

# RAPPORT

THE MAGAZINE FOR NLP PROFESSIONALS



## Post Pandemic Potential

NLP Quick Tips • Education • NLP Stories • Health & Wellbeing • Lifestyle • Business • ANLP News • NLP People • Social Media  
NLP Conference & Awards • Coaching • Author Interview • Diary Events • Research • Book Reviews • NLP Practice Groups • Blog

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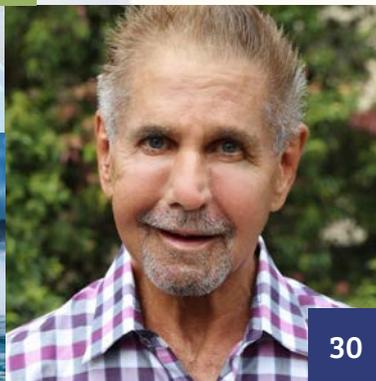
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# I Love Henry Spider Now



By Jane Bullows

## The challenge

M had developed a phobia of spiders at the age of four, when she lifted an old cardboard box in the garden and a spider crawled over her hand. At the time she laughed at the tickly feeling, but her mother immediately screamed, scooped M up in her arms and ran inside the house, saying: "I hate spiders, they're ugly and might hurt you – don't do that again, M!"

M grew up believing that spiders were dangerous, ugly and to be feared. She was very aware that she may be passing this fear on to her own baby daughter and wanted to overcome her phobia.

Her positive statement was "To be calm around all arachnids (and enable my daughter to feel equally safe and inquisitive around spiders)." After doing various meditation and breathing techniques by herself, M decided to seek NLP to help her with her phobia. She was an existing explorer with me for confidence building and public speaking, so it was a natural progression.

## The effect

M stated that she was terrified of spiders and had been for as long as she could remember. Even seeing a spider in the garden was enough to start the fight or flight process. She had recently become a mother and had begun to have dreams that spiders might get into the bedroom and hurt her baby girl. M was on heightened alert for any spiders – she would scream, jump up onto the sofa or higher ground, or run for cover. She was very aware that this was an extreme reaction and that it might already be having an effect on her baby girl (in the same way that her mother's phobia had affected her).

She was aware that she had been ignoring her phobia for a long time, believing that she couldn't change. However, since becoming a mother herself, the urge to change the pattern became stronger. She wanted to be able to feel calm around spiders, to enable her and her daughter to play outside, be inquisitive and explore the garden. M felt compelled to address her phobia and NLP was her first choice of option.

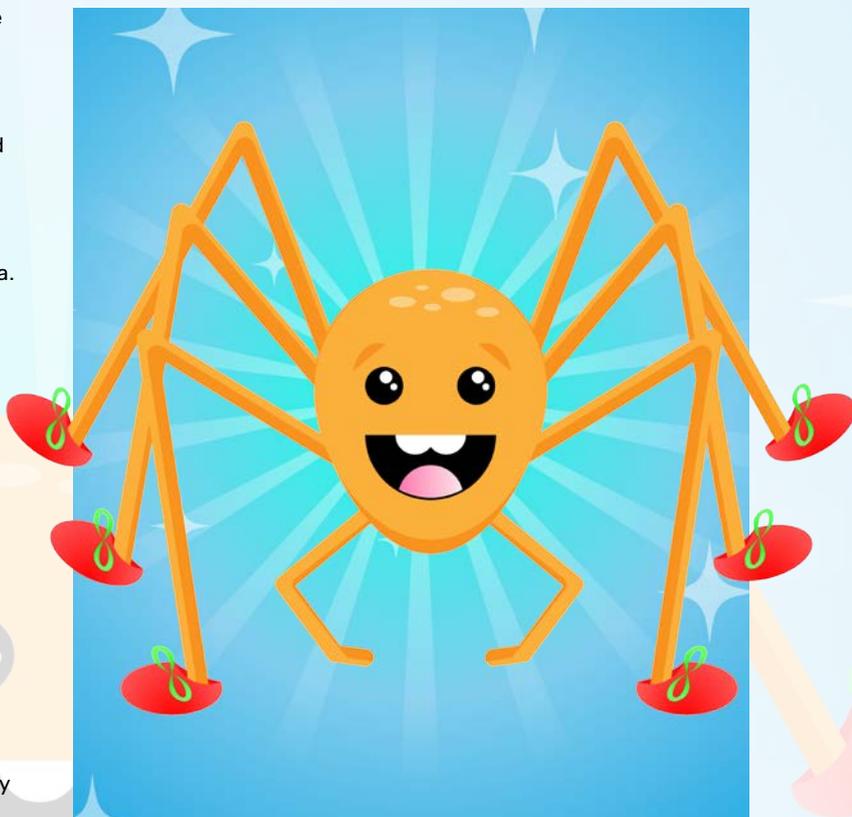
## Solution

It took four sessions for M to release her phobic response / limiting belief and overcome her fear of spiders.

In our first session, we discussed how M felt about spiders – how ugly they looked to her, how dangerous she believed they could be, how frightened she felt when they moved, and how they might be hiding and waiting to crawl on her or her baby. We explored her first memories of spiders, before she ever felt scared of them, and then the first significant experience when she felt fearful of them.

Over the following two sessions, M created her positive statement and we explored what a friendly spider might look like. We had fun and plenty of laughter ensued. M drew a funky spider with Jamaican Olympic running kit, complete with gold chain and bright red running shoes. She named him Henry and took him home to live on her wall. I enhanced M's safety anchor and applied the phobia technique.

In the fourth session, we reinforced the phobia technique and future paced a number of scenarios with 'Henry'. A few days later,



## M wanted to be able to feel calm around spiders... to enable her and her daughter to play outside.

M phoned and said that she had been actively seeking out spiders (under boxes / in the shed) so she could hold one and show it to her baby girl.

## Result

M was ecstatic about the impact of the sessions. She was amazed by the way she now felt about Henry. She started spending more time outside and exploring under rocks, wood and boxes in the shed, applying her safety anchor a few times to begin with – yet she was able to actively seek out spiders.

The first spider she did see was one that had come through the (now open) French windows and into the lounge. She said she didn't even notice him until he ambled over the rug! M said that she felt a wave of calm wash over her and she and the baby remained on the sofa and watched the spider. She then called him Henry out loud and started chatting to him about his travels and whether he had found a mate yet! She let him wander and, to her amazement, he calmly left the room and went back into the garden.

A few weeks later, M texted me to say she had been online, looking at local zoos and opportunities to hold a tarantula. She felt great and really excited about her and her daughter exploring more Henrys (and Henriettas). ■

# The Gardening Effect



By Yvonne Fernando



*"Where flowers bloom, so does hope."*  
~ Lady Bird Johnson

**I**t's a privilege to have been asked to write about our work at the Gardening Group at Charing Surgery in Kent. The story starts in 2014 with an idea, a few inspired doctors, two unruly plots, an enthusiastic group of patients, lots of weeds, no money, a bunch of ideas, an amazing group of volunteers and a passionate NLP professional.

Gardening is known to be therapeutic by nature and it was this concept that planted the seed of an idea that would empower patients to improve their own health and wellbeing. Introduced by Charing PPG (Patient Participation Group) at Charing Surgery, the Gardening Group would allow patients to come together, make new friends, get fresh air and exercise, be creative, have fun, do something purposeful and feel a sense of belonging. Members would literally get to see the fruits (flowers and vegetables) of their labours and feel a sense of pride and community.

From its early beginnings to the success of now, the whole project has been a great example of what happens when you get in the flow. At every stage of the project, from when we were wondering how we were going to find funding, to how we were going to find people, to even hoping for good weather, it all began to find its place. I was proud to be able to bring my enthusiasm

*"There is so very much to enjoy at our mornings in the garden. The fresh air, the physical workout, the variety of tasks to tackle. We see our plans develop alongside the friendships we make. We can watch our plants grow and take pleasure in the compliments from passers-by, who seem to love it as much as we do!"*

~ Gardening Group member Judy Say.

and NLP skills to the team and project to make this exciting venture happen.

Senior Partner at Charing Surgery, Dr Bill Warrilow explained that The Walking Group, a project established at the surgery in 2009, had proven significant benefits and as such, a group activity like the Gardening Group, which was positive, social, non-competitive and inclusive, would be likely to achieve similar benefits in reducing social isolation, improving mood, and restoring confidence in patients.

Our inspiring venture was recognised by Ashford Borough Council and the Big Lottery Fund, which both awarded it grants. Locally, the scheme attracted support from two garden designers, Franziska Harman and Ylva Blid-Mackenzie, and the Godinton Trust, while sponsor David Wilson Homes also contributed funds and supplies.

In practical terms, the group continues to meet once a week and is made up of patients who would like to be involved or have been referred, should their GP feel they would benefit from a health, social or fitness aspect. Planting schemes have been introduced to provide year-round interest to keep the group busy throughout the year and, more recently, we have introduced a circular way of managing the group, which is based on collaboration.

*"The surgery Gardening Group has done amazing work over the last five years. They have transformed the area around the surgery. The areas give pleasure to all residents visiting the surgery and the helpers."*

~ Dame Austen, Clerk to Charing Parish Council

### An award-winning community venture

With so much community engagement, we all get so much out of it, from local supplies of alpaca manure to fertilise the soil and generous donations of plants and cuttings from Belmont House and Godinton House and Gardens, to patients stopping by with plants and different kinds of help and support. Plus, there's always time for tea, cake, and a chat on the job as well as annual outings to special floriferous places!

The group itself has gone from strength to strength, growing in enthusiasm and support. We have been visited by Andy Garland of BBC Radio Kent, who staged a feature from the therapeutic gardens, and received a Gold Access Award from the Ashford Access Group in recognition of the Gardening Group's commitment at planning stage to ensuring accessibility for all abilities throughout the site. We were awarded a level 5 (outstanding) from the RHS Britain in Bloom in 2018 and 2019 and received two Silver Gilt from the Wild About Gardens Award Scheme in 2017 and 2018. We have also received numerous positive press articles locally.

Our original objective was to focus on the benefits members would enjoy from being part of the group. At the same time, we hoped to create a welcoming and relaxing space for patients visiting the surgery. However, we really hadn't imagined the huge impact this project would have on everyone: patients and staff as well as people in general passing by with a kind word of appreciation.

### A green prescription

The health benefits associated with gardening have rarely been out of the news and this has certainly gathered pace during lockdown as more and more people started to experience 



*"When we started developing the idea for the Gardening Group, I don't think any of us could imagine what a vibrant, beautiful space the gardens would become. Patients and staff often comment on how lovely the gardens are, how much they appreciate them and there's no doubting how much they've enhanced everybody's wellbeing."*

*~ Kay Acott, Practice Manager,  
Charing Surgery*





- ▶ the paybacks of gardening and nature. A ground-breaking report, *Gardens & Health*, commissioned by the National Garden Scheme called for greater recognition and integration of gardens in the NHS and Public Health Policy, while the RHS 'Ornamental Round Table' hosted a Health & Horticulture

*"I look forward to the summertime and spending my lunchtime sitting in the garden. It is now a pleasure to sit in the sun-drenched 'Dreaming Garden'. Thank you for creating such a restorative oasis!"*  
 ~ Dr Warrilow, Senior Partner,  
 Charing Surgery

Conference where attendees from 150 key stakeholders drafted a Charter Framework that aimed to incorporate horticulture into everyone's lives. During the height of the pandemic in July 2020, Environmental Secretary George Eustice announced a £4 million pilot project to test whether patients would benefit from joining outdoor activities and being in green spaces. The so called 'green prescription' was introduced in response to evidence suggesting that spending time in nature could lead to physical and mental health benefits. The project at Charing Surgery clearly proves this theory and remains ahead of the curve.

Gardens provide us with the perfect opportunity to get in touch with ourselves and reconnect to our place in nature. They deepen not just our contact with ourselves, but also our connection to the world, and give us new ways of seeing our place in it. It is not surprising that so many people have benefitted; when we allow ourselves to collaborate and learn from nature, rather than trying to dominate it, we can discover a deep peace and renewed sense of wonder.

The very act of gardening can nurture the soul as well as the soil. As we learn to pay more attention to our thoughts and feelings, we develop a richer source of information. This allows us to make more successful decisions and create a secure foundation. When we foster this process, it can allow our lives to bloom and bear fruit.

It's been a real pleasure to be part of this inspiring project. The whole process highlights what a positive difference we can all make when we come together to create something special. ■



**Yvonne Fernando** is an NLP Master Practitioner and life coach based in Kent. As well as working one to one, she runs inspiring workshops for positive change to help people learn, grow, experience new things, build confidence and improve health and wellbeing. Yvonne also leads a Relaxation Mindfulness Meditation programme at her local surgery. In all aspects of her work, she aims to inspire, engage, build community, and, in essence, touch the heart. Animals and their 'ability to connect without words' are an important part of Yvonne's world too and a special part of her private practice. [www.yvonnefernandonlp.co.uk](http://www.yvonnefernandonlp.co.uk)

# NLP on Every Street Corner

The magic NLP world of the Ten Bugs Academy in the Netherlands



By Erna Smeekens

**I** am very honoured to be one of the finalists in the NLP Awards and after receiving a request from Karen and Shannen to write an article about our work, I will try in my best English to tell you our story.

In 2006, I went through a painful divorce and became a single mom with four very adventurous boys aged from 12-16 years. I am a teacher and a horticulturist, and I got a job on a farm where we took care of mentally disabled people who became so through accident or illness; we also offered city-based schoolchildren the chance to see how a farm works. I could combine being a teacher with my farm knowledge: a big dream.

It often rains in the Netherlands, so when we had conversations in the fields with the people, we did not see the tears, and people loved to talk with me. They often said: "Erna, you should become a coach." I had no clue what this was, but sometimes I surfed the internet and searched for how to become a coach. I only found very expensive courses and put away the possibility as I had very little money after my divorce.

One Sunday afternoon I was surfing again and came across a blog about a life-changing movie: *Freedom Writers*. I went to the video store and got the film. It brought me to tears. I was deeply impressed and wrote an email to the writer of the blog. I invited him to our farm and told him I wanted to become a coach. We met, and as we walked over our fields I told him about my work and our

**They wanted to do something 'good' in society but did not believe people would appreciate the gift if they gave it away. I proved the opposite.**

beloved people. Out of the blue, he offered me a place on his course. I had no idea what it was, but he said something about NLP and that I could become a coach. It was a present.

I took his present and, to cut a long story short, it was the beginning of an incredible life-changing journey. He and his college offered me the complete NLP training. Later on, they told me I was kind of their experiment: they wanted to do something 'good' in society but did not believe people would appreciate the gift if they gave it away. I proved the opposite; I really was so convinced that I never ever would get such a chance in my life again, so I was a very eager student. Very eager.

During my NLP training I got burned out, lost my job, totally ran out of money, had to live on social benefits and got my food from the local foodbank. I saw our country from a totally new perspective. Poverty and humiliation were not being taken seriously. I had many, many thoughts about never getting out of this swamp ever again.

And I had my 'big rescue': my NLP education.





### Pay It Forward NLP

I met many people at the foodbank who were well educated, intelligent, nice, kind. People run out of money for many reasons and it's difficult to find a way out, to find possibilities, to see chances. A little plan grew in my head based on another touching movie, *Pay It Forward*. I had completed my NLP education for free. How would it be if I, a teacher who was busy doing my NLP Trainer training, should ask 12 people in my world to receive NLP Practitioner training – not for free, but in exchange for doing something beautiful for society?

I spoke with my two beloved teachers and they said: "Ok, if you do it, we will make it possible." And so, in 2010, we started the very first Pay It Forward NLP Group, beginning with 12 people I knew from the foodbank who had no money but lots of time. Twenty days later I had a group of people who had taken back the reins of their life. We celebrated with a beautiful certification ceremony: we invited people from social works, from the foodbank, from all kinds of organisations, and everybody was deeply impressed.

We received a request from the group to do their Master Practitioner training and we also had a new group who wanted to do the Practitioner course, so in 2011 I certificated as an NLP trainer and we began the Tientjes Academie (The Ten Bugs Academy). Our plan was that everybody should be able to learn NLP. We called it 'NLP on Every Street Corner'. People could sign up for NLP training for free, simply with a good plan of how they would make the world a better place with the NLP talents they would gain. It's NLP based on *Pay It Forward*.

That was ten years ago. I have since met my new partner Hans and together we have trained many groups, both small and large. We have achieved many wonderful things: for example, we work with supermarkets who sponsor our refreshments, and with a housing corporation, and we include their staff in our Pay It Forward training sessions. By doing this, we mix up worlds, which creates beautiful models of the world. We meet struggles in many ways and we stay alive, just trusting that living our mission – something which is bigger than we are – will take care of us. It seems to work out.

Through our students doing their Pay It Forward we have created a foundation where people can express their talents on a voluntary basis. People really lived their talents but when they were confronted by family and friends about employment, which they didn't have, that caused frustration and pain. Therefore, in 2013 we began a co-op where people could earn part of their social benefits through becoming part-time entrepreneurs. As that was something new in our country, we shared our experience and knowledge and today there are over 20 co-ops countrywide.

## People sign up for NLP training for free, simply with a good plan of how they will make the world a better place.

We spent four years working on this project, which was partly funded by our government. During this time we only trained two NLP groups a year but our hearts yearned to return to our Ten Bugs Academy. So, in 2020, we decided to return to full-time training again, which turned out to be challenging because of the coronavirus pandemic. Nevertheless, we are very happy to be back home.

Because of the pandemic we now train very small groups of people who can afford a bit more so we can survive. Nevertheless, even now, in all our groups there are people who are there on the basis of Pay It Forward. We will never give up making NLP on every street corner a reality!

There is so much more to tell, but I am running out of space. In January 2020, I received the incredible news that I had been nominated for an NLP Award. I had NO clue where it came from ... it turns out one of our Pay It Forward students told you what we do. We weren't able to be present at the gala dinner you organised in 2020, and I'm really delighted that, despite the pandemic, I now have this chance to tell our story. Thank you very much for this beautiful and honorable opportunity! ■



**Erna Smeekens** is a happy mother of four and an international IA-NLP trainer. Together with Hans Udo, her partner in life and work, she began the Tientjes Academie (Ten Bugs Academy) in 2011. Through the academy, they make NLP possible for ten 'bugs' a day, especially for those without the funds to afford training. They also train teachers, social workers and small teams, as these organisations usually have low personal education budgets. Alongside their training, they work with people on the edge of society on a voluntary basis. Erna is the author of *Jong Leren Communiceren (Juggling with Communication, loosely translated)* about NLP for teachers and parents. Erna and Hans live in the south of the Netherlands, near the Belgium border.

# Community Interaction



There are four ways you can quickly, easily and regularly chat to members of the ANLP Team and your fellow members:

- The ANLP Community Café, open (virtually) every Monday evening at 18:30 (BST) – check your members update for Zoom details or go to this members-only webpage: <https://anlp.org/news/anlp-virtual-community-meetings>
- The Members Q&A sessions on Facebook Live (via the ANLP International CIC Facebook page). The next booked sessions are:
  - Tuesday 14th September at 14:00 (BST)
  - Thursday 16th December at 19:00 (GMT)
  - Wednesday 16th March at 10:00 (GMT)
- Exclusive Trainer and Accredited Trainer Community Café, held on the first Thursday of every month at 10:00 (BST) – Zoom details are shared in the Trainer monthly update or on this trainer-only news page: <https://anlp.org/news/virtual-community-cafe-exclusive-for-trainer-and-accredited-trainer-members>

- Join the ANLP Members Only group on Facebook, where you can seek advice, share successes and ask questions of the ANLP Member community – details on page 33. ■



## Website Contact Form

During May, the contact form on the website was abused by phishers and spammers on at least three occasions. This is the first time for a number of years we have encountered such challenges and we apologise for any inconvenience caused to members.

To protect you from receiving further messages of this sort, we have suspended the contact form altogether. As long as your profile is filled in, there are still plenty of contact options for website visitors and potential clients to use to reach you. ■

## ANLP Team News

Congratulations to Shannen and her husband Tom on the birth of their lovely baby Emily, a little sister for Edward. The family are doing well and Shannen is looking forward to being back on the ANLP Team in the new year. ■



# Post Pandemic Potential



By Eve Menezes Cunningham

**B**y the time you read this, you'll probably have had both doses of your vaccine. Things are already beginning to open up again and there's a sense of optimism as we begin to see people we've missed for months and do the kinds of things we never expected to have to live without. People have been going misty-eyed watching strangers meet up for coffee.

## How are you doing?

Maybe you've been thriving throughout this very strange time. Did you learn how to cook more complex things, do DIY tasks you'd have previously felt were beyond your capabilities? Write that novel? Create and sustain healthier habits?

Or maybe, like most humans, it's been more of a struggle than you might have expected (had you been able to predict such a thing). Have you been stressed and anxious about the ever-changing public health messaging (beyond the consistent social distance, mask, wash hands)?

**Maybe you've been thriving throughout this very strange time ... Or maybe, like most humans, it's been more of a struggle than you might have expected.**

Overwhelmed with home schooling? Are old habits suddenly back that you may have thought you'd overcome years ago?

As we ease back out into the world now, I hope you'll find the following ideas helpful in terms of reconnecting with that sense of post pandemic potential – but doing so with a heavy dose of self-compassion and acceptance.

## Health and fitness goals

What's your goal here? Maybe your old fitness routines became inaccessible as gyms and pools shut down. Perhaps you've developed fitness routines for the first time in decades, making the most of your government-allotted daily walk, online classes and other exercise options.

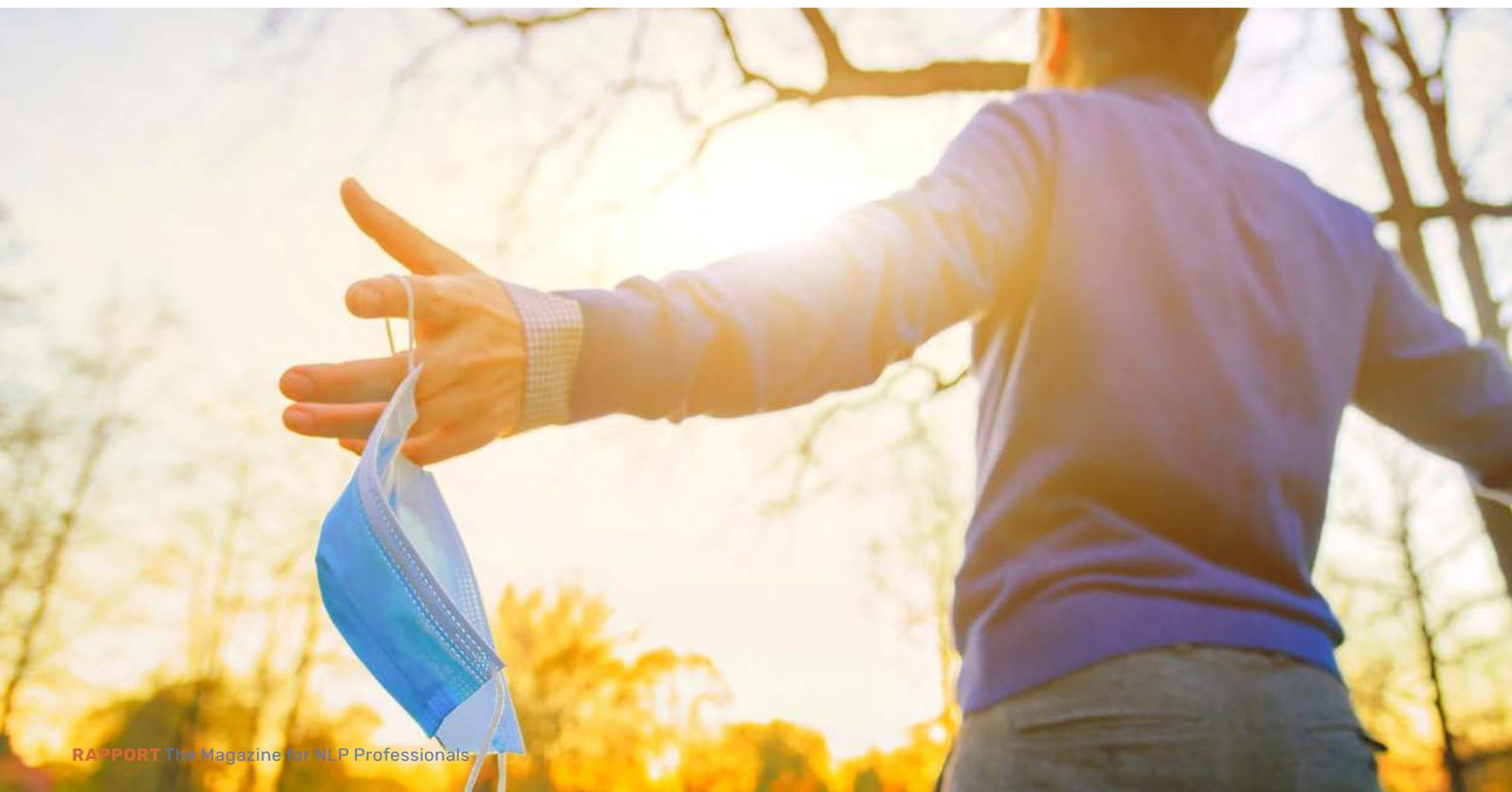
What would be a well-formed outcome in this area for you? How are you doing (assessing it with honesty as well as compassion)? How might you adapt

your approach to better suit fluctuating energy levels and headspace? How might you create a spectrum so you can do *something* towards these goals each day while accounting for any obstacles that might crop up?

## Mental health

I imagine that people who haven't had *any* mental health bumps in the road are as rare as unicorns – whether that's been increased anxiety at the idea of getting back out there (if you were happily cocooned in lockdown) or the desperation to connect with fellow humans when these everyday connections were suddenly outlawed.

We're wired to connect and the idea that things that help us feel better could potentially kill each other has been challenging for everyone. You may have watched loved ones get sick, had funerals





and weddings that haven't felt remotely like the ceremonies you would have wanted, or been sick yourself. Maybe it's dealing with polarised opinions, being out of work or overworked, worried about money?

Now that things are beginning to ease up, consider what might be a well-formed outcome in terms of your mental health. Again, assessing it with honesty and compassion, how are you doing? How might you adapt your approach to better suit fluctuating energy levels and headspace?

If you've managed to put some healthy boundaries and habits in place during this time, how might you sustain things as life gets back to a new normal?

### Work and creative endeavours

In some ways, mothers have a built in 'pattern interrupt' with maternity leave, where they often do something different when back in the workforce. It may have been forced by employers not supporting part time hours or other adjustments, or other ideas may simply have come to the surface, having had a break with time to think (while keeping a brand-new human being alive and dealing with all that new parenthood entails).

This global pandemic means women and men of all ages have had to reassess, pivot and even dream bigger. Some people have struggled to harness the headspace needed to be creative while others have been inspired to make new or long-held dreams a reality.

Film director Nicole Russin-McFarland says she wanted to be Peter Jackson after seeing the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. "The idea of being immersed in the best of blockbuster filmmaking in New Zealand sounded tempting. With the pandemic, I decided, 'Why not?' As a result, I'm working towards fundraising from others in 2022-2023 to film in Wellington at Jackson's Stone Street Studios. I have been making films in the UK during the lockdown, working with actors working from home to show I am worthy of being invested in to rent that space."

Maybe you know exactly what you'd like to be doing creatively or in terms of work as we emerge from our cocoons. Maybe this is a completely new thought for you. Either way, what would be a well-formed outcome for you in this area? How are you doing (again, assessing it with honesty as well as compassion)? How might you adapt your approach to better suit fluctuating energy levels and headspace?

The work culture has shifted dramatically and putting some thought into the changes that have been forced on you and your business, assessing what's been better than you might have anticipated and what you really miss, will help you co-create a more rewarding workplace for the future.

**We're wired to connect and the idea that things that help us feel better could potentially kill each other has been challenging for everyone.**

### Relationships

Maybe you're emerging from your cocoon feeling more loved up than ever? Are you happy to be seeing other loved ones (and strangers) but quite enjoyed all that time to yourself?

Perhaps you're spending a lot of energy reining in your homicidal urges because the way your loved ones breathe is so grating! Maybe you've been in lockdown alone, thinking about all the strangers you'll be hugging soon. Perhaps you've ended a long-term relationship because you couldn't delude yourself about it any longer. Maybe you're ready to join a dating site or ask friends to set you up because you envy even the couples whose breathing is irritating each other...

What would be a well-formed outcome for what your relationships look like? Is what you're currently doing working? How might you adapt your approach to

better suit fluctuating energy levels and headspace? This might take a bit longer as you reassess *all* your relationships – who have you missed the most? Who *haven't* you missed?

### Parenting

Can you *imagine* having known, when you decided to become a parent, that one day schools would suddenly close and you'd have to navigate endless changes with work while home schooling and helping your children address an increasingly uncertain world? Containing their emotional rollercoasters as well as your own?

"I realised pretty quickly that I needed to move from my masculine 'get stuff done' energy to be more nurturing and to really listen," says Wendy Molyneux, the Heartfulness Coach. Wendy has been locked down with her teenage daughter, who struggles with anxiety and OCD. "We tried to sit down for 'Tea at 3' most days and just touch base. I had been up for hours working. She had likely not long got up and it was a tough lesson to stop trying to control her and just let that be. I aim to do my Heartful Breathing meditation twice a day (it usually ends up being once!)."

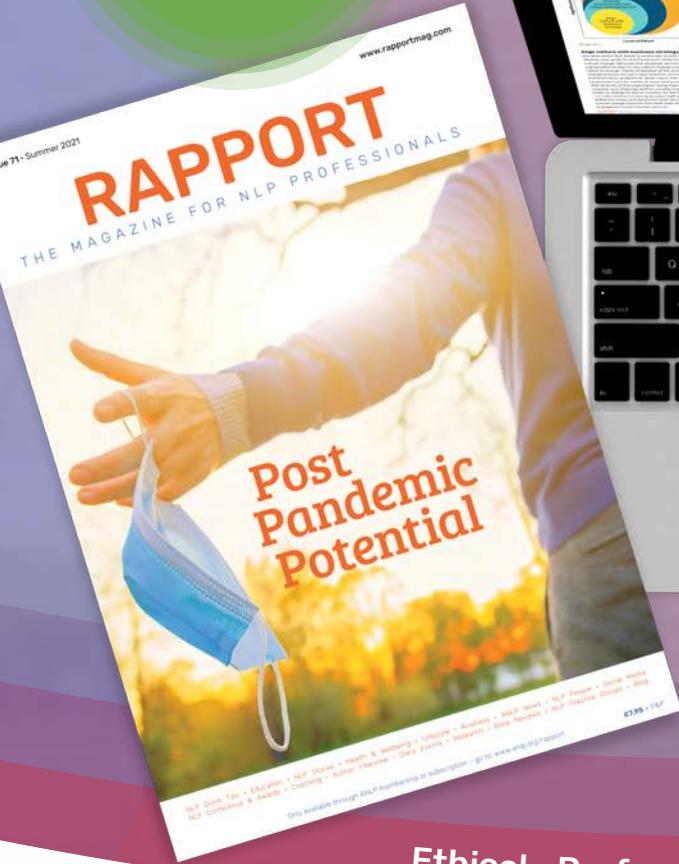
"Getting my daughter involved helps move her from her over-stimulated headspace into her calm, energetic heart space. It's a work in progress but we will get there. Lockdown has been a great opportunity to shine a light into some dark places and positives have come out of it in terms of our connection and me being inspired to help other 'failing' parents."

Now that schools have reopened, what would be a well-formed outcome in terms of the way you parent? What's been working about your existing approach? How might you do better for you and them by amping up the self-compassion? What have your kids learned from the experience? Have you talked to *them* about elements you might want to keep?

Whether you choose one area to reassess or several, be patient with yourself as you make progress. ■

**Eve Menezes Cunningham** is an NLP Master Practitioner. She runs Feel Better Every Day ([selfcarecoaching.net](http://selfcarecoaching.net)) and is the author of *365 Ways to Feel Better: Self-care Ideas for Embodied Wellbeing* (White Owl, 2017).

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# RAPPORT

The Magazine for NLP Professionals

Regular columns include:

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