



NLP

Three letters that *changed* the world

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Is there a therapy or transformational process that has been as influential and all pervasive as NLP?

By Sudha Hamilton

Neuro linguistic programming (NLP) has, over the last 30 years, reached into nearly every level of our society. Beginning with the therapeutic community, Richard Bandler and John Grinder (who were the founders) developed their work in conjunction with three of the most effective and well known psychotherapists of the time - Fritz Perls (founder of Gestalt), Virginia Satir (family systems therapy) and Milton Erickson (hypnotherapy). As NLP included principles from all of these disparate modalities, it dropped a large pebble in many pools of consciousness - and the ripple effect has been substantial. It is highly likely that any training or transformational work that you may have done has been positively and powerfully influenced by the many guiding principles inherent in NLP. Recently the publication "Psychology Today" stated that "NLP may be the most powerful vehicle for change in existence."

From there, NLP immediately began spreading like a virus into the corporate world, infecting sales trainings around the world, as managers realised that this work could make their people more effective and therefore their companies more money. Modelling "rapport", and "anchoring their intentions" with powerful gestures and mental images, firstly sales people, and then all levels of corporate management began to expand their understanding of how we all think and operate. Training and Development Journal says "NLP does offer the potential for making changes without the usual agony that accompanies these phenomena....it offers the opportunity to gain flexibility, creativity and greater freedom of action than most of us now know." NLP has been instrumental in the shift to a greater consciousness within our corporate world.

NLP has also been hugely influential in the field of sport and other high performance categories. Coaches and athletes have benefited from the techniques employed by NLP - "reframing" their communication to be able to perceive new possibilities and identifying our sabotage tendencies through "parts integration." Golfing star Tiger Woods and tennis great Andre Agassi both utilised NLP techniques to reach the peak of their particular sports. A strong mental performance is such a vital component of any successful performance, be it on the sports field or on any other world stage. Politicians and performers

have also taken advantage of the NLP approach, with Bill Clinton and Tony Blair as two notable examples.

NLP is, of course, all about education, and it focuses on the effective teaching process through “modelling” and recognising the different ways we learn, depending on whether we are more visually inclined - “I can see what you mean” - or auditory - “That rings a bell” - or kinaesthetic - “That feels right to me.” These defining sub-groups allow teachers and trainers to use the language that each student’s brain is most able to effectively process. Concepts are grasped quickly and learning occurs without the pain of incomprehension. Recognising that each individual has a preferred representational system (PRS), was a key to designing effective “sub modality” tools, like visual, sound and textual imagery.



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The techniques which NLP practitioners employ bring awareness to naturally occurring processes, and enable us to enact change in our behaviour at will. As the great teacher Osho would always say, “awareness is enough” - once you become conscious of something then transformation can happen spontaneously. Ask yourself the question who am I? Keep asking and with each round of answers you will discover more and more parts of yourself. Some seemingly buried in your unconscious and quite a few in apparent conflict with each other. Recognition and understanding of these disparate parts and their desires can allow us to move forward and to let go of attachments to unhelpful behaviours. These processes can release a tremendous amount of previously pent up energy and many people who have done the trainings have reported such results. NLP can also help you gain access to the many resources in the unconscious mind - that great storehouse of learning, memory, behaviour and emotion.

One of the fundamentally correct things about NLP is that it was formed out of the observation of what works - Bandler and Grinder analysed the language and behaviour utilised by three excellent psychotherapists in their consultations with clients that affected positive healing outcomes. It is solution based rather than symptomatic. This is, I think, one of the main reasons it has gone on to become the most influential transformative process on the planet. To understand how our brains work and the important role that language plays in how we process information and perceive reality is heroic stuff indeed. Bandler and Grinder, and all those NLP innovators who have come after, have created a system that allows humanity to develop, change, grow and evolve. Christopher Partridge, author of *New Religions*, states that “NLP may be best thought of as a system of psychology concerned with the self development of the human being” and “It is concerned with the function of belief rather than its nature. It is not concerned whether a belief is true or not, but whether it is empowering or disempowering.”

In Australia we have a number of innovative and excellent NLP Master Practitioners, who have taught, trained and created - transforming lives along the way. There are also NLP schools where you can become a teacher/trainer in a variety of NLP associated modalities including hypnosis, time line therapy™ and NLP life coaching.

(Many thanks to Sue Sharp of Australian College of NLP for editorial contribution to the above article.)

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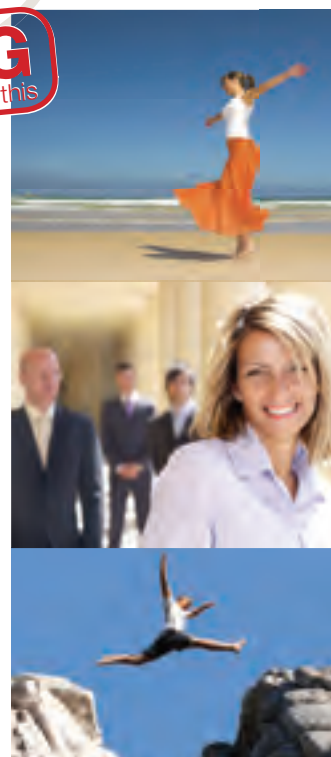
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