

RAPPORT

The Magazine for NLP Professionals

Issue 62

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NLP Conference

2019 Edition



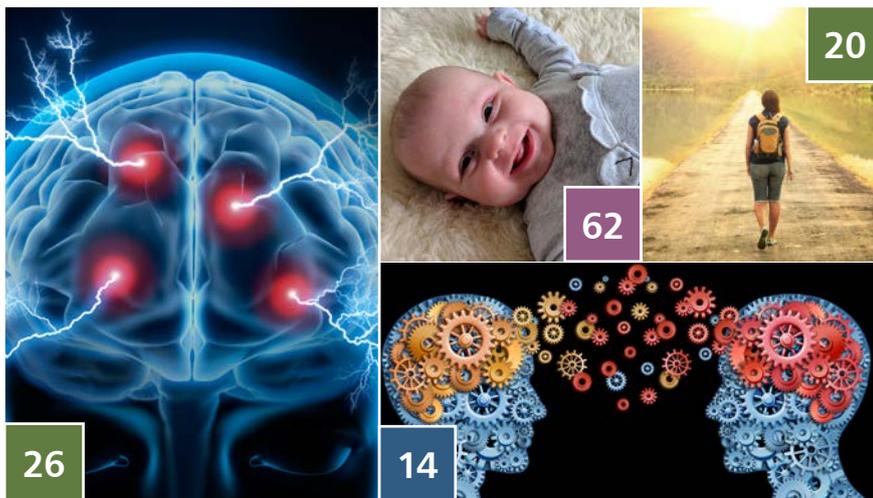
32-page Conference Brochure inside
Everything you need to make the most of the Conference and Awards
Taking place at Heathrow, London 17–19 May 2019

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The Magazine for NLP Professionals

Issue 62 – Published April 2019



See the 32-page **Conference Brochure** in the centre of this issue of *Rapport* for everything you need to make the most of the **Conference and Awards** that are taking place at the 2019 NLP International Conference.

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How are your ‘problems’ trying to help you?



By Eve Menezes Cunningham



As we reframe our problem as something that *might* have some silver lining, we naturally become more curious and resourceful

Think of a problem you’re currently up against. There’s the famous Einstein quote about not being able to solve any problem at the level at which it was created, and yet we still try to think our way out of things. At time of writing, well, I am deleting lots of political thoughts...

While we’re familiar with the NLP presupposition of there being no such thing as failure, only feedback, problems, by their nature, are challenging.

When we add a sense of needing to get to another level in order to solve said problems, we might then beat ourselves up for not being there yet. Resourceful states are wonderful but Michael J Fox had years of wallowing about his diagnosis before he channelled so much energy, money and goodwill into the search for a cure.

Think about what might be trying to emerge at a soul level

The exuberance I feel when I reframe whatever’s going on by pausing to consider what might be trying to emerge at that deeper level instantly starts shifting the energy around the ‘problem’.

I’ve heard people undergoing major health issues recognising that, painful as it all has been, there *has* been a

gift in terms of them having to learn to set boundaries, take better care of themselves and accept help from others.

As we reframe our problem as something that *might* have some silver lining, we naturally become more curious and resourceful. This is something that has to come from within.

I can’t imagine having much patience for anyone who attempted to force me into any positive reframe. It’s like post-traumatic growth – a wonderful possibility for many trauma survivors but something that can’t be rushed or forced.

If the idea of souls and the transpersonal doesn’t appeal, you can still work with that highest, wisest, truest part of yourself. As Oprah asks, ‘How is this problem trying to HELP me?’ Typing these words, I’m reminded of Angelina Jolie in *Tomb Raider* with that little ‘Bring it on’ look she kept getting when I’d have wanted to curl up in a corner and await the sweet release of death. She (fictional superhero character) had amazing resilience and used each battle and challenge as an opportunity to get stronger, more courageous and adept at problem solving.

I see Oprah as a bit of a superhero too and her simple ‘How is this problem trying to help me?’ is a way of seeing whatever it might be as not just a lesson

from the universe (she also often says she says, ‘Universe, I’m tired – please don’t teach me anything today’) but also there’s a friendliness in this approach.

Pick a problem, any problem

- **Health issue?** How is it trying to help you? Maybe it’s forcing you to prioritise your own self-care and treat your body with greater respect? What springs to mind for you?
- **Money worries?** How are they trying to help you? Maybe you’re learning to negotiate better? Maybe they’re teaching you independence or interdependence? What springs to mind for you?
- **Uncertainty around something big?** How is it trying to help you? Maybe it’s teaching you to trust in divine order? To be patient? To enhance your resilience? What springs to mind for you?
- **Facing injustice?** How is it trying to help you? Maybe it’s meant you’ve had to speak up for yourself, feeling shaky at first but getting stronger and being heard? Maybe you’ve spoken up for others? Maybe it’s connected you with your inner power? What springs to mind for you?

Experiment with it and, if you’d like to share, I’d love to know how you get on – eve@selfcarecoaching.net ●

NLP and dementia

How we can use NLP to support caregivers



By Edward Grey



Dementia can be defined as ‘a term used to describe a constellation of behavioural signs and symptoms of intellectual [neurological] dysfunction due to widely varying aetiologies and dependent on separate neurophysiological mechanisms.’ (*1)

In the UK at least, dementia now sits alongside cancer as the most talked about of human diseases. We are mindful of aging populations and the challenge of caring for increasing numbers who are likely to develop dementia. Sadly, this impact is often calculated in purely financial terms – but this is not an opportunity for me to get polemical and shout about morality and social justice! This is an opportunity to remind ourselves of how useful NLP can be in supporting those who care for people with dementia.

There are many excellent websites, books, organisations and support groups that provide sound, helpful advice to carers and families; I’ve listed some in the references at the end of the article.

To be clear: my article is *not* about how NLP technologies can directly improve the symptoms of dementia (at a neurobiological level). To the best of my knowledge, there has yet to be any significant clinical study of NLP in this context. This article is specifically about how NLP can assist people when caring for or living with people with dementia – tools we can use or tools we can teach others to use.

So, for carers, we’ll consider how NLP can be used to:

- reduce stress
- improve relationships
- develop more effective means of communication
- frame and reframe ongoing experiences
- bring more joy and happiness.

I’d also like to throw a few ‘curve balls’ into the mix, namely: what would happen if I considered dementia in the context of neurodiversity – that dementia, like autism, is ‘just’ a neurological condition that makes a person ‘different’? Can ‘identity’ exist

without memories? Could the apparent ‘regression to childhood’, often talked about with dementia, actually be something I might even aspire to? We’ll revisit these and other seemingly more radical positions at the NLP International Conference in May.

Here are a few relevant NLP fundamentals to help guide this conversation.

- Each person has a unique ‘map’ of their reality
- We are more than our behaviours
- It’s not about *who’s* right, it’s about *what’s* right
- All behaviour has structure and intention
- Cause/effect: choice always exists.

How does each of these concepts help us as carers, families and friends of people with dementia?

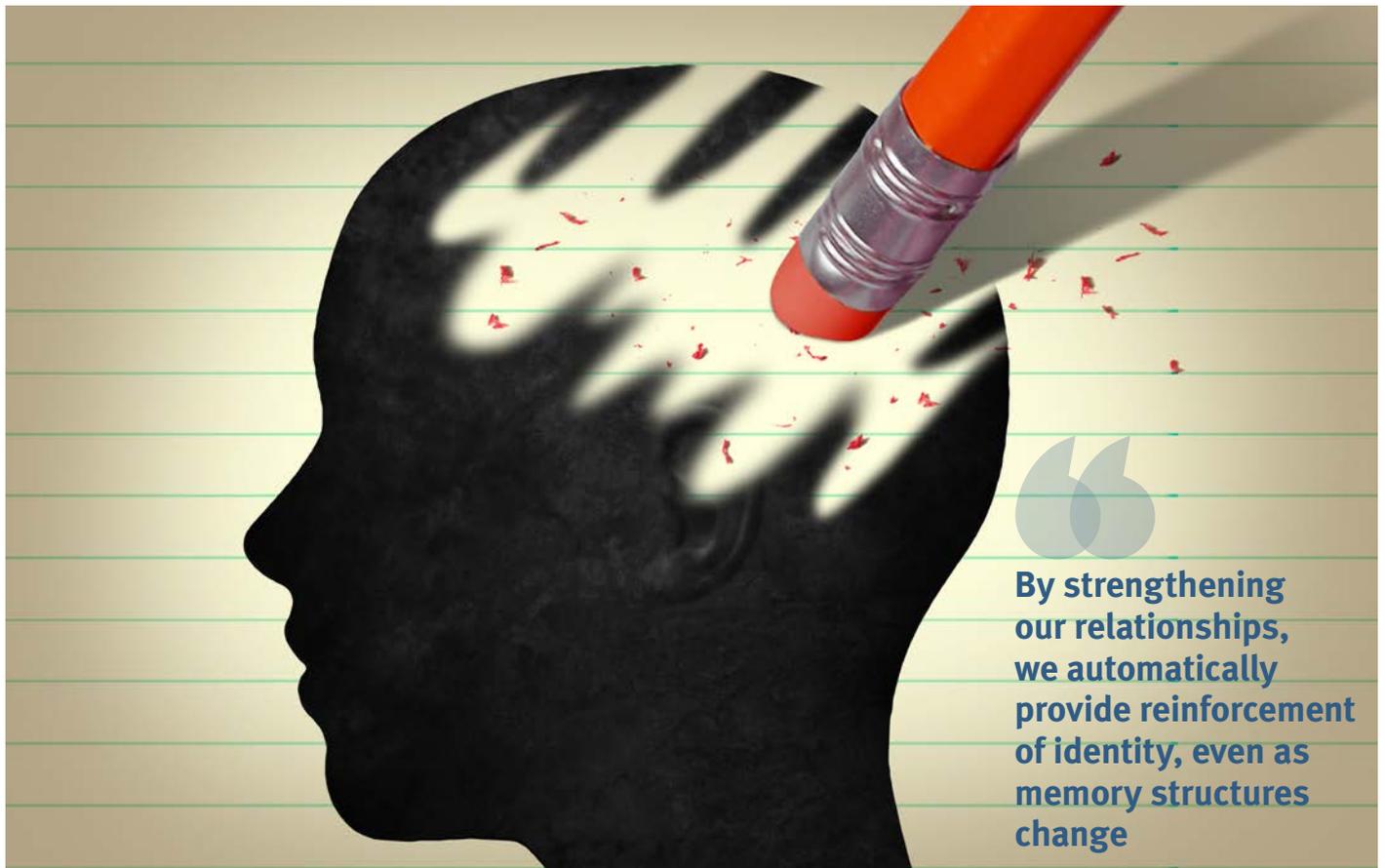
Each person has a unique map of their reality

As NLPers, we embrace the concept that each of us operates from our subjective reality. To the person with dementia, whose VAKOG systems are deteriorating and whose short/medium-term memories are fading, their map of reality remains, regardless, *subjective*. If we interpreted the changes in neurological functioning (that are symptomatic of many dementias) as a particular form of deletion, distortion and generalisation, we might regard them as ‘changes’ rather than ‘deteriorations’. What do we mean by ‘deterioration’ in this frame? We can reframe experience so that we fully respect the ‘truth’ of the dementia mind and, in doing so, ease the compulsion to project or force our map on others.

We can reframe experience so that we fully respect the ‘truth’ of the dementia mind and, in doing so, ease the compulsion to project or force our map on others

We are more than our behaviours

As dementia takes hold, we can get a sense that the person’s very identity is being eroded. But what *is* identity? Definitions and explanations are many and complex – and all of them are incomplete. Memory certainly plays a critical part in our identity – but surely we are more than just our memories? Dilts & DeLozier suggest that the nominalisation ‘I’ can be ‘viewed as a process function’ (*2) and Dilts’ ubiquitous logical levels model illustrates the interconnectedness of values, beliefs, capabilities and identity. For me, the idea that ‘I’ only truly exist *in relation to...* was an idea that lodged itself in my mind from an early age, after reading *I and Thou*, Martin Buber’s seminal 1937 work. NLP seems, to me, a good fit: from Dilts & DeLozier again, ‘Externally, identity is expressed through our participation in the larger systems in which we participate’ (*3) – our relationships. Pushing the point, we could say we *are* our relationships. By



strengthening our relationships, we automatically provide reinforcement of identity, even as memory structures change.

It’s not about *who’s* right, it’s about *what’s* right

One of the most frustrating things about dementia is encapsulated in those moments when the person with dementia is convinced that they are right about something (say, the exact location of the dishwasher) when, in fact, they are wrong. But in the floating timelines of the dementia mind, the location of the machine *is* accurate – it just happens to be exactly where it was years ago but it has now been moved. NLP teaches that it’s not about *who’s* right, it’s about *what’s* right. Milton Erickson’s mantra was to validate his patients’ inner experience. As Ericksonian hypnotherapists, we recognise the power of saying ‘Yes, that’s right.’ In Jill Bolte Taylor’s book, describing her recovery from stroke, she says: ‘I needed people to love me – not for the person I had been...[but] to accept me as the person I was at that moment.’ (*4) We can ease the stress of the situation by recognising that all of us are ‘right’ in our own minds in each moment that occurs.

All behaviour has structure and intention

NLP presupposes that all behaviour has a positive intention. The displaced dishwasher is a case in point; to the dementia mind, it’s immensely confusing that it’s no longer where they remember it to be. The potential for arguments is clear, particularly if the person with dementia is insisting on putting dirty plates into a cupboard. We could speculate that the positive intentions of

such behaviour are to be helpful, remain independent or even simply a habitual response to finishing a meal at home. When we focus on the positive intention(s) behind a behaviour, even if we can’t quite identify the ‘real reasons’ for that behaviour, we find ourselves responding to the other person’s map and not our own.

Cause/effect: choice always exists

Surely one of the most beautiful and empowering gifts we can give is to help people be ever more fully ‘at cause’ in their lives. I don’t underestimate the emotional impact of dementia on carers; to say it’s easy to stay ‘at cause’ under pressure would be disingenuous. But NLP positions the cause/effect paradigm as central to its oeuvre. When we help people to be fully ‘at cause’ with their experiences, they are less likely to fall into the drama triangle roles of ‘rescuer, persecutor or victim’. (*5)

To wrap this up, it might be helpful to plot some of the many established NLP tools against three important behavioural competencies needed in the care of those with dementia. ●

Competencies	NLP interventions
State management	Anchors; state break; pattern interrupt; grounding; visualisation
Relationships & communication	Rapport; non-verbal communication; utilising metaprogrammes; pacing & leading
Understanding & empathy	Timelines; pacing & leading

References

- (*1) Albert, Feldman & Willis (1974). The ‘subcortical dementia’ of progressive supranuclearpalsy. *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry*, 37, 121-130 [my parenthesis]
- (*2) Dilts & DeLozier (2000). *Encyclopaedia of Systemic NLP and NLP New Coding*. Identity, p.519
- (*3) *ibid*
- (*4) Bolte Taylor (2009). *My Stroke of Insight*; Hodder [my parenthesis]
- (*5) Karpman 1968. *Transactional Analysis Bulletin*, 26

Edward Grey is an NLP trainer and ANLP’s Regional Ambassador for the Isle of Wight. He works as a leadership coach and as an Ericksonian hypnotherapist.

Little known facts. ANLP are...



Independent

ANLP do not compete with their members. They do not offer NLP training.

Global

Six out of seven continents are represented by ANLP members (no members in Antarctica...yet)



 **NLP** INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



Hosts
of the NLP
Conference &
NLP Awards

 **NLP / AWARDS**



Active

ANLP has 21,000 followers over their social media platforms

A social enterprise (CIC)

They are accountable to the CIC regulator and have to act for their community



Inclusive

All the main NLP certifying bodies are represented by ANLP members





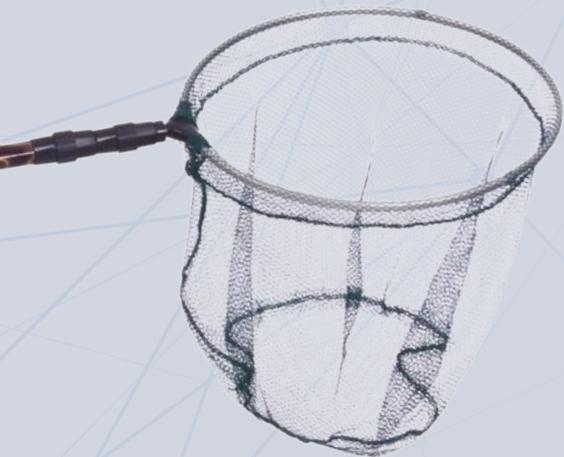
A small team

ANLP has one full-time staff member, four part-time staff and a host of volunteers who ALL work for the benefit of the NLP community



A safety net

They run an independent complaints process to protect both members and the public



Proactive

ANLP originally launched the *Current Research in NLP* journal in the Houses of Parliament



Community focused

Support NLP practice groups in the UK and overseas



Generating business

NLP Awards winners have used the endorsement of the award to win new business and, in one case, win lottery funding for a community project



Publishers

ANLP now has a publishing arm. For more information contact publishers@nlppress.org



Tao and NLP



By Ian Pitchford

Everyone appears to have a little bit of knowledge about the Tao; they might not know it's the Tao Te Ching when they quote it, but there are echoes of the Tao in many of the metaphors that you hear from coaches, NLPers, leaders and generally enthusiastic people almost every day. Verse 64 is the verse that so many people quote and that appears on many social media posts: 'A journey of 1000 miles starts with a single step.' This is used by people to inspire action, to get people to make a start and commit. Whilst I have never met him, as he died some 2500 years ago, I am sure that Lao Tzu would never reject the use of this or any other verse to add value to people's lives. I also feel confident that he would want the Tao Te Ching to be embraced as it was written, and to be experienced and not intellectualised. As I came to discover in a very wholehearted way, the Tao Te Ching is the gift that keeps on giving. It has become more than I ever conceived it could be and has had a profound influence on my life.

The Tao is so much more than a simple collection of motivational verses that get quoted as a piece of ancient wisdom in an attempt to add an element of authenticity to an idea that is being presented. It is a piece of written verse and in this format it is relatively simple to comprehend; however, reading the Tao Te Ching was just the start of my journey with the Tao. The Tao Te Ching is something that has to be embraced wholeheartedly, with curiosity and passion, and fully experienced to get a glimpse of how it can be completely understood.

So, what is the Tao and where did it come from? The Tao Te Ching was something that I came across not long after I completed my master practitioner training. A friend on that course gave me the book *Change your thoughts, change your life: living the wisdom of the Tao* by Dr Wayne Dyer. In an open and receptive place after the training, as we so often are after such fabulous experiences, I dived into the book. Little did I know at the time what a profound experience I would have; I naïvely, as a result of the title 'Change your thoughts, change your life,' believed that this book would simply echo and reflect my master practitioner journey.

Little is truly known about the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, who is a guiding figure in Taoism. He is said to have been a record keeper in the court of the central Chinese Zhou Dynasty in the 6th century BCE, and an older contemporary of Confucius. This could be true, but he may also have been entirely mythical. It is however recorded that Lao Tzu, an enlightened man, wrote 81 verses which reflect not only the meaning of life but the way to live a meaningful and happy life. These 81 verses are regarded as the ultimate or definitive narrative which reflects how our world works – a powerful and insightful claim which in my experience may well be true. I was fascinated by the ideas in this book, enchanted by each and every single one of the 81 verses. So fascinated, that over the subsequent years I have read at least ten other translations of the Tao from the pool of many, many hundreds of translations of this great text that exist. Every time I have read a translation, I am left feeling a little bit closer to it,



The Tao Te Ching is something that has to be embraced wholeheartedly, with curiosity and passion

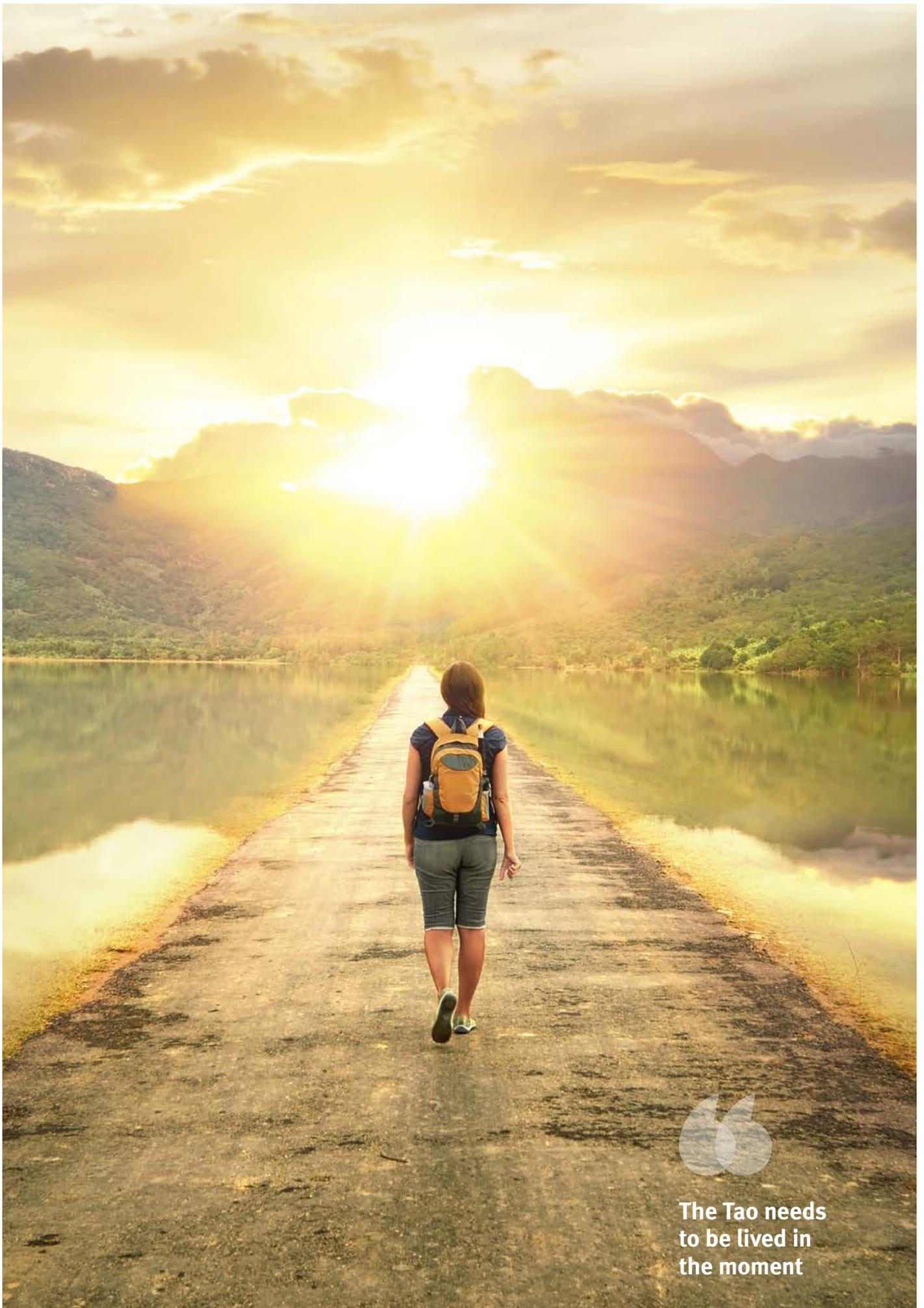
but still not entirely sure that I have done it justice in the way that I have cherished the words.

Back in 2015 I came to the conclusion that this is a text not to be *read* but to be *lived* and experienced; after all it was a way of living that was captured in text and it needed to be experienced and explored in that way. I made myself a simple promise that the next time I read a translation of this incredible book I would commit to living the experience and not simply reading the book. As I hastily packed for a summer holiday, I threw a few books into a bag and unconsciously my future for the next three months was decided. As I sat on a ferry at the start of my journey to the west coast of Ireland, I pulled a book from the bag and the promise I had made to myself now came true. I began to read and question myself on how for the next 81 days I would live every lesson of the Tao Te Ching. What became readily apparent was that I could, each evening, read and meditate on the verse that I would live and explore the following day. To hold myself to account I decided that I would record my reflections and, a little concerned with how much time I could spend writing, I decided to do this via a video diary. So, one of the greatest journeys of my life had begun.

It seems pointless to go through a verse-by-verse record of each day, as for those who would like to witness this you can find all of my reflections on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0u8KJAoq2QbdzE5yvSWCK00cA8Av8ZBm>.

Truly living an experience and being as attentive as you can be is not something that features in everyone's life. We often find people being in a great moment and yet detaching from it, watching it on the screen of a phone and recording it in order to re-live it later. Somehow they're locked into capturing the experience through fear of missing out and yet they're somehow missing out because they are not present in the experience. This is not something that could ever work as a way of experiencing and exploring the Tao Te Ching; the Tao needs to be lived in the moment.

One of the opening statements of the Tao is that the Tao that can be named is not the Tao. This instantly places the concept of the Tao Te Ching beyond words and its ability to be explored in an intellectual way. Like a Japanese Zen Koan the Tao Te Ching sits in a world of non-duality where there is no differentiation between subject and object. To paraphrase Charles Horton Cooley, 'I am not what you think I am, you are what you think I am.' In NLP terms, 'perception is projection' but experienced at the level of one's identity, although this still feels as though it is ►



The Tao needs
to be lived in
the moment

► simply the tip of the iceberg.

Non-duality is the greatest, and possibly simplest, but most profound idea that flows from the Tao Te Ching. It also becomes one of the most difficult for people to comprehend and to accept in a world which extols positive thinking. But as with all things it's about perspective: 'There are no unresourceful people, just unresourceful states' and 'Everyone has a unique model of the world.' The Tao Te Ching would encourage us to take a meta position of the presuppositions of NLP and when you take a meta position on the Tao Te Ching you begin to connect with the power of experiencing non-duality as a very visceral component of a happy life.

The experience of non-duality is something that I have explained many times since the start of this journey with the Tao Te Ching. The way that I have chosen to explain it initially has encouraged me to step into the world of duality and opposites as a starting point. When you ask someone what they want or how are they feeling, you get an answer which often reveals how they have been taught to respond. Let's say the answer is a very British 'Not bad!' – a fine answer which will echo round thousands of conversations each day. Typically, this will provoke a judgement from the speaker and an awareness physically and emotionally about how they have experienced their answer. Of course, as NLPers then we know that 'the map is not the territory' and this is an externalisation of something much greater. We also know from the world of quantum linguistics that this is one of an infinite number of potential answers that may exist for the person answering the question. If we were to put our coaching hat on and sit within the frame of the 'present state to desired state' model, then a very simple follow-up question could be 'How would you like to feel?' This naturally provides the speaker with a point of focus and something to work towards, but it may imply that one is somehow more favourable or attractive than

As we step into the world of non-duality there are no good or bad answers; there are simply answers

the other. As we step into the world of non-duality then they are simply both answers and for one answer to exist then so must the other, and all the other alternatives, and so very quickly there are no good or bad answers; there are simply answers. This also goes for the feelings that go with the answers. As we step into a world of non-duality there are simply feelings and since these feelings are what we are currently experiencing now, they are neither good nor bad, they are just what we are experiencing. In the world of non-duality we have to recognise that we are not those feelings or thoughts but we are so much more than we ever thought we could be when we recognise that we experience these things and are not what we experience. I am conscious as I write this that I may be experiencing a small element of what Lao Tzu did, in that I am trying to share an incredibly tacit experience, in an explicit set of words and sentences.

The biggest thing that I believe NLP has to learn from the Tao Te Ching is to move beyond itself, to move beyond what it thinks it is in the eyes of so many. We need to move beyond the collection of tools and techniques that exist within it and that we see so many people championing in different formats. We need to move beyond the idea of it being an attitude or a set of beliefs as this keeps us all potentially in a dualistic place. Maybe we all need to simply take our own meta position and *be* NLP. As Gandhi once said, 'Be the change you want to see in the world', as we all sit at the centre of a circle with no circumference. If I am what I see in you, you are kind and compassionate, loving and gracious, you are angry and you are sad and I wholeheartedly embrace all of you. ●



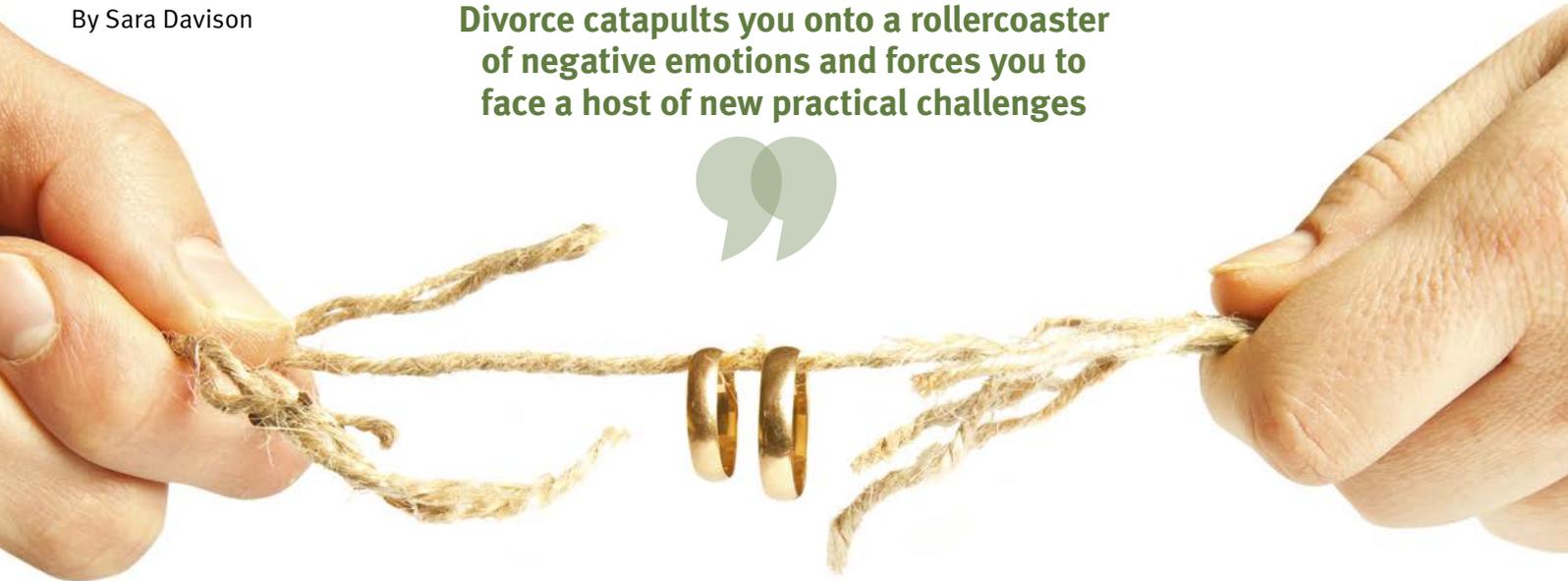
NLP – The secret to get you through your divorce



By Sara Davison



Divorce catapults you onto a rollercoaster of negative emotions and forces you to face a host of new practical challenges



I just can't cope with this anymore. My heart is broken into a thousand pieces and I have no future,' sobbed my new client Emma as she sat curled up on my clinic sofa. She had recently discovered her husband had been having an affair with a close friend of hers. When she confronted him he told her he didn't love her anymore and walked out the same night. They have two children aged three and five years old.

Devastating. For any of you who have been there you will know how tough it is to deal with the breakup of your family and also come to terms with losing the future you thought you had.

Divorce is known as the second most traumatic life experience we go through, after the death of a loved one. It catapults you onto a rollercoaster of negative emotions and forces you to face a host of new practical challenges. At the same time you will be expected to make huge life-changing decisions about where you will live, how much time you spend with your children and lifestyle changes you had never contemplated until now.

If you add to the mix emotions such as betrayal by a close friend and suddenly becoming a single parent overnight, as Emma is having to face, then you can understand how overwhelming it can become and how it can appear there is no hope. It's so normal to fall apart and not know how to get back up.

I discovered this for myself when my own marriage fell apart. It was as if I had been hit by a freight train as everything I knew as 'my life' changed overnight. In one evening I had lost my husband, my best friend, the father to my son and my business partner and I was left reeling from the shock.

I had been an NLP master practitioner for over 15 years at this point so I knew deep down that I could turn this around, but I was at a loss as to how to do it. I looked for help on the internet and for books to read that could offer me the help I desperately needed, but I couldn't find it. So I made the decision to combine my NLP and coaching techniques with this new world of divorce to create a programme that would get me through, one step at a time.

And this is now what I share with thousands of people around the world to help them cope better with any kind of breakup. Sadly there is no magic wand to take away all the pain, but there are things you can do to take back control over your emotions. I like to think of it as the 'remote control to your brain'. We all have one but most of us don't know how to use it! And this is what NLP can help us unlock.

NLP can be applied to traumatic life events to help us come to terms with what is happening to us and to create a clear path to enable us to move forward. I'm not saying it is easy; in fact the times when you need to use it most will be the times that you want to jump back into bed, pull the duvet over your head and eat crisps! But it's like going to the gym. It's not the first weight you lift that builds your muscle, it's the last repetition that makes all the difference when it really, really hurts!

First of all we need to work out specifically what we are dealing with. Emma was totally overwhelmed when she came to me and could only identify

that 'everything feels terrible'. It's crucial to get clarity about the specific emotions you are experiencing and not clump everything together in one. Listing out all the different negative emotions and circling the ones that are the most controlling for you is a great way to start to get the clarity you need.

It's human nature to avoid facing up to things that make us uncomfortable; however the irony is this gives them more power over us. The trick to taking back your control over negative emotions is to face them head on. It's a bit like going to a funfair and staring up in fear at the rollercoaster thinking you could never do that. Then, if your son is anything like mine, you are next in line to go on that very ride. You feel the very real fear but before you know it you are strapped in and off you go to loop the loop!

Afterwards as you walk away from the rollercoaster ride you may not have enjoyed it, but you know you can survive it and it doesn't have the same terrifying hold over you as it did before you faced your fear.

The same principle applies to helping you cope better with your breakup fears. Emma identified 'heartbreak', 'sadness' and 'betrayal' as her top three negative emotions. When we had more clarity we could work on the individual fears by jumping into them and getting a deeper understanding of what they look like, sound like and feel like. Emma only felt comfortable spending 20 seconds in each at this early stage, which is normal, but with practice it gets easier to spend more time with each one.

NLP enables you to what I have termed 'dial down' those negative emotions. If you are experiencing a controlling emotion at a level of ten out of ten this can be paralysing and prevent you from doing the things you need to do such as going to work, thinking straight and parenting. It's amazing that dialling down an emotion from 10 to just 8 or 7 can make a huge positive impact and enable you to carry on with your daily routine. With practice this can of course go right down and in some cases totally disintegrate the hold the emotion has over you.

NLP can also provide some simple 'reframing' techniques to help dial down the impact of other areas of your divorce. If you are dealing with lawyers then there will be a lot of legal paperwork and emails. For many of my clients, seeing their ex's name all the time in the correspondence can be very upsetting. There can be a lot of emotion tied up in a name and Emma found it was triggering her tears every time she just heard her husband's name.

One technique I use with my clients is to stop using the full name all together. I ask them just to use their first initial, so Rachel and Robert become R. But I take it one step further – not a capital R, a tiny weeny lower case r! This is how they refer to them in speech and all written correspondence too. Again a small change that has a huge impact on how clients feel.

I will always remember when a *Daily Telegraph* journalist came along to review one of my Breakup Recovery retreats. Her husband had met someone else shortly after their split and she was very angry about how quickly he had moved on. In fact when she came to define this emotion she identified it as 'pure rage'. It was having a big negative effect on her life as it was affecting her children who spent time with their dad and his new partner.

I took the delegates through a simple exercise of identifying the negative emotion and where it was in the body.

I asked them to describe its colour, temperature, movement, weight and sounds and then pull it outside them. We then changed the submodalities to ones that they loved such as favourite colours and textures. They then replaced it into their body in place of the old one. After only a few moments the journalist suddenly burst into tears. 'It's gone, it's all gone,' she kept saying. This exercise had a profound impact on her and that day she lost the rage for good, and she wrote about it in her article which you can still find online today.

One of the things about NLP that I love the most is that it can be harnessed in so many different ways to help us navigate the most difficult of challenges. It can help us change our perception of what we are experiencing, dial down our negative emotions, grab back our control and actually enable us to move forward so we can feel happy again.

NLP has helped Emma regain her self-confidence and she is using it to be a strong role model for her children. NLP even enabled the journalist to congratulate her ex-husband when he got engaged within weeks to the new girlfriend.

And NLP has helped me not only to survive and thrive after my divorce, but to grow a global coaching business that now helps other people around the world to cope better with their breakups. It's a powerful tool and an empowering one – I can vouch for that! ●



Sara Davison, best known as The Divorce Coach, is the UK's most sought-after authority on breakup and divorce. Revolutionising the way we view and navigate one of life's most traumatic events, Sara's quest to banish the stigma surrounding divorce and prove that the end of a relationship can be an empowering, life-affirming event is fast catching on. A twice bestselling author, NLP master practitioner and qualified hypnotherapist, Sara combines 20 years' coaching experience together with her own experience of marriage breakdown to create bespoke coaching programmes designed to help individuals transform their lives by taking control of their mind and designing the lives they want to live. In 2018, Sara launched an all-new Breakup and Divorce Coach Practitioner Accreditation Programme, to share her secrets to becoming a confident and successful coach and creating a global coaching brand. Sara also spoke at the 'Best You LA Expo' in 2018 and will be part of the NLP Conference as a speaker this year. She is also winner of 'Best Self-development Coach' at The Best You Awards 2019.

Passion in Action – the wisdom of the cognitive mind



By Judith Lowe and Judith DeLozier

Come as you are – everyone is welcome!

We are so looking forward to meeting you on our special masterclass day at the NLP International Conference.

The Passion in Action masterclass is a day for *everyone*. It's a day for us to come together as an NLP community and work out what we have to offer the world by way of our hopes, dreams and skills for a positive and sustainable human future.

We aim to use the power and magic of our collective intelligence on the day to find ways to bring out the creative new possibilities of life – for ourselves and for others. The value in the day is the experience you have, and where that takes you as a person.

You can just come as you are. There are no expectations or commitments. Your presence and willingness to participate in whatever way suits you is perfect.

Goals and dreams – your passions, plans and actions

For some of you who join us in May, the focus for that positive future might be a personal one. How can I live my life to the full? How can I nurture my special gifts and bring them more fully into the world? How can I deeply support my own health and wellbeing?

For some, the masterclass might help you focus on family and close friends. Can I bring more love and joy into my intimate life? How can I strengthen and enrich human connection in my everyday world of home and family?

And for some, your special 'passion project' for the day might be in a particular area like education or climate change or social care or sports or arts or politics or business or any other issue that has a feeling of urgency and importance to you.

We aim to use the power and magic of our collective intelligence on the day to find ways to bring out the creative new possibilities of life



NLP, bodies and minds

In our first article (*Rapport 60; Passion in Action*), as well as talking about some of the deeper patterns and developments in the field of NLP, we listed some of the wonderful projects that have come out of the Passion in Action work.

In our second article (*Rapport 61; The wisdom of our bodies*), we focused on the wisdom of the body, the life and knowledge in the body, what is also known as somatic intelligence, and invited you to step into some of the activities and try a few things out for yourselves.

In this third and final piece we want to share with you a couple of the simple ideas and tools we use in the Passion in Action process to support people to think clearly, make good plans, and take these plans into action in the world. This article is focused on the more cognitive aspects of NLP, giving a very brief background to some of the ideas that generated the field, and also asking, 'What is the *wisdom* of the cognitive mind?'

The bigger conversation

NLP has a basis in the field of cybernetics. Norbert Wiener described cybernetics as '*the scientific study of control and communication in the animal and the machine*'. This is where the metaphor of 'programming' in NLP is sourced – taking concepts from computers and machines across to humans, and vice versa.

The interesting thing about the first- and second-tier cyberneticists is that they were all bringing different maps – biology, psychology, anthropology, medicine, mathematics and linguistics – to a conversation to find patterns that connect. They knew they were at the edge of a new possible approach to science and knowledge. They were interested in the conversation with the bigger mind of systems.

The history of NLP as a field has its foundations in these conversations about systems and the mind, and the cognitive approaches and tools from NLP have a direct relationship with these intellectual and academic encounters and discoveries. The trans-disciplinary approach of cybernetics now focuses on social systems such as businesses and includes modern concepts like 'emergence' and 'self-organisation'.

As we have mentioned in previous articles, the thinker and researcher Gregory Bateson, who was a key figure in many of these early debates, was influential in the development of NLP. He was a guest teacher on the campus at Santa Cruz and many of the original team of developers knew him and were taught by him. His ideas about communication, about learning and change in living systems, about families, addiction, culture, art, consciousness and ecology, provided an early intellectual resource to the emerging scope of NLP, and have shaped and energised our own conversations about the ethics and efficacy of our approaches.

Some of the systems-based ideas and models in NLP that relate to goals, evidences and to feedback – the TOTE model for example – come more or less from the labs in the 1950s and 1960s that were working on the cybernetics research for guided missile systems. The NLP meta model – a model about how certain questions can be used to help people systematically shift their thinking – was developed from the tools and frameworks in the academic linguistic field of transformational grammar.

The ideas in NLP 'reframing' now take us forward in time to the heart of twenty-first century research into meaning-making, cognitive bias and perception. There are many more links that NLP has with contemporary approaches to psychology, cognition, linguistics, neuroscience, etc. and you can find many



of them at the online *Encyclopaedia of Systemic NLP and New Coding NLP* by Robert Dilts and Judith DeLozier (www.nlpu.com).

So NLP has its roots in some big ideas – about life and learning, about art and culture and systems. We want to bring this sense of the bigger mind, this bigger conversation, to the Passion in Action masterclass.

What is the *wisdom* of the cognitive mind?

Cognitive scientists study intelligence and behaviour, with a focus on how our nervous systems represent, process and transform information. NLP fits into this space. NLP is about the mind, how we know, how we represent our experience and what underlying frames are organising our world of experience, and creating our inner landscape and map of the world, the never-ending web of meaning.

In NLP we go inside this space and focus on *strategies*, how we represent our goals, and how we represent and sequence the mental and behavioural processes to achieve them, to change them, to think about them, to be creative, to make decisions, to remove barriers of various kinds, and to pattern and process many types of information in a subjectively meaningful way.

All of these concepts, strategies, descriptions, techniques and models are products of the cognitive mind describing our inner and outer worlds.

Our cognitive minds produce our reality, and to do this, our cognitive minds filter, distort, delete and generalise the data in order to maintain stability and sense in our thinking.

On the one hand our mental and linguistic capacities are our stand-out human glory, and on the other hand our minds can lead us astray and into delusional worlds. So what to do but to have some core guidelines as to how to use our cognitive minds to operate at their wisest?

This is what NLP offers – tools to help us be somewhat less crazy, and somewhat more clear and focused. NLP gives us tools to help us to be in touch with whatever reality is, to be rational ►



NLP has its roots in some big ideas – about life and learning, about art and culture and systems

NLP gives us tools to help us to be in touch with whatever reality is, to be rational in just the right kind of way, to have some basic sanity and good will

- ▶ in just the right kind of way, to have some basic sanity and good will, to function at our best, to help each other out, to be amazing geniuses in our own way, and to build a world we all want to live in.

Passion in Action – the NLP cognitive toolbox – finding ‘true north’

What’s important to you? What really matters? ‘Where,’ as Judy DeLozier asks, ‘are you spending your heartbeats?’ Or as the poet Mary Oliver says, ‘What are you doing with your one wild and precious life?’

In the Passion in Action process we aim to help each person to find their energy and direction. It’s as though there’s a compass needle that’s swinging and oscillating that will eventually settle on your personal magnetic north, a direction that physically and emotionally draws you. It’s your place of need and desire and imagination, where there is a natural, spontaneous, felt sense of meaning and expansion of being. Yahoo! It found me! We found each other! My project for the day is ...!

This is an iterative process, more conscious for some people, and more hidden for others. Eventually this feeling, these values, this dream, and this energy can be translated in stages, into an explicit goal and a project that we call a **BHAG – a Big Hairy Audacious Goal!**

There are many processes in NLP for helping people identify what’s important to them and then helping them to build some kind of viable action plan and take it into the world. For example, even a fairly loose application of the NLP model of ‘well-formed conditions for outcomes’ can begin the process of organising and framing this ‘true north’ mind-body information.

- What do you want? What do you want to make/have happen?
- What’s really important about this to you?
- What will you use as evidence of progress and achievement?
- How will you know it’s working? Or successful?
- What’s the context for this?
- When, where, with whom do you want/not want this?
- What impact will this have? Is that what you want?
- Might you or others lose anything?
- What’s already working well? Or already in place? Or currently beneficial?
- Does this fit/resonate with who you are as a person/team/organisation?
- Are you/others congruent about it?
- If you have doubts, or there are obstacles, what are they?
- What is the positive intention(s) behind the obstacles?
- Can you take ownership to get your goal started?
- Can you keep it going, and make it happen?

Also you can use Robert Dilts’ ‘neurological’ levels model to further organise and explore what you have in mind. Here are some examples of the questions you can ask, and the different levels at which you can offer support and advice to others.

- *What is the purpose? And bigger vision for this project?* **(VISION)**
- *Who does it serve? What is the contribution to the larger system?*
- *What is your sense of who you are in this project?* **(IDENTITY)**
- *What is your identity, your personal contribution, or role?*

- *What deep values does this project bring to life?* **(BELIEFS AND VALUES)**
- *How is it meaningful to you?*
- *What beliefs support both you and the project?*
- *Are there any beliefs that require updating?*
- *What key skill, tools and cognitive capabilities are needed?* **(CAPABILITY)**
- *Which key energy and emotional states are needed?*
- *What kind of emotional and social intelligence is relevant?*
- *What actions and steps will you take?* **(BEHAVIOUR)**
- *What type of interactions with others will be required?*
- *Which actual words will you use?*
- *What types of vocal tone and body language is appropriate?*
- *What types of contexts will this project thrive in?* **(ENVIRONMENT)**
- *How might you adapt and transform an environment/context to be more supportive and welcoming to your project?*
- *When, where, with whom will you be creating this change?*

There are many ways to take this journey from a ‘true north’ awareness to a focused and energising goal and project. The unconscious mind takes the lead, and then the conscious, more cognitive mind can begin to form ideas and representations. Then you can start to actually talk about your dream, to draw it, to make plans, to get and give advice, to put things in your diary, and to make those phone calls... whatever. Something’s happening! It’s exciting!

In this process you can proactively engage with and transform the obstacles and doubts that will inevitably pop up. We can help people transform difficult beliefs, explore different perceptual positions, and build new connections even with alienated parts of the system.

We’ll draw on NLP meta programmes, on the Disney model, the SCORE model, the meta model and much of the mainstream, rich, cognitive toolbox that NLP offers.

Also we’ll ask, ‘Who sings your song?’ We’ll ‘gather the allies’. We’ll call up the best in ourselves. We might even dance, who can say?

And much, much more... from the *bigger* conversation of course!

We look forward to seeing you in May. ●



RAPPORT

The Magazine for NLP Professionals

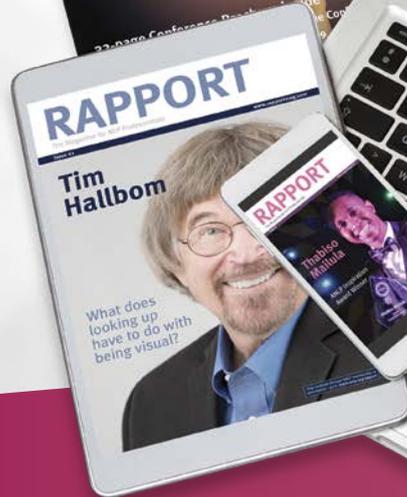
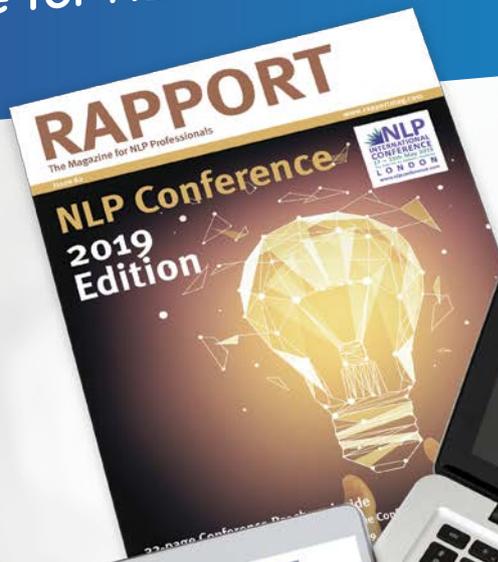
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