RAPPORT

The Magazine for NLP Professionals

James Lawley and Penny Tompkins

Models of Persistence and Innovation

Managing Change in Education

By Roger Terry

What do we really mean and understand by the much overused phrase, 'managing change in education'?

The impact of change

In the education arena, the changes that most often impact schools are in response to the latest government or Ofsted directives. Much of the change in schools is stimulated externally and is non-negotiable: changes may range from subtle restructuring through to wholesale shifts in the curriculum (or both), and can be accompanied by a squeeze on budgets.

Perhaps what we *really* mean is: when the change arrives, how do we manage the people? Their states, thinking and objections – both overt and covert.

Why is change challenging in education?

In my work in the non-education field it has become clear that strongly bonded, cohesive teams are able to navigate change very effectively with less drama, less pain, and with a more workable result.

When I turn my attention to schools, their unique structure mitigates against building strong teams unless the head teacher and senior management team hold an unwaveringly clear focus on bringing this about.

Teachers spend the majority of their time in their own classroom kingdom and much less time working in a team context, whereas in non-educational organisations as much as five hours a day is spent interacting and working in a team. Teams in schools tend to come together less frequently, and do so mainly for meetings or INSET days. In addition to this, having your kingdom threatened by change may very well produce resistance and defensive behaviours.

This conscious or unconscious attitude can become the underlying tone during meetings and workshops intended to inform or decide on how to 'manage change'. All in all, the job of bringing in the changes becomes more difficult and problematic because of this misalignment of intents.

How can using NLP help?

NLP is one of the best sets of tools for achieving alignment and for creating sustainable ecological change. Understanding the principles of change and then having good presuppositions (beliefs) to hold the process together is a vital place to start.

Principles

David McClelland, who spent his career studying motivation, has three conditions that need to be fulfilled before change can take place. Addressing these in a change process will help frame change initiatives. Although not originally from the NLP

> **Having your kingdom threatened by change may produce resistance and defensive behaviours**

world, these guiding principles have been adopted by many NLP professionals.

1 You must want to change (motivation, dissonance, desire)
2 You must know how to change (tools, methods, models)
3 You must have the opportunity to change (space, time, process).

Personally, I add a fourth: 'Be prepared to be different after the change.'

Beliefs

Then, from the NLP world, holding presuppositions relevant to the type of change process is important for managing mind-sets.

Here are my three favourites.

1 The meaning of your communication is the response you get
2 We are always communicating
3 The person / group with the greatest flexibility will have most influence in a situation.

Questions

One of the advantages of applying NLP is the ability to ask some very precise questions. The language models are a fabulous tool to scope situations and lay the ground for the best change programme to be delivered.

Asking questions when faced with the job of 'managing change' is a wise move, especially before taking on a role of managing change in an organisation.

As with any potential confrontation, what is needed are accurate common maps before a campaign can be successful. (Imagine what chaos would ensue by attempting to win a battle if all your command units were operating from different maps.)

- What is the change a response to, and where is it coming from?
- What, precisely, is going to change?
- How quickly do we need to act?
- How many people are involved / affected?
- Do they have the skills / experience needed?
- Have the barriers been identified, and can they be removed?
- What problems are currently being focused on, and are they actually important in the change context?
- What is the current climate in the organisation?
- How much flexibility is available?
- Is there a readiness for change?
- What are the consequences of the change?

Using the meta model, we can certainly begin to ask more focused questions that will move towards solutions that are both workable and ecological from a system perspective.

Exploration process
In *The NLP Toolkit*, Richard Churches and I describe a method of school improvement that uses Robert Dilts' Neuro-Logical Levels in the iceberg format (tool 67). Since writing the book, we have updated our approach somewhat. In order to help teams visualise the change and gain involvement, we have included the Present State to Desired State model as part of the process which can easily and simply be represented on a flip chart (see Figure 1).
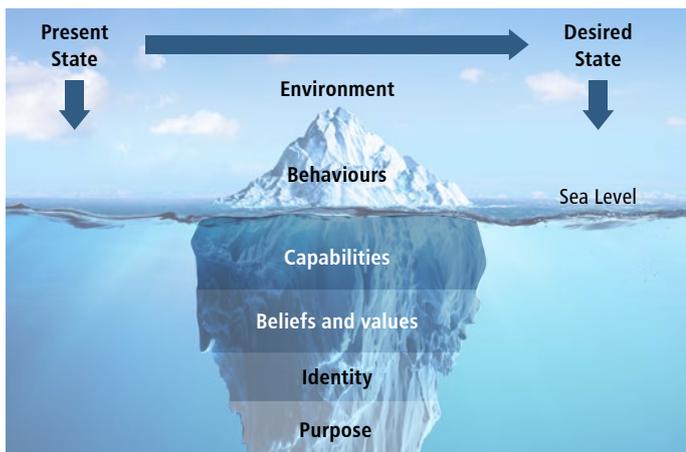
Figure 1

You can use this model to map out the range of improvements and changes that would work best. Find any sticking points that lie below the waterline and decide how to address them. This can be done as a team or multi-team process, it requires a good level of facilitation and process management in order to produce solid results. (Place the summarised and collated results on either side of the iceberg.)

The iceberg has six levels – three of which are observable and often attract more attention:
- Environment
- Behaviours
- Capabilities (or skills) – only visible when they emerge as behaviours. This level includes the untapped talent in your school.

The next three levels lie deeper, are often invisible and are part of the unspoken traditions that all institutions tend to generate over time.

By paying attention to these categories we can begin to create

> **What is needed are accurate common maps before a campaign can be successful**

plans that will work:
- Beliefs and values
- Identity
- Purpose.

Survey present situation
Familiarise yourself with the model, categories and the types of questions that are helpful to ask (available in *The NLP Toolkit*).

Begin your analysis with the environment category and work towards the purpose level, identifying the gaps and revealing any sticking points or obstacles.

In each category, take care not to mix categories together. This will help you define your present state or situation.

This is a great exercise to do with teams using post-it notes on a large wall.

Once you have completed your survey you can begin to sort and map the essential parts of your change plan, which will take you to a vision of the desired situation.

Formulate the change strategy
It's now time to design your desired state or situation, and we reverse the process.
1 This time start with the *vision* – make it short, clear and succinct to bring clarity.
2 Define or refine your *mission*
3 Make a comparison between the current *values* and *beliefs* that you uncovered in your review, to any new values and beliefs that will be needed in order to complete the mission
4 Are there any *new capabilities* (or skills) that will be required in order to fulfil the vision and mission, and actualise the beliefs and values needed?
5 What *behaviours* are useful in building the capabilities?
6 Finally, what changes are needed in the environment in order to support the *vision*, *mission*, *values* and *beliefs*, *capabilities*, and *behaviours*?

Create detailed plans and an execution strategy.

Design your plan to create shifts in the levels of thinking in the iceberg that are currently most out of alignment with the overall purpose and mission.

Your aim is to create alignment of categories and people so that a supportive framework is built and the change can be a success.

Communicate the vision, mission, values, behaviours, plan and consequences clearly and concisely to everyone – even if it seems they are not directly affected.

The most common reason for resistance and sabotage is that people have been kept in the dark, feel ignored and think they don't know what is happening.

Remember: you cannot not communicate.

So if you are a leader then it's best to be upfront and decide what to communicate rather than simply hope that your message will get through.

Because, whatever you do in a change situation, something will be understood or misunderstood and it's down to you when 'Managing Change' to communicate to succeed. ●

Roger Terry is Co-Founder of Evolution Training Ltd; a Master NLP Trainer, Coach and Consultant, and Author of *NLP for Teachers*, *The NLP Toolkit*, *Resourceful Living*, *The Effective Communication Guide for Leaders* and *The Hidden Art of Interviewing*.

The Business of Fellowship

By Robert Dilts and Ian McDermott

We have been creating together for over 25 years. While we have created public programmes and run them together sometimes, much of our work goes on behind the scenes. And it is behind the scenes that we have developed a way of working which is personally rewarding, spiritually uplifting and commercially profitable.

It is based upon a unique form of collaborative conversation as a fundamental foundation for life and professional success. We call this way of working and interacting 'intentional fellowship'. It's sufficiently important to us that, travel and training permitting, we speak most weeks and have done so for years.

What is fellowship?

'Fellowship' has multiple definitions in the dictionary including:
- A group of people meeting to pursue a shared interest or aim
- The companionship of individuals in a congenial atmosphere on equal terms
- A friendly relationship marked by ready communication, mutual understanding, kindly concern, interest and support
- The body of people in a profession or field of activity
- The feeling of closeness and friendship that exists between companions
- A coming together for spiritual purposes (from the Greek *koinonia* and found in the Bible).

Our concept of fellowship is that it is a type of generative collaboration that comes from sharing a higher purpose that simultaneously enriches us as individuals.

In Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*, for instance, an unlikely group of quite diverse individuals undertake a complex and dangerous journey together in order to save the 'free races of Middle Earth'.

Though they are in some ways natural adversaries, their common higher purpose unites them and inspires them to remarkable actions and achievements beyond their previous capabilities.

Working together in fellowship, they are able to accomplish things that would have been impossible for any of them to do

> **We have developed a way of working which is personally rewarding, spiritually uplifting and commercially profitable**

as individuals.

Fellowship then is about helping each other reach a higher purpose by joining with and supporting each other through a number of (generally unpredictable) life situations and challenges.

Creating and managing a successful team or business in many ways requires the development of a certain degree of fellowship also. And we have certainly found this to be the case with our particular clients and collaborators.

What is intentional fellowship?

We have consciously chosen to build our relationship with each other around all of the elements of fellowship listed earlier. For us, fellowship is too important to be a function of mere happenstance.

Intentionality means being proactive and clear about what matters to us. Constantly clarifying our values and committing to realising them is the basis of our fellowship.

Our experience is that, if you want to go from superficial collaboration to intentional fellowship, there will have to be some sense of service to a higher purpose.

This involves making sure that whatever we do we can answer three questions:
1 What are we really about and what matters to us?
2 How can we deliver practical benefits that people can use and profit from?
3 How can this ensure they will want to support our vision and what we're doing?

We find that this kind of thinking produces meaningful and profitable projects and programmes.

What are the benefits of fellowship and how is it relevant to business?

The first business payoff is in our own lives: we both have a sustained track record of success.

We have created programmes, developed products, written books and built successful careers and institutes. We attribute this in large part to our commitment to intentional fellowship.

For us, it is a way to:
• Produce viable business ideas which can then be implemented
• Evolve new platforms which can be used to serve others

> **Fellowship also requires a balance of ego and soul within each of us**

• Leverage change to an advantage
• Identify needs which create new opportunities for making a difference
• Establish a sustained pattern of innovation.

These benefits emerge from clarifying two questions:
1 What matters to us?
2 How do we make that relevant to other people?

We apply this same mindset when coaching individuals and teams in organisations. That's why we'll ask:
• What matters to *you*?
• How can *you* make that relevant to other people?

These two questions reveal something fundamentally important to intentional fellowship: it requires both 'I' and 'we'.

If there is too much focus on ourselves as individuals, it becomes 'all about me' and there is no shared foundation for a larger 'we' to emerge.

If, however, we are not personally engaged as individuals, there's no passion and our creativity is diminished because we have left out the uniqueness of our personal experience and perspectives.

Fellowship also requires a balance of ego and soul within each of us. Too much 'I' or too much 'we', too much ego or too much soul, will prevent a field of fellowship from forming.

Clearly, there is much more to say about this dynamic, and we plan to do so in a future article. For now we just want to share how we diagram this for our own understanding (see Figure 1).
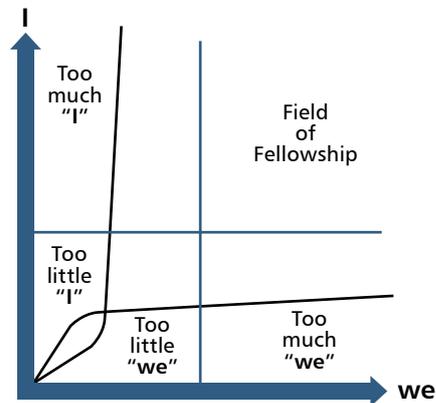

Figure 1
A field of fellowship emerges from the integration of the 'I' with the 'we' when both are in service of something greater

We find that developing this capacity for enlightened self-interest in service of something bigger is a crucial success factor for exceptional teams and organisations.

Creating the conditions in which this can happen is one of the most important things we do with our collaborators and business clients.

How do you create and nurture intentional fellowship?

For us *intentional conversation* is the prime generator of creativity in the context of fellowship.

For example, our regularly scheduled conversations are not   ▶

▶ simply convergent (focused on a single topic), nor simply divergent (wide ranging and without structure). In fact, they are both convergent and divergent – which makes them emergent!

We start with an intention, then the conversation goes where it goes and becomes divergent. Some things engage our energy and excite us and we begin to draw those together; like gas clouds gradually coalescing to form new planets. From this convergence something new and unexpected invariably emerges.

This structure is not just an abstract construct. We actually like each other and laugh together. We are interested in each other and each other's lives and trust that whatever we speak of it will somehow be relevant. (Sometimes it's not at all clear how for some while.)

We are always careful to document and make a record of our conversation, i.e., leave 'footprints' of our previous conversations. This helps us frequently to find the 'diamonds in the rough' or 'buried treasure'.

Whenever we have a conversation, we are never alone: we always have others in mind. Our clients, for instance, are always part of our conversation. There will always be a time when we'll go to second position.

At some point in each conversation we will ask some version of: 'How can this be useful to others? What might this give others?' The enterprise aspect of our conversations is about finding something of value to others and considering how it could be enhanced by their input.

Whether going through a divergent or convergent phase, our conversations are always taking place around *four fundamental questions* that continually weave together ego and soul – 'I' and 'we' (see Figure 2).
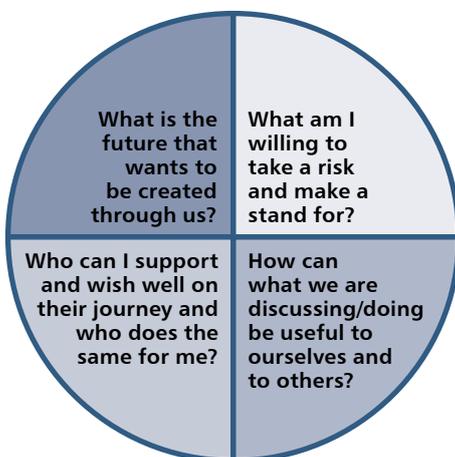

Figure 2
The four fundamental questions of intentional fellowship

We have found that this type of conversation has produced many projects and ideas that are both personally and financially rewarding.

Of course, nobody has a 100% success rate. We've had our fair share of 'failures' and near misses with respect to the things that we have developed. However, we often find ourselves

> **A good metaphor would be two musicians improvising**

repurposing these things; sometimes years later. It has been our experience that nothing we have created together is ever really wasted.

This is a highly practical expression of the NLP principle that 'there is no failure, there is only feedback'. We have found that when we bring this way of thinking into our work with business clients they find it a radical and game changing proposition.

The five disciplines of intentional fellowship
Based on our experience, a good metaphor for this kind of conversation would be two musicians improvising. There is a rhythm of exchange (no one goes on too long) and they operate within creative constraints, e.g. a time frame or time signature.

We have formulated our creative constraints as five disciplines of intentional fellowship:

1 *Connection – Making Time*: we speak most weeks and find the ongoing engagement essential to our generativity
2 *Disclosure – Telling the Truth*: we are honest and upfront about what we think and what we feel
3 *Inclusion – Accepting What Is*: there are good days and bad days. We incorporate whatever is happening as a relevant part of our conversation
4 *Accountability – Following Through*: we make what we discuss and decide a priority and put it into action
5 *Aliveness – Living Our Values*: our conversations are always an expression of who we are and what matters to us.

Each of these disciplines has a built in TOTE.

We can ask at any time a very simple question, beginning with two words: 'Are we ...' (Making time? Telling the truth? Accepting what is? Following through? Living our values?)

We apply the same TOTEs when we are working with our collaborators and business clients by asking the same questions: 'Are you ...' (Making time? Telling the truth? Accepting what is? Following through? Living your values?) '... with respect to what is really important to you?'

We encourage you to try these questions and disciplines in your upcoming conversations and interactions with your colleagues and clients.

Because this way of working seems so important to us, right now we're working on the Intentional Fellowship book.

We've also undertaken to write another article for *Rapport* in 2018.

Next year we will be sharing some of the nuts and bolts experientially in a one-day Masterclass at the 2018 NLP International Conference. Our focus will be on 'Catalysing the Possibilities of Intentional Fellowship'.

To alter a quote from the great Sufi poet Rumi: 'Out beyond all ideas of "I" and "We", there is a field. We'll meet you there.' ●

Robert Dilts has a global reputation as a leading developer, author, coach, trainer and consultant in the field of NLP. He worked closely with NLP co-founders John Grinder and Richard Bandler at the time of its creation. Robert pioneered the applications of NLP to education, creativity, health, leadership, belief systems and the development of what has become known as 'Third Generation NLP'.

Ian McDermott is the Founder of International Teaching Seminars which this year celebrates its 30th Anniversary. Ian pioneered the integration of NLP and Coaching and is now doing the same for NLP and Neuroscience. He has trained a generation. His work focuses on five main areas – innovation, entrepreneurship, legacy, leadership and collaboration. Nowadays he spends much of his time advising senior leaders.

Can Useful Rather than True Knowledge be Scientific?

Design science, Liberian tailors and NLP

By Paul Tosey

> **I argue that there is more than one way of being "scientific"**

Debates about NLP in relation to the academic world can become quite polarised, with NLP being criticised because (for example) it is not 'scientific'. In this article, I argue that there is more than one way of being 'scientific', especially in the field of business and management, in which I worked as an academic for many years.

There is much debate in business and management about what kind of discipline it is, or should be.

Some argue that it should aspire to be a predictive science in the same vein as physics, chemistry and so on, others that management is essentially about getting things done in the human, social world through practical knowledge – more like a 'design science' (*1) that is concerned with enabling interventions for local problem-solving.

NLP has some affinity with this notion of a design science when seen as fundamentally a process of modelling, generating knowledge that is 'useful rather than true' (to use the terms Bandler and Grinder employed in *Frogs into Princes*). Conversely, if the products of NLP modelling are put forward as objective, universal and predictive, critics can often drive the proverbial bus through them.

In fact, theories and models of the 'useful rather than true' type are more common in business and management than you might think. For example, the premise of Gareth Morgan's classic book, *Images of Organization*, is (I quote from the book jacket) 'that all theories of organization and management are based on implicit images or metaphors that stretch our imagination in a way

that can create powerful insights, but at the risk of distortion'. In other words, whether based on metaphors of cultures, organisms or machines and so on, such theories are 'map not territory'.

You might be familiar with Kolb's experiential learning theory and the idea of a learning cycle.(*2) This respected theory of learning is based on thorough theoretical work and Kolb's *Learning Styles Inventory* is used widely as a self-assessment tool. However, the extent to which evidence supports the idea that people *have* learning styles or that this cycle represents the way people actually learn remains contested despite well over a thousand studies.(*3)

As a third example, a well-known model of change management devised

by John Kotter, an emeritus professor at Harvard, consists of a series of eight steps.(*4) Failure to manage change effectively is due to neglecting these steps; Kotter suggests that more than 50 per cent of change efforts fail at the first hurdle through lacking a sufficient sense of urgency.

In my experience, MBA students like its practicality yet can be surprised to discover that the evidence and analysis behind the model are hard to pin down. Indeed a surprisingly common initial reaction is that the model 'must be true' because it comes from a Harvard professor.

Yet it appears that the model results from the way Kotter has made sense of his first-hand experience of many cases of large-scale organisational change. The process or method through which that experience has been interpreted is not available (to my knowledge) for public scrutiny, and Appelbaum et al (*5) concluded that 'most of the evidence … points to data that has been compiled by Kotter himself in his book titled *The Heart of Change* … In essence Kotter validated Kotter' (my emphasis).

The difficulty of evaluating evidence for Kotter's model is compounded by the fact that independent written-up case studies are also rare. Most often it seems to be applied retrospectively, which is prone to 'retro-fitting'; in other words, people interpret their own experience according to the model which then turns out, remarkably, to fit their experience. The model can still be regarded as useful since it helps managers orientate to a change process and to take action. Yet it seems to be very much Kotter's 'map', relying more on his own interpretations than on analysis and testing that others can evaluate.

This certainly does not mean that anything goes in business and management. Any theory should be treated with criticality, scrutinised in terms of how it was devised, the assumptions and values that underpin it, and whether its claims stack up. These examples illustrate that 'useful rather than true' knowledge is commonplace in this field, with no simple binary distinction between what is 'scientific' and what is 'unscientific' – because it depends which form of science we are talking about.

One difference, however, between

Any theory should be treated with criticality

such theories and NLP models lies less in their content than in where and by whom they are produced.

Consider for a moment the question of how you would go about becoming a tailor. Perhaps by studying for qualifications and achieving professional membership? Based on a study of apprentice tailors in Liberia (and other groups) Lave and Wenger (*6) highlighted the significance of the informal, *social* process of engaging in what they called a 'community of practice', moving from the periphery towards the centre.

An apprentice lives in a Liberian tailor's household as well as working in their craft shop. Sure, by doing that they acquire the skills and knowledge of tailoring. But it is also a process of acquiring the *identity* of a tailor – ways of viewing the world, talking, behaving, and so on – through just being around (which, incidentally, sounds quite like modelling).

Taking an NLP model into the academic world is a bit like taking a homemade suit into a Liberian tailor's craft shop and expecting to be accepted straight away as a tailor. The suit might be perfectly good, but it is not enough – you have to have been living there too in order to be a tailor.

Similarly, as a former academic myself, I appreciate how difficult it can be for outsiders to access an academic community of practice. Disciplines and sub-disciplines have their own discourse (just try reading any academic journal article!) and their own networks through which knowledge is generated and marketed. In a comparable way to becoming a Liberian tailor, you might have to live there too …

In conclusion, I suggest that 'useful rather than true' knowledge can in principle be regarded as scientific in the sense outlined here. What are some possible implications for any NLP practitioner seeking to gain acceptance for their models in an academic community of practice?

- First, it could well be helpful to explore framing NLP in terms of 'design science', emphasising modelling as its core.
- Second, just because a model offers practical knowledge does not assure its quality and render criticism invalid. If you want it to stand up to scrutiny, keep meticulous records of your thinking, methods and data. Create a comprehensive audit trail.
- Finally, don't expect the quality of a model to be sufficient by itself to be accepted into another community of practice; heed the example of the Liberian tailors. ●

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(*1) E Sadler-Smith, HRD research and design science: recasting interventions as artefacts.
(*2) D Kolb, *Experiential Learning: experience as the source of learning and development.*
(*3) F Coffield, D Moseley, E Hall, and K Ecclestone, Should we be using learning styles? What the research has to say to practice.
(*4) J Kotter, Leading change: why transformation efforts fail.
(*5) S Appelbaum, S Habashy, J-L Malo, and H Shafiq, Back to the future: revisiting Kotter's 1996 change model.
(*6) J Lave, and E Wenger, *Situated Learning.*
Note: for those who do not have access to academic journals, pre-publication versions of articles can often be found on websites such as ResearchGate (**www.researchgate.net**).

Paul Tosey was formerly Senior Lecturer and Head of PhD programs at Surrey Business School; he now works as a freelance consultant and coach. An NLP Master Practitioner and a certified Clean Practitioner, he co-authored with Jane Mathison, *NLP: a Critical Appreciation for Managers and Developers.*

The ANLP Regional and International Ambassadors

We are delighted to announce 1 new Regional Ambassador!

Ian Pitchford is appointed ANLP Regional Ambassador for Devon

Our congratulations to Ian Pitchford who is the latest addition to the prestigious list of ANLP Regional Ambassadors where he will represent ANLP in Devon. Ian has been a member of ANLP since 2010 and is very active in the NLP community.

Ian is extremely passionate about the belief that 'we are all better than we know, if only we can be taught to realise this' (Kurt Hahn).

The founder of i2i Development Solutions Ltd and A Mind 4 Adventure, Ian is a very active trainer of NLP, leadership consultant and Coach. As an NLP trainer, he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience that is instrumental in supporting people changing their outlook on life. Ian works with individuals, teams and whole organisations, supporting those wanting to become NLP professionals, corporate business clients or as a mentor or coaching supervisor.

In addition to being an NLP Professional, in the last 10 years, Ian has completed an MBA, obtained a Diploma in Performance Coaching and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education, as well as being a Certified Master Coach and credentialing with the International Coaching Federation as a Professionally Certified Coach. Passionate about hypnotherapy, Ian also holds a Hypnotherapy Professional Diploma. It is these skills that enable Ian to speak with authority on the role NLP can play in society. Ian always demonstrates how his membership of ANLP gives him the credibility and ethical framework on which he has built his successful business.

Ian is a training deliverer and an active coach, supporting a vast array of people on their personal journey through life … and if he's not at work then you will find Ian on a river or up a mountain!

So, we think he is going to make a very good Regional Ambassador for ANLP and will raise the profile of NLP and ANLP in the local Devon community … and beyond!

The ANLP International / UK Regional Ambassador is a prestigious position within ANLP. Each Ambassador is selected as truly representative of the ethics, professionalism and aspirations of ANLP and their members with a focus within a particular country or UK region.

As ANLP continues to grow, our International / UK Regional Ambassadors play a crucial role in improving how we innovate and disseminate the latest developments in NLP and related fields to our global membership. They are helping us to develop thought leadership and contribute to the best practices of business and learning for ANLP Members and the NLP community. Additionally, they are working with us to plan local events to promote ANLP, NLP and their local communities.

Being an ANLP International / UK Regional Ambassador has additional membership benefits and gives a unique opportunity to shape how ANLP interacts with your country or UK region. These benefits include:

1 Membership fees are refunded when membership targets are achieved.
2 Use of the title 'ANLP International / UK Regional Ambassador' on the ANLP website and featured on the new ANLP International / UK Regional Ambassador profile page.
3 Use of the title 'ANLP International / UK Regional Ambassador' on your own business collateral.
4 Exclusive feedback into the ANLP Board on new initiatives for your own country / UK region.
5 Keynote speaker opportunities at regional ANLP workshops.
6 Free personal business advertising on the ANLP website for 12 months, when membership targets are achieved.

If you feel that you can add to the international / UK Regional voice of ANLP and would like to work with us on making ANLP and NLP more accessible in your country or UK region, please contact us via **strategy@anlp.org**. ●

BE KIND, FOR EVERYONE YOU MEET IS FIGHTING A HARD BATTLE.

SOCRATES

By Karen Moxom

What is Mine to Do?

My very wise coach mentor, Melissa suggested I ask myself the following question when I expressed a feeling of overwhelm, because I had a few deadlines to meet this week and was struggling to meet them all!

What is mine to do?

I found this question working as an amazing and simple filter, sifting out all the rubbish and distractions and things I felt 'obliged' to do because they were important to other people!

So often, I find myself wanting to 'do it all', relieve the pressure on others, alleviate their stress when actually, it is often much better to work on exactly what is mine to do and leave the others to play their part.

So now it is Friday and I reckon I will meet all the deadlines this week, without working until midnight (!) because I have paused regularly and checked in with myself and asked: what is mine to do?

Even more gratifying is that I have squeezed in some extra tasks along the way, probably because I was more focused, using the question to raise my awareness and gently bring myself back to the task in hand.

I wonder what you could accomplish today, simply by focusing on what is yours to do? ●

Right or Kind?

Do you want to be right or do you want to be kind?' This was a question I came across many years ago in the personal development field. It is a question I often use as a guide when considering my response to something, especially in a conflict situation when my buttons have been triggered!

And I know that there have been a number of times when my answer to this question has changed the way I have responded to a given situation … and 9 times out of 10, I choose to be kind.

I look back over my life and can see a number of life defining moments where I have chosen to be kind, even when I have evidence or back up to show the other person that I was 'right'. I choose to stay silent, because I can see their need, in that moment, is to be right. My proving otherwise could have consequences far greater than a short-term slight dent in my ego!

And after years of following this philosophy, I am questioning my actions. Is it right for me to stay silent so they can feel better about themselves in the moment, even if I don't? Is it ok to stay silent and allow others to hold opinions and beliefs that may be questionable or even wrong? Is it fair for someone else to continue making their informed choices without all the facts and information?

Am I staying silent in the moment simply because I'm less than keen on confrontation, so this is an easy way out and justifies, to me, that it's ok to stay silent, because I am dressing it up as kindness?

Am I being too hard on myself here or am I at a defining crossroads in my life: do I want to be right or do I want to be kind?

Upon reflection, having been on the receiving end of 'right' a number of times, I still choose to be kind. Even if I have an important point I would like to communicate, there are kind ways of doing it when the situation allows rather than in the heat of the moment!

I wonder what you would do when contemplating this same question? ●

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