

Sources and Constructs underpinning NLP

Background and History of NLP.

Your behaviour is based on a certain structure. NLP examines this structure focusing on the way you think, act and speak within the framework of specific models. The models were initially created by **Richard Bandler**, an academic who studied a wide range of disciplines to try and understand how people became effective, and **John Grinder**, assistant professor in linguistics and the University of Santa Cruz, in California, United States, in the 1970s. So this communications technology has been around a fair while now.

They obtained inspiration and insight from, and modelled three successful therapists who produced excellent results – seeking to understand what made them so effective. They were **Virginia Satir**, psychotherapist and ground breaking family therapist, **Milton Erickson**, an American psychiatrist who specialized in medical hypnosis and family therapy and the German **Fritz Perls**, the developer, along with his wife of Gestalt therapy.

Out of this modelling came a series of techniques that can be used to help change behaviour. **Tony Robbins**, Life and Business Strategist, contributed to the popularity of NLP by using it extensively. NLP was managed and developed in several independent sectors, renamed and there was a lack of definition and regulation, which undermined its reputation. However, after a series of legal battles, NLP legally became a generic term. Today, there is still no general agreement among practitioners about the theory of NLP. That said most work is still based on the ideas of the co-founders and other respected individuals.

In this module we are not setting out to explore the whole, very wide landscape of NLP, but to provide you the Mentor with some basic information about the approach that will assist you in understanding how to communicate most effectively with your Mentee. Since NLP deals with subjective experience, and is based upon the supposition that as human we are unable to identify objective reality, this implies that there is no such thing as a perfect or right direction when leading a life. Thus aiming for creating the best possible situation, and making the right choice with the right attitude, given the circumstances, intention and context is the best we can do.

And as a Mentor your role is of course to help your Mentee chart this exact path. Doing this by assisting them to widen their options, they will increase their chances of gaining greater excellence; through acquiring different views

of their wider environment, and placement with it, and thus become wiser in their choice making. In which case we are dealing with change and what blocks change. This topic will be covered under Tools and Frameworks later in this Phase.

Key Pre-suppositions of NLP – Empowering beliefs for Creating Change that Sticks.

Before diving into the details and undertaking some self-learning activities it is helpful to understand the underlying suppositions proposed within the NLP approach. One of the most important assumptions in NLP is that everyone, regardless of their social background, is capable of utilizing language to learn and achieve personal greatness or excellence. And by “greatness” we are speaking about the progression from a current state towards a more desirable one. The viewpoint is that Everyone is capable of positive change. There is nothing in your mind, or in the entirety of human existence and reality, that cannot be expressed and understood through language and NLP is an effective tool for personal change when there is a willingness to learn new things. This willingness to learn is rooted in the realisation that we don’t have all the answers, and that we may in fact, have values and or beliefs that are flawed, and are hindering our progress toward goal achievement.

What follows are other constructs that lie at the core of NLP:

1	<p>The Map is not the Territory. “the mental map is not reality itself.” What does this maxim mean? Simple: a person’s representation of reality does not have a direct and faultless correspondence to reality. Therefore, “reality” cannot be lived as if it is a single direct route as if moving from A to B. As human beings, we have different options as to how to live life. Depending experiences and perceptions, choices are made, which lead from one path to another. Each individual has their own map of reality, involving a representation of the self and the surrounding world, and all that is within it. It is through this map that reactions to the world occur and through those reactions, we get to know ourself and it better. This can also be thought of as the discrepancy between subjective and objective reality.</p> <p>EG. Think of an apple, an image of a red, juicy fruit or a bright green apple, or even a technology brand, may come to mind. All 3 conceptions “ an apple “ are acceptable or false. With learning and self-discovery, there will arise instances where there will be tension</p>
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	<p>between maintaining an old belief and accepting a new solution (and belief) based on what's out there and observed in objective reality. Accepting the world as much bigger and more dynamic than anyone's individual mind map of reality is what allows the making of lasting, positive changes in any domain of life.</p> <p>Also, it is important to acknowledge that we each have a unique mental model, and thus it is important to have respect for that.</p>
2	<p>Mental Filters are Applied to Create Internal Representations of the World at Large. Actual reality bombards us with thousands of different stimuli (bits of information) on a moment by moment basis throughout the day. If we were to pay attention to everything around us we would be totally overwhelmed, and in fact burnt out. Our mental filters protect from overwhelm, and our mind uses these filters to accept, contest or discard different kinds of information, to the point this becomes a fully automated process that tends to keep like for like and discard the rest.</p>
3	<p>Life and Mind are both Systemic Processes. There is always an interaction between the self and another humans or between self and the environment. Everything in the universe is interrelated, from the simplest element to the most complex systems. So, when a part of your mind or life is affected, the entire unit absorb the effects as a whole. When this occurs, the system looks for ways to get back into, and maintain constant balance.</p>
4	<p>The Meaning of the Communication is the Actual Response it Elicits, not What was Intended. The manner and content of the reply you receive from whomever you are communicating with is what the entire communication meant. You may try to relay a certain message but validation of understanding will only be done once the receiver or the person you're communicating with has replied consistent with your intention. EG. If you tell a joke but the other person doesn't laugh as you expected, then something in the manner of the telling wasn't conducive to your desired communication, and the other didn't see it as funny</p>
5	<p>There are Two Communication Levels: Conscious and Unconscious. Most human communication is not only verbal. You may not be conscious of it we all use a lot of hand and eye movements, facial expressions, posturing, non-verbal cues and body language along with the spoken words. Then add tone and mood behind the message will</p>

	<p>relay and entirely different meaning. EG. you say “Get out of here!” or “Get out of here ☺” creating two very different meanings.</p>
6	<p>There are no Failures in Communication, only Outcomes. Not receiving the response expected after communicating with another, doesn't mean that the communication process was useless or a failure. It does mean that the outcome was different from what was intended. This happening should provide encouragement to improve your skills and attitude about communication. Learn from undesirable past outcomes so that you will be able to gauge and identify the factors that prevented the right message from being delivered, and change things up for the next time.</p>
7	<p>Failure is and Option. This builds on item 6 above. We learn to avoid failure as much as possible, and this can lead to becoming fearful or anxious about learning and trying new things. This is probably why many find it hard to extricate themselves from negative situations, as they are unable to look beyond the result or outcome that in front of them to another possibility. NLP shows us that any kind of result, positive or negative, is just feedback. so, if a certain action gives a negative result, this is not failure as NLP invites an inquiry about the outcome. EG. What needs to be changed? What is at the root of the cycle that creates the repeat of negative outcomes? Accepting failure in both familiar and unfamiliar situations opens the mind to continuous learning</p>
7	<p>Establishing and Building Rapport is done by Relating to Individuals According to Their Model of the World. Since all people create their own model or representation of the world depending on their understanding of past experiences and the influence of others and the environment, it requires effort to step into another's model – their reality. It means developing the ability to view the world the same way they do so that you can effectively build rapport and communicate. If you are close-minded about other people's representational systems, it will hinder the gaining of a desired response or outcome, as the other will also have trouble understanding your own model.</p>
8	<p>Resistance Reveals the Inflexibility of the Communicator. If you experience resistance from another, it doesn't necessarily mean that the person is not open to communication. It may be that you are not establishing rapport effectively. You need to enter their realm and understand their model of the world first, or else they will unconsciously refuse to receive your messages. You have to learn how to be flexible in order to understand and speak their language since</p>

	they cannot readily understand yours. If you are inflexible then you risk sounding insulting by asking them to change
9	People have all the Resources they Need to Change. You do not need to acquire new things in order to make you a good communicator, leader or to make changes in your life. You already have all the behavioural, mental and emotional resources inside of you. If you do not recognise this, it only means that you have not yet accessed them properly or realized your true strengths. There are chronic stressors that have been preventing you from using them.
10	A Person's Positive Worth is Constant even when the Value of Internal or External Behaviour is Questionable. Each human has worth and dignity regardless of their thoughts and actions. However, there are good and bad behaviours which may determine the person's judgment of his worth to self and the environment. This means that your value as a person remains unchanged no matter how bad your behaviour is. People will measure the value of your actions and behaviour according to their own values system and their expectations. It is possible to change bad actions and manners of thinking to be more aligned with one's deeper personal value.
10	All behaviour has a Positive Intention. All behaviour is intended for positive outcomes but not every behaviour is designed to be carried out in a positive manner. There are several self-preserving mechanisms that aim for personal benefit but the process of achieving that can be dangerous for self and others. Some of these behaviours are unconscious and sometimes the mind and body only think about the positive outcome regardless of the negative means or approach. EG. Euthanasia is intended to relieve patients of their pain, suffering and misery. The intention is positive but the behaviour and method are still life-ending.
11	Good Decision-making Requires Accurate Information. immediately rushing to action or making a decision before acquiring full knowledge, is dangerous. Also, giving enough time to calm any excitement is important, as haste and disrupted emotions result in poor judgment and inadequacy of action. Taking time to pause, to distinguish what is conscious and choiceful, from automated conditioned responses, and also differentiating your ideals from what is actually happening in your life, enables a reality check that will effectively increase your choices and enable the making of good decisions.
12	A Single Part is not the Whole. Many subscribe to the idea that once a person does something bad or unacceptable, that person is forever

	defined or characterized by that single action or event. NLP's view is that a single event is never the basis for a person's whole identity, or what the person can achieve or accomplish in the future. This assumption is helpful when you're dealing with those who've been branded as troublesome or even "hopeless."
13	The Reticular Activating System. The human brain, as the organ using the greatest amount of oxygen in the body) does everything possible to conserve energy and cognitive resources. One of these ways is by using the reticular activating system. The RAS exists to help minimize useless "noise" in the environment so that a person can easily pay attention to what most important. The RAS refocuses the mind when stimuli or information coming in from the environment is new, has emotional impact, or is related to the survival of the person. The ability of the RAS to refocus the mind is maximized by using those key markers: survival, emotion and newness.

NLP Analytical Models.

There are five key strategies, that according to NLP theory, are used either singly or in a blend in order to relate either to the world and/or to the self.

1. **Memory.** The mind stores data from personal experiences and later the information is retrieved from that memory, being distinguished as to whether it is a good, neutral or bad experience. This is how we learn from mistakes or cherish past successes. We constantly retrieve information that is stored and use it in decision-making, critical thinking and to develop new approaches when presented with a new situation.
2. **Belief.** We compare real experiences with the interpretation of them. By looking at actual occurrences in life and aspiring to our ideals (goals; values), our belief forms that the achievement of a higher state is possible, and through that belief choices get made that are designed to create greater success than is available in the present.
3. **Decision.** Basing on belief, options are generated about to how to achieve goals in life. Through the assessment and evaluation of past conditions, the present situation and desired future, choices are identified that will lead to decisions designed to reach a goal or an ideal future.
4. **Motivation.** Motivation collaborates across the first three strategies. Firstly, memory provides a baseline for reality. Secondly, imagination or belief creates a set a comparisons as to how much greater things can be.

Thirdly options then decisions follow, designed to reach these greater things. When these three steps combine, they manifest a powerful drive toward goal achievement. This is motivation. What motivates, differs with each individual, depending on personal experience and belief. Some motivation is extrinsic and other intrinsic – and this topic will be explored later in Phase 2.

5. **Learning.** This strategy incorporates memory, decision making and motivation, to enable faster more efficient learning. Memory provides data and information relevant to the task at hand. Past decisions determine how much success or failure was had, and (ideally) learning resulted in the making of wiser ones in the future. Avoiding the repetition of past mistakes, paves the way to expanded learning.

Frameworks of Thinking

NLP looks at a range of behavioural frames. These are ways of thinking about actions that are taken.

Outcome verses Blame Frame

NLP orients toward an outcome rather than the person's past. It is not interested in the why nor the past to find out why achievement is not occurring. In NLP terms the risk of the latter is that we can get caught up in apportioning blame, and finding justification to continue the status quo. The point of reference in NLP is in how, and it doesn't matter what is done, it's about the how. When doing this there are a few questions that are used to uncover the what and how...

- How do I do what I do now?
- What can I do differently in the future?
- How can I do it differently to achieve a different outcome?

Curiosity and Experimentation

There are four different elements that are considered here. Curiosity, Experimentation, Assumptions and Choice.

Adopting a genuinely curious mindset is very helpful as it leads to the asking of question – without attachment nor judgment. And as a result it is likely a discovery about how to do things more effectively can arise.

- How does do?

- What do I notice that makes so effective?
- How might I do that too?

Being willing to experiment, and fail is critical. Ruling out what doesn't work. It's about applying what is found out, learning from the results – doing less of what doesn't work and choosing to do more of what does in the moment.

Assumptions and expectations are a real 'trip up' in that it results in pre-judging. Jumping ahead into the future that hasn't yet happened means that there is a missing out on what the possibilities' are.

Choice comes from garnering curiosity and experimenting. When we were children our minds were fully open toward the world and there was a hunger to try new things. The greater the choices the more likelihood of success.

Feedback verses Failure

As mentioned above, NLP is focussed on results. And when things don't work out the way you want them to it means you have achieved different results than those you set out to achieve and you can learn from that. Everything that happens in the NLP framework is feedback information. The key here is to short circuit any negative emotions that arise when things don't work out, because they may stop you from trying again and taking further action toward creating what you want.

The fear of failure and beating the self-up if results aren't generated right away gets in the way of being open to the lessons in the feedback of the experience.

Possibility verses Necessity

NLP tells us it is always helpful to assume that there are choices in every situation. When we get caught in the 'should'; 'must'; 'have to' narrative this limits choice. And when we engage with choices, we engage with being the cause' rather than being at the 'effect' of any situation. When we don't take responsibility for the results we create – we become victims of fate and in NLP this is referred to as being 'at effect'. When we are in this state – we have no access to our innate resourcefulness.

EG.

- I'm overweight because I have a slow metabolism – there is nothing I can do to change that !

By changing the narrative to one where the decision is to be 'at cause' of whatever happens, then the thinking switches around, based on the view that there is influence that can be had over what happens.

EG.

- My metabolism is slow, and I can work on getting my weight down through finding the right exercise.

To shift from one to the other we pose the question:

“What can I do differently to get the result/outcome I want?”