (the study of the origin and structure of knowledge itself). Everything in NLP is based on specific evidence procedures for effectiveness and is thoroughly tested. "Doing NLP" means working diligently to be sure we know what we know, and use it appropriately.