

RAPPORT

THE MAGAZINE FOR NLP PROFESSIONALS



Yoga Nidra Meets NLP



Link directly to video content from *Rapport* using QR codes



Highlights from our Social Media Outlets Over the Last Few Months (page 36)



NLP Quick Tips • Education • NLP Stories • Health & Wellbeing • Best Practice • Business • ANLP News • NLP Inspirations • Social Media NLP Conference & Awards • Coaching • Author Interview • Diary Events • Modelling Projects • Book Reviews • NLP Practice Groups • Blog

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Let Yourself Imagine the Identity You Barely Dare Dream Of



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I can practically feel all my cells and every fibre of my being reconfigured to adapt to my new identity.

When you imagine a happy, fulfilled Future You beyond what you *normally* allow yourself to imagine, what springs to mind?

STOP IT! Don't immediately talk yourself OUT of what you want. Give it some space and energy.

What kind of identity feels too outlandish to even consider?

I'm revisiting the most recent column's theme of identity and goals and dreams because my own identity has evolved (and continues to evolve) in what feels like one of the biggest emotional growth spurts of my life.

I passed my driving test.

While I've lost count of the friends and acquaintances who've told me, "You won't know yourself!" when I told them I was learning, I genuinely feel discombobulated. I can practically feel all my cells and every fibre of my being reconfigured to adapt to my new identity as a driver.

Aka Proper Grown Up (aged 48).

Apart from joyful things like being able to drive to the local beaches whenever I want for sea swims and snorkels, I no longer need to balance too many groceries on my bike and teeter the 4km+ home. I'll be able to take the bike on road trips and not need to cycle to the sea or pool to swim (so I'll have more energy for more swims). I can give loved ones lifts to delightful things, essential things and generally feel like a contributing member of society.

I remember how helpless I felt when I wanted to support community efforts to welcome refugees with lifts and even meetups but lived that bit too far from town to manage it. And how all the cats that landed on my doorstep could have been helped faster had I not been so dependent on coordinating trapping them and getting them to the vets with driver loved ones' visits.

Since starting to learn to drive in January 2023 (it took me a good while and countless lessons), I've expanded my newly empowered sense of self in other ways too.

I've bought a couple of strimmers, a petrol lawnmower (all very much needed for the field and lawn), a food processor (yes – I used to be scared of the noise of food processors. Now I make my own pestos, curries and pastes. Who knows, I may yet get a hairdryer at some point! Probably not...) and a power drill that I'm not yet confident enough to use alone but will become so.

These seem like tiny things. But for me, they're huge.

I've been running my own business for 20 years. I've moved countries alone a couple of times in my life. I've had a book published (and am working on others). I unexpectedly joined a sub aqua club. I do all sorts of things that other people balk at but now I can DRIVE I feel unstoppable.

I feel like I can pull my weight amongst my neighbours, helping out with lifts and emergencies.

I can go on adventures.

What about you?

Maybe your quantum leap identity shift is something similar that feels out of reach for you while most other grown-ups already take it for granted?

Or maybe it's something that no one you know has done and you lack role models (or will need to search that little bit more widely for them).

If I could bottle this feeling I have at the moment and share it, I would – but I'm anchoring it for myself and hoping to spread at least a little of it with these words.

Let yourself want what you want.

Think of whatever it is you feel SURE you can't do (Travel alone? Write that book? Perform on stage? Start or expand that business? Move? End a relationship? Start a relationship?) and let yourself at least imagine it.

I just saw a reel of GOAT (Greatest Of All Time) gymnast Simone Biles telling herself, 'You've got this' before going out to perform in the 2024 Olympics. This is three years after honouring her mental health and giving herself a break in spite of hideous opposition. If my learning to drive feels a bit *Well, ANYONE can do THAT*, let Biles' comeback inspire you.

Remember, you truly *do* have all the resources you need. Even if something feels impossible, there IS a way. It might not be easy (it probably won't be) but you've GOT this. ■

Learning NLP with ADHD: How Can That Work?

Victoria's story



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I am a commercial photographer based in Holme, Lancashire on the edge of the Lake District. I also describe myself as a 'commercial connector' and an ADHD dyslexic genius!

From the earliest stage in my life, I felt I didn't fit in; I felt tagged as 'different' and a disruptive influence. When I learned to write, I did mirror writing. At school, I changed the way I spoke to try to fit in. I pushed boundaries for the dopamine rush – I was the class clown. I was always after some stimulant and, inevitably, the

reputation I developed with teachers meant I spent a lot of time in detention – it seemed like for anything they could pin on me.

What is ADHD?

So, what is this condition labelled ADHD all about? I think Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, rather like NLP actually, is very misunderstood. It usually presents in childhood and is often characterised as the naughty child that can't sit still. It can and does persist

into adulthood, although it is often misdiagnosed. Some of the key symptoms can be:

- Poor awareness of time and often being late
- Restlessness and impulsiveness
- Unable to focus and, in contrast, hyperfocus
- Trouble staying organised
- Procrastination
- Easily frustrated
- Often bored
- Trouble concentrating
- Mood swings/dark moods
- Relationship issues
- 100% of people with ADHD have RSD (rejection sensitive disorder), a relatively new finding.*

** RSD, Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria doesn't have an official set of symptoms and isn't a formal medical diagnosis, but doctors and therapists often use the term when they notice exaggerated reactions connected to an official behavioural condition like ADHD. People who experience RSD don't handle rejection well. In fact, they find it hard to describe what they feel and often use words like 'unbearable' or 'devastating'. It could cause you to develop a serious fear of rejection, too.*

"Congratulations, you have a Ferrari brain and bicycle brakes ... we just have to make some tweaks so you can stop safely!" Dr Edward Hallowell (psychiatrist specialising in ADHD)



I am fortunate, as I don't get the anger/anxiety issues that many people experience. I go to the other extreme of not getting mad or angry and being full-on people-pleasing, thus having the potential to attract toxic and abusive relationships. I realise that for some people with the condition, it can take them into very dark places.

I, like many other people, got my official diagnosis late in life, and still slightly mourn the life I had without the knowledge. In reality, I always kind of knew, and again, as many do, we self-medicate... Mine was Coke – no not that one, Coke in can form!

I had a whopping 25-year addiction to



Diet Coke, drinking an unbelievable 6-18 cans a day. What acts as a stimulant for most people was calming me down – so, in effect, I was self-medicating with it. And whilst I was doing that, my GP could not help me. With the help of a hypnotherapist I broke that addiction and have been off it for many years now, and on appropriate medication to help manage my condition.

That said, I often say: “It’s hard being me on daily basis.” I lose keys and I liken my brain activity to five squirrels in a barrel – but, crucially, I also see it as my superpower. It is the source of my creativity; I look at things differently and I feel things deeply. I am an empath and have a huge interest in people, which greatly influences the quality of my work with clients. I no longer try to fit in – I lean into myself and who I am. On the other hand, I find the logistics and admin of running my business hard to keep on top of.

I was introduced to Florence Madden and her NLP courses by a mutual friend, and a new challenge lay ahead – one that initially felt daunting to me. I was interested in neurodiversity, given my condition, and also in finding out more about the brain. I was concerned about my focus and ability to absorb fully, especially when I realised there was a written test at the end. Florence calls this a questionnaire, but it was still a test/exam to me... at least until she explained how it would be conducted, and I finally started believing I could do this!

NLP and me

From the little I knew at the outset, I felt NLP would be helpful for me in my work. My approach as a photographer is to go beyond simply taking a ‘good’ picture of someone; I look to make a connection with my client and capture their natural character.

At first, I wondered if the NLP Business Practitioner was a higher level than I needed, yet I knew I wanted to invest in myself. I was curious how it could help me, specifically with connecting with and building rapport with the CEOs who form a significant part of my client base.

So, I joined Florence’s course at Macdonald Leeming House on the banks of lovely Ullswater in the Lake District – and was immediately glad I did. My experience on the course was very different from the scenario I had imagined. I joined a fabulously supportive group and the relaxed setting and Florence’s delivery made it so easy to absorb. We were seated on comfy sofas with lovely food, chocolate and fruit – not the schoolroom set-up that would have been a serious inhibitor for me. Additionally, with the consent of the other delegates (the venue is dog-friendly), I could have my dog Nookie with me, which enabled me to relax even more.

The course itself was conversational in style, engaging, and inclusive of everyone. It appeared as if we had free rein, but there was an underlying structure keeping us on track. I described it to friends as

I hope my experience breaks down some of the misconceptions of ADHD and what people are capable of when given the chance.

having “the illusion of not learning even though I was!”

So, I was relaxed when it came to the questionnaire/test on the last day. We were not under a time restriction, and I could look out of the window at the beautiful grounds and lake and gather my thoughts, which I found were all there and waiting for me – I knew this stuff; I was living it by this point! In fact, it couldn’t have been further from the fearful test scenario of my imagination, so I was able to do my best. I knew my spelling didn’t have to be perfect, and if any question was not answered fully, I knew Florence would have one-to-ones with each of us anyway and simply ask the question orally. This wasn’t special treatment for me, by the way; Florence spent time with each of us explaining what was being assessed – which was our knowledge of NLP, not our ability to be good at exams (phew!).

One of the other things I liked about Florence’s approach is the open invitation to come back as a visitor. Anyone who completes any of her NLP courses can come back as a visitor on a future course ▶

▶ for a day or a few days for only the cost of the hotel day delegate rate. This is a great opportunity to revisit elements of the course and connect with a whole new group.

My experience of coming back was brilliant. The group were so welcoming to me and whilst it enabled me to affirm how much I had learnt and used my learning, I know from the feedback how much I brought to the group too. I got the feedback that they were 'astounded' by me and that my NLP training had made the difference. I felt how I had shifted my thinking: I properly turned up, I sat 'bigger' in my seat, I occupied my own space and felt so much more attuned to the individuals in the group and thus in an even better position to support their learning too.

In my day job, NLP has become a natural fit with my skillset. It has undoubtedly given me extra strength in how I handle personal situations, as well as benefiting my clients. An example of this is a recent commission working with a young actor, helping him relax into the photoshoot – and helping him in his craft! I used the Circles of Excellence anchoring technique to get him into a resourceful state for the picture and then, in conversation, he shared that he finds it hard to get into an authentic 'sad' state when it is required in a role. So, I showed him how to use Circles of Excellence to be able to access this state when needed, too.

On another occasion, I was working with a lawyer who is a comedian in his spare time, and I helped him to step up and into this. He needed to own it, be confident and let his confidence zoom out to his audience, so once again I called on my anchoring skills, to great effect.

Looking back, I have come a long way in my thinking about myself, my ADHD and NLP. I hope that the sharing of my experience breaks down some of the misconceptions of ADHD and what people are capable of when given the chance. I recognise there's a broad variation in how people experience the condition, and emphasise that I know I am very fortunate.

Through my NLP journey, I now see that even though I thought I had already reframed, leaned into and celebrated my ADHD and dyslexia, they were still limiting my thinking about myself. The shift is that NLP has enabled me to be me, and to dig down into myself and not restrict my growth or get in my own way. I think this change is embodied in the NLP pre-supposition that 'we have all the resources we need'. I get this now – and what a gift it has been to realise that!

A final note from Florence... and Iain

I have to thank Victoria for how she has expanded, or perhaps confirmed, my thinking of what is possible, so much so that I recently had another delegate on my Personal Effectiveness At Work course who I was told in advance has autism and ADHD, Iain Dunn from Inspire Safety. I just knew he would be okay and still benefit from the training, and I am delighted to say he has – in spades! Here is how he describes his experience.

"The course is very interactive and managed to keep my focus throughout, which can be a challenge due to my ADHD. I felt this was due to how the course has been developed to be incredibly inclusive and a safe space for everyone involved."

"I was thoroughly impressed with the course and how accessible it was for me. I thought I may struggle with parts, because of ADHD or autistic traits of

mine, but it was quite the opposite, with Florence making it engaging for me, ensuring I never felt uncomfortable and ensuring it was a safe space for not just me, but everyone involved.

"I have managed to apply it to a wealth of situations at work, including in day-to-day operations and relationships with co-workers and also in meetings with clients and on-site visits, as I have to engage with a variety of personnel in different situations."

Both I and the other delegates loved the different insights Iain brought to the course content, and indeed hearing the insights he has into his own condition.

Once again, we recognise that there is a wide variation in how people experience autism and ADHD and it would be wrong to generalise. Suffice to say that people are more capable of learning NLP – or anything else – than perhaps they or others realise, and we should be careful of 'labels'! ■

"When the atmosphere encourages learning, the learning is inevitable." Elizabeth Foss





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NLP at the Festival of Education 2024



Karen Falconer & Gill Stevenson

members@anlp.org
www.anlp.org

In July 2024, the NLP for Education team were excited to give a presentation at the UK Festival of Education. The festival is a huge professional development event for the UK education sector with over 500 speakers, 5,000+ attendees and around 20 presentations per hour!

The NLP for Education steering committee applied with four subject area talks and had one accepted (an achievement in itself). ANLP members Sian Goodspeed and Hayley Reilly were chosen to develop and present *Proven strategies to increase connection and reduce adverse student behaviour*.

Meanwhile the rest of the core team of Emma Beynon, Karen Falconer, Andrea Sandiford and Gill Stevenson, plus Shannen Marsh, put in long hours and a great deal of thought and effort to develop a website of free resources to direct educators to after the presentation.

On the day, Sian and Hayley presented to a packed room of nearly 60 delegates

(seating was for 45!). They started the session by leading the delegates into the Learning State, which they all participated in (even those sitting cross-legged on the floor!).

Alongside some NLP basics (what is NLP, and the Communication Model), Sian and Hayley talked about the neuroscience research that backed up the theory behind their session, and how making linguistic changes in the classroom, at any level, can positively influence the behaviour of the students.

The Communication Model created a lot of interest, with people taking photographs, as did speaking the young person's language to increase rapport. As Hayley said: "What was basic to us was not previously known to the delegates."

NLP
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Education
www.nlpforeducation.com

Sian and Hayley talked about how making linguistic changes in the classroom, at any level, can positively influence the behaviour of students.

Here are some remarks from delegates:

"The section on speaking our young person's language was really powerful and created a lot of chatter in the room. The slide was really clear and created a bit of a eureka moment when I realised how some of the language we use can limit our ability to reach our students."





“Understanding the Communications Model has given me food for thought in relation to how we factor external influences as well as internal systems into our young people’s learning and behaviour.”

“Why is it they always put the most interesting talks in the smallest rooms?!”

Why was this presentation so important?

This is the first step for the project team to take NLP into a wider arena (a toe in the water). It was the first exposure to NLP for many of those in the room who had either not heard of NLP before or had ‘preconceptions’ of it.

The Festival of Education is a platform for new ideas, innovations, evolution and revolutionary thinking for education. It has been the launchpad for many international initiatives from education companies and educationalists.

It was interesting to hear language in many of the talks that reflects our own position: ‘coaching’, ‘relational, not consequential’, ‘nurturing and building rapport’.

So, this is where it starts – in a room where teachers, administrators and other education-related people can see, hear and experience what NLP can do, and begin the viral transmission of how NLP can make a difference in education at whatever point it enters.

What’s next for NLP for Education?

ACTION!

We highly recommend that ANLP members who are involved in education at any level attend the meeting next year as delegates. Hear the talks, listen to the delegates and gain a rounded understanding of the issues education

faces and how you can help.

The NLP for Education project is a collaboration of ANLP members who are working together to develop a framework for getting NLP into the education system. Many ANLP members have skills and experience that has given them a route to bring NLP into an education setting. Modelling their work is helping to develop the key attributes and messages that are needed to, collectively, be the ‘difference that makes the difference’, for introducing NLP to the infrastructure of education: government, teaching faculty, administrators, students, support systems (parents, carers, suppliers, etc.) and more...

The website that has been developed follows the model presented at the 2024 ANLP Conference and can be found at www.nlpforeducation.com. It includes relevant articles from previous editions of *Rapport*, some short videos explaining NLP techniques and their application in the classroom and downloadable PDFs so

that those supporting children and young people in education can easily put these techniques into action.

This is only the start. We are now looking for people who are interested in being involved by either providing or developing resources to enhance our support to educators, parents, training colleges and policy makers.

If you would like to get involved, here’s how you can help.

NLP for Education needs resources: case studies, testimonials, and reference points to help build the framework to support educators and parents in two ways:

- 1 By providing free resources to demonstrate the why and how to use specific techniques in specific educational settings.
- 2 By empowering other ANLP members to take the project into places of education and to demonstrate the positive power NLP can bring to everyone involved in the education cycle.

If you have any of these resources that you can share with the team or you can help in a practical way to move the project forward, for example, by providing contacts in LEAs, or teacher training colleges, please contact us here: www.nlpforeducation.com/contact.

More information is available on the ANLP website here: www.anlp.org/nlp-in-education-project

NLP for Education: Making education more effective, accessible and fun. ■

“Why is it they always put the most interesting talks in the smallest rooms?!”



The eCoherence Zone:

Intelligent Fungi



By Lizzi Larbalestier, ANLP Regional Ambassador for Cornwall and the NLP Specialist Envoy for the Environment and Oceans. www.anlp.org/people/lizzi-larbalestier

The oldest and largest organism on earth is a fungus. Every footprint we take, we stand upon around 300 miles of mycelium network... and it knows you are there. Language is something not solely in the domain of humans. We know that birds and animals develop complex communication systems, but it can be even more fascinating to dive into the language of plants. Underground mycelium (nature's internet) responds to electrolytes and electrical pulses. Trees partner with this fungus, which breaks down toxins and transports nutrients – water, nitrogen, carbon, phosphorous and other minerals – in exchange for sugars and other products of photosynthesis. Through mycelium, trees also link with each other and can swap resources back and forth between them, supporting one another to collectively thrive.

And here is the important part. There is no competition... no survival of the fittest. The world view of trees is mutualistic. Trees seem to understand that, collectively and with the support of fungi and soil, they regulate and respond to their environment – they are interdependent. A forest is far from a collective of individuals: it is an intricately connected and integrated whole... an ecosystem where much of its complexity lies out of sight.

It seems trees care for one another and this sense of community asks the question: what do you need and how can I help? It seems to me we can all learn a little from this approach to life. ■





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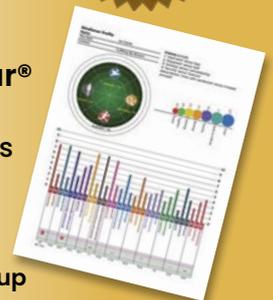
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Emergence Coaching: Case Studies and Evaluations



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(Part 3 of 3)

In this, the last of three articles on Emergence Coaching (EC), we bring together the main themes and principles of our proposed framework with a more detailed description of the EC Model so you can explore the model yourself with your clients. We share two brief case studies using the model in our practice and conclude with our developing understanding of how this approach invites a different way of working as coaches.

The Emergence Coaching (EC) Model

Our starting point is that the familiar NLP coaching frame of 'Present State to Desired Outcome', while useful, benefits greatly from an approach that prioritises present-moment emergence as a means to shape future action and increase personal agency. This stance is all the more salient given the current VUCA/BANI world where the emerging future is uncertain, fragile and co-created by thoughts and actions taken in the 'now'. In a world where 'truth' is increasingly difficult to discern, profound in-the-moment attention – central to EC – reconnects us to a truth that cannot be denied: our emergent selves! EC is rooted in a fundamental belief that at our core, we *are* love, compassion and wisdom and that by presence-ing to our emergence, we can think, feel and act with wisdom from this place in any context.

The main outcomes we seek with EC (and, indeed, with all coaching models) are increased personal agency, choice and resourcefulness. EC invites a profound re-connection with our

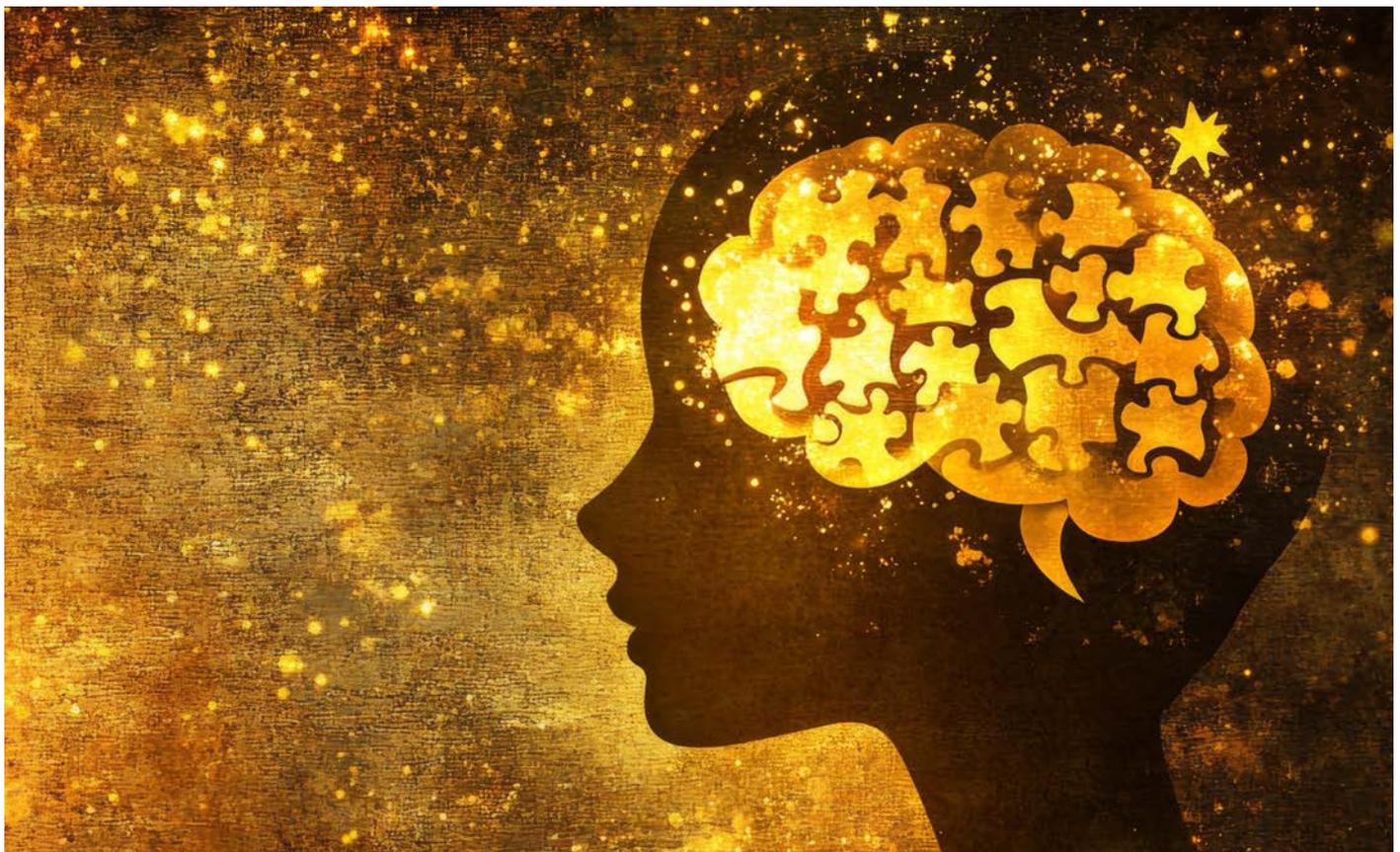
deeper selves and, as a result, the potential for a commensurate level of connection with others and our environment. This re-connection emerges as we tune in to what IS.

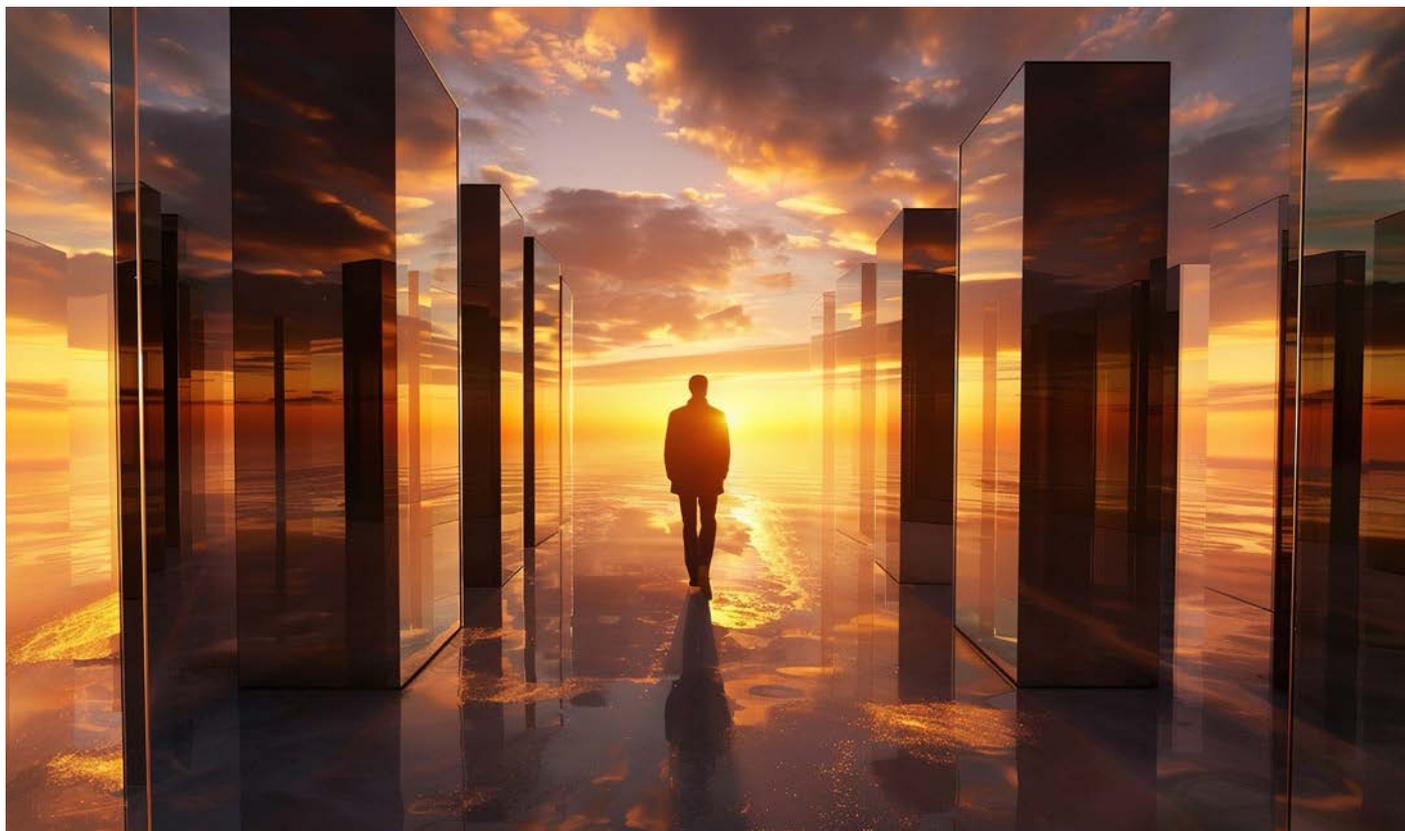
The model in six steps

- 1 'Settling and Intentionality' – where we ground, settle and tune into the 'here and now'.
- 2 'Connecting for Oneness' – where we reconnect with mind-body-heart-spirit for resonance and inner power, deepening the client-coach relationship as well as enhancing the client's trust in themself.
- 3 'Befriending Emergence' – where we notice whatever arises into awareness and inquire about (i) *What about it is difficult?* (ii) *What makes it tolerable?* (iii) *What makes it exciting and generative?*

This is a key step that supports a movement through likely 'stuck' states/discomfort, on through the not knowingness/

The main outcomes we seek with Emergence Coaching are increased personal agency, choice and resourcefulness.





fussiness/confusion to become 'comfortable with the uncomfortable' in a way that supports deep mind-body learning and emergent wisdom.

- 4 'Permission to Experiment' – where we invite playful experimentation to deepen insights in often obscure and less-than-conscious ways as a source of embodied knowing and confidence.
- 5 'Noticing meaning-making happening' – where we build awareness of what meaning-making is going on, helping clients notice that meaning-making is inevitable and a gateway to agency.
- 6 'Personal Agency' – where we assist clients in converting their emergent 'knowing' into wise action with questions such as "What are your intentions now? In what ways are you now? What would 'now' have you do?"

Whilst we are proposing a clear structure for EC (having now evolved the original framework into an applicable model), the model is nevertheless a heuristic; we encourage you to play with the structure and ideas therein and notice what emerges for you and your client as you use it.

Case study 1: Jane

Jane seeks help to lift her out of a prolonged period of "gloom and despondency" and feeling "empty". This feeling has become the norm for over two years, interfering with Jane's ability to experience life as meaningful or motivational. Jane struggles to find effective strategies to change her inner experience. She feels disconnected from herself, others and the world, shows little body movement, vacant eyes and very low energy levels. History taking reveals no significant past trauma, a happy childhood and good bonding with siblings and parents, good physical health, a stable intimate relationship and a job that is going okay, if a little "dull".

Using the EC approach supports us in developing a safe space and secure relationship that permits Jane to become intrigued

We encourage you to play with the structure and ideas therein and notice what emerges for you and your client as you use it.

and curious about what's unfolding for her. As she is gently encouraged to notice what's emerging in her mind-body, a profound re-connection with her somatic wisdom occurs. At the heart of this *emergence* is Jane not needing to *do* anything but rather be with what is. Not all that emerged is comfortable; some things appear pre-verbal, somatic; some are metaphors and some silence. All are *true* phenomena in her mind-body.

As I watch her personal agency emerge this, in itself, gives rise to Jane connecting with a deep well of wisdom that NLP assumes is always present within, if not always available. She calls this re-connection "wonderful". Jane and I return to the EC model, as a stand-alone process or as elements woven into other coaching approaches that fit her needs in different sessions.

Case study 2: P

P seeks coaching to regain confidence eroded by Covid and his boyfriend, who left their relationship. P seeks help to move forward. He seems 'stuck' and this frustrates him. The EC model steps 1 and 2 seem a great place to start our work. After settling with one another, I gently enquire whether P would be willing to set his desired outcome "to move on" to one side and instead touch into his present experience and what is unfolding within him and around him. P is also reassured that we are in this process together. P is willing.

As P is gently guided to settle and tune into his true experience unfolding in his body, mind, heart and spirit, he begins to get a true sense of it. P shares something profound and new in his awareness – his spirit is "surprisingly strong", his heart is hurt not by the rejection by his boyfriend but by his choice to tolerate poor behaviour. P links this need with a younger version of himself that felt abandoned as a child. The experience is intense yet beautifully sacred.



▶ When it ends, P looks at me with clarity and says, “I mistook him for a father I never had.” The words carry profound wisdom and power. He still has feelings to work through, but he no longer feels stuck! We talk through options for next steps, including possible counselling. P leaves the session empowered and trusting in his agency.

Insights and implications

The EC model we are sharing with you has evolved from what has worked for us in practice. There are a few key insights that we connect with coaching mastery and some important benefits to coach, client and the coaching process:

- While EC has distinct stages, these emerge organically from being fully present with our clients and inviting (and modelling) attuning to the natural tempo of emergence.
- With a strong emphasis on what some may call presence-ing, EC allows considerable flexibility and creativity. This approach helps the client face the complexity of their own inner experience, where the resources of coach and client are combined and utilised. The key challenge for an EC coach is to attend to what is unfolding and cultivate curiosity of emergent phenomena rather than hold doggedly to coaching formulas or even previously stated future-desired goals.
- EC is a deeply relational and ultimately highly therapeutic approach. The practitioner is not fixing their client! Rather, s/he guides the restoration of the client’s trust in greater wholeness and connection, building agency and confidence to be with their unfolding experience as a *transient existential phenomenon*.
- EC is a style of working that is much needed in today’s world as clients experience more complex states and relationships that can erode trust in self and the power of connection. Instead of fulfilling the role of being ‘in charge of the session’, the EC coach stays connected with their client and themselves in the moment, helping to ‘level’ the coach-client power dynamic.
- Traditional coaching and therapeutic practitioners understandably divide into somewhat artificial camps. But

in a sense, EC is both therapy and coaching! This is where EC complements the DO focus and helps us tap into the full range of NLP processes the early masters and fathers intended, leading us also towards mastery.

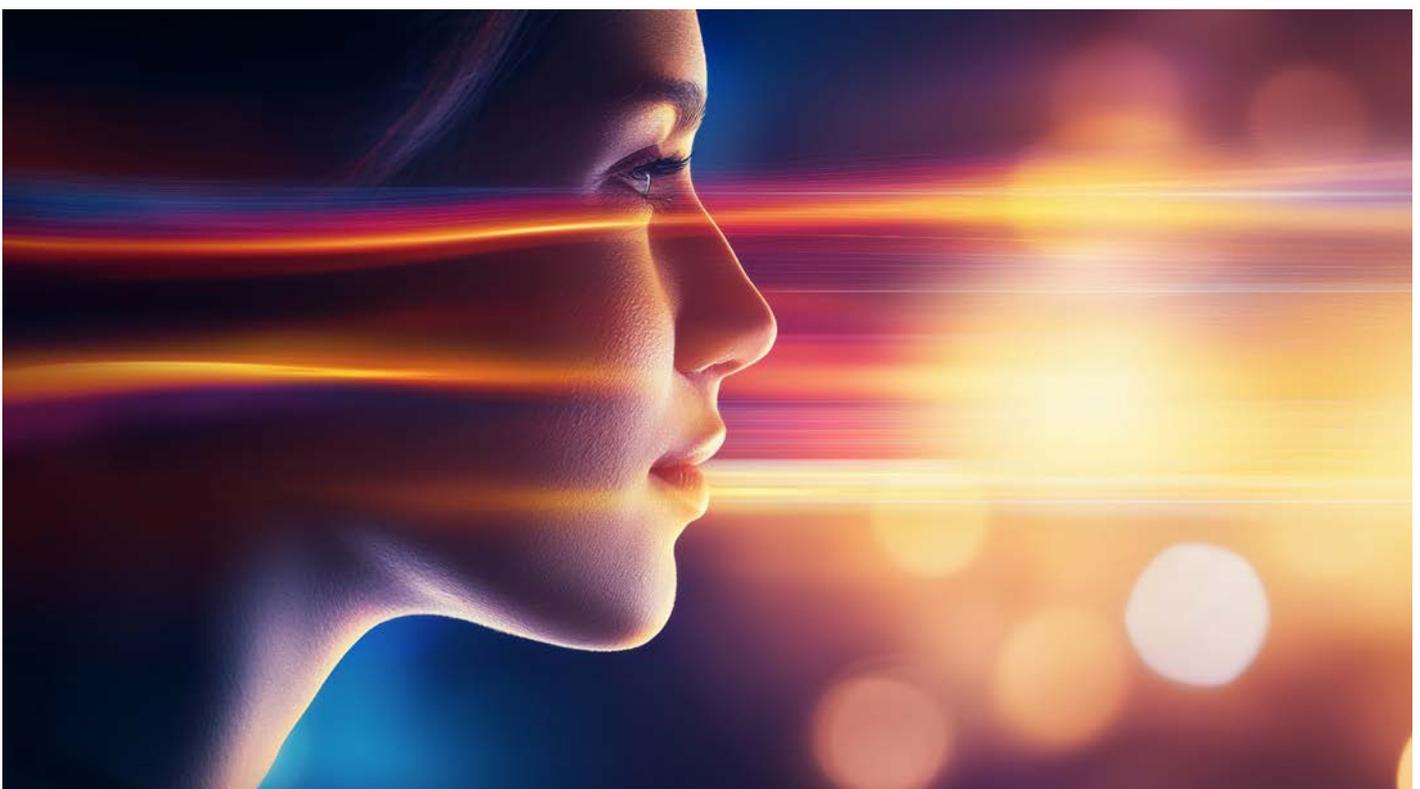
Our parting reflection prompts – and an invitation!

We hope this three-part series resonated with your experiences coaching clients and leaves you curious to explore the EC approach further. You may wish to consider the following:

- What enables you to be fully present with your client? And what stops you?
- In what ways might you see letting go of controlling a session as challenging or liberating?
- What are your current beliefs about the idea of a ‘true’ self?
- How might an EC approach change the way you contract with clients?

As we explore the notion of *emergence within coaching*, we keep discovering far-reaching implications, both in terms of client outcomes and our sense of mastery of practice and the growth potential for our businesses. A significant next step in the development of EC is a two-part retreat for coaches in this community (www.sites.google.com/view/emergencecoachingretreat2024) to come together and use the EC model to support and validate our personal leadership and agency. We look forward to connecting with you there. ■

As we explore the notion of emergence within coaching, we keep discovering far-reaching implications, both in terms of client outcomes and our sense of mastery of practice and the growth potential for our businesses.



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The Creation Cycle: NLP Modelling of The Inner Smile



Richard Bolstad

nlpnz@yahoo.com
www.transformations.org.nz

As a trained archaeologist and a teacher in two schools of Traditional Chinese Meditation, my interest has been to create a scientific model of traditional Chinese psychology. I noted in the first article in this series that there are many explicit overlaps between Chinese Taoist philosophy on the one hand, and NLP on the other. This makes it easy to take a traditional Chinese meditation process, in this case 'The Inner Smile', and analyse it in terms of NLP processing.

The risk of new age approaches to other cultural practices is of appropriation instead of appreciation: we pretend to be 'doing Buddhism' while actually doing entrepreneurial Capitalism. Here I translate from one language (Taoism) to another (NLP), but not to replace the original material. My current archaeology research project (at the University of Leicester) applies this approach to our entire NLP training in Cyprus, of which this is a part. The basic idea of 'experimental archaeology' is that since all human beings have some similarities, if we can embody a practice from an ancient culture (i.e. do it) then we may be able to unpack some of the scientific explanation for its success by studying how it works inside us.

Four core NLP processes

The process I will study here is called the Inner Smile. I start



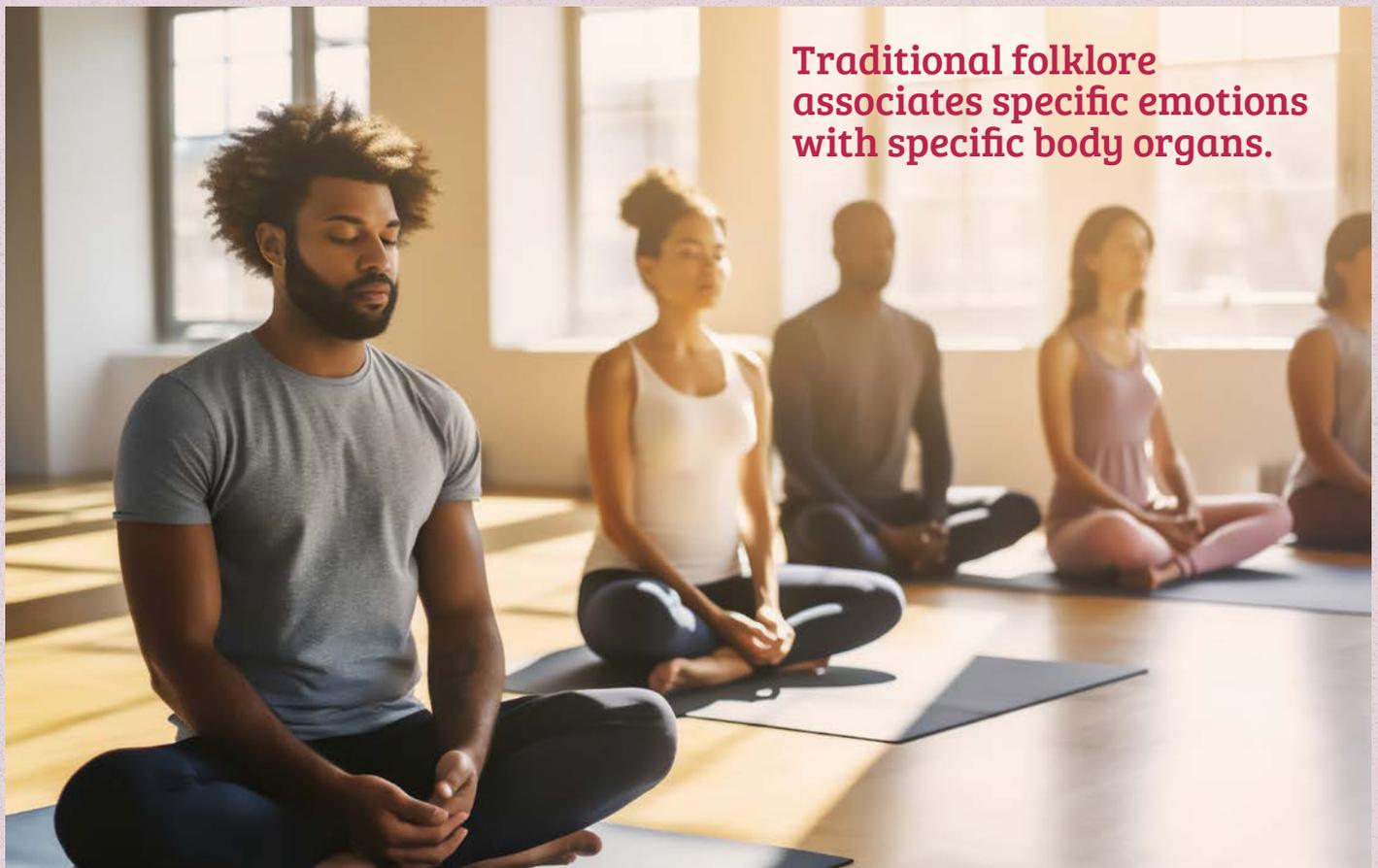
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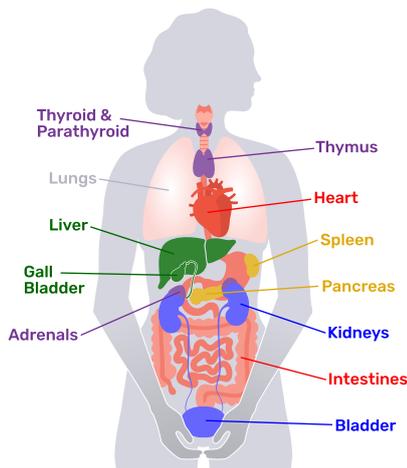
by explaining my tool kit for unpacking it, which includes four main NLP structural shifts that produce emotional change: physiological change, anchoring, submodality shifts, and reframing. All four methods imply that emotions are strongly 'embodied' (in Taoism, 'mind' and 'body' are a system).

1 Physiological change: It is commonly understood in NLP that changing your posture, gestures, facial expression, breathing etc. changes your emotional state, a principle called the sensorimotor feedback theory of emotion, in western psychology. For example, research has been done where subjects hold a pen in their mouth in ways that either inhibit or facilitate the muscles associated with smiling, without actually



Traditional folklore associates specific emotions with specific body organs.

Organs for Inner Smile



NLP Change Processes in the Inner Smile

Physiology: Face smiling, back straight, hands connected, tongue against top of mouth.

Anchoring: Step into time pleasant to recall, when you felt a profound sense of love.

Submodality Shift: See body organs in specified colours - diagram on left.

Reframing: Each of 5 unpleasant emotions is a positive signal to change.

Since all human beings have some similarities, if we can embody a practice from an ancient culture then we may be able to unpack some of the scientific explanation for its success by studying how it works inside us.

telling the people to 'smile'. Those who hold a pen between their teeth (facilitating smiling) will report a cartoon as funny, while those who hold the pen between their lips (facilitating frowning) will claim it is not funny (Strack et alia, 1988). In this Inner Smile exercise, we have several similar physiological instructions: you sit with your back straight (preventing slumping forward), with hands connected in front (which relaxes the chest), with tongue against the top of the mouth (reducing internal dialogue) and with lips curved in a smile (as per the pen research).

2 Anchoring: Anchoring is an NLP term for what psychologists call stimulus-response linking. Any sensory stimulus that reminds your brain of a time when you had a positive feeling will tend to evoke that feeling, even when your conscious attention was elsewhere. Dr David C McClelland and Carol Kirshnit of Boston University researched this with stimuli related to the emotional state of 'love', which we use in the Inner Smile (McClelland and Kirshnit, 1988, p 31-52). Subjects were shown a variety of movies, and their level of immunoglobulin A (the first line of defence against viruses and other pathogens) was monitored before and after. Gardening films and political propaganda had no effect, but a film of Mother Teresa caring for people in Calcutta caused a sharp rise in levels of the immune chemical. Interestingly, many of the subjects, when questioned after, said they did not approve of Mother Teresa and doubted the genuineness of her work. But their bodies simply embodied the experience they were watching and hearing about, and their immunity level rose anyway. The fact that they had held the visual images of caring in their mind was more important than their theories about it.

3 Submodality shifts: In this Inner Smile process, we imagine we are smiling to the organs and glands inside our body. In NLP we know that changing the qualities (submodalities) of images, sounds and sensations affects the emotional response to them, and here we visualise the body's internal organs in pleasant colours to induce this effect. The colours traditionally associated (in Taoism) with each organ are red for the heart, yellow for the spleen and pancreas, metallic white for the lungs, dark-blue for the kidneys, and green for the liver. Do the specific colours matter? Maybe. One of the key evolutionary responses to colour is that mammalian brains can track the time of day entirely by colour (red and yellow indicating midday and blue-grey and blue indicating twilight). That means the 'energy cycle' of colour the Chinese are using in the 'Five Phases' model (from fire-red at midday to water-blue at night) is related to a hardwired evolutionary response to time of day and probably even time of year (Walmsley et alia, 2015).

4 Reframing: The idea that unpleasant emotions can be experienced as signals redirecting our attention is implicit in the work of Virginia Satir. Satir said: "For me the symptom is analogous to a warning light that appears on the dashboard of a car. The light, when lit, says the system required to run the car is in some form of depletion, disharmony, injury or impairment ... My treatment direction is to release and redirect that blocked up energy." (Satir and Baldwin, 1983, p188). This is a Meaning Reframe, in NLP terms. It invites you to identify an unpleasant emotion, identify what quality it is advising you is 'depleted', and enhance that quality, rather than 'fighting' the message of the emotion.

Emotions and body organs

Traditional folklore associates specific emotions with specific body organs. We talk in English about someone who is angry being 'livid' (related to the liver), someone who is going over and over some frustration as 'venting their spleen' over it, or someone who feels joyful as being 'heartened'. Traditional Chinese Medicine suggests that these correspondences are more than metaphorical. The association with the liver and anger, aggression or assertiveness, for example, is found in Taoism, in Plato, in the Talmud, in Hindi, in Zulu etc. (Krishna and Hillman, 1970, p. 77). Of course, we know in modern biology that the heart responds to stress, that the adrenal glands atop the kidneys respond to fear by producing adrenaline, and more recently that reduced lung function is associated with depression (Hu et alia, 2024).

In the Chinese Medical system, the five key unpleasant emotions are associated with imbalances in the natural cycle of energy as you engage in any project in your life. The idea is that any project has a beginning motivational phase (metaphorically called the Wood phase), a high energy phase (Fire), a stable energy phase (Earth), a winding down phase (Metal) and a rest phase (Water). The five main 'negative' emotions can be understood as imbalances of a specific phase, and linked to a specific organ in the body for that reason.

- Liver (Wood): Anger is a signal to assert your own goals as well as others.
- Heart (Fire): Stress is a signal to spend time enjoying what you already have rather than just pushing to achieve.
- Spleen/Pancreas (Earth): Obsessional thinking over the same things is a signal to be open to new ideas.
- Lungs (Metal): Sadness and grief are a signal to clarify what to have the courage to let go of, and what to hold onto and treasure.
- Kidneys (Water): Fear is a signal to be more gentle and accepting with oneself/life.



The Inner Smile

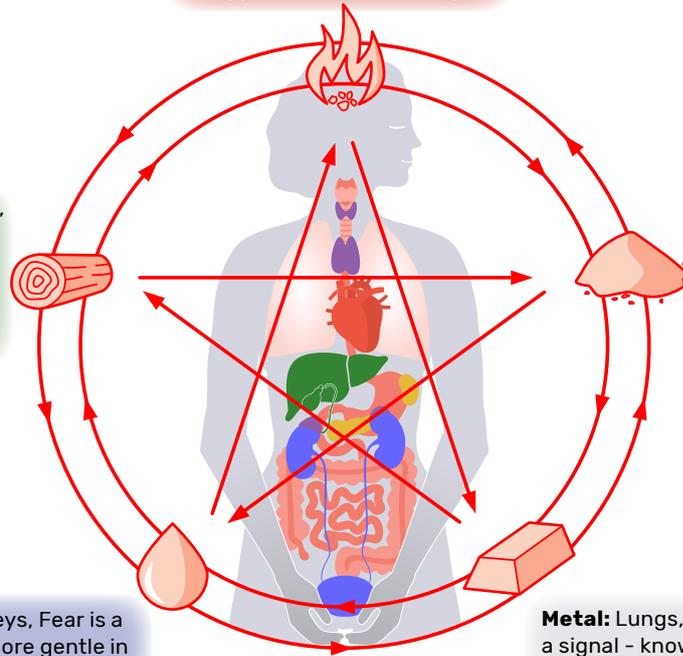
1. Sit with back straight, hands together, tongue on top of the mouth, smiling.
2. Remember a time of love and draw the feeling in between the eyes. Using colour and reframes, smile to heart, lungs, liver, pancreas and spleen.
3. Inhaling loving energy and smile through digestive system to place below and behind navel.
4. Circle eyes 9 times each way. Smile to brain and nerve cells and through body.

Wood: Liver, Anger is a signal - be assertively kind to both self/others.

Water: Kidneys, Fear is a signal - be more gentle in your self expectations.

Fire: Heart, Stress is a signal to appreciate what already is.

Earth: Spleen, Stuckness is a signal to be open to new approaches.



▶ The Inner Smile in research

Research on Taoist Master Mantak Chia doing the process show that his brain waves and electrical system radically change as he does the process, which simply involves smiling to and visualising change in each organ, smiling via the heart, lungs, liver, spleen/pancreas, and kidneys, then smiling through the digestive system, then smiling through the brain and nervous system. Gerhard H Eggetsberger, biochemist and technical head of the Institute for Applied Biocybernetics and Feedback Research in Vienna, noted that doing the Inner Smile shifted Mantak Chia almost instantly into an ultra-relaxed theta brainwave state usually seen only in deep meditation (Esoterica, 1997). The full process instructions for this meditation can be found on this page: www.transformations.org.nz/5phases

How it works

The Taoists attribute the success of the process to the use of several change techniques simultaneously, as described here, and to the alignment with the natural energy cycles of the body. The process combines physiology shifts, anchoring positive feelings, submodality shifts, and meaning reframing with an understanding of the logical sequence of five phases of emotional response to the normal challenges of life, and of the embodiment of emotions. ■

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Broken Things



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Broken Things is a poem I use when teaching the concept of ecology in NLP, or when working with clients who struggle with feeling 'broken'. Ecology means we take into account all parts of our internal system, including our 'brokenness', in whatever form it might take. NLP presupposes

that symptoms (physical, mental or emotional distress) are a way of communicating that something needs to be 'heard, held, or healed'. In my poetic work, this explores the question of self-acceptance: how wide is your embrace of yourself and your life?

Broken Things



If you live deeply,
all the broken things in your life
will come begging to be mended.

They will make you believe love can
never come until you nurse them all
back to health.

It is impossible and you know it
because some things cannot
be made new again.

But love is too precious
to give up on it.

So you try clean living,
hot yoga, silent retreats;
You go vegan and volunteer
at the local co-op wondering
how much good you must do
to turn the karmic wheel
and be blessed.

These surface feedings
never quell the hunger.

But if you live deeply
with all the broken things in your life
that come begging to be mended,
you may, one day, cross
the impossible bridge.

You give up on the spotless cleaning,
forfeit the scale of shiny, new perfection
and you give your all to caring for this life,
healed and unhealed, broken and whole.

You break the rule of conditional love
by making love your condition.
Everything that you have been waiting
to come to you, then comes from you.

You wake up as a guest
in the house of love and
realise you have always
been welcome there.

Every life will have its portion of heartbreak, its measure of hurt and happiness, of desire and defeat; some of this will break us open and some will break us apart. How we relate to the broken things in our life makes all the difference. If you live deeply with all the broken things in your life that come begging to be mended, you will welcome them as a messenger, as angels bearing gifts, and you will do your best to hold them in esteem, knowing

something needs to be heard, held, or healed. Then, with patience and the courage to be vulnerable, they will become companions on your own personal journey to wholeness. I believe the wider the embrace of yourself, the deeper your compassion for others, and the greater your power to act in the world.

Thank you for listening, and may you go forth embracing the broken things in your life and do good in the world. ■

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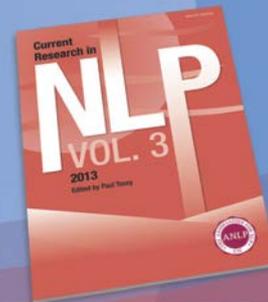
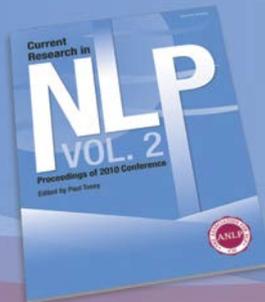
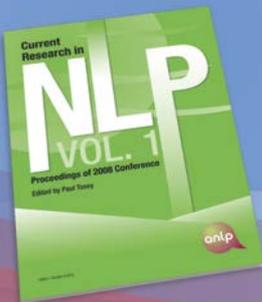
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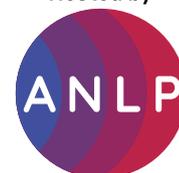
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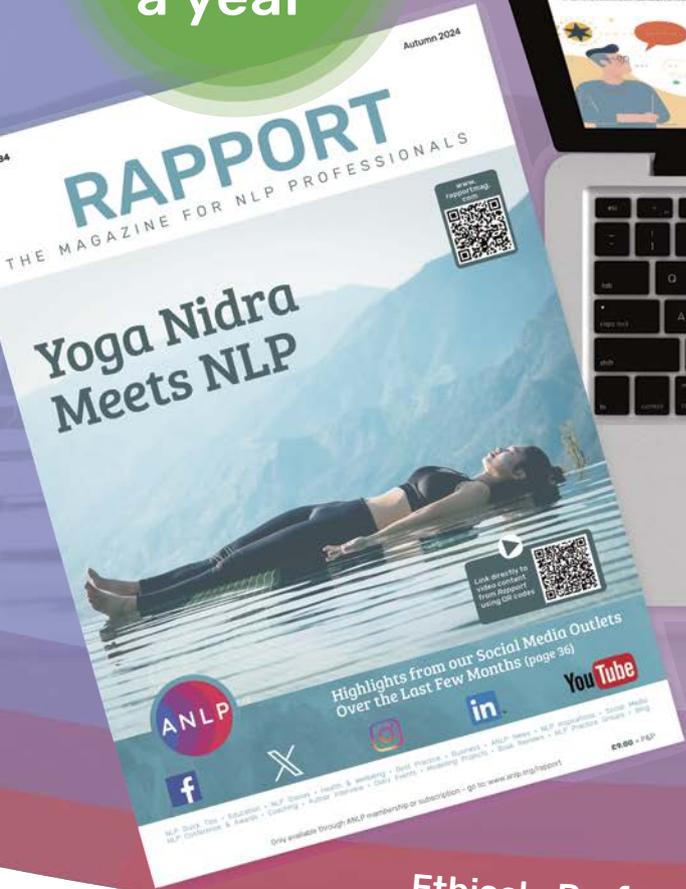


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