

rapport



ISSUE FOUR

SUMMER 2006

Jumoké Fashola

Can NLP be
bad for you?

Michael Neill

Talks about his
new book

Dyslexia

Can coaching help
improve school work?

Free DVD

See how NLP can be
used to cure a phobia



Welcome again to another issue of Rapport, the personal development magazine. This issue we have a number of strong and moving pieces that show the capacity for individuals to succeed in the face of difficulty. On page 38, we feature the story of one man's journey to the Arctic. Using NLP techniques, he became the first disabled person to walk to the north pole. Similarly, on page 18, hypnosis is used to help a deaf woman communicate with her eyes closed, and on page 34, a coach reveals how she helps young people with dyslexia do better in their school work.

We also feature two authors. Michael Neill talks about his new book 'You can have what you want' and beating negative thinking, while we print an extract from Steve Andreas's latest text, 'Six Blind Elephants: Understanding ourselves and each other'.

BBC radio presenter Jumoké Fashola raises controversy on page 14 by hearing listeners complaints that NLP is bad for them, while on page 28 Rapport reviews the Change Corporation's claim to Re-Vitalise your life.

Check out the free DVD inside from the Performance Partnership. Watch David Shephard demonstrate an NLP technique to help cure phobias. Enjoy!

William Little
Editor

rapporcontents

Regulars

4 NLP NEWS

6 DEBATE
Is hypnotherapy or your GP best for insomnia?

8 WHAT'S NEW
The latest news.

12 LETTERS
Express your views.

20 SPA
Rowhill Grange reviewed.

41 COLUMN
Life coach marketing.

43 BOOK REVIEWS
The latest books reviewed.

44 AUTHOR INTERVIEW
Michael Neill gets what he wants.

50 ENDNOTE
Is NLP ethical?

Features

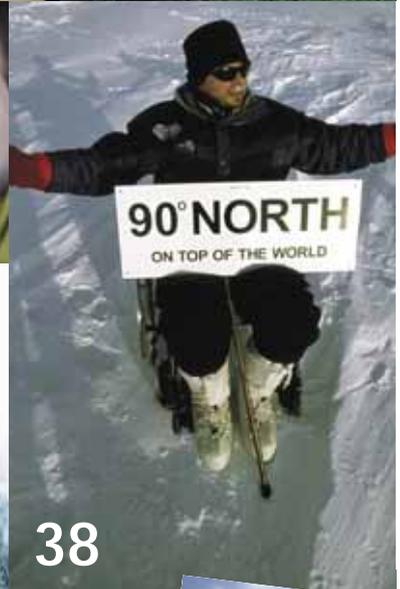
10 GROOMING
Can NLP make you stick at the gym?

14 NLP INTERVIEW
Radio presenter Jumoké Fashola on NLP and life.

18 HYPNOSIS
Can hypnosis be used to communicate with deaf people. Rapport finds out.

22 BOOK EXTRACT
Steve Andreas's new book.

25 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
William Little reviews hypnosis audio CDs to build a better memory.



28 TRAINING
The Change Corporation says it can Re-Vitalise your life. We test out the claims.

32 HEALTH
What makes you happy?

34 COACHING
NLP helps dyslexic children.

38 MISSION POSSIBLE
One disabled man's quest to conquer the north pole.



See page 4....

Editor: William Little
will@rapportmag.com
Contributors: Joanna Goodman, Nicolette Stoddart
Art Editor: Enzo Zanelli
Advertising: David Hammond
david@rapportmag.com; or call 0870 787 0026
Subscriptions and back issues: info@rapportmag.com or call 0870 444 0790;

Publisher: Karen Moxom
karen@rapportmag.com; or call 0870 787 1978
Company Reg No. 05390486
Phoenix Publishing Ltd
PO Box 3357, EN5 9 AJ
Rapport published by Phoenix Publishing on behalf of ANLP.
Printed by: Wyndeham
Westway, 1 Sovereign Park,
Laporte Way, Luton LU4 8EL

DISCLAIMER The views within this magazine are not necessarily those of the publisher, nor does the publisher endorse the products or services promoted in the magazine. Articles are for information only and intent is to inform. Readers should seek professional advice before adopting any suggestions or purchasing any products herein.

Gymworkout

Can using NLP help you stick at the gym?
William Little finds out

Joining the local gym and attending it are two very different activities. The former is easy, the latter takes a lot of will power and motivation. Last issue in this space, Rapport featured an article about having one-to-one training at an exclusive gym. But for the many people who can't afford to spend hundreds of pounds a week to be told how to get fit, they are left with one option – to motivate themselves. But can they do it?

Many personal trainers at gyms up and down the country are now being trained in NLP techniques, but often their services can come at a premium. So how can NLP help you to go the gym more than once a year using it on your own?

London's Soho Gyms very kindly let me in to use their gym to see whether I could muster up the energy to attend over a long period. Mark Hende, the manager of the Clapham High Street branch, tells me that NLP is fast becoming a must-have among trainers. Gyms, he says, aren't that interested in having people join in January then not turn up for a year and not renew their membership. He'd rather have a committed group of members who actually use the gym regularly and renew their membership every year.

Soho Gyms offers a personal trainer in with the membership to work out a fitness programme with you. Emma, my personal trainer, first asked me the big important question: why? The why underpins the motivation, as well as the type of exercise one should do, and the

level at which you do it. Well, I want to keep fit because it is good for other activities that I like doing, such as walking up mountains, – you can't do that if you collapse at the first incline. I'm also running a 10-mile marathon in October, which was a goal set in order to get fit.

The work out Emma set included running on a treadmill, various weights as well as trying to sit down and stand up again on some kind of ball. There was a lot of variation, but it certainly doesn't have the excitement of playing football or a team game, so how did I stick at it?

Well, the very fact of having a six-week programme written down for me, which I was able to access every time I turned up at the gym gave me a clear and defined goal to work towards but also focused my mind on getting there to do it. I wasn't turning up without a plan to work towards, which might be demotivating. I knew what I would do when I got there and that the programme would develop after six weeks once I had finished it. I had never really had one of these before, despite my numerous forays into the gym. I thought I could hack it on my own, but clearly, with all the failed attempts, I couldn't.

Therefore, I also maybe had a lingering belief that I wouldn't actually stick at it – why bother starting when I knew I wouldn't succeed, kind of thought process. I have joined gyms, like many people, most of my life as an act of penitence to my health, but



generally give up after a short period of time, either because work becomes too hectic, I become demotivated and bored, or I get ill with a cold and forget to go back once I am well again (convenient, I know). So I tried to create a few positive anchors associated with the gym and then use the tried but very well tested swish technique to get rid of all the negative ideas that I just wouldn't be able to hack it once I started.

So, when am I happiest and the most motivated and have so much energy that I can hardly sit still for five minutes? Well, when I'm on holiday, of course, and it is hot and sunny, and every day is an adventure just waiting to happen, especially if I am somewhere exotic, new, and far away from England. So was I going to have to turn my local gym into the jungles of the Taman Negara National Park in Malaysia or a beach on the Tioman Islands – it certainly looked that way if I was going to match the energy levels and commitment I exhibited while I was there. I worked out some of the triggers for my motivation while on holiday – the warming sun on my face, the new sounds of a new place and the swish of the waves, surrounded by nature. The gym on the other hand is metallic and dry, cold and uninspiring, a place where repetition rather than new experience dominates. So I transposed those sensations and feeling from my holidays, turning them up as best I could in my head, and turning down the cold dreariness of the gym. The idea that I would be able to turn going into the gym into some



kind of tropical holiday experience was slightly worrying. If it was really successful, would I ever want to leave the place once I'd arrived. I'm sure the only reason I go home from holiday is that I have a flight booked. So I also set myself a time limit of between 30

“The work out included running on a treadmill, various weights as well as trying to sit down and stand up again on some kind of ball”

minutes and an hour, three days a week. The idea that you have a voice in your head calling for final passengers to board the aeroplane to my local paradise gym, and then a similar call for my trip to my house at the end of the session certainly appealed to my sense of the ridiculous and absurd.

I also swished the new image of me

basking under a hot sun and swimming in a turquoise sea in place of the dreary gym. I did this a number of times as many NLP trainers suggest.

Did it work? Well the combination of having a clear goal certainly motivated me more, as well as feeling I would have

to go back to the trainer at the end of six weeks and say how I was getting on. It would be rather embarrassing if I hadn't improved a jot. The NLP techniques were certainly helpful in terms of getting me there. There's nothing worse than thinking you have to go to the gym when there are a million other pleasurable activities or non-activities you could be

doing instead. But giving the idea of going to the gym a trigger filled with the associations of a warm, sunny and exciting holiday has you running to the gym as though you've just heard the last call for your flight somewhere fun.

I have also imagined clearly what I will have achieved in six months time. Running without stopping out of breath, and the pleasure and satisfaction of finishing my 10-mile marathon in one piece and without collapsing. That, on top of all the other self-help triggers, did it for me, now what's stopping you?

Recommendation:

There are many ways into NLP but by far the most effective book to get you using NLP from day one is Romilla Ready and Kate Burton's NLP for Dummies. It gets straight to the point with clear examples.

Soho Gyms can be found in London. Visit www.sohogyms.com ●



Hearingaid

Nikki Crocker had meningitis at the age of 7, which made her deaf. She has recently been able to communicate under hypnosis with her eyes closed. She tells the story of her experience

I attended the hypnotherapy course as part of the NLP Practitioner Course run by Jeremy Lazarus. Lisa Wake was introduced as our trainer for the hypnotherapy, a section I was nervous about. My nerves stemmed mainly from a fear of the unknown. My fears came a lot from the fact that I understand the spoken word through my own expert skill of lip reading to back up my hearing loss; an ability that I believed would hinder my being able to enjoy hypnosis.

I had meningitis at the age of 7; I woke up from the first night of infection

to a seemingly silent world. I found I had a child's endlessly flexible ability to turn what an adult would perceive as an insurmountable hurdle into something of an adventure. My experience meeting Lisa Wake (an ANLP Accredited and Recognised trainer) was a turning point for me; I had never considered looking into hypnosis! My mind suddenly had a 1000 and 1 questions to answer!

As a part of the NLP Practitioner course, we were offered the chance to complete hypnosis certification training. Until I was handed the notes to prepare

myself prior to the lesson, I gave the situation very little thought. Actually meeting Lisa and hearing her talk about the training and what it would involve made me quake in my shoes. I had never heard of a profoundly deaf person experiencing hypnosis, let alone successful hypnosis; but a little voice inside would not let me back out of the challenge of finding out a little more about myself and how far I could push those boundaries.

Following an intense visual disturbance during a test run with a



“Despite the weightless feeling I had, I was aware of moving my head to listen; I knew I was trying to understand what was being said by a rather insistent voice, with a new tone, and different volume”

fellow coachee, it became apparent that I could achieve quite a deep trance-like state; Lisa suggested I tried hypnosis for myself, in a situation that I felt I could be comfortable in. So, settled onto comfortable cushions on the floor, to remove my fear of falling, I agreed to the experience with Daksha my next coach, closely watched over by Lisa.

Prior to the journey, I would not have even contemplated the possible issues that hypnotherapy could help those

with hearing loss.

We agreed on trying an Ericksonian induction with a touch to the forehead to deepen my trance; all based on having read and discussed the options in a group before hand. A tingle of anticipation and nerves gave way to a calm gentleness that can only be experienced. Lisa, observing previously that I went into deep trance very quickly, set up simple signals to see how much my unconscious mind would respond.

Meantime, I was wondering what the voice I could hear was saying. I wondered if they had managed to make my unconscious mind lift my arm even, as I felt so weightless I could not feel my limbs. So I moved a finger, which for me said ‘my finger is still on the carpet’. Despite the weightless feeling I had, I was aware of moving my head to listen; I knew I was trying to understand what was being said by a rather insistent voice, with a new tone, and different volume. I simply obeyed what my mind suggested to me, and relaxed even more.

After I was brought back to consciousness Lisa told me of the finger signal that she set up; to move a finger to indicate ‘yes’; to which I responded...; but my unconscious (or was it my conscious mind?!) would not respond to the second signal to indicate ‘no’!

My head also moved following the direction of the voice. This ability to hear direction I did not believe I had.

Needless to say having trust in one’s coach is paramount. This goes for any one person experiencing hypnosis for the first time; and for me, it would not have been possible in my earlier nervous mind. As to using hypnotherapy to explore if this could improve what hearing I do have left could be a whole new issue for me to follow up on. A separate coaching hypnosis for a different situation, which relied more on the spoken word than to signals gave me an effect lasting just over a week, so my unconscious state must be able to respond even though my conscious mind could not hear the message being said. ●

Lisa Wake

Nikki had a goal to try to deal with the deeper issues about her deafness. She wanted to know whether she would still be able to hear with her eyes closed and follow instructions. She communicates through lip reading.

I didn’t tell her that I was going to get her to give ideomotorsignals, a non verbal form of communication, as this would be giving her a suggestion and she might do it anyway. I wanted to make sure that it was her unconscious mind that was responding to my suggestions while she was under trance.

I believe that when you are under trance you are able to communicate with the unconscious mind that doesn’t rely on the five senses.

The student took her into a relaxed state, and then I took over, taking her deeper with her eyes closed. I took her deeper until I reached the right level of trance, making sure she was breathing correctly.

I worked with any potential resistance, using Ericksonian suggestions: ‘you might like to, you might not. I got an ideomotorsignal from her left

finger when I asked her to move it.

I also used Ericksonian suggestions, asking her whether she would like to go deeper into trance, so that there would be least resistance. I also asked her whether she would like to resolve any underlying issues around her hearing, and she moved her finger yes. I also asked whether she would like to work on that.

I started bringing her out of trance and got to level two, but handed back over to the student to take her the rest of the way as she was expecting to hear her voice at that level.

When she came round she said that she was compelled to move her finger across the carpet. The experience is uncommon. It is an indication that the unconscious mind can communicate without the need for the five senses, which work only with the conscious mind.

Contact Lisa at www.awakenconsulting.co.uk or on 01642 310022.

Steve Andreas

Steve Andreas has been learning, teaching, and developing NLP methods for 28 years. Here is an excerpt of his latest book 'Six Blind Elephants: understanding ourselves and each other'

This is a brief excerpt from a chapter distinguishing the many different communication patterns that have been described with the term "Double Bind," and showing how a double bind can be used therapeutically, taken from Steve Andreas' new book, 'Six Blind Elephants: understanding ourselves and others'.

Ambiguity

I once watched a videotape in which Erickson asked a client, "Can you shake your head 'No'?" When she nodded her head up and down, Erickson said, "That's not 'No.' "

Then the woman shook her head from side to side. When Erickson said, "You can't?" she looked very confused.

Now let's look at the structure of what Erickson did. The common question, "Can you tell me the time?" can be answered in two ways. One is to do what is requested by the embedded command, "Tell me the time," by looking at your watch and telling someone the time – something many people do several times a day.

The other way to respond is to nod or say, "Yes," indicating that you have the ability to do it (or shake your head or say, "No" if you don't have the ability because you don't have a watch and don't know the time). Since the question can be answered in two very different ways, it is ambiguous. This will be true of any question of the general form "Can you-?" which linguists call a "conversational postulate," or "conversational implication," and which is generally accepted as a gentle and graceful way to ask someone to do something.

What makes Erickson's particular

question very interesting is that a "Yes" answer meaning "Yes, I have the ability," is the opposite of the "Yes" answer of doing it, and vice versa. No matter how she answers, Erickson can interpret the ambiguity in the other way, and indicate that she is wrong.

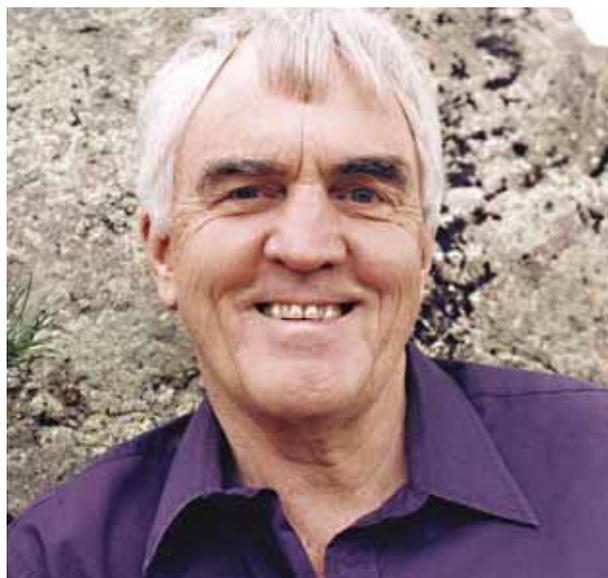
If Erickson had asked her, "Can you nod your head 'Yes,' " a "Yes" answer meaning ability would be congruent with doing it, and a "No" answer would also be congruent with both meanings, so there would be no ambiguity, and no bind.

Notice how hard it is to understand this communication trap, even when it is written down and you can go over it slowly and review it. In the normal flow of conversation, it is much harder. Only a very skilled linguist or logician would be able to unpack it "on the fly," recognize the trap, laugh, and say, "You got me," and then comment on its structure, "No matter how I answer, you can interpret it in a way that makes me wrong."

It would take an even more skilled linguist to respond with the same pattern, putting Erickson on the receiving end. "Nice trap; can you indicate your agreement with me by shaking your head 'No.'? "

Another time when I was present, Erickson asked the group, "Can you tell when someone is hypnotized?" This is the same communication pattern, which is ambiguous, and can be answered either by describing the knowledge or skill, or by demonstrating it. Various people in the group understood this as an intellectual question, and described a number of different nonverbal signs of trance.

After listening attentively to all these responses, Erickson turned to a woman who was sitting several chairs to the right



of him in the circle, and said, "Mary, where are we?" and she answered in a high-pitched young voice, "Up in the apple tree." Then Erickson asked, "And what's my name?" Again she replied in a high-pitched voice, "Tommy." Quite obviously she was in a very deep trance, but no one had noticed. Erickson was repeatedly trying to teach people to be observant, and not rely on abstract intellectual thinking, and he was quite willing to "rub our noses" in our incompetence in order to make this point.

Paradoxical intention

In chapter 5 on self-reference I described the structure of recursive problems like anxiety, or stage fright, which function in the same way as the familiar "feedback" screech that develops when a microphone is placed so that it receives the output from an amplifier and speaker that it is connected to; a small initial sound quickly increases in volume until it reaches the limits of the system.

When someone's attempt to control an

involuntary problematic symptom makes it worse, it is because the symptom is both the result and also the cause of the escalating disturbance, a vicious circle. These kinds of problems have been described well by Paul Watzlawick as, "When the attempted solution is the problem."

If instead, someone deliberately tries to increase such a symptom—by deliberately trembling more, or making even more frightening catastrophic mental images that elicit the symptom—the symptom typically decreases, because the recursive escalation is reversed.

When someone voluntarily attempts to increase or duplicate an involuntary symptom, this recategorizes the symptom as voluntary, creating a puzzling ambiguity, and a bind. "Is the symptom voluntary or not?" Whether the symptom decreases or increases, it appears to be voluntary. If the symptom decreases—in frequency, intensity, or extent—that voluntarily achieves the goal of reducing it. If the symptom increases, that also means that it is under voluntary control, which implies that voluntary control can also be used to reduce it.

Erickson often began to treat weight loss in this way, by first ordering a client to gain ten pounds, before telling them to lose weight. Most people have tried to lose weight with much voluntary effort, only to gain it back involuntarily. By reversing the sequence, they are faced with the task of gaining weight voluntarily, and the implication is that it will be followed by losing weight involuntarily and effortlessly.

Often when people fail at something, it is because they are preoccupied with their expectation of failure, which is an example of what has often been called a "self-fulfilling prophecy." When someone complains that they always fail when they try to do something, they can be instructed to deliberately and repeatedly fail at the task. If they do in fact fail, they have succeeded at the assignment to fail, a counterexample to their statement that they always fail.

If they happen to succeed at the task in spite of their expectation, they will have succeeded in what they wanted to do (while failing the assignment). This transforms an either/or alternative – either succeed or fail to a both/and

situation in which no matter what the outcome, the client has to succeed at one task, and at the same time fail at another.

Many of Erickson's cases of impotence were treated in this way; the client was given the task of not getting an erection, transforming failure into success.

Despite the name that has been given to this method, it is only paradoxical in the looser meaning of doing what is unusual, unexpected, or counterintuitive, not a logical paradox as described in chapter 7.

Logical double bind

Because of their structure, some communications are logically inescapable, and have only one possible answer. For instance in response to something her father said, a teenage daughter said emphatically, "That's stupid!"

Her father said, "Well, I can understand your saying that; you're a teenager. And as a teenager, you can't not disagree, can you?" She looked very confused and then dropped into a brief trance. The father took that opportunity to make a few positive suggestions about her behavior around the house.

This example takes a bit of unpacking to understand clearly.

Her statement "That's stupid" is an emphatic statement of disagreement with what the father said.

Her father categorizes her statement as "disagreement," and then says that since she is a teenager, she has to disagree. "You can't not" is a complex way of saying "You have to." The double negation makes it harder for her to process and understand the meaning of the statement.

The tag question, "Can you?" adds some additional complexity. It makes it harder for her to understand the meaning of the sentence, and it also introduces an ambiguity. If she answers "Yes," (or "No") is she responding to the statement that she "can't not disagree" or is she responding to the opposite "tag question" "Can you?" at the end?

If the daughter disagrees, that is a confirmation of his statement that she has to disagree.

If she agrees, that also confirms his statement that she has to disagree.

And if she remains silent, that is

letting the statement stand, agreeing with it by default.

I saw a shorter version of this pattern in a cartoon once. A husband says to his wife, "Whatever I say, you always disagree with me."

If she disagrees, that is a confirmation of his statement.

If she agrees, then she affirms that she always disagrees.

And if she remains silent, and lets the statement stand, that will also be understood as agreeing with the statement that she disagrees.

This pattern is particularly useful with anyone who is "oppositional" and very likely to disagree with whatever you say, like a "typical teenager," or a "resistant client." When you predict that they will disagree, and they try to oppose that, they find that there is no way out—they have to disagree as you predicted, which is agreeing with you at a more general logical level.

It would take a very able linguist or logician to process this, recognize the trap, laugh, and say, "I have to disagree." It would take an additional degree of mental agility to use the same pattern in response, by saying, "And you can't not disagree with that, can you?"

What may not be obvious from this example is that this pattern can be used for any content at all—not just disagreement. "I think you're a great kid, but of course you will disagree with me."

"I love you deeply, but you can't not disagree with that, can you?" In the struggle to understand the communication, and finding that they can't agree, and have to disagree, attention is diverted from the content, which is likely to be accepted unconsciously in much the same way as a presupposition or implication.



www.realpeoplepress.com has more information about this book, including contents, introduction and additional excerpts. For more information, go to www.steveandreas.com ●

Re-Vitalise Your Life:

Breaking through to a new you!

It all comes down to cause and effect. Lindsey Agness and Eelco Wisman of The Change Corporation promise to transform your life in just two days. On one condition: You have to do whatever it takes! By Joanna Goodman

It's the hottest weekend of the year and at 9am on Saturday morning 14 women and one man are swapping the sunshine outside for a meeting room at the Selsdon Park Hotel and waiting eagerly for Lindsey Agness and Eelco Wisman of The Change Corporation to help them break through to a new outlook on life. Why are they here? Two thirds of the group are undergoing significant changes. Several participants have recently started new businesses, some are contemplating a career change and others face challenges in their personal lives. The rest were sufficiently motivated by Lindsey and Eelco's dynamic and inspiring presentation at the Vitality Show at London's Olympia to sign up for the two-day personal development programme that promises to Re-Vitalise Your Life.

Their performance outshone some of the more 'alternative' offerings at the Vitality Show due to a combination of slick professionalism and raw energy. The short presentation to a full house – standing room only – was carefully structured with no gaps or flat patches and just the right amount of audience participation. Of course this was not surprising, given the background of the two presenters. Lindsey is a change manager and people development expert who spent

12 years at the global consultancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers. Eelco was a trainer with the Dutch Special Forces and runs a successful NLP company in Holland called Outwise. They are both certified NLP trainers. Indeed, NLP brought them together. They first met a year ago at David Shephard's Master Trainer Development Programme and soon after Lindsey asked Eelco to join her as Director of The Change Corporation. They devised Re-Vitalise Your Life – a holistic NLP-based course designed to help people follow their example and move out of the Grey Zone – where life isn't awful, but it's not great either – into the Absolutely Brilliant Zone.

The programme focuses on mind and body – with more emphasis on the body than most NLP courses – and is based on the philosophy that success in life is down to maximising physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Re-Vitalise Your Life starts with a quick blast of its theme tune – Simon Webbe's 'No Worries' – and catchphrase, 'I just know your life's gonna change'. Of course everybody is ready, but we're not prepared for the X factor – the remarkable chemistry between this attractive couple that underpins their exuberant presenting style. The entire programme flows

seamlessly between Lindsey's sparkling narrative and Eelco's outrageously direct humour which enables him to break the ice with everyone in the room. But Eelco quickly gets serious again, pointing out that all the answers are in The Method Part 1 (Part 2 will be launched next year), which helps people identify and define their key goals and harness the energy to do what it takes to achieve them. 'If you always do what you've always done you always get what you've always got. So if you really want something different, you have to do whatever it takes to change,' he says. 'Anything less than 100 percent is sabotage,' adds Lindsey.

The Method Part 1 is based on creating your own universe around seven topics – all beginning with the letter F: focus, feeling, food, fitness, flexibility, feedback and future. At the start of the weekend, everyone is given a workbook with a section on each topic followed by questions to answer, plans to fill in and space for notes. As Lindsey explains, the idea is that each participant takes away a personal action plan to keep them focused on the goals they set themselves at the start of the programme.

The first day of the programme ploughs through intensive workshop sessions with presentations, discussions and activities. Focus is all about setting





goals and targets, advocating SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed) objectives, identifying desired outcomes and developing a positive mental attitude. Although this exercise reminded a few of us of conventional management training, the career change/new business start-up participants found it useful to sit down in pairs and discuss their plans. They introduce NLP frames and techniques such as anchoring through practical exercises that everyone could relate to. 'Think of a time when you felt fantastic and experience that moment again now,' urges Lindsey enthusiastically. Eelco helps a reluctant participant to relive a positive experience. When he finally convinces her to reconnect with a moment of triumph, she cries and laughs and we all laugh with her.

The next session covers the principles of healthy eating. This is where the programme diverges from most personal development and NLP courses. Participants are given useful diet tips and then are asked to complete a food diary and check in with a buddy – another

participant – in a week's time.

Day two begins with deep breathing and Tai Chi in the beautiful hotel grounds. The people who stayed up late partying are delighted by the slow pace of the early morning exercises! Having stretched our bodies, we go back inside to stretch our minds as the flexibility session is about beliefs. Everyone is asked to identify their own empowering and limiting beliefs and write them down on different sides of a one-inch thick piece of wooden board.

Feedback is next – in groups we're asked to give each other positive feedback and suggest one thing that each person could improve. My feedback was to stop apologising for asking everybody questions and just go for it! This is worth reporting as it reflects a U-turn in the group mindset – some 24 hours earlier when I told participants that I was from Rapport, there was some concern about whether the presence of a journalist would be an inhibiting factor, given that some people were dealing with sensitive personal issues. But since then Lindsey and Eelco have built up their confidence

“The climax of the whole weekend was a 'board break' – an empowerment technique involving breaking a wooden board with just your bare hands”

and the room is full of warmth. 'Meeting Lindsey has given me self belief,' said one participant.

We returned to NLP with Timeline Therapy™ and visualisation. 'Put a single goal into your future and breathe life into it,' exclaims Eelco. 'Focus on what you want, not what you don't want,' adds Lindsey, with one proviso: 'Be careful what you wish for because you might get it.'

The climax of the whole weekend was a 'board break' – an empowerment technique involving breaking a wooden board with just your bare hands. One by one, Eelco guides each participant as they break through the piece of solid wood on which they had written their goals and limitations. Each time the atmosphere is electric. I don't need to ask them how they feel – some jump up and down in glee and disbelief; a couple burst into tears. Everyone hugs each other. 'I had a big goal to break through. I didn't think I could do it,' says one participant. 'Now I know I'm strong, I can do anything,' adds another. 'The board break has given them a moment to go back to,' explains Lindsey. 'Things will never be the same again.' Eelco looks at me. 'Now it's your turn?' he says. I hesitate – tempted – but then think better of it. I don't want to break through to a new life with a sore hand. I need to write up my article!

Courses start from 7th to 8th October and from 13th to 14th January. Call 01304 621735 or visit: www.thechange corporation.com ●

