

RAPPORT

THE MAGAZINE FOR NLP PROFESSIONALS

Imagination

The difference
that could make
the difference



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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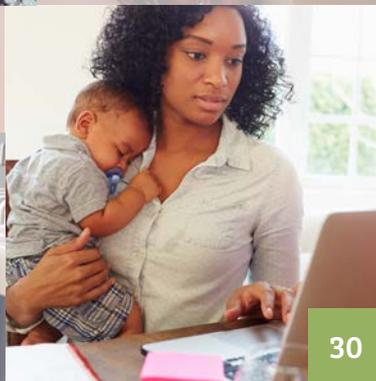
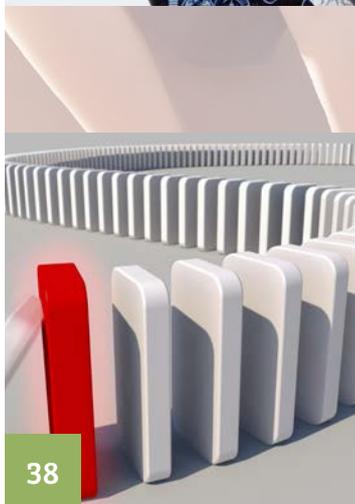
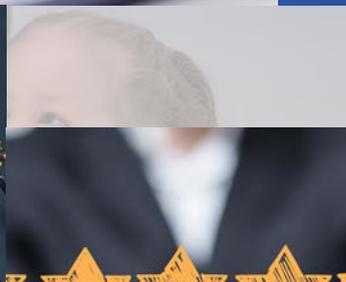
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Engineering leadership team succeeds with NLP

This case study shows that development of so-called 'soft skills' can deliver hard results in business performance, even in a traditional engineering business



By Dianne Lowther

THE CHALLENGE

Schaeffler (UK) Ltd is a medium-sized manufacturing business in the automotive sector which went through a major cultural change. In 2000, due to increased competition from low-labour-cost countries, the factory was struggling and threatened with closure. The leadership team put together a recovery plan with the overall goal to become 'production location of choice'. They briefed the staff in a programme of one-to-one meetings and over a period of three to four years completely turned the business around, becoming the production location of choice for new and existing customers and also within the Schaeffler Group. In January 2007, when HR Director Adrian Roberts met Dianne Lowther of Brilliant Minds for the first time, the leadership team were looking for ways to stimulate further improvement. The management team were working well, but the next level of supervisors and team leaders were reluctant to own continuous improvement, change processes and some aspects of the day-to-day running of the business.

THE EFFECT

The question in everyone's mind was – how to make another big step forward? NLP had been briefly introduced to the leadership team by another consultant. They thought it might be useful but didn't know enough at that stage.

THE SOLUTION

The introductory programme

The first step was an introductory programme of NLP in August 2007. All managers were invited and 15 out of 18 attended the two days. The participants represented a mixture of departments and roles, including the Managing Director, Manufacturing Director and HR Director. Feedback from the introductory programme included: 'It was very practical and I was able to relate the content to work situations' (Sales Manager); and 'Not a PowerPoint slide in sight! A refreshing change' (Materials Manager).

The practitioner programme

Following the introductory programme the HR Director, MD and Plant Director were convinced that NLP could be a useful tool to help them achieve their goals and decided to undertake the practitioner programme. All managers were invited to attend, with a clear understanding that it was entirely voluntary and



Not a PowerPoint slide in sight! A refreshing change

that no one would be put under any pressure to participate since it represents a significant commitment of business and personal time. The practitioner programme was delivered in five modules of three days with an assessment day at the end. There were eight participants. Seven out of the eight achieved the Practitioner Certification in September 2008, with one participant unable to complete the programme until 2009 due to ill-health.

THE RESULT

This project won a Wales Training Award for Partnership and Collaboration. The following paragraph is an extract from the submission: 'The NLP programme has undoubtedly helped achieve these results and the company has managed to buck the trend and grow its business during difficult economic times. In addition to improved employee behaviour in the workplace, equally valuable outcomes of this training have been the personal benefits experienced by the employees, which have been described by some as "life-changing". This has evidently had a positive impact on family members and the wider community at large.'

This case study shows that development of so-called 'soft skills' can deliver hard results in business performance. The team at Schaeffler have shown that they really see their people as the business' most important asset, that people are the only source of sustainable competitive advantage in the manufacturing sector, and that the leadership team have a responsibility for their own development as much as their workforce's development. The leadership team have shown an exemplary commitment to investment in learning and development at all levels in their organisation and are reaping rich rewards. Let us all hope that other organisations will follow their example! ■

Good news for members – HMRC approval



ANLP continue to act upon member feedback and enquiries...

You asked – are ANLP membership subscriptions approved tax-deductible professional fees when completing a UK tax return?

We acted – following some further research, ANLP applied to HMRC for recognition as providers of professional membership subscriptions.

After review by HMRC, they have confirmed that the application has been successful:

'ANLP has been approved by the Commissioners for HM Revenue and Customs under Section 344 of the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 with effect from 6th April 2019.'

This means that when you complete your tax return this year, you can list your ANLP membership fees as an approved professional subscription in the relevant section of your tax return and obtain the relevant income tax relief.



HMRC, like many organisations, is currently experiencing backlogs due to the pandemic, so if ANLP do not appear on the approved list when you do your tax return, you are advised to explain that the organisation has only recently been approved

and quote the following head office reference: T1644/2/2020.

This is highly significant for you because your ANLP membership has now been recognised at the highest level as a professional membership subscription. ■



NEW

ANLP criteria for virtual training

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a 'new normal' where many NLP trainers have had to move their training courses to a virtual environment.

This is still very different to simply doing 'online' training!

ANLP rules on membership requirements have not changed. A Practitioner

Training still requires a minimum of 50 hours face-to-face training – it is the definition of what constitutes 'face-to-face' that has changed.

For details of the new criteria, please check <https://anlp.org/anlp-criteria-for-virtual-training>. ■

Member updates

Emailed monthly

Include important and relevant information relating to your membership

PLEASE READ THEM



Call our careers line now!

ANLP are recruiting...

Our lovely copy editor/proofreader, Helen, is moving on to focus on her work as a learning disability support worker. This has created a very part-time vacancy for a copy editor/proofreader.

As *Rapport* is a quarterly magazine, it means this work is only done four times a year! There are other ad hoc opportunities that crop up occasionally and, in essence, this is a great role for someone who is looking for a regular bit of additional income.

If you are interested in applying for this role, please email your cover letter, CV and/or relevant experience to the *Rapport* team [link to email: rapport@anlp.org Subject *Rapport* copy editor position].

For more information, please check out the news piece on our website. <https://anlp.org/news/anlp-are-recruiting->

Deadline: 7th August 2020.

WANTED

Supporting the NHS with empathy and skills



By Andy Coote

At the NLP Awards, held at the Park Inn, Heathrow on Saturday 18th May, 2019, the award for NLP in Healthcare was awarded to Jo Wilson and Andy Coley of Beyond Training. Introducing the award, Reb Veale shared the words of ANLP partner charity Mind BLMK who chose Jo and Andy from the shortlist:

'Through their support, help and guidance, they have created a long-term impact on clinical outcomes. Their dedication in supporting both patients and staff within the NHS is exceptional. As a direct result of the NLP techniques provided, healthcare staff who are supporting and treating chronically ill patients feel empowered and able to communicate more effectively. For these reasons, we would like to give the NLP in Healthcare award to Jo Wilson and Andy Coley.'

Jo and Andy's work focuses on helping members of NHS organisations and community services to develop and transform in a sustainable way that is not often readily available in the public sector. The nomination form stated that their attention to detail, close support and responsive contact means that a wide variety of environments to work in, and the opportunities available through using NLP, help to ensure that patients are supported and that people benefit. The manner in which Jo and Andy share their guidance continues to have long-term impacts on clinical outcomes. The person who nominated Jo and Andy expressed, 'For me personally, the impact has been in how I, as a healthcare provider, work and help the people I cross paths with. I am currently gathering information for case studies and publications in journal articles too – all of which is possible from the impact of Jo and Andy's sincere support.'

On receiving the award, Jo Wilson said, 'I just want to say a massive thank you. It is such an honour. We started working together as Beyond Training Solutions for a number of reasons and one was that I'd worked within the NHS and then through personal experience during the last six months of my dad's life recognised the huge challenges the guys who do an amazing job in the NHS face and also the impact that those challenges have on the patients and also the families. What we wanted to do was find ways we could help to give them ways to impact the patient journey and patient care and support the families.'

Andy added, 'I'm shocked and pleased to receive this award, particularly from our peers in this room. It is an honour; thank you so much.'

Jo has been 'on the hamster wheel of stress, guilt, overwork and feeling trapped'. She has juggled motherhood, a successful career, family responsibilities, financial pressures and at times has dropped more than a few balls. Through her own learning journey, she realised that she didn't have to stay on the hamster wheel for the rest of her life.

'At the proud age of X (never ask a lady to give away her age!) I stopped doing all the things I thought I should do and started

doing the things I love doing and so set up Beyond Training Solutions. I have always got my buzz from seeing others really achieve what they previously doubted and have now taken this into the core of my business and I'm loving every minute of it.'

She adds that enabling individuals, teams and organisations to realise their potential, facilitate and strengthen collaborative working and effect lasting and empowering change is her passion. 'Oh yes, and I love bringing a sense of challenging fun into the proceedings as well!'

Jo is an experienced trainer and facilitator who has worked at director level within both the public and commercial sectors. She has an in-depth understanding of the challenges facing management professionals and is passionate about providing them with the resources to make a real difference to themselves, the organisation and the customer. In the last decade she has been pleased to extend this into facilitating improvements

The manner in which Jo and Andy share their guidance continues to have long-term impacts on clinical outcomes



Andy knows first-hand what it is like when you are enabled to take control



in patient care and customer service, both at individual and organisational level.

Jo says, 'I have never been happier or more fulfilled as this has given me the opportunity to not only do what I love but also watch other people let go of things that have previously held them back and move forward in a way that fits with them.'

Andy Coley has a background working in high-tech computer firms and city banks. He has also been involved as a director in a number of smaller companies over the last 20 years, mainly in IT and internet sales. During his business career he has found that having a flexible approach is key for your own life as well as within business. A number of years ago, Andy found his own health was at risk as his weight hit over 23 stone. He knows now that he saw the issues surrounding his weight coming and yet he chose to ignore them because it was easier to do so. Other aspects of his life were not exactly at their best stage at the time and thinking about losing weight was just another difficult thing to handle. And then something happened – he received some NLP coaching and it was like a magic switch as he realised that he had ownership of his own health and development and it allowed him to find the strength and motivation and have the tools to make a lasting change. He stopped blaming all around him for what was going wrong and took control. Since then he has lost over 6½ stone and more importantly he knows first-hand what it is like when you are enabled to take control. He now has a fantastic family life, respects himself and loves everything about what he does.

'This is when I developed my passion for training, facilitating and coaching. I stopped blaming all around me for what was going wrong and took control. It was fascinating that all it took was me, right then, to decide to make the changes for me. It was amazing how that simple change in mindset made massive changes in all areas of my life.'

For me personally, the impact has been in how I, as a healthcare provider, work and help the people I cross paths with

'Since then I have been developing my own skills, enhancing those I already clearly had and then passing on this belief change to others. For me, establishing Beyond Training Solutions with Jo and now guiding people towards finding their own solutions – be that a corporate management team, a group of attendees on a workshop or someone who's come to us for personal development coaching – gives me a real buzz. Watching those lightbulb moments as they realise that all it took was a shift in their own thinking to achieve what they wanted and helping direct and focus that light towards an outcome is why I do what I do.'

Andy has a unique perspective on situations from large organisations through to individuals and this, combined with his experience on a personal and professional level, means he really enjoys helping others to change, for the better.

Karen Falconer, CEO of ANLP who created and runs the Awards, added, 'I met Jo and Andy through their presence at an NLP conference a few years ago. A couple of years later, when ANLP was invited to take over hosting the conference, Andy stepped up straight away to volunteer his support for the conference and became a great asset to the team. Andy and Jo are proactive, enthusiastic, skilled and have the energy of a hundred battery-operated bunnies! I am particularly happy that MIND chose Jo and Andy as their winners in this category.'

The next NLP International Conference will take place virtually on 14th – 16th May 2021. The Masterclass will be presented by Connirae Andreas and the full programme is published on page 28. ■



This article has been produced from nomination forms and the Beyond Training website at www.beyondtrainingsolutions.com/.

The International NLP Conference in 2021

NEW ways of being in the world



By Karen Falconer



As you know, the 2020 NLP International Conference was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic that affected most parts of the world.

Our intention was to host the 2021 Conference in London at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Centre in Heathrow as we have for the past three conferences... as normal, in person...

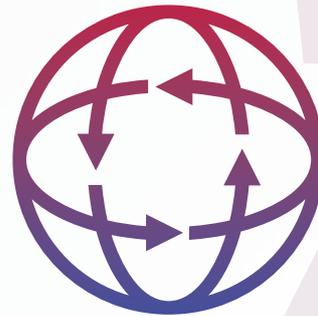
In the UK, we are adapting to our 'new normal' and the unknowns that may affect all of us, now and in the future. Top of our 'old normal' and our 'new normal' list is the health and safety of anyone who attends the NLP conference. This ranges from the hotel staff who coordinate and serve us through to our own team, our amazing stewards, the exhibitors, the presenters and, of course, our delegates.

Taking as many potential challenges and variables into consideration, we have concluded that the risks of holding the conference 'in person' in the UK in 2021 are too great. We have a responsibility for the well-being of all our attendees. We also have no control over the health and safety regulations that the hotel may have to impose at a moment's notice... and we certainly have no control over Government rules that may or may not be in place at the time!

Having consulted with many people, who have experienced the recent changes, on the best way to proceed and having ensured

NLP
International
Conference
14 - 16 MAY 2021
www.nlpconference.com

Hosted by



Going virtual for 2021

that our conference presenters are happy and committed to present in a virtual environment, we have decided that the 2021 Conference will be a virtual conference using the combined technologies of Whova (our conference app) and Zoom.

There are many positive benefits to this which will make the conference even more accessible and give the opportunity to people who were unable to travel to London for health, personal safety, financial or other reasons the chance to experience some of the great influencers in the NLP community.

By using the Whova app, we intend to do the very best we can to create a virtual conference experience that will still be rich, motivational and inspirational for all who attend. Those who have attended the conference before will already know about our conference app and the many opportunities it offers, over and above a virtual Zoom experience! These include:

- 1** Networking – people come to the conference to meet other people and forge new friendships, renew acquaintances or exchange ideas and chat. The Whova conference app allows this to happen in the virtual environment through the use of some clever technology. In previous years, delegates have had the chance to use Whova to connect with other delegates and this is still available.
- 2** Exhibitors – one of the highlights of the 'in-person' conference is to be able to walk through the exhibitors in the refreshment area and check out the new products and services that are on offer. Again, the Whova app will allow you to interact with the exhibitors in a similar way and the good news is that there might be more of them to choose from!
- 3** Meet the presenters – our tech platforms will enable you to raise questions during sessions. Your question might get

We intend to create a virtual conference experience that will be rich, motivational and inspirational for all who attend



answered during the session or after, when the presenter gets a chance to review all the questions that have been asked.

- 4** Most significantly, a virtual conference allows us to record all the sessions – the ‘in-person’ conference only gives you the opportunity to see one presentation at a time and sometimes you would have liked to be in two places at once because the schedule has placed two presentations you want to see at the same time... it was impossible for us to do anything about this – until now!

The Virtual Conference ticket price includes ALL streams from ALL presenters for a period of six months after the Conference has ended! (Terms and Conditions apply.)

There will be differences to the way the conference has worked before and we will guide you as to how to get the best out of the virtual experience in the coming weeks and months.

We have also given due consideration to the programme. Whilst this remains largely unchanged from the original 2020 programme, the main differences are the timings of the days. These have been changed to ensure you have adequate breaks away from your screen *and* so that delegates from all over the world will have a chance to join the live presentations.

Connirae will be presenting from 12 noon (BST) on Friday 14th May, through to 8pm – with adequate comfort/rest breaks throughout the day.

The Saturday/Sunday programme has been redrafted and you can see this on the next two pages:

We have simplified the ticket prices for the virtual conference because it is so accessible and all delegates will have access to all the recordings. These tickets are available on the website at the Super Early price of only £180 (including VAT) for all 3 days.

We will continue to keep you informed as we continue to evolve our plans and make this the best NLP International Conference yet!

Finally, we will be back at the Radisson at London, Heathrow from 20th – 22nd May 2022 because there is no substitute for proper hugs... so keep those dates free too.



Connirae Andreas
will be presenting on
Friday 14th May 2021 from
12 noon through to 8pm
(BST)



SATURDAY 15th May 2021

	Stream 1	Stream 2	Stream 3	Stream 4	Stream 5	Stream 6
08:00 09:30	Melody Cheal Re-Organising your Internal Food Cupboard	Robbie Steinhouse Can Models and Theories Co-Exist?	Jeremy Lazarus Values: An Invaluable Tool	Leo Lobo Our Beliefs Were Born Before Us	Neil Wilkie The Relationship Paradigm	Andrea Bremner The Microbiome and its Link to Wellbeing
09:30 10:00	<i>Refreshment / Personal Break</i>					
10:00 11:30	Magdalena Bak-Maier The Route to Health and Success	Judith Lowe Somatic Intelligence	Michael Dunlop Tiny Ripples of Hope	Bernadette Bruckner Change your Questions, Change your Awareness and Consciousness	Evelina Dzimanaviciute NLP, Trauma and Laughter	Joe Cheal Re-sourcing Language
11:30 16:00	<i>Extended Refreshment / Personal Break</i>					
16:00 17:30	Robert Dilts & Mickey Feher Success Factor Modeling: Tools for the Future					
17:30 18:00	<i>Refreshment / Personal Break</i>					
18:00 20:00	Marilou Seavey Changing the Stuff in your Head	Ian McDermott The Dance of Being and Doing	Michael Hall Meta-States Model: Mindfulness to Modeling	Wendy Sullivan & Paul Field Mind-Scams: Who's in Charge?	Keshav Bhatt How To Build an Online Following That Buys your Services	Caitlin Walker Coding in the Moment

Correct at time of going to print. Please check www.nlpconference.com/the-programme for latest information.

All times based on BST

NLP
International
Conference
14 - 16 MAY 2021
www.nlpconference.com

NLP
AWARDS
SAT. 15 MAY 2021
www.nlpawards.com

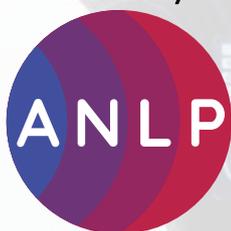


Going virtual
for 2021

SUNDAY 16th May 2021

	Stream 1	Stream 2	Stream 3	Stream 4	Stream 5	Stream 6
08:00 09:30	Phil Parker Advanced Work with NLP and Health	Julian Russell The Secret of Personal Transformation	Marian Way So, you'd like to become #DramaFree	Thabiso Mailula Dreams to Reality in Motion	Laura Toop Finding Meaning and Purpose in the Wake of Loss	Lizzi Larbalestier A Sea Change
09:30 10:00	<i>Refreshment / Personal Break</i>					
10:00 11:30	Continues...	Laura Spicer Expressing Excellence: Your Voice Power	Olive Hickmott The Elephants in the Classroom	Laura Payne-Stanley How Technology can Enable your Business to Thrive	Rita Aleluia NLP and Generative Parenting	Reb Veale mSpiralling
11:30 16:30	<i>Extended Refreshment / Personal Break</i>					
16:30 18:00	Ian Pitchford The Tao and NLP	Andrea Frausin How to Communicate with your Unconscious	Katie Raver Introduction to NightWalking	Colette Normandeau Spark your NLP Business Success	Anneke Durlinger There is More to Conflict than Meets the Eye	David Murphy Productivity: Great Meanings into High Performance
18:00 18:30	<i>Refreshment / Personal Break</i>					
18:30 20:00	Patricia Eslava Vessey Hypno-Kinesthetics	Jerry Seavey Timeshifting	Art Giser Energetic NLP: Free Yourself From Spiritual Cages Now	Mark Deacon & Wyatt Woodsmall They Want What We've Got, They Just Don't Know it Yet!	Deborah Epelman Systemic NLP as Human Evolution Tool	Kerry Nickols NLP and Agile: Swipe Right, it's a Match!

Hosted by



Can becoming a mum mess with your mind?



By Rachel Smith

'Mummy guilt' is discussed between many mum groups as a real, almost expected feeling, to be accepted when becoming a mum. I explore this concept from my view as a working mum and also as a coach and NLP practitioner



Pregnant for the first time, I was so often told, 'Nothing can prepare you for motherhood.' I thought that these people didn't know me very well! I was a senior manager in a large corporate company, I had worked hard for a career I loved and I planned everything about my return to full-time work before I left on maternity leave. I had no plans at all to let becoming a mum change that!

Fast forward 12 months and my original plans took a major U-turn. I had become a mum and my world had been turned upside down (and probably inside out too!). I felt the pull of 'mummy guilt' for leaving my son at nursery but also felt immense pressure to return to my career and provide financial support for my

Mums and the way we do business are revolutionising the economy

family. This feeling of guilt so often talked about between mums – is this a learned behaviour or does it come from within us, our DNA? Is it the 'maternal instinct' that gives mums that pull to want to be with their children or is it social pressure and history continually repeating itself?

This pull to be with my child led me to negotiate a part-time working contract in a role that kept me close to home and therefore closer to my son. But what happened was the career I loved now

became out of synch with where my purpose in life had shifted unexpectedly! I continued in the same role, trying desperately to continue at work 'as if I didn't have children' and do my best at home being a mum pretending not to have a career. I remember talking with a senior manager discussing my predicament and suggested more flexible ways of working, to which his reply was, 'Rach, you've committed career suicide... You need to choose if you want to progress or if you want to do all the "mum" things you talk about.' Walking away from that conversation I was shocked, distraught and so angry that the two things I loved weren't allowed to be combined. Do I choose to further my career or focus

more on my family? This memorable moment, about seven years ago now, was the moment I realised the prospect for mums and their careers was something that needed to change and I wanted to use my own story to help other mums make that happen. Does any of my story sound familiar to your career journey after becoming a mum? I now support mums to find career success, whilst also appreciating they are a mum and in this 21st century it is possible and can be done.

Seven years on, I've had son number two, progressed in my corporate career and developed a coaching career dedicated solely to working mums. Mums and the way we do business are revolutionising the economy, with more mums than ever using the internet to work from home, stay close to their children and have the flexible working they need to successfully run a family household and a career. From the many discussions I have had with working mums and my personal experience, why do mums still feel such guilt? Where is it coming from, but more importantly, how can we be kinder to ourselves and give ourselves a break!

As a mum, do you feel it's expected of you to be the primary carer to your children? Go back just a generation or two and my mum was able to take years away

from working to bring up my brother and me; my grandmother rarely worked at all. Only just over a century ago girls did not even have to go to school and were taught by the females in their family to look after the children and household.

These lifestyles and ways of bringing up children were very typical in the past, but what has changed? Women are now educated equally to men and this generation bringing up children are often needed to work to contribute to the family's finances. Women simply cannot afford to stay at home and bring up their children, but also many aspire to have successful careers. This can often lead to mums trying to fulfil the role of the main caregiver to their children whilst also having a successful career.

Every family does things differently, has different pressures and different ways of living but if any of my story, and the stories from many mums I work with, resonates with you, I have put together five tips to help mums alleviate the pressures we put upon ourselves whilst juggling our careers and family.

**It's OK to ask for help.
You have nothing to
prove to anyone**

Tip 1: Stop trying to do it all yourself

So often we are our own saboteurs! The past, the present, how our parents brought us up, it goes back generations. These learned behaviours that we may consciously or subconsciously copy often determine how we parent our children. But we are not our parents and we are living in a different environment to those who have parented before us. One thing that can be assured is that change is a constant and with the recent crisis our world as we know it is going to majorly change at a rapid pace.

Do you do the majority of the school runs, the cooking, the chores... are you the primary carer? I feel tired just thinking about it and you probably are too! What baby steps can you take today to start alleviating the pressure from yourself and sharing the load with others? It's OK to ask for help. So many mums feel like they have to 'prove' they can cope. You have nothing to prove to anyone.

See what happens when you step away and give others a chance to have an input into parenting. It might not be the way you would do it but, if it gives you less to do and spreads the responsibility, it's going to be a step in the right direction. ▶



Tip 2: Support others to co-parent

You cannot control others but you are in full control of you, what you do and how you react to situations. What can you do in the home to help others support more with the kids or do more around the home to share out the responsibilities?

Could you:

- Positively encourage others to do something they don't usually do
- Encourage the kids to go to others when they normally run to Mummy
- Allow 'your ways' to be flexible; others will never do it like you – because they are not you!
- Sit down and talk – do others know what you want to achieve at home and in your career?

You can also help turn the tide on parenting within your workplace by being supportive of men you work with and encourage them when parental responsibilities are discussed. Also support flexible working for both men and women.

Tip 3: Be confident in your abilities

Often as women we give ourselves a whole load of negative messages and we tell ourselves it's not OK to be outspoken or confident. But in an interview, we need to be prepared to 'sell' ourselves.

Be kind to yourself and tell yourself about all the things you do amazingly well; write a list and be able to see all your achievements. You'll then be more confident to articulate to your manager or potential employer how amazing you are and why *they* are lucky to have you!

As the world around us is evolving so quickly, so must our roles at home and at work continue to change

Tip 4: The stereotype of working women is not attractive – rephrase it!

Successful women and especially those who are mums can get a lot of criticism, funnily enough often from other women! Many mums have experienced it or know someone who has or have seen it in the media. Working mums, especially those in senior roles, are often called self-consumed, bossy, on a power trip, selfish. You can rephrase these comments and agree: 'Yes, I am clear on what I want to do and my purpose in life. I love to lead and feel successful and I do make time to focus on my own needs as I strongly believe a happy mum has happy kids.'

Let's support and celebrate our own and each other's successes, both at home and at work.

Tip 5: Stop trying to please everyone

If you try and please everyone, the chances are you will be pleasing no one

and you most certainly will not please yourself. You'll also not be making enough personal progress trying to constantly please others. Aim to step out of your comfort zone, make a change, however large or small, and go for it!

So, can becoming a mum mess with your mind? It certainly can change your outlook on life, but it's up to you whether you let it mess with your mind or strengthen it and open up new exciting opportunities.

As mums of the 21st century, I believe it is our responsibility to carve the way for future generations. Help others and ourselves to release the guilt and pressure that can come from trying to do it all. As the world around us is evolving so quickly, so must our roles at home and at work continue to change, allowing for the opportunity for mums to thrive in careers, whilst also being the mums they want to be. ■



Rachel Smith is a master practitioner in life coaching and focuses her online coaching business, Thriving Working Mums, on supporting working mums to thrive in a career whilst also appreciating and understanding they are also mums. After experiencing first-hand the struggles to thrive in a corporate career once having children, Rachel developed both short- and longer-term coaching programmes to help mums to be confident to 'lean in' in the corporate world and find balance between career success and life as a mum.

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How to sing in pitch

A modelling project



By Sarah Andrews

In this new series, we explore modelling projects undertaken by NLP professionals so we can learn both about the subject being modelled and the modelling approach taken.



Repeated rehearsal enables singers to have confidence in, and trust, their subconscious

INTRODUCTION

How do you sing in pitch? How do you know you are singing in pitch?

I love performing in the theatre, however I have always shied away from musicals and choirs because I held a strong belief that I was unable to sing in pitch.

As part of certifying as an INLPTA master practitioner, I had to undertake a modelling project which involved selecting a skill to learn or improve and finding three exemplars to model. I decided to model 'How to sing in pitch' to see if I could change my beliefs around singing and create a model that would be useful not only for me but for others as well.

With the presupposition 'Possible for the world, possible for me, it's just a question of how' firmly in my mind, I set off on my quest.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project involved understanding the main process chunks for singing in pitch and defining the strategy for knowing if the first note that is sung is in pitch.

The exemplars and I used the following two terms and defined them so we all had the same common understanding:

- Performance – singing to an audience
- Pitch – where the note being sung is one of the notes A to G and in the key in which you sing. The note is precise on the scale – not slightly above (sharp) or below (flat) the desired note.

THE EXEMPLARS AND CONTRAST

I chose three exemplars in the field of singing:

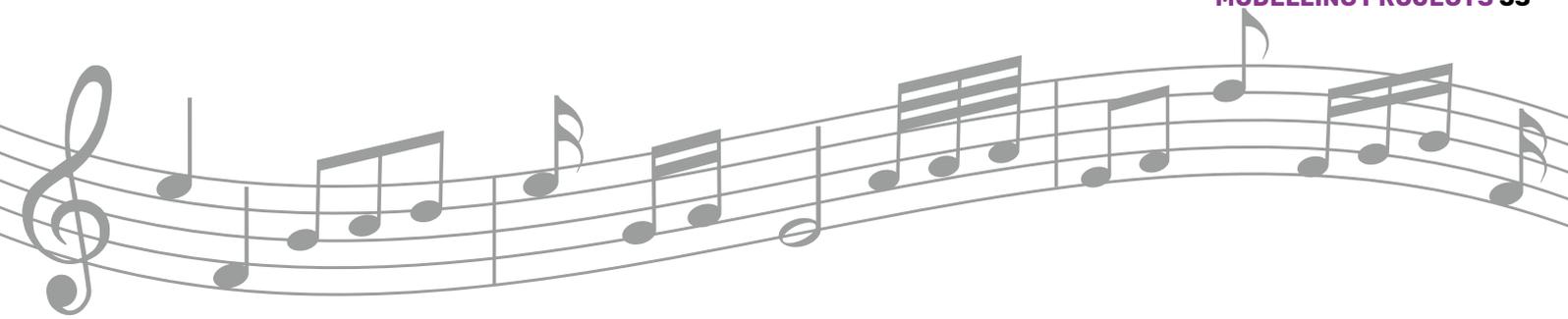
- A tenor at Winchester Cathedral and choir master for three Hampshire choirs
 - A professional soprano who is a classical vocalist and member of three choirs
 - A musical theatre actress and singing teacher.
- And one contrast subject for comparison:
- An actor who enjoys a sing-along to her favourite tunes.

The three exemplars are all professional singers who understand the term pitch, they can all sing in pitch and they know when they are not singing in pitch. All the exemplars have been trained to sing. There were three sessions per exemplar, all held in the same theatre.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

I observed all the exemplars when they sang 'as if' they were singing in a performance. I asked them to sing over and over and repeatedly questioned them about what they were doing and how they were doing it so I could capture the model and understand the strategy they used to know when they sang the first note in pitch. The exemplars all followed the same process, both in preparation to sing and when performing.

Below is the model, removing the idiosyncratic steps to a particular exemplar.



THE DETAIL OF THE MODEL

Warm-up and exercises

The warm-up consisted of an extensive full-body, face and lip warm-up before any sound was made. They all talked about the importance of warming up the body so it is as relaxed, open and free as possible. If they are not fully relaxed there will be tension felt in the body, resulting in voice strain, reedy notes and breathiness. They all demonstrated singing before and after a warm-up to show the difference.

Next each exemplar warmed up their vocal cords with humming, scales and breathing exercises which included big sighs and a range of vowel sounds up and down the scales. When questioned, they all said this is to warm up the vocal cords and also to test out the notes and sound quality. If the voice is not warmed up the voice becomes strained and reedy.

The exemplars spoke about how important it is to rehearse the song so it was in what they called their memory bank. They said if they haven't rehearsed then it takes them 'a few goes' to locate the right note from their memory and sing the song in pitch. The repeated rehearsal enables them to have confidence in, and trust, their subconscious to bring the 'right' notes up when they need them in performance. This allows them to stop focusing on the note so they can concentrate on storytelling and communicating with the audience.

Breathing

The exemplars continuously spoke about breathing and breath control – the sound only comes out beautifully as a result of good breath control. They all did a range of breathing exercises before making any sound.

They spoke about being aware of their diaphragm and the importance of controlling the airflow with the diaphragm to sing the notes clearly and in pitch. If the breath is not actively controlled by the diaphragm the voice will sound breathy and sharp or flat when the sound comes out.

Hydration

All the exemplars drank water during the warm-up and before singing. They explained it is key to keeping the vocal cords lubricated, otherwise sound quality is affected. They avoid coffee before performing as it affects the vocal cords and quality of sound.

Posture

The exemplars stressed how important it is to create enough space for the air and sound to flow through the body. They had a similar stance, standing with feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly relaxed, frame open with shoulders back, creating space for the air in their body, and head up so the voice projects up and out. They showed me different postures and the effect of lifting the soft pallet and changing the shape of the mouth and the difference it all makes to sound quality.

Be present

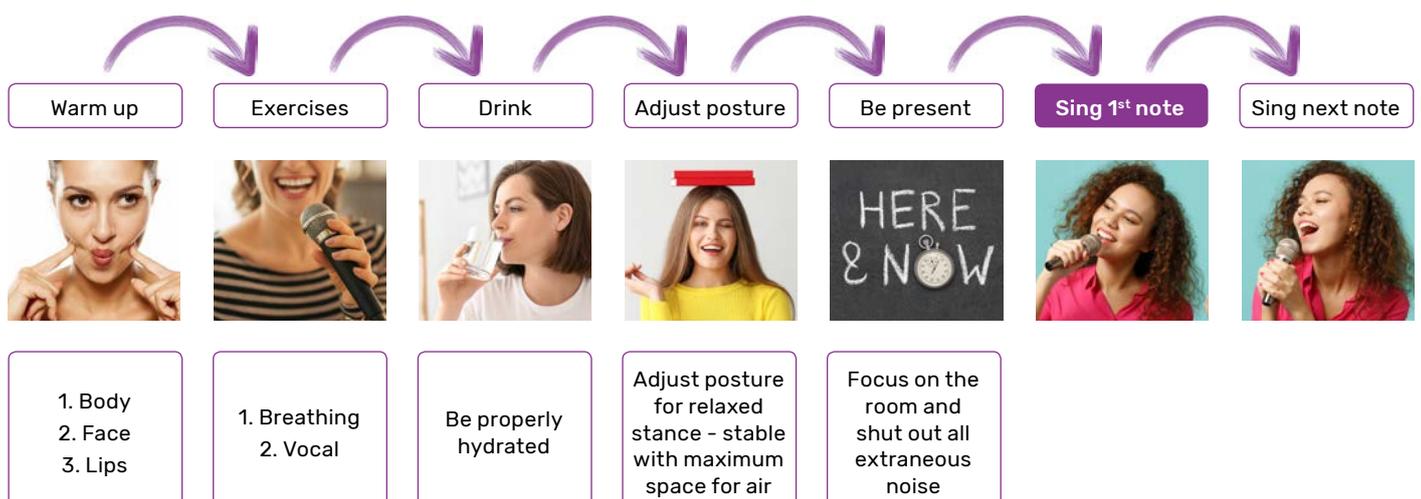
When performing all the exemplars focused 'in the moment' and were able to block out all unnecessary sounds around them (e.g. coughing, police sirens). They focus on the music (and conductor) so they know when to sing. They are aware of what they are feeling in their body at every moment to assess if they are carrying tension and whether they have enough breath to sing.

Singing the first note

Hearing the note in the introductory music is the start point, the trigger, for their strategy to sing the first note. They hold this note in their heads (repeating it in their heads) until they see the conductor indicate it is their turn to sing.

When they sing the note they are holding in their heads, they know whether they are in pitch (or not) if:

- The note they hear themselves sing feels right; then they sing the next note
- OR
- The note they hear themselves sing doesn't feel right, so they adjust their pitching and sing the next note.



The diagram below shows the exemplars' strategy for singing the first note in pitch. I have also noted the representational systems they accessed for each element of the strategy as it is key to know these for teaching the model and strategy on to others.

One of the key differences between what all my exemplars did, and my contrast did not, was that just before singing the first note, they all exhale fully and empty their lungs of air so that there is no air in the body. Then they inhale deeply right down into the belly so there is a full tank of fresh air. When I asked about this, they stated how important it is to have a full tank of fresh air, not just topped-up air, as the old air may be slightly stale and not support the voice. There were times they sang without enough air in their bodies and they ran out of support for their voice and the tone and quality changed as a result. This was one of the differences that made a *big* difference when they sang.

GIVING IT A GO

As part of the modelling process, I gave the model a go to try it on for size and sang Happy Birthday. I learned:

There was a definite difference in the sound quality before and after the warm-up exercises.

Without the warm-up my voice was breathy, reedy and out of pitch. I guessed the notes and the sound was not clear or pleasant (judging by the wince from the exemplars). The sound came from much higher in my throat, felt strained and I ran out of air very quickly.

When I did the warm-up my voice was clearer and stronger. I listened to the music a few times and familiarised myself with the start note and held that in my head. I felt a difference in my body when I had an open posture and controlled my diaphragm. Creating space in my body through my posture allowed me to take in more air. Lifting my soft pallet and opening my throat allowed the breath to flow with a cleaner sound and there was

space for the notes. I noticed the sound starting and resonating lower down in my throat and body (as opposed to talking which feels higher in the throat). Breathing out completely and then filling up with air down to my belly enabled me to hold the notes and sing longer phrases with control and clarity of sound. After practising and rehearsing the song, I could hear and feel when the first note was not 'right'.

EXPLORING SINGERS' MODEL OF THE WORLD

As part of the modelling process I explored the neurological levels and metaprogrammes of the exemplars in the context of singing. I gained more insight into their model of the world and how it influences how they sing. Understanding these helps with designing, chunking and sequencing how to train the model onto others.

Neurological levels

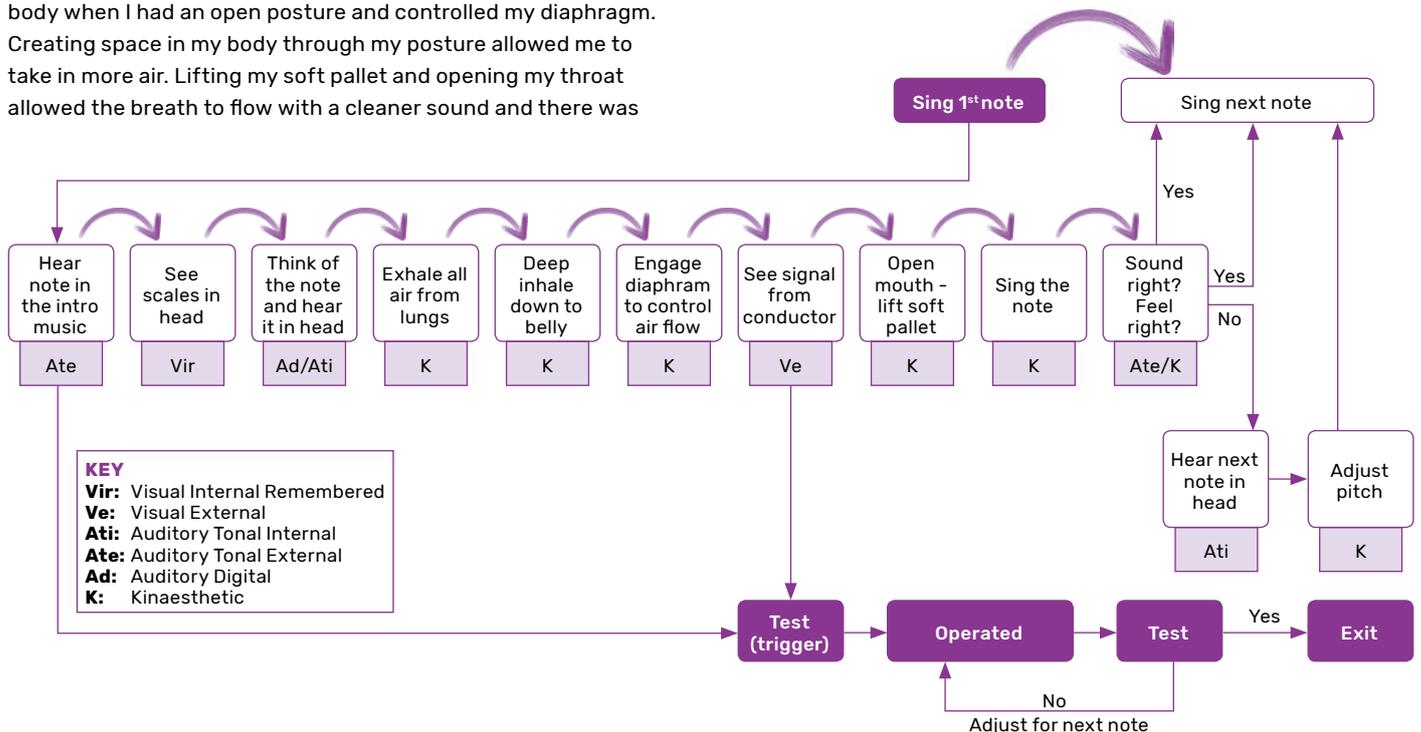
Purpose

The key purpose for the exemplars when they sing is to entertain the audience, to tell stories to others through music and feel part of a wider tradition communicating through song. They also talked about singing for themselves, having a sense of pleasure when they sing and being at their happiest when performing.

Identity

The exemplars all have the following sense of identity when they sing:

- I am powerful
- I am confident
- I am the best version of me.



They are aware of what they are feeling in their body at every moment

Values

All the exemplars mentioned the following as their top values in the context of singing:

- Freedom
- Creativity
- Feeling good about themselves
- Connection with others
- Communication.

Beliefs

The exemplars share these beliefs:

- Believe they can sing in pitch
- Believe they are good at singing.

Skills/capabilities

All the exemplars have the following capabilities:

- Focus on the present moment and block out all extraneous noise
- Hear musical notes outside and inside their heads
- Breath control when singing
- Interpret the music and tell a story through their singing
- Have good posture.

Behaviour

When they sing they:

- Warm up ensuring their body and voice are sufficiently prepared
- Trust their memory to remember the notes they need
- Relax
- Breathe.

Environment

Key elements about environment when singing:

- Temperature and air quality affect their voice and pitch
- They prefer singing later in the day when their voices have warmed up

- The room needs to have good acoustics so they can hear the sound ring and travel
- They sing best when they feel comfortable in their surroundings, with a welcoming audience and people they trust on stage.

Metaprogrammes

The exemplars all had a number of metaprogrammes in common in the context of singing.

- **Internal process:** *Intuitors* – awareness of the patterns in the music, the relationships of the notes and the music they sing.
- **Internal state:** *Feeling* – they associate into the music and put themselves into the shoes of the role they are playing. They pay attention to how it feels when they sing and take a subjective view to know whether they are in pitch or not.
- **Reason filter:** *Options* – they enjoy experimenting and improvising – none of them like to follow set procedures.
- **Action filter:** *Active* – they get on with practising, learning from mistakes so they continually tweak their singing and keep at it until they have it right for performance.
- **Time storage filter:** *In time* – they have the ability to associate quickly and easily into the now, particularly when performing (they were all also over 15 minutes late for every session!).
- **Frame of reference:** *Internal frame of reference* – they know whether they sing the right note because if it sounds wrong they notice a feeling inside themselves – they do not look for external checks first when they sing.
- **Chunk size filter:** *Global to specific* – they all need the bigger picture of the music they are singing and then go into the detail of the notes/character/feelings. When singing to an audience they are only aware of the bigger picture unless something goes wrong, then they go into the detail and focus on the notes.
- **Emotional stress response:** *Associated* into the music and their character when they sing.



Learning the basics

1. Presence
2. Hydration
3. Posture
4. Breath control
5. Scales
6. Notes

Warm up exercises

1. Body
2. Face
3. Lips
4. Breathing
5. Vocal cords



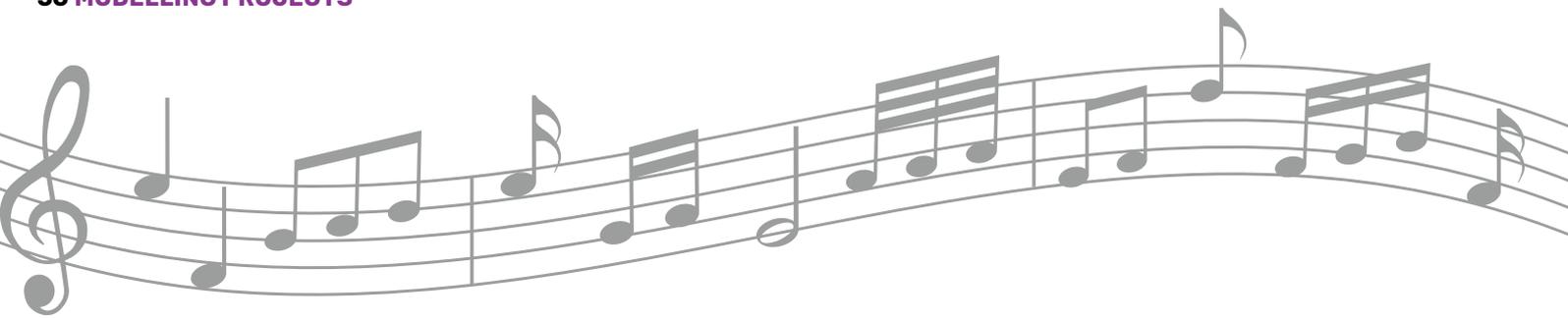
Singing practice

1. Listen to and rehearse singing notes
2. Notice what it sounds like and what you feel
3. Practise, practise, practise

What does it feel like

1. Creating space in the body
2. Effect of breathing
3. Hearing notes
4. Feelings in the body





DESIGN AND SEQUENCE FOR TRAINING

Below are the core elements to use as a starting point to create a more detailed training plan for installing the model:

- 1 A series of body warm-up exercises; teaches the difference between tension in the body vs relaxed muscles and frame
- 2 A range of facial warm-ups to relax the jaw, cheeks, lips including saying tongue twisters
- 3 A series of breathing exercises to prepare the lungs and frame for deeper breathing
- 4 Optimum posture and learning how different postures affect breathing and breath control
- 5 A range of exercises using different sounds, pushing air out over the vocal cords
- 6 Practise breathing out fully to expel all air and then a deep intake of breath into the belly to notice the difference in sound quality
- 7 Learn to focus on just the present moment, to practise listening for the note and watching for 'the signal' to sing
- 8 Practise listening to a note or series of notes and sing them over and over until the note is hit repeatedly and start to notice what you hear inside yourself and where you feel the sound

in the body. The aim is to feel when you hear the note sung correctly in the body. This will help teach you to have a felt sense of when you have hit the note or not for yourself, without seeking an external check.

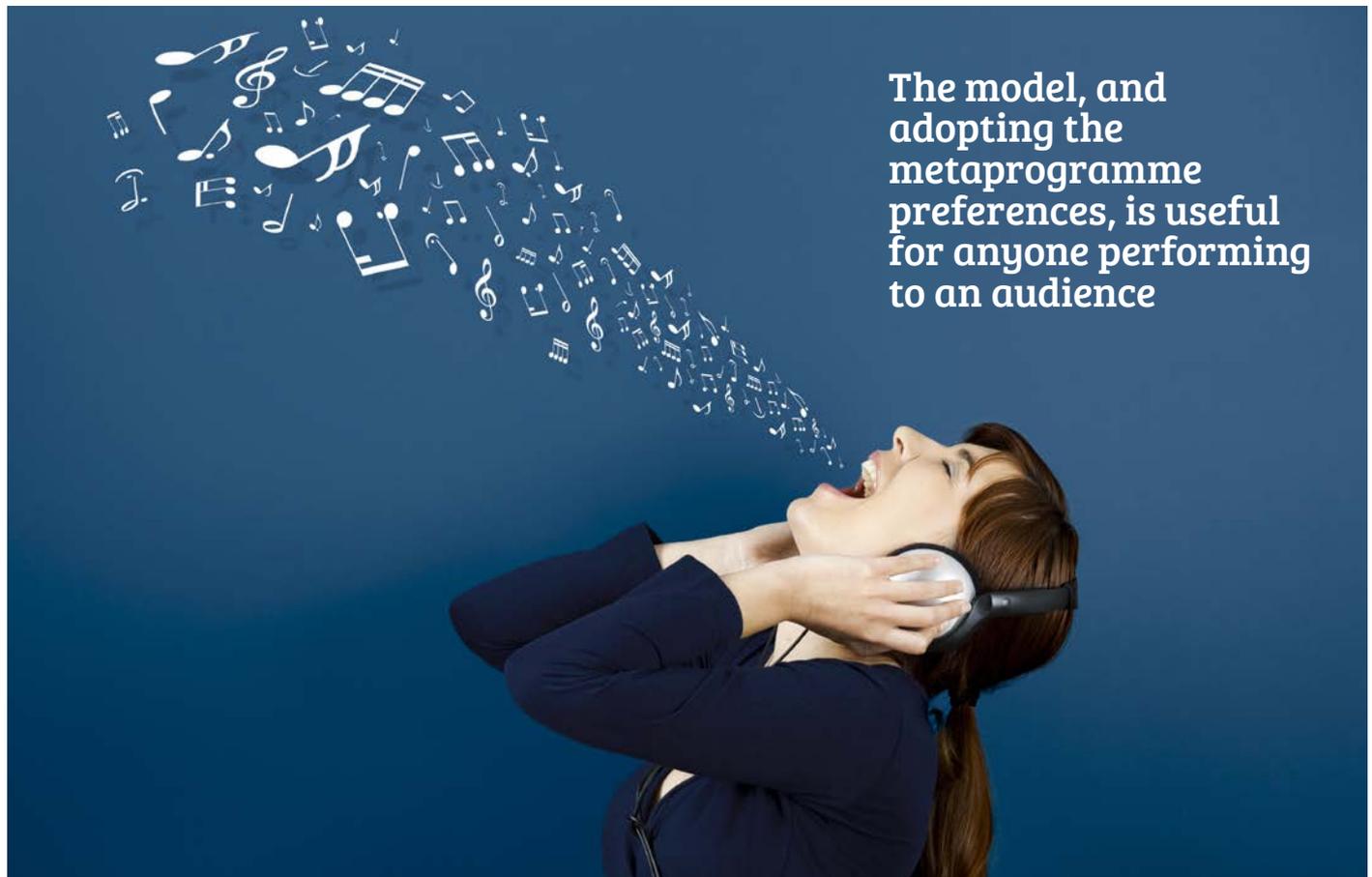
WHERE ELSE MIGHT THIS MODEL BE USEFUL?

My first modelling project was fascinating and the model itself has many other areas where it is useful.

The model, and adopting the metaprogramme preferences, is useful for anyone performing to an audience. The model can be used to prepare before going on stage, speaking in large meetings and for trainers, to prepare and warm up the body and vocal cords ensuring that the voice is strong and carries. I have used it many times now when training and the difference in my own voice quality and tone is greatly improved.

CONCLUSION

I really enjoyed this project and I learnt a lot about how valuable modelling is. I continue to use it in my work as a coach and a trainer. In the meantime, I am starting singing lessons and once we are out of lockdown I am going to audition for a musical! ■



The model, and adopting the metaprogramme preferences, is useful for anyone performing to an audience

Sarah Andrews is a trained coach, an INLPTA NLP master practitioner and NLP trainer (certified by Dr Wyatt Woodsmall), a certified mBIT coach and a member of the ICF and ANLP. With over 25 years' project and change management experience in a variety of sectors and corporate organisations, Sarah has a wealth of experience in how to effect both personal and professional change. For more information contact: sarah@spiralchange.co.uk; www.spiralchange.co.uk.

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