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RAPPORT
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NLP Professionals

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Judith DeLozier
Constant Connection and Inspiration

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Changing Attitudes
Improving Outcomes

A case study of an NLP Intervention within the NHS

By Tracey Gray

This article describes the work that took place on a busy acute medical ward within a large NHS Trust. For confidentiality purposes the Trust is not named. I am managing director of Inspirational Minds Limited and designed and led the intervention. The ward was failing on all counts with low morale, numerous complaints and behavioural issues that were resulting in unsatisfactory patient experiences, increased sickness and absence, and high levels of stress and anxiety amongst staff. The work consisted of four phases, data collection and analysis, workshops, role reversal simulation and evaluation. The work made a profound difference and led to two prestigious national awards.

Background

Imagine being a patient in the middle of the night on a busy medical ward, you are thirsty and in pain.

As you look around what do you see? Staff in conflict, rolling their eyes, being disrespectful about each other, patients and the organisation.

What do you hear? Raised voices, breeches of confidentiality.

How does it feel? You are scared to ask for a drink in case there are repercussions…eventually you pluck up the courage and press the buzzer….you wait and wait after what seems like hours a nurse arrives and sighs at you and rolls her eyes. 'What?' she asks. You ask for a drink only to be told, 'For heaven's sake there are people a lot sicker than you on this ward.' The patient sadly died, something had to change.

This is an actual complaint and became the catalyst for the Matron to call for help from the Executives of the Trust. A four-phase intervention was designed with the full backing of the board and sponsored by the Trust Chairman.

Phase 1 – data collection and analysis

Quantitative data was collected to enable measurements of success. This data included aspects of clinical care, which were indicators of how well a ward was performing, alongside team performance issues. Qualitative data was collected through one to one coaching (see Figure 1).

Qualitative data – coaching

The perception across the organisation was that this was a group of staff who were incompetent and lacked compassion and care. I was curious about what the perception was from the staff. What had happened

❝ They were asked to identify three areas that would improve things ❞

to create a group of people who had lost belief in themselves. All 36 members of staff received one to one coaching.

During the coaching session each person had their values elicited within the context of what was important to them working there. The purpose of this was to find common values that could lead to the creation of a shared set of ward values with associated acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.

A meta-program profile was also completed on each person to identify differences and to discover ways of celebrating the differences. In addition they were all asked to identify three areas that would improve things and how they could personally improve performance in these areas.

Data analysis

The key themes identified from the coaching sessions

Measure	Number of incidents six months pre-intervention
Formal complaints	5
Informal complaints	37
Employee cases involving HR	33
Sickness and absence	6.68%
Days lost to stress and anxiety	378
Hospital acquired pressure ulcers	4
Infection outbreaks	11
Preventable falls	32
Never events	1

Figure 1. Quantitative data pre-intervention

were poor communication, people refusing to take responsibility and accountability for their actions and a lack of belief in their own ability and that of their colleagues. The comments and examples from the coaching were used to create two NLP workshops and a role reversal simulation. To improve clinical care the workshops ran parallel to training in clinical skills particularly around pressure area care, infection prevention and falls.

Phase 2 – intervention workshops
The workshops were compulsory for all staff, and groups of people who had issues of conflict with each other were placed in the same groups to facilitate discussion and practice new ways of being.

Workshop one explored the NLP communication model, rapport, cause and effect and Perceptions. They were interactive and resulted in lots of laughter and learning as individuals started to discover that they personally could make a difference.

Prior to the first workshop a common practice at shift handover was for comments such as 'it's a battlefield down there', followed by character assassinations of the people they would be working with. The team decided to change this and introduced 'high fiving' and positive comments about each other with immediate effect. This caused laughter and shocked reactions from fellow professionals who noticed the palpable difference in atmosphere. The team discovered they actually liked each other and started believing in themselves.

Workshop two was dedicated to Values and created a set of values that all of the team could agree on with the top value being care not only for patients, but also for each other and their self as well.

A wall of pride was created where good practice, thank you's and achievements were displayed. Meta program profiles were fed back to the team and it was established that two of the core issues were not only lack of understanding about each other's differences, but also lack of understanding about each other's roles. This resulted in a project being developed to enable shadowing of each other to gain the understanding they needed.

66 The patient sadly died, something had to change 99

Phase 3 – role reversal simulation
The ultimate perceptual positions workshop, the data from complaints was taken and using a group of actors (well, family and friends!) the staff became the patients and the actors became the staff, so that they could experience what the patient had been through in their care. This was followed by an in-depth debrief with profound and lasting learning.

Phase 4 – evaluation
Instant: each workshop was evaluated immediately with measures put in place to ensure that the behaviour changes continued. I introduced ad hoc positivity rounds, which consisted of dropping in to the ward unannounced, and checking they were still on track.

Six months post-intervention: quantitative data with the identical criteria was evaluated six months later (see Figure 2).

The best result of all was unquantifiable – it was a team of people who had their belief back, with patients benefiting by improved experiences.

Dissemination and sustainability
The most challenging part of change interventions is sustainability. To address this, members of the ward team including the Senior and Junior Sister and the Matron trained as NLP practitioners and coaches. All new members of the team attended the Trust's one-day Introduction to NLP to sustain effective communication as part of their induction.

Since this intervention, six staff have been promoted, and during a major re-organisation the ward now no longer exists. The individuals continue to use their skills and are an ongoing positive influence in the areas in which they work.

National recognition was achieved by winning the Nursing Times Award for Excellence in Staff Health and Well-being which included a reception at Clarence House with HRH Prince Charles and the Training Journal Award for Best Organisational Development Programme. ∎

Measures	Number of incidents pre-intervention	Number of incidents six months post-intervention
Formal complaints	5	0
Informal complaints	37	1
Employee cases involving HR	33	1
Sickness and absence	6.68%	3.76%
Days lost to stress and anxiety	378	34
Hospital acquired pressure ulcers	4	0
Infection outbreaks	11	0
Preventable falls	32	17
Never events	1	0

Figure 2. Quantitative data six months post-intervention

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Practice Groups Reminder

ANLP has devised a support pack for Practice Group Facilitators, both experienced and new, with the intention that Practice Groups can be nurtured and helped to flourish around the UK.

The ANLP Practice Group Support Pack includes latest copies of *Rapport*, *Acuity*, *Current Research in NLP* and *The NLP Professional*, so you have some resources to share with your attendees. You will also be given CPD certificates in PDF format, so you can issue ANLP Practice Group CPD certificates to your attendees.

All ANLP Practice Groups will appear on the ANLP website practice group listings so please make sure you let us know of any changes to your group, so we can keep the list up to date.

To update your information or to get your Practice Group added to the list, please contact Nina via **members@anlp.org**. ■

ANLP Regional Event

Building on our support for local Practice Groups and a successful Research Stream at the 2014 NLP Conference, it is our intention to launch the first ANLP regional event in 2015. The first one will take place in the South West of England, and then we will move this around the country each year, so we really do bring NLP into your local community. Keep an eye on the website, ANLP newsletters and *Rapport* for further news. ■

ANLP Green Paper

2014 also saw the launch of the ANLP Green Paper, entitled 'NLP: A Positive Future'. The paper and NLP Conference keynote are still available on our website, and the discussions continue on LinkedIn. We have recently offered an open invitation to the NLP Community to get involved with this project, and we look forward to developing this further in 2015. ■

ANLP Website

You may remember one of our projects for 2014 was to improve the website and communications. We started this process by taking on a new system for communicating with members, mainly through the newsletter. This is a vital part of your ANLP membership and is the main form of communication to keep you informed about how to make best use of your membership, update you regarding membership offers and *Rapport* publication, as well as being the main way we can invite you to

participate in NLP projects, PR and business opportunities.

We will be further developing the website in 2015, and finishing the enormous review, redesign and series of improvements as recommended by you. This is proving to be a project far greater than we originally anticipated, and we know the end results will be worth waiting for! We are currently reviewing the tenders submitted and will be working on the website over the coming months. ■

How NLP Helped a Learning Disabilities Charity
Take their Service to the Next Level

By Karen Meager

Introducing Freeways Trust

Freeways Trust is a charity that supports vulnerable individuals, primarily adults with learning disabilities. They provide residential care and supported living services to people in the Bristol and Bath area.

The aim of their services is to support people to be as independent as possible. For some people this means learning new skills and doing some tasks without support and creating links with people outside Freeways, for others this may mean maintaining the skills they have for as long as possible. People are supported to take risks to learn and this is assessed to maintain their safety and security.

Freeways support individuals using person-centred plans and approaches and health action plans to ensure people's needs are met in the way they choose to ensure the best outcomes.

We were approached by Freeways to provide training for their Management Team. They have a team of over 30 managers who manage residential houses and other services. It was a dedicated team with a unique set of challenges. The widespread geographic locations made management level communication difficult and small teams working 24-hour shifts resulted in staff sometimes feeling isolated. The nature of their work, with service users often experiencing emotional as well as cognitive difficulties was mentally and emotionally tiring, as well as very rewarding.

Implementing a management-wide NLP Diploma

As in any good development programme, the senior leadership team were included in the programme and most of them trained to Practitioner level, both to use the skills within the business and to support the managers with integrating their learning.

Those senior team members who do formal Supervision (which is a regulatory requirement) were taught how to use NLP in supervision sessions to support managers in expanding their thinking and deepen their ability to apply NLP to resolve particularly difficult dilemmas and situations. They were very proud of their qualifications.

The most important part of any development programme is how is it integrated back into the organisation and we were very impressed at the level the managers applied NLP both in their personal lives and professionally.

> **❝ Senior team members were taught how to use NLP in supervision sessions ❞**

The managers with their certificates

The NLP Diploma was taught in two modules which gave the managers time to integrate their learning and then bring back to the group any problems, learnings or issues that we could continue to work with in class. The group were creative and could see the benefits the tools and techniques could offer them in their work and it did not take much encouragement from us before they were using NLP in situations we had not expected, here are some of the key changes they implemented as a result of the training.

Using outcomes in team meetings and staff reviews

As a care service, a lot of the focus can be on preventing or resolving problems. This is often appropriate and yet the managers embraced the concept of using well formed outcomes to help them with bigger initiatives like fund raising and organising events.

In team meetings they found that making each meeting outcome focused, rather than working to an agenda, made it more productive, stimulating and interesting.

They found using personal outcomes in personal development reviews a very effective way of helping staff to take responsibility for their own development, whilst being clear about how the organisation can support and help them to achieve this.

Karen Meager

Understanding the Representational Systems and using this with staff and service users

The concept of people having different sensory preferences and what that means as a manager, was something the managers took into their work and got really creative with.

Initiatives included ensuring stimuli around the residential care homes spoke to all the Representational Systems. Teaching staff ways to use them to teach service users to do self-sufficient tasks like dressing themselves: for Visual preferences showing them first and then getting them to do it; for Auditory, talking it through first; for Kinaesthetic, doing it with them; and for Auditory Digital, giving them a step by step process.

They embraced this awareness and understanding and integrated it into many aspects of their work.

Understanding responsibility

In a care service it can be tough to draw appropriate responsibility boundaries and the managers were finding it challenging to know how best to empower staff and service users; when to support them, when to step in, when to do something yourself, when to let people make mistakes whilst retaining a safe environment. Also the dynamics of running care homes means that the division of work and home can get a bit blurred for staff, when they work nights and work so closely with their service users.

We used the concepts of appropriate responsibility, the presuppositions of NLP, ethics and ecology to explore case studies and consider the consequences of various policies and courses of action. This helped the managers to decide on appropriate actions and decisions, and it freed up more of their time to look at the bigger picture for their service.

Linguistics

The managers were struck by the power of linguistics and not only implemented changes with how they addressed and gave instructions to staff, they also used linguistics to facilitate communication with the service users.

They became clearer in their communication and took out all those words that don't mean anything, like 'perhaps', 'maybe', 'sort of' and 'you know', because these all confuse the clarity of the message being delivered.

66 The group could see the benefits the tools and techniques could offer in their work 99

They also worked on 'saying it how you want it', rather than what you don't want, when giving feedback so that people were clear on expectations and found that staff also felt more supported with this approach.

As a result communication has become simpler, more direct and clearer, which is critical in a busy service working shifts.

Follow up programmes

We have done a number of follow up programmes with Freeways following the NLP Diploma, building on the skills and taking NLP into their supervision sessions.

We work with a lot of organisations implementing NLP-based development programmes and yet with Freeways we were amazed and delighted by the imagination and creativity with which the managers used the tools and techniques and integrated it into their everyday working practices.

They are a courageous group, happy to come forward and share experiences, and to talk about things which didn't work so well. They are a real asset to Freeways as an organisation and to the service users for which they provide such an amazing service.

'From a senior management point of view,' said Claire Hayward, CEO of Freeways Trust, 'we noticed the difference in how the management teams became more proactive, recognising that if something was not working they could do something about it and gaining the self-confidence to act. The process of working with the teams as a group meant they supported each other and this support has continued on into the workplace. The cost to the charity was a gamble, as funding has been cut, but the positive results have meant the gamble has more than paid off.' ◼

Karen Meager is an NLP Master Trainer, Psychotherapist, author of *Real Leaders for the Real World* and Managing Director of Monkey Puzzle Training & Consultancy Ltd.

Boost the Effectiveness of Your Training Courses and Client Sessions:

Interesting Insights from a Meditation Teacher

By Mark Zaretti

❝ Meditation is not hypnosis or NLP, it is quite distinct, but there is overlap ❞

I have previously written business articles for *Rapport* about marketing, social engagement and multimedia so at first glance this title may seem a bit of a diversion, however as you read on you may discover that the insights gained, and approaches used, when teaching meditation are actually quite handy when it comes to business and in particular the business of running trainings. They are equally of value in any client interaction. I have personally been curious about 'meditation' for well over 30 years now.

I put 'meditation' in quotes because it is just a word, and one that has a wide range of meanings too. Putting it simply for the purpose of this article I would define it as 'a way to have an experience-based exploration of inner awareness'. That is a huge generalisation and simplification but it is a good starting point. The key words here are *experience-based* and *awareness*.

As well as enjoying the many benefits and insights meditation practice can bring, I have also been teaching it since the late 1990s and have run many courses, lectures, private lessons, classes and even teach people in many countries via Skype. So with the key words of *experience-based* and *awareness* in mind let me

share with you some of my teaching approaches and demonstrate how they can be useful in other ways, such as when running training courses or providing client-based interactions.

Meditation is not hypnosis or NLP, it is quite distinct, but there is overlap and many of the techniques, especially the hypnotic side can really help people who are learning to meditate. Where they do differ can be explained best with a metaphor. Hypnosis and NLP can assist people in noticing, understanding, moving, and changing their boxes. Meditation can allow people to become aware of and transcend their boxes, as well as discover the space between boxes. Of course any metaphor is at best an attempt to describe something, which will always fall short. So let us not get too hung up and remember the best way to really know the difference is to explore both, and that is something I have done and wish to share with you.

So let us understand better what a person might experience when learning meditation so we can understand how NLP and hypnosis fit in and vice versa. When people start meditation they are learning how to be aware internally. This awareness starts by being

🎧 Ironing out any unhelpful self-talk early on is a great idea 🎧

aware of what is already present, which is of course their physical body, their emotions and their thoughts. But through practice they can start to be aware of a way of being that has nothing to do with their thoughts, feelings or physical awareness. Some might call it stillness and I will use that word to describe this awareness for now.

Having taught many people over the years I have observed that some find it easier to access this stillness compared with others. The potential stillness to explore is the same for all people so the variation in their ease of access must be caused by the individual, which means it is down to their body, emotions or thoughts. Putting it simply *it is what is already present* (mind, emotions and body) *that can help or hinder a person from noticing new things*. This is where NLP and hypnosis can help because they provide tools for adjusting the way a person uses and relates to their mind, emotions and body.

Let us explore a number of approaches and patterns I have developed and experienced from teaching meditation and see how they may be useful.

How are they representing the process?
Imagine two students about to sit down to meditate for the first time.

Student A is saying to themselves, 'This is cool, I'm excited to see what it's like!'

Student B is saying to themselves, 'I'm nervous, what if I don't like it or can't do it?'

Who do you think is going to find it easiest to relax and enjoy the experience? Go ahead and say each of the sentences in your own head and see which one 'feels' more supportive and which creates tension. These students could be given equal advice and guidance and sit in the same room with the same conditions, but it is pretty obvious that one of them is going to find it a lot easier to relax and let go. So some simple NLP strategy elicitation, asking them 'What are you thinking to yourself as you sit there?' can go a long way.

Any new experience naturally has the potential to cause anxiety in some people. This might be a client about to have their first session or someone starting a training course. Ironing out any unhelpful self-talk early on is a great idea. There are plenty of NLP approaches to changing negative self talk and most of the time I would simply keep it conversational, which was one of the late Frank Farrelly's real skills. There is also a specific approach to getting rid of negative self-talk which you can explore called the 'Voice Tempo Exercise', developed by Nick Kemp. I generally do not find it necessary but it is nice to have as a tool in your proverbial tool box. The take home lesson here though is make sure their internal dialogue is supportive before you start.

What is the main cause of student anxiety?
Here are two examples of how a teacher might

introduce a new exercise, see which teacher you would rather work with.

Teacher X, 'Hi, I'm going to teach you a secret breathing technique. It's pretty hard and most people struggle but if you try really hard you may notice a little.'

Teacher Y, 'Hi, I'm going to teach you a really useful breathing technique which you can just enjoy playing with and I'm really curious to know what you will discover.'

Two completely different approaches, which say exactly the same thing: 'you'll learn a breathing technique and you'll notice stuff.' But I would put my money on the fact that the students of Teacher X have higher levels of anxiety than those of Teacher Y.

I have observed many times that in any teacher/ student dynamic the greatest potential source of anxiety is the teacher. The student does not know what they do not know yet and hence is putting their trust in the teacher. If the teacher says it is going to be hard then guess what, it is going to be hard. If the teacher says it is going to be easy then it is certainly going to be easier.

So when you are instructing clients, be mindful of how you are framing things. Are you accidentally installing anxiety or assumptions of failure? Those paying attention would have also picked up on the use of *try* by Teacher X; *try* is the one word way to easily install the idea of failure, which I am sure you know already.

Have you spotted a pattern yet?
In the previous two examples, I did not start by telling you information. I gave you an experience first, then asked you what you had noticed based on that experience, and finally gave you more information. This is what I call the *experience first* approach.

When I am teaching a meditation technique to a student I do not start by telling them what the technique is, what they are likely to notice, and what I or others have experienced from it in the past. Instead I simply sit them down, ask them to close their eyes and guide them through the exercise so that they are experiencing it without prejudice as they are introduced to it. Then once they have had the experience I elicit feedback from them and am then able to provide appropriate information if ➡

❝ In any teacher/student dynamic the greatest potential source of anxiety is the teacher ❞

needed. This approach has several benefits.

1 Because I have not provided lots of information it means there is less information with which they can create expectations and hence potential blocks.
2 With fewer expectations about what they may experience it also means they are more likely to notice what they are actually experiencing rather than filtering only for those aspects which match their anticipated expectations.
3 Because they have had an experience first and I have elicited information about it I now am in a position to make sure any information I provide is actually related to their experience and hence has more value.

For me, this is also one of the nice things about meditation, the fact it is not an information-based pursuit. Let me demonstrate.

I am sure you have probably seen a helicopter. Now even if you had read every book there is on helicopters, looked at lots of pictures and videos, studied them at length, all this information would not be the same as actually having the experience of flying in one. So when I teach, I am mindful of the difference between information and experience. Mainly that information is how we communicate our awareness of an experience with others (and ourselves). The experience comes first. You cannot be the source of new information without first having had a new experience.

So when teaching meditation, my goal is to enable experience and then provide information relevant to the experience, rather than trying to provide information about a potential experience.

So how would you provide the *experience first* approach in your work to improve your clients' experience?

Using NLP submodalities
In the above example I said that I would elicit information from the person after they had the experience. An awareness of submodalities (Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic – VAK etc.) and how they are used in questions can really help in this elicitation stage.

What I normally ask the person after a meditation is: 'What did you notice this particular time?' You'll find that there are no submodality references in that statement. I could have phrased it visually and said: 'What did you *see* this particular time?' Or phrased it kinaesthetically: 'How did that *feel* this particular time?'

But by avoiding submodalities I avoid limiting their range of response. The word 'notice' allows them to include all submodalities in their response. Equally, if I want to filter for just one submodality then I will specifically use words corresponding to that submodality.

It is time we talked about time
Everything happens in time and most of the time we are either thinking about the future, remembering the past or occasionally we are in the present. Of course, we use this to great effect in NLP for timeline work. In any training, change work, therapy session, coaching and, of course, meditation training there are subtle aspects of time, and as a teacher, or therapist how we reference time can have a strong influence on our students/clients.

Any process happens over a period of time and the expectation of how long it might take is often dictated by the experience and expectations of the teacher. For example, if I told my students it will take you 10 years to be ready for the next phase then that would create a certain (unhelpful?) expectation in them, especially when you consider the assumption that difficulty and time are associated. Over my many years of teaching I have learned that very little is actually set in stone. It may have taken some people 10 years to achieve a certain awareness but does that actually mean that is a truism for everyone? I tend to avoid setting expectations of time when teaching. That way the possibility for faster change is always present.

I do not avoid the subject of time completely though. Often at the end of a lesson I may use the concept of timelines to help students create the supportive habit of regular meditation. For example at the end a guided meditation when the students are really relaxed I might say something like: 'As you think about the future you can imagine times when it would be useful to feel this relaxed and able to keep focused. So it is nice to know you can use these meditation techniques whenever you need.'

A statement like this allows them to create the assumption that they will use what they have learned now in the future. It also allows them to anticipate the benefits of doing so. Both of which are obviously useful to helping the person learn to meditate. So when you think about your client interactions in the future, how would you use references to time differently to improve the results you get?

Let's go from one extreme to another
When you close your eyes for about 10 seconds what do you notice? Ok give it a go – *before reading the next part*.

I am going to demonstrate another useful approach you can take but if you did not just close your eyes and

notice whatever you noticed for at least 10 seconds then give it another go *now*.

Then read this next paragraph and hear it in your head as if I was saying it with you.

'When people have their eyes closed some will notice colours while others will notice that there are no colours. Some will notice that everything is still while others will notice that there is movement. Some will notice that things seem flat while others will notice that there is a sense of depth. Some will notice that there is a space in front of them and others will notice that there is nothing in front of them. Some will notice their thoughts and others will notice the space between their thoughts.'

Now close your eyes for about 10 seconds and notice what you notice, and notice what is different from the last time you closed your eyes.

Some people will have noticed that what they noticed was different and other people would have noticed that everything was the same. What did you notice this particular time? In the paragraph above what I did was to introduce polar opposites, for example: 'Some people will see colour and others will see that there is no colour.'

What this does is make the entire range of experience between those polar opposites accessible to the person without prejudice. They may notice colour (some people do at certain stages of meditation) or they may not, but either way it is within the range of experiences defined by the polar opposites and so whatever they notice is fine. It is a subtle way of saying 'you may notice xxx', but if they do not notice xxx then they do not feel that they have failed in any way. Notice as well that the language was third person, 'some people notice' rather than 'you may notice'. This is a way of introducing a suggestion without creating pressure on the person.

For example, in a client therapy session you might say something like, 'Some clients notice changes right away while others notice the difference some time later.' Either way you are suggesting change will happen along with the possibility that it could happen quickly. Some people will be able to think of lots of ways this may be useful in the future, while other people may not think of any ways and that is ok.

I have introduced a number of approaches that you may already do or perhaps wish to explore in your own working practice. To recap:

1 Becoming aware of and sorting out internal dialogue in your clients to improve client interactions
2 Avoid installing anxiety in your students/clients to produce better outcomes
3 The 'experience first' approach which removes the need for information
4 Submodality clean language for eliciting more relevant information
5 How referencing time can create obstacles or be used to create supportive attitudes
6 Creating an inclusive expectation range within which a person can have experiences.

Obviously there are other approaches too and my goal here is to help share observations that other people may find useful and benefit from. My day job is providing web technology, multimedia and design services, support and solutions and I regularly apply these approaches above in business interactions, for example when showing a client a new website design I give clients the experience of the design first, I then ask them for feedback before going into the information about colour, layout and typography.

Enjoying and teaching meditation is a passion of mine and speaking just from a business perspective it is easy to understand why so many people are starting to explore it. Just imagine the benefits of being able to quickly relax and de-stress; to calm the chatter of a busy mind; to revitalise the body after a busy day; to access a more creative and intuitive level of awareness; to reduce blood pressure and recover faster from injury; the list goes on.

Because meditation is a natural process working with the mind, body and emotions to bring about these benefits and it only requires someone to sit and close their eyes, it is very accessible to people of any background or situation. ◼

Mark Zaretti

Mark Zaretti trained in NLP to a master practitioner level and was an assistant for a number of years assisting NLP Trainers running training courses in the UK. Mark has also trained with the excellent Doug O'Brien in Eriksonian Hypnosis and 'Sleight of Mouth' language patterns, had the pleasure of training multiple times with the late Frank Farrelly and a number of other trainers, voice coaches and teachers. As well as helping business people and individuals benefit from meditative techniques, Mark has also taught groups within academia and organisations, the most recent being the NHS Employers in the UK. He spends his time between the UK and Italy teaching internationally with many clients having lessons and guidance online. For more information: **www.zaretti.com**; **www.pureenergymeditation.com**.

Diary of a Wannabe Researcher (Part 1)

By Guy Whitmore

Guy Whitmore

I t was a day like any other – until, that is, the phone rang. It was a call that changed my life in many ways, and resulted in me conducting a pilot study that I believe demonstrates NLP has the potential to save thousands of lives.

The fateful call was to tell me a family member had been involved in a serious road traffic incident and while she was physically unhurt, the horrific emotional consequences soon became apparent.

Panic attacks, anxiety and a fear of driving quickly followed, resulting in her leaving her job due to the daily drive.

Seeing this sparked something deep within me. I wanted to promote road safety, not only to save lives but also to spare others the emotional trauma I'd witnessed.

In 2013, according to statistics 1,700 people died on Britain's roads and 21,000 people suffered serious or life changing injuries. What could I do to reduce that, I kept asking myself.

I decided to train as a driving instructor, but as soon as I started sharing my plans with friends and colleagues, quickly realised there was a group of drivers that desperately needed help – but were all but hidden.

With alarming regularity, I would hear people tell me about people they knew that

❝ I wanted to promote road safety, not only to save lives but also to spare others the emotional trauma ❞

were nervous or fearful of driving. Turning right, parking, using motorways or driving above 45mph – the list went on.

I say hidden because as these motorists have passed their driving test, they are thought of as confident enough to use our roads. Also, little research seems to have been done on the issue, though in 2011, a Spanish survey found that one third of licence holders reported they were scared of driving.

The implications of this are severe. Anxiety, fear and stress in any situation increases the chances of poor decisions, inappropriate action and aggression. When driving, any one of these could have catastrophic consequences.

So, as a master practitioner, I started to use NLP to help those with driving related fears and phobias, and the results were positive. I then carried out a small pilot study last year, which also showed NLP could help tackle the issue.

So against this backdrop – and thanks to support from the ANLP and a number of NLP professionals – I am embarking on research to investigate the results further.

The aims are:
- To save lives
- Produce robust data showing NLP is an effective and bona fide therapy
- Convince those who still – despite the evidence – refuse to see NLP as an effective and bona fide therapy.

Research is completely new to me, by day I am a writer. I anticipate the learning will be as steep as it is exciting.

I will be sharing my experience with *Rapport* readers in forthcoming issues, and will be keen to get feedback and advice from seasoned researchers and NLP professionals out there.

To start with, I am keen to find information or previous studies that could help the creation of a validated questionnaire.

Anyone with any ideas can contact me on **guywhitmore01@gmail.com**. ◾

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