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20

SUMMER 2010

Persuasion
The art of
Business Success

Ross Jeffries
Meditation, mindfulness
& seduction

Energetic **NLP**
for **Health**
& **Healing**

COACHING
MODELS
don't work

Lynnette Allen
NLP in
BUSINESS
& in LIFE

THE BIG
QUESTION
What is your
greatest learning
from applying
NLP?

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INSIDE ISSUE 20
Contents

Cover Stories

SUMMER 2010

48

24

18

28

26

10

Winner
HERTFORDSHIRE
BUSINESS 09
AWARDS
HERTFORDSHIRE
WOMAN OF THE YEAR
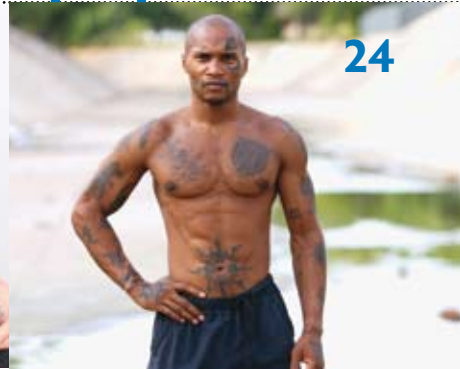
Publisher - Karen Moxom

Welcome to the Summer issue of Rapport.

We have another bumper issue for you this month. I was delighted when Eve secured an interview with Lynnette Allen (p48). I read her first book, "Behind with the Laundry and Living off Chocolate" when it was first published (and because I was!), and I remember being struck by her pragmatic approach to coaching.

That same pragmatic attitude seems to be one adopted by Bill Docherty MBE, who successfully applies his NLP principles to his business, as well as his charity and community work, and is certainly an inspiration to others (p38).

Our BIG question this issue has also unearthed some inspiring answers, and reading these has served as a great reminder for me about my learnings from applying NLP (p4). For me, the greatest impact from NLP is when it can be applied on a practical level and be used to change or improve any situation.

And whilst I love the practical applications of NLP, I too have been caught out by Email Miscommunication in the past (p18). Yes, I am one of the 32% of people who has forwarded an email to the wrong person, with interesting consequences!

I also enjoyed David Molden's refreshing article about Coaching Models, reminding us that coaching is about far more than simply applying models, it is also about the skills and perhaps elegance used when applying these models (p26). I guess this is a reminder that flexibility is key?

I will be getting Robbie's book "Brilliant Decision Making", which breaks down the NLP principles and neurological research that underpins good 9and bad) decisions (p32). I'm sure many of us have made some big decisions over the years, and a deeper insight into this art is most welcome.

Talking of big decisions, by the time you read this, we will have moved to our new office, so please make a note of our new address (see page 12).

Until next time

Karen

Find peace now, ask me how
Meditation, mindfulness, and seduction
Speed Seduction creator Ross Jeffries talks to Judy Rees

Ross Jeffries, the NLP enthusiast who created "Speed Seduction", now admits his idea spawned a monster. The international Pick Up Artist (PUA) community sell NLP as a manipulative trick for getting women into bed, fast – and their business is booming.

Particularly since 2005, when The Game by Neil Strauss's exposed the PUA's world of "lairs", "wingmen" and "lay reports", NLP and seduction have been inextricably linked by many people, particularly online.

Seduction is the hottest topic in online NLP discussion forums: female NLPers typically regard PUA attitudes and behaviours as unpleasant, offensive or even dangerous. And yet for young men, a pick-up bootcamp is an increasingly common doorway to more mainstream NLP training.

So what does the man who started the trend think about the outcome of his creation? Jeffries' "Speed Seduction" predates the mass-market internet: his book How to Get the Women You Desire into Bed came out in 1992. Nowadays, around 40 different companies market pick-up products and training courses, and his former students are among the leading lights in the PUA community. But Jeffries is very keen to distance himself from them.

For example, he admits that his marketing materials can be offensive to women, but claims that he's pacing the emotional reality of his potential clients, and will quickly move on, leading them into more helpful attitudes. His competitors, in contrast, make a policy of putting women down.

"Their major theory is that most women only have sex to prove their worth and value to men, so if you invalidate women, make them feel valueless and put them down, their lack of self esteem will cause them to come into your bed. This is what I would call manipulation, because it's pushing down on people's pain buttons. I do not teach this. I want everyone reading this to be very clear, this is not what I am doing.

"I think what they're doing is destructive."

Jeffries says his competitors often use deceptive – and potentially illegal - marketing techniques, as well as recycling and remarketing each others' ideas and materials in ways that mislead their customers. Unlike him, he says, they treat the entire enterprise as no more than a money-making scheme.

"If you go look at my competitors' marketing it's stupid and offensive but once you get into the teaching, guess what? It's equally stupid and offensive. It's not suddenly when you open up the box you'll really find good stuff. My marketing can initially be offensive to get attention, but once I've gotten the attention I quickly get off that into the substance. Their stupidity is shot all the way through."

And he acknowledges that at least a few people in the seduction community go even further, into outright abuse. He details three specific behaviours which, he believes, amount to manipulation and exploitation.

1 Lying about facts.
2 Pushing down on people's 'pain buttons', using their emotions of fear, guilt, shame, abandonment etc.
3 Concealing an agenda, for example pretending you want to help someone with their homework when in reality you want to get into their bed.

"Not anywhere do I advocate any of that. I never have and I never will," he says.

So, does he feel responsible for the seduction community? "That monster is out of control, I would love to see it destroyed," he says. Because he doesn't endorse his competitors or their products, he says he doesn't feel intellectually responsible. But emotionally, it's a different matter. "I feel angry and bad about it. I feel angry about what they're doing and how they've even ripped me off. They're ripping the consumer off as well as ripping me off."

And did he anticipate the worldwide movement? Apparently not.

"I'd love to say: "Oh, I was a genius, I foresaw something called the internet would come along and social media..." No, I was just looking to take what changed my life and convey it in a

> ❝ Seduction is the hottest topic in online NLP discussion forums ❞

> **❝ This is what I would call manipulation, because it's pushing down on people's pain buttons ❞**

way where I could enjoy running a business that helps me help people and do what I love. I thought, 'Wow, I could make a living doing what I love, changing lives, sharing something that absolutely, dramatically changed my life, so let's do it.' I had no thought that there would be a community worldwide."

Training and coaching is what he loves. He's spent 20 years working with hundreds of men. Many of them speak highly of him, and sometimes their ex-girlfriends even write in, seeking introductions to his other students! So what, exactly, does he teach, and how does it relate to NLP?

"Here's the thing - why is it OK to use NLP to bust a phobia or to model the excellence of a basketball player but to use it in a way that gives men power and choice and selectivity to achieve what they want to achieve with women, why is that inherently necessarily a bad thing?

"In teaching Speed Seduction, I point out to guys that a huge piece of getting good with women is they need to understand themselves, looking at where they're defaulting into responses and filters that they haven't really chosen but have been imposed upon them by media, TV, books and also their own default bad habits. So really, as far as my style of doing things, to get good at seduction you have to get really good at personal transformation.

"NLP is primarily a set of attention-direction filters, telling people what to ignore and what to pay attention to when they look to pattern and model excellence. The heart of it as I practice and teach it, is seeing process. Where other people see things, we see process.

"Where other people struggle with a 'thing' called love, we see a subjective set of processes with a structure and a recipe. And because of that, we can see what's actually going on where other people don't see it. And what you can see you have power to change, to modify, to control or to influence. So to me, the biggest part of my work is seeing people through those NLP filters and then teaching my students to see themselves and women through those NLP filters.

"Then the language patterns come after that."

But there's more to his training and coaching than NLP, particularly when working with men who are anxious about approaching women. Surprisingly, the 'more' is a form of Buddhist meditation called vipasana, or mindfulness meditation.

"Perhaps this sounds crazy, from someone who in his marketing says 'Get laid now, ask me how'. But in fact, this is what I'm very deeply passionate about because I've seen the difference in my life," Jeffries explains.

"Many men have an image in their mind that they have to be perfectly smooth and perfectly confident before they even talk to women, which is cr*p, because of course you can't have that good a skill set unless you practice many times. So they're stuck in this sort of

Gordian knot where they won't make any moves until they're perfect but of course they can't be perfect until they make a lot of moves. And so they wind up never making any moves and never being perfect, and just chasing information, rather than actually getting skilled in the world.

"A lot of NLP techniques involve visualising in a certain way. The challenge is many people can't visualise, and also many people are already too stuck in their head anyway. If I give someone a lot of visualising to do, for example to overcome fear and instill confidence, the problem is that it is playing into their need to have absolute certainty before they take a step.

"And so my insight is to come along and say: 'You know, to slice that knot in half, NLP is not a good toolset for this.'

"I've found something that I find to be equally, if not more, useful. NLP is my beginning, my foundation, and I still make it a core, but not the only thing that I do.

"Vipasana emphasises insight into your ongoing subjective experience. For example, if someone comes to me and they're very, very anxious around women, rather than have them fight it or do a swish and change it, I have them pay attention to it with great clarity and without any desire to change it. So for example I have them pay attention, where do they feel the feeling, and how does it change and move?

"And if you teach people the discipline of tuning in to their experience without fighting it, and without feeding it…and without trying to suppress it, there's a beautiful third choice, which is to be present with something without trying to fight it, without trying to feed it, and give it full permission to be there and bring your full awareness to it. And what happens is that things that normally form a block begin to dissolve into something else. It's a practice of equanimity.

"NLP is great for rehearsing new behaviours, but it really doesn't have any good toolsets for building what I would call witness consciousness, to be present with what your experience is without fighting it, without feeding it, without needing to modify and change it.

"NLP is all about change, change, change, and sometimes in life we do have to surrender, but surrender in a way that leads to wisdom and purification, not self-destruction or insanity or harming others, and that is the deep, deep power I have gained from vipasana.

"You won't find peace, I think, through NLP. It's a beautiful set of modalities, a beautiful set of tools, but it doesn't talk about that. So I would say it's time to bring balance back to the NLP world by teaching that there's some areas of life where control is not necessarily the best first response." ∎

What do you think about the relationship between NLP and persuasion?

Have you experienced Ross Jeffries, his competitors or their students at work? And do you agree with Jeffries about the importance of mindfulness as a supplement to NLP?

Sensory Awareness
and its role in time travel

By Joe Abrams

Many human cultures have developed powerful stories to explain their origins. Many of these stories revolve around a creator, who made humans "special" amongst the animals. These creation myths vary in content, although their existence in all parts of the globe suggests a common urge – we all like to know how things happened.

One of the tools which modern society has developed to explore the past, is archaeology. It is concerned with the full range of human experience; how we organized ourselves into social groups, exploited our surroundings, what we ate, made, believed and how we communicated through art, music and words.

Archaeology and NLP
The connections between this quest and that of NLP are profound. The very basis of our humanity flows from our use of complex speech-language, for it is via this tool that our consciousness developed. The brain's capacity for language allows us to define our personal past, present and potential future and by so doing, to become aware of the existence of the 'self'.

"Consciousness is my main, perhaps my only attribute. Therefore, I am a conscious thing. Conscious things are minds. Therefore I am a mind"
(Rene Descartes)

Archaeology searches for evidence of that hinge in the human story whereby we moved into consciousness, that awareness of self which came via our capability to use complex language to communicate and to co-operate. Prior to this

transition our story is one of relatively modest technological innovation, evidenced in stone tools, and changes in anatomy. Following that increase in our capacity for complex communication and an associated growth in consciousness, we see an explosion in technological innovation. A huge variety of tools being put to use in all the new environments into which humanity now adventured. The birth of complex language

> **❝ To appreciate these things we need to utilise our intuitive mind ❞**

led to powerful co-operation between humans, making them formidable hunters, increasing their capability beyond that which their physical strength and size allowed as individuals. The birth of art can then be seen in abstract cave paintings, the birth of music in the instruments left behind, evidence of spirituality in the act of deliberate burial and the rituals which accompanied it.

NLP draws on many sources to create models whereby patterns of human thought, and the role language plays within them, can be recognised. Models have been generated that allow practitioners to use NLP in assisting people to change, moving from less than resourceful patterns of behaviour and freeing them to reach their potential.

How NLP can add magic to the archaeological narrative

"The rational mind is the faithful servant; the intuitive mind a sacred gift"
(Albert Einstein)

Einstein's quotation provides a useful analogy for one of the ways in which the archaeologist may use NLP. It has been my experience that, as we gather data (plant remains, bone fragments, wooden artefacts, coins or the remains of buildings and statues) our primary task is to quantify, catalogue, archive and publish their descriptions. We relate them, via ever expanding typologies, to the data gathered from other, similar sites and through this system the great corpus of knowledge moves on. I view this practice as representative of the human brain's tendency to rationalise, organise and label the world in

> ❝ **People of all cultures, and at all times, have experienced the world via their five senses** ❞
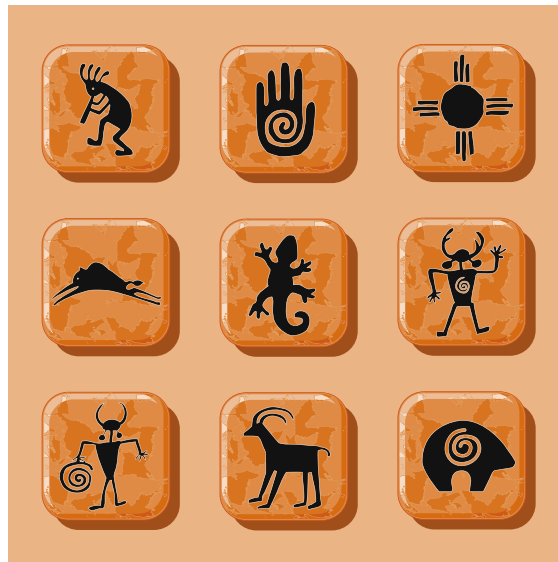
order to make sense of it.

Of course, understanding how a pot was made, tells us nothing about how its aesthetic appeal, or lack of, improved the taste of food served in it. Being able to recognise the tell-tale signs of a hearth, within a prehistoric roundhouse, tells us nothing of how the flames danced against human faces as they absorbed the welcome warmth of fire and family. Testing the chemistry of soil around that house in order to define different areas of human activity, does not shed light on how it felt for all the members of an extended family to share their home with cattle. To appreciate these things we need to utilise our intuitive mind. The VAKOG model which I have picked up via NLP is a highly effective way of doing this.

VAKOG is a model rooted in the way the human brain and body process sensory information via our five senses, informing our experience of the world. Crucially, people of all cultures, and at all times, have experienced the world via their five senses. It is one of the threads which binds us making it an ideal way in which to attempt a more complete appreciation of the past.

Experiencing how those activities might have felt, looked and tasted is what makes it possible for someone living now to step directly into the shoes of people living 'then'. I have a vivid memory of removing pieces of a Bronze Age wooden trackway preserved in the Cambridgeshire peat fens. It was being dismantled to understand its construction, catalogue the species present, check for carpentry marks and to obtain samples for scientific dating. At some point in the process, I removed a piece of wood to reveal a single leaf, sealed for some 3,000 years this leaf was perfect in every way, still retaining its bright green colour slightly translucent in the sunlight. In that moment, I appreciated more completely how the local environment would have looked, felt and smelt than I have ever done by trawling through long articles on species and scientific dates. My own sensory

awareness temporarily cleared the fog between myself and the trackway makers.

The exploration of Metaphor within NLP reveals its role in the ways we humans are predisposed to express our perceptions of reality "Metaphor allows us to externalise abstract thinking and translate it into a sensory-based tangible representation" (Owen – The Magic of Metaphor). This is useful to the archaeologist, who can begin to appreciate how people in the past would also have processed information in this way, created their 'Maps of the world' using their own Metaphors.

An awareness of the VAKOG model of sensory awareness and the role of metaphor have become useful tools for me in directing my minds intuition to (come closer) to experiencing how events in the past might have looked, felt, smelt and sounded – and via this process to aspire to telling more complete stories about the past.

Objective and complete experience of the past is not possible – I don't have a time machine. What we all have is our five senses and our own ability for complex language. Through synthesising the rational data gathered via archaeology we can utilise that intuition to re-create and tell stories about the past. By so doing we transform that foggy, fragmented greyscale image available via fragmentary collections of artefacts and move towards wide-screen, sharp focus, surround sound multi-colour stories. We may do this, in part, by utilising our five senses in creating those stories and VAKOG is a way of achieving that.

Taking the long view – how archaeology may assist users of NLP

Let the past serve the present
(Mao Zedong)

During my NLP training a useful catchphrase was used to start many sessions 'Everything you have learnt up until now still counts'. How true, both for my fellow students and for humanity as a whole. Reflection on our personal and collective pasts can lead to progress as we recognise the patterns of behaviour which work and those which are less resourceful.

1) As practitioners of NLP we are familiar with the power of modelling success. We may find it useful to explore, with clients, stories about the human past. An understanding that so many individuals and so many communities have come before us, have faced similar challenges and have mustered the wit and determination to rise above them achieving huge success, can be inspiring. By and large, the human race have been winners, our ingenuity and ability to co-operate mean we can each be proud and draw strength from our membership of that winning group. As with any winner – and depending upon the context, encouraging the development of a sense of magnanimity towards the rest of nature may also be a useful learning point.

The human past possesses a plethora of success stories from which a Practitioner could select in order to match with a client and their present/outcome states.

2) Discussion of NLP presupposition 'The Map is not the Territory' may provoke a re-evaluation of ones current viewpoint. A pathway to exploring that presupposition is to remind clients of ways in which past communities constructed maps of their physical worlds – not on paper but in gustatory associations with certain types of fruit growing only in certain spots, visual memories of distinctive mountain ridges or other landmarks, kinaesthetic anchors between fear and certain environments such as marshland. The variety of sensory maps available and crucial to human survival can be a powerful reminder of how developing a ▶

▶ personal flexibility in mapping our own lives can be as crucial to our survival now as it was to our ancestors living closer to nature.

3) In modern Britain we are surrounded by boundaries created by human beings, barriers by the side of roads, fences around gardens. In the past such boundaries existed too, along with a whole variety of natural boundaries marking the edge of 'safe' (e.g. meadow, river valley) land from potentially 'dangerous' land (e.g. marsh or desert). Ironically, as modern technology sweeps away the limitations once set by nature, land ownership and the creation of barriers to 'private' land replaces them and plays the same role – to inhibit free movement.

As an archaeologist I find it fascinating to observe why steep bends occur in some modern roads – why didn't the road builders just design straight roads that takes us quicker to our destination? The bulk of our roads have ancient origins and the ancient users didn't move as fast as we do, and anyway, they were not necessarily going where we are. Often when stripping ground

❝ Objective and complete experience of the past is not possible – I don't have a time machine ❞

ahead of modern road widening – the ancient answers for modern bends in the road become clear, an ancient cemetery lay in the way and the route moved around

it. A forgotten village stood at that bend, pulling travellers, and the road towards it. Those villages and the cemetery are long forgotten now, invisible even, and yet the modern roads cling to these ancient patterns. I am sure the reader is already making associations, perhaps a person drawn to follow old patterns which no longer work for them; obeying invisible obstacles in their pathways.

Discussion of this idea may assist clients in exploring and questioning why they have sometimes followed roads which were un-resourceful and how they might strike out and design better ones, fit for their present.

As with archaeology and the human past, this article only scratches the surface of what is possible. Our collective past can be viewed as one of huge changes, those changes viewed even in one lifetime can be impressive, when viewed from a distance over hundreds of generations – they confirm the awesome power for positive change which humanity has. What better way to inspire a feeling of personal potential than to remember that wonderful past we all share. ■

Author

Joe Abrams has trained in NLP with Melody and Joe Cheal of the GWIZ Learning Partnership and recently became a Master Practitioner. He is now trading as Way To Flow through which he explores the uses of NLP and hypnotherapy for positive change. He is also a Project Manager with Albion Archaeology (Central Bedfordshire Council).

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How to avoid **email miscommunication**

By Eve Menezes Cunningham

I once very graciously made a huge tea round," says William. "It took three trips to the kitchen to distribute all the beverages. Well, nine cups, anyway." But when he got back to his desk, a colleague was "scuttling around my computer, frantically attempting to delete an email that she'd mistakenly sent to me. It read: 'Bleurgh. Another horrible William cuppa. What does he do to it? How can you make tea taste like that?' And it's rubbish. I make an excellent cup of tea.

Even if you haven't done it yourself, chances are, you know at least one person who's accidentally sent an email to the wrong person leading to mutual mortification or worse. A recent AOL survey found that 32% have forwarded an email to the wrong person.

66 32% have forwarded an email to the wrong person 99

Louise's excitement about her new job diminished when she discovered that someone working for her was not up to scratch. After spending a few months trying to retrain her, she received an email asking for a pay rise. Louise forwarded it to her own boss, laughing at her cheek. "Except I'd hit reply," she says, "and didn't realise until I got an email from her with the simple line 'I don't think this was meant for me.'"

On a much larger scale, Gwent Police recently made headlines for accidentally emailing confidential information about people's CRB checks to a local paper. The email's author faces the sack for gross

misconduct and personal information about over 10,000 people is floating around.

According to AOL, 67% check emails in bed, 59% in the bathroom, 50% while driving, 39% in a bar or club, 38% in a business meeting, 25% while on a date and 15% in church. Somehow, although I'm not a churchgoer myself, I find the last statistic even more shocking than the idea of drivers emailing.

It's easy to dismiss emails as dangerous but they are also incredibly useful. They allow us to keep a record of what's been agreed, work night or day and hit send when it's fresh without worrying about being intrusive. They also allow us to edit our words, deleting them entirely sometimes, in a way that's impossible with live or telephone conversations.

**Your NLP skills can help you avoid some of the more common email miscommunication pitfalls:**

Keep your outcome in mind – Create a well formed outcome and keep this in mind as you send your message. What kind of response are you hoping for?

Use your sensory acuity and flexibility – If you don't get the response you wanted, look for ways to adapt your approach next time. Is there a time of the day or week when the recipient might be more receptive? Do they prefer phone calls or face to face conversations? What else might you do differently? AOL found that 16% have used email to break bad news. Are you taking an easy way out by avoiding a phone or face to face conversation? It may be uncomfortable but, long term, you'll both be glad you made it more personal.

Play with perceptual positions – these are another endlessly helpful tool. Put yourself in your recipient's shoes. How are they likely to feel reading your words? How would you feel if you were them? Is there a better way to get this message across?

What kind of rapport do you want to contribute to? – You can build or break rapport by using similar language, salutations and sign offs. You might start with Dear x and then, if they change to Hi x, adapt your own approach. Similarly, Kind regards may evolve

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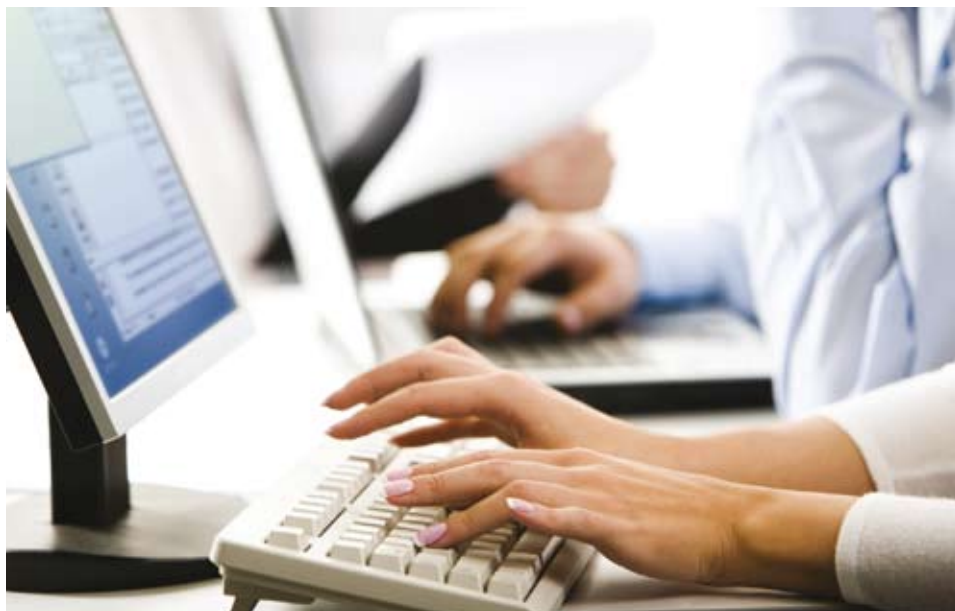
into xxx! (Just make sure it's appropriate.). If you're receiving emails that feel a bit too friendly, you can up the formality in your own emails. AOL found sign-offs quite controversial with 63% of respondents having been irritated by them. "Cheers" and "xoxo" caused the most offence.

Pause – If you ever send emails before you've finished drafting them, delay typing in the address until you've checked everything properly (even if you're hitting reply, copy the address you want to send it to but paste it out of that box until you're ready to hit send). If it's an especially important message, you might find reading it aloud before you send it helpful to catch typos as well as getting a better sense of how it might sound to the recipient.

Think about your own preferences and those of the person you're sending to – Is this email a good opportunity to practice using more kinaesthetic / auditory or visual language. Do they share your natural preference? Even if you decide not to change your language, asking yourself the question

will help you consider their viewpoint that bit more.

Stretch a little – It's common knowledge that standing up while talking on the phone can help you sound more confident and that smiling comes across even through your voice. If you've been sitting at your computer for ages, get up and have a stretch to loosen any tension in your neck and shoulders or wrists. Just taking this moment or two to check in with your own feelings could help you send a much better email when you sit down to type again.

Be as kind as you possibly can – It's easier said than done but if you're getting annoyed with someone else's emails to you, take a deep breath and remember that emails last longer than phone calls and face to face conversations. Resist the impulse to vent. Think about the tips above. Would picking up the phone help you defuse the situation and even be kinder? Email can often sound far more abrupt than the sender intends, especially when emotions are heightened. Do your part to stop things spiralling. ■

NLP and the Art of Deciding

By Robbie Steinhouse

In this article I want to explain the NLP principles and the neurological research that underpin my recently published book Brilliant Decision Making. At the end of the piece I shall outline where these have led me.

NLP and Decision Making

Part of my purpose in writing the book was to make some key NLP models, such as the Well Formed Outcome and the Logical Levels, accessible for the non-expert general reader. For a long time I was unsure how exactly to do this, but one morning I woke up thinking about the rather slick manual I had received with my new Ipod the previous evening – a 'quick start guide', a meaty 'how to do everything manual', and then a detailed 'trouble shooting guide' – and suddenly realized I had found my key. The quick start guide would be a 'decision simulator', an eight-step process based on the Well Formed Outcome. The trouble shooting section would be based on the Logical Levels. In the middle would be the 'meaty' fuller section, with a number of other NLP concepts featuring.

One such concept is congruence, which lies at the heart of good decision making. Good decisions are congruent ones, ones where

> ## 66 A good decision is not necessarily one that works out perfectly 99

'head, heart and gut' all say 'yes' to the decision.

It's important to understand that a 'good' decision is not necessarily one that works out perfectly. Circumstances change, and what seems – and is – a good decision at one moment may turn out to be less than ideal later on. But there is no methodology for making perfect decisions, only one for making the best one you can at any given moment. Such a methodology centres round congruence.

In addition to increasing the chances of favourable outcomes, congruent decisions are rarely regretted, even if circumstances change radically and it turns out that the decision has to be reversed or changed.

Incongruent decisions on the other hand are often accompanied by justifications, such as an expert has told the person they should do x, or that conventional wisdom says they should do y. In a fast-changing and complex world, such decisions often turn out to lead to unfavourable outcomes. Even more often, they turn out to be

66 congruent decisions are rarely regretted 99

causes of regret: even when the outcome has been favourable, the person who hustles themselves into a decision 'against their better judgement' is often left pondering how much better things could have been if they had been true to themselves.

A decision once made has to be implemented. I find the concept of TOTE very helpful here. Many people see decision making as a series of discrete steps: you research, you decide, you implement. But actually they merge into one another: a good decision is a flexible one, that leaves room for change as you implement and the world turns out not to be quite as expected. Decisions are models not theories: begin with a simple model, try it out, amend the model, try it out (and so on: test, operate, test, exit…) I learnt this the hard way having to make big changes in my business during the credit crunch: conventional wisdom was no longer working and I needed to move away from prevailing business theories to a more flexible approach.

Decisions can also get stuck. The Logical Levels of Robert Dilts provides a perfect template for trouble-shooting in this kind of situation. What level have you got stuck at? Understanding this enables you to find the right procedure to 'unstick' it. The levels, remember, are:

- Spirit
- Identity
- Beliefs & Values
- Capabilities
- Behaviours
- Environment

The statement 'I can't decide that here' is worth unpacking.

Is there a conflict between the decision and one's mission or higher purpose? Does it not fit into the bigger context of one's life?

Is the inability at the level of identity (I can't decide…), a feeling that the decision somehow challenges one's self-concept? Does the decider lack permission or secretly feel that he or she does not deserve the outcome?

'I can't…' Is decision stuck at the level of beliefs and values – it is somehow not possible or unimportant for the decider? Or does he or she lack the capabilities to decide or to implement?

At the level of behaviour, does the decider have some instinct that this is somehow not right to do?

At the level of environment – the person could decide somewhere else but not here. Is the decision affected by conflicting agendas of people around them in this place?

Good decision makers learn to differentiate between a personal issue that is blocking their progress – time to refer to the 'trouble shooting guide' above – and the sense of incongruence when a decision is simply wrong. For example, I was recently working with a business coaching client who had to make a decision about restructuring their team. The client 'knew' the decision was the right one, in other words he was congruent about the decision, but at the same time he was afraid of having an empty desk. If he delegated all of his work, he would have nothing to do and therefore he would be 'worthless' – an issue at the identity level. With a bit of help from NLP, during the session the client resolved this issue and he went away able to implement the decision.

The concept of framing also plays a key part in good decision making. Good decision makers are able to use the 'as if' frame to work through various options and consider their consequences. Poor decision makers are often stuck in one frame, and often one perceptual position, too. This is how it looks to me, now… The ability to examine an issue from different viewpoints is essential both to formulating a good decision and to putting it into practice.

Neurology

Research on how we actually make decisions has been revolutionized by various scanning and brain-imaging techniques. And this new research has in turn changed our model of decision making from one that is purely rational to one which is driven by 'informed emotion'. This, I feel, strongly justifies the NLP approach to such matters: our ▶