

THE MAGAZINE FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

# rappoort

23

SPRING 2011

## Dr Chris Steele

From surgery  
to TV

The  
**Big Society**  
and NLP

**Modelling  
resilience**

**Frank Pucelik**  
Thirty years of  
third man out

**Debate**  
The nature  
of change

AVAILABLE BY SUBSCRIPTION £3.50 WHERE SOLD

- 4 Debate**  
The nature of change
- 8 Basic NLP**  
Perseverance works
- 9 Professional Development**  
Positively seething with rage
- 10 NLP**  
Frank Pucelik
- 14 NLP & Relationships**  
Relating through difference
- 18 Lifestyle**  
Using NLP for a smooth move
- 20 Education**  
Teaching students with special needs
- 22 International**  
India
- 24 Celebrity**  
Dr Chris Steele
- 26 Coaching**  
Sensory acuity (and rapport)

- 28 Health**  
Unlocking children's potential
- 32 NLP**  
Modelling resilience
- 36 NLP**  
Internal politics
- 38 Business**  
The Big Society and NLP
- 40 ANLP**  
Our new website
- 42 Trainings & Workshops**  
Reveal Solutions
- 44 Diary**
- 47 Book Reviews**
- 48 Author Interview**  
David Molden and Pat Hutchinson
- 50 ANLP News**
- 52 Regional Groups**
- 54 Endnote**  
The duty of care in provocative work



24



36



38



10



18



28



Publisher - Karen Moxom

**Welcome to another packed issue of Rapport.**

At last, we have had some sunshine and the first signs of Spring are here for all to see – it's my favourite season and I love seeing the daffodils and tulips making their colourful appearance in March.

Spring, for me, signifies a time for change, and Andy has chosen this as the thought provoking debate topic for this issue (p4). Talking about change, it has been 'all change' for the ANLP website this Spring. Our very own Claire Sweeney updates us all about those changes on page 40.

This time of year is often when our thoughts turn to moving, and having recently moved herself, Eve has applied her NLP to the art of successful moving (p19). Do let us know if there are any other specific applications of NLP you would like to read about in future issues.

Of course, moving will be dependent on the current economic climate, and Michael Deval shares his own experiences of the 'Big Society', working with the unemployed, on page 38.

A chance conversation with Grahame Morgan-Watson resulted in his observations about the congruency of decisions (p36) – how interesting, and co-incidental, that he should relate this to politics!

We feature some fascinating characters in this issue – Frank Pucelik, NLP's 'third man', speaks up after thirty years of silence (p10) and Dr Chris Steele, more renowned for his appearances on daytime TV, outlines some of the challenges he has had to face (p24).

Prepare to be inspired by Cait's wonderful education feature, about accessing the full potential of adult learners with special needs (p20). Enjoy part two of Joe Cheal's relationship feature, relating through difference (p14) – I am pretty certain we can all identify with some aspect of this article!

I will leave you to get on and read this issue and I'll wish you all a Happy Easter – enjoy the raft of bank holidays we have coming up in the next couple of months!

**Karen**

**Editorial Team:**  
Caitlin Collins, Andy Coote, Eve Menezes Cunningham  
Judy Rees admin@anlp.org, 020 3051 6740

**Art Editor:** Enzo Zanelli

**Advertising:** Nicola Andrews  
advertising@anlp.org, 020 3384 3217

**Membership, subscriptions and back issues:**  
members@anlp.org, 020 3051 6740

**Publisher:** Karen Moxom vision@anlp.org 020 3051 6740

**Company Reg No.** 05390486

**Phoenix Publishing Ltd** Room 11, Apsley Mills Cottage,  
Stationers Place, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP3 9RH

**Rapport** published by **Phoenix Publishing** on behalf of **ANLP**.  
[www.anlp.org](http://www.anlp.org)

**Design:** Square Eye Design  
[www.squareeyedesign.co.uk](http://www.squareeyedesign.co.uk)



# Relating Through Difference

By Joe & Melody Cheal

Countering the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse in Relationships.

“ Successful couples seek the positive in one other and in each other’s positions, perspectives and personality ”



## The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

A couple sit and discuss an issue which has been causing friction between them. As to the content of the issue, you might add your own example here. Perhaps he isn't doing his fair share around the house. Perhaps she is spending a lot of time with her friends. In this instance, the couple are in the honeymoon phase of their relationship and what they probably don't realise is that how they go about exploring this issue will likely determine the status of their relationship in five years time.

In an extraordinary series of studies John Gottman, a social psychologist, has been

able to consistently predict the long term condition of a couple's relationship. By observing just five minutes of how the couple interact when discussing an issue, Gottman and his team have a 91% success rate at predicting whether the couple will still be together in five years time.

It appears that one of the most critical factors in a successful relationship is how a couple handles difference (e.g. of opinion, perspective and/or personality). In his book, *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail*, Gottman (\*1) highlights a series of behaviours that appear when a relationship is less likely to succeed in the long term. He calls these

the 'Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse': stonewalling, defensiveness, criticism and contempt.

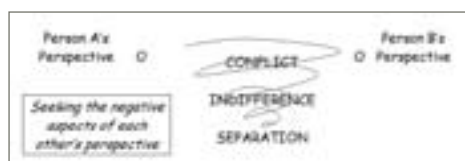
Stonewalling is about avoidance; certain topics become off limits so we don't talk about them. Defensiveness is linked to apprehension; not taking responsibility and by implication wanting to blame someone else. Criticism is about antagonism; attacking the other party overtly. Defensiveness and criticism are usually two sides of the same coin, where one side wants to attack and the other side parries. Contempt is about aversion and is considered to be the worst and most poisonous horseman. Here we

## “Gottman and his team have a 91% success rate at predicting whether the couple will still be together in five years time”

are in the realms of insults, name-calling, sarcasm, hostility and cynicism; and according to Gottman the body language of contempt includes sneering and eye rolling. As an aside, if all this sounds like classic teenager-to-parent behaviour, is it possible that they are going through a phase of psychologically ‘divorcing’ from their parents in a quest for independence?

If the four horsemen are in place, there appears to be a degree of ‘learned helplessness’ that may set in which creates a new level of stonewalling and avoidance. Here, either one of the couple (usually the male apparently) will tend to avoid issues by shutting down completely or leaving the scene. It is as if they are caught in a double-bind of ‘damned if I say anything, damned if I don’t’. And so the couple move from difference to indifference.

In simple terms, in the face of difference, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse ride in when the couple can only see the negative of each other’s perspectives/personality. And so they spiral down in conflict, indifference and then perhaps divorce.



### Successful Couples and the Counter Horsemen

Do successful couples argue? Of course they do, but Gottman also found that successful couples tend to have a ratio of at least five good experiences to one bad. Good experiences might include positive interactions like hugs, cuddles, a genuine “I love you”, kind words, compliments, gifts, doing things together and talking about joint interests.

Something that Gottman alludes to but does not pull together into a model (like the ‘Four Horsemen’) is the positive spin. What is the model for successful couples? How do they handle difference?

According to Steve Andreas (\*2), “Fritz Perls

used to say that: ‘Contact is the appreciation of differences’ – in contrast to seeing differences as bad.” In our own workshops, we have introduced the four counter-horsemen of awareness, acceptance, appreciation and admiration. As well as providing a direct counter for each of Gottman’s horsemen, these act like levels that couples transcend as they face and resolve their differences.

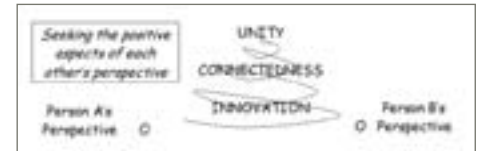
The first level, awareness is about acknowledging that there is an issue and being prepared to discuss it rather than avoiding it. The second level, acceptance is about staying open to our partner’s perspective and knowing that it is more productive to listen than it is to get defensive. The next level, appreciation is about valuing the fact that our partner can be and do different things to us and instead of criticising them, we understand that this is useful to the relationship. We may even praise the fact that they do certain things better than we do ourselves. The final level, admiration, is where we see our difference as a part of relationship excellence. We seek to find integration between opposing positions and to create synergy rather than contempt.

In “The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work”, Gottman (\*3) suggests that: “fondness and admiration are antidotes for contempt. If you maintain a sense of respect for your spouse, you are less likely to act

disgusted with him or her when you disagree. So fondness and admiration prevent the couple from being trounced by the four horsemen.”

Successful couples seek the positive in one other and in each other’s positions, perspectives and personality. When faced with difference they seek synthesis and synergy and by doing so spiral upwards through innovation, connectedness and unity.

According to Michael Hall (\*4), synergy is part of the self-actualisation process which “operates as an integrative process of opposites and polarities.” As we self-actualise, distinctions and differences disappear. The relationship becomes greater than the sum of its parts and together, we can achieve things we could never have achieved independently.



On one level, it is as simple this... when we see the negative/disadvantages of each other’s position, we will likely fall into conflict. When we see the positive intentions/advantages, we transcend from (i.e. ‘end the trance/illusion of’) difference into innovation and connection.

Gottman’s Horseman	Behaviours	The Counter Horsemen	Behaviours
<b>Contempt (Aversion)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eye rolling</li> <li>• Sarcasm</li> <li>• Insults</li> </ul>	<b>Admiration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show interest &amp; respect</li> <li>• Encourage &amp; extol virtues</li> <li>• “Difference is excellence”</li> </ul>
<b>Criticism (Antagonism)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criticising</li> <li>• Attacking</li> <li>• Generalising (eg. always, never)</li> </ul>	<b>Appreciation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback &amp; praise</li> <li>• Show support</li> <li>• “Difference is useful”</li> </ul>
<b>Defensiveness (Apprehension)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making excuses</li> <li>• Defending oneself</li> <li>• Countering (yes, but)</li> </ul>	<b>Acceptance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay open</li> <li>• Listen</li> <li>• “Difference is okay/good”</li> </ul>
<b>Stonewalling (Avoidance)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topics become ‘off limits’</li> <li>• Changing subject</li> <li>• Withdrawing and ignoring</li> </ul>	<b>Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in dialogue</li> <li>• Acknowledge difference</li> <li>• “There is difference”</li> </ul>

### ► Applications

In terms of practical applications, when you are faced with difference, you might explore the following steps:

- 1) Seek to hold a positive internal representation of your partner (e.g. that they are resourceful, loving and loveable).
- 2) Get clear about what they really want. Listen to your partner's position and seek the positive intentions (benefits): What would they get by achieving their goal?
- 3) Reflect the positive aspects back to them (in part to demonstrate understanding).
- 4) Be clear about what you really want. Put forward your position and the positive intentions (benefits) of your own position: What would you get by achieving your goal?
- 5) Then (rather than trying to make one side better than the other) seek a solution that accounts for the positive aspects of both positions.



The four horsemen of the apocalypse and the counter horsemen are also relevant within a work environment. Dysfunctional relationships and teams follow the same

model through avoidance, apprehension, antagonism and aversion. However, high performing teams seem to work the other way. Team members seek to discuss issues,

welcoming difference and diversity as roads to innovation and progress. As they spiral upwards through the levels, they accept, appreciate and then admire differences in the team. When you hear someone from a high performance team talking about a fellow team member it is usually respectful and complimentary.

## “Admiration is where we see our differences as part of relationship excellence”

And so we might consider a 'high performance' relationship one in which couples will talk about their partner in very positive ways, openly discussing what they appreciate and admire (particularly when their partner is not there). How many couples do you know who do this? As long as this is done with an awareness of the audience (i.e. not overly sycophantic!) it provides a refreshing change from those that moan about their supposed loved ones.

Listen to yourself when you talk to and about your partner. Notice your body language when you are with them. As long as it is ecological to do so (i.e. doesn't harm you or others in any way), seek to find the positives in who they are, what they do and what they want. What do you appreciate in your partner? What do you admire about them?

And, of course, remember to tell them from time to time! ■



### References

- \*1) **Gottman, J.M.** (2007) "Why Marriages Succeed or Fail" Bloomsbury
- \*2) **Andreas, S.** (1991) "Virginia Satir: The Patterns of Her Magic" Real People Press (p.53)
- \*3) **Gottman, J.M.** (1999) "The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work" Three Rivers Press (p.65)
- \*4) **Hall, L.M.** (2007) "Unleashed!" NSP (p.203)

### About the Authors

**Joe and Melody Cheal** have been working with NLP since 1993 and married since 1994. As well as being Master Trainers of NLP, they are also partners in the GWiz Learning Partnership [www.gwiztraining.com](http://www.gwiztraining.com) transforming people and businesses through the fields of personal, professional, leadership and organisational development.

Joe holds an MSc in Organisational Development and Neuro-linguistic Technologies and a degree in Philosophy and Psychology. He is also the editor of Acuity.

Melody holds an MSc in Applied Positive Psychology and a degree in Psychology.

# Using NLP for a...

By Eve Menezes Cunningham

**W**e all know that even the most longed for move can be stressful. But there are lots of things you can do to make things go as smoothly as possible.

## Use visualisation to help manifest the home / office you want

Before you even begin looking online, through the papers and at estate agents, get clear about what you want. Jot down everything that you want in your new home or office. Create a complete wish list. If others are moving with you, get them involved. What would make it an ideal move for everyone involved?

Once you've got everything on paper, decide what's an Absolute Must and what's Desirable. This will save you lots of time when it comes to actually viewing properties. It will also help you all focus on the positives of your move at those times when you may be feeling less than positive about the whole thing.

## Create well formed outcomes (and keep them in mind no matter how frustrating things get)

"I've moved at least ten times," says Olivia. "Once, the outgoing people, who decided to save money by hiring a van, still had their stuff inside. In all the rooms, naturally. Our stuff was on the pavement (our removal bods were not happy) and it started to rain. When my partner moved, the removal van did not show up. I had to collar my son and a builder I know and hire a van in the space of an hour. I've moved to places where there were mouldy vegetables in the larder, all the lightbulbs had been taken and in our last house, the ladder to the loft. It was purpose built, so no good to anyone."

Allow extra time and money for everything so when unexpected hiccups and emergencies occur, you're not completely thrown. Prepare for the unexpected not by imagining all the possible ways things could go wrong but by anticipating that not everything will go according to plan. And remember, it's not personal.

## “Move on a school day so you have children out of the house”

- Camilla

## Be flexible and pay attention to the feedback you're getting from the world

Sam's worst move was one she attempted to oversee from Los Angeles where she was working. Having paid "through the nose for an expensive company to come in and wrap everything down to the last teabag in my London abode" she did her best to relax and concentrate on her work.

"On the moving day itself I received a call from my buyers telling me all of my furniture was in the middle of the road and that she had witnessed neighbours having a rummage through my underwear drawer. Lesson learnt: always be in situ to direct the move."

Her best move was "One I organised myself, from the UK to France. After several moves, I'd finally learnt: discard what you'll never use again before the move." Having sold and donated books, furniture and other things, Sam "slimmed down my belongings to the things I genuinely needed. It was very difficult. I was surprised how attached and emotional I was towards inanimate objects. But whenever I'm in a conundrum about life, I always think about my motto of that moving period. 'Simplify.'"

## Get organised

"Having moved 10 times in the last decade, I advise keeping a list of everywhere that needs your address," says Anne. "Bank, utilities, council, TV license, DVD rental, any online retail sites you use like Amazon (so you don't accidentally post stuff to your old address) and everyone you have to tell when you move. This way, you won't have to spend ages remembering them all every time (as you will forget some). Use [iammoving.com](http://iammoving.com) to generate letters, it's really useful."

"If you've got kids," adds Camilla, "Move on a school day so you have children out of the house."

What other things can you streamline just by being that bit more organised?

## Future pace to help make good decisions

"We had a spectacular disaster last time we moved," says Alan. "The day after we'd exchanged contracts





(and agreed to sell our kitchen equipment to our purchasers) our basement - which included the kitchen - was flooded to a depth of five feet.

"Suddenly the door from the lightwell burst open and the whole two rooms flooded. I and my neighbour were up to our necks in fast-moving water. It was scary (even more so in retrospect: our son was just 2 and could easily have been in a highchair in the kitchen, and if the neighbour hadn't warned us we wouldn't have known).

"We lost the cooker, fridge, washing machine, tumble drier and lots of other stuff, much of which we'd already sold to our purchasers. The house was uninhabitable, with no kitchen, electricity or central heating - all damaged by the flood. We had a 2 year old and Joan was two months pregnant. We stayed with a neighbour that night and with Joan's parents for the next couple of weeks while the debris was removed and the house dried out."

All this sounds unimaginably unlucky – especially for London. But for as much peace of mind as possible, look into all your insurance possibilities and make sure you're covered for all eventualities.

### Think about what you can do to support yourself

While some people would find moving every 10 years too frequent, others seemingly effortlessly move twice a year.

Stu Campbell, MD of Fire PR ([www.fire-pr.com](http://www.fire-pr.com)) has become an expert mover. As well as moving offices twice last year he has also

## “Discard what you'll never use again before the move”

moved house four times in the last six years. And the last move combined his and his partner's into one so effectively, he moved two house on the same day.

If you're the type who likes to get settled, keep reminding yourself that once you're settled in, this can be your home or office for as long as you want. In the meantime, think about the people you know who thrive on change. Are there some strategies of theirs that you could adopt? Just for the months of your move?

### Here are Stu's top tips:

- Get good quality packing materials - makes it so much easier and saves breakages
- If moving yourself invest in a small trolley
- ONLY use a reputable 'man and van' company or a removal firm
- Courier companies will often do removals (as long as everything is packed and you book a large enough van to take the load)
- Label everything and put lists on the outside of boxes
- Be realistic about timeframe – don't try to rush it. Allow "down time" or "time off"
- Cleaning is easier if the property is empty – often best to have a professional deep clean
- Set up key utilities before you move in – such as internet, phone etc.

"Have a clear out before you move," adds Olivia. "That will save moving junk from loft to loft. If you can afford it, get a packing service. Don't bother stressing over little things that are missing/aren't right when you move in. If you have little ones, give them a list of jobs to do so they feel involved. Much better than them getting under your feet. Get someone to look after your animals for the day if you can. Dogs and cats find moving as stressful as we do. Take cash out for movers' tips."

### Get yourself into a resourceful state

"Nothing makes it easier to get unpacking than by starting with a fortifying cup of tea," says Lynley. "Put essentials in a box clearly marked ESSENTIALS. These are kettle, cups, tea, coffee, biscuits."

What other things help you feel relaxed? Can you fit in a mini meditation or a little exercise that your body will thank you for (lugging furniture and boxes may be essential but a little yoga or gentle stretching will help you centre yourself and avoid injury)?

And most of all, be gentle with yourself. Everyone finds moving stressful to some degree. Just remember, it will all be worth it. ■

# Dr Chris Steele

## From the surgery to TV

By Eve Menezes Cunningham

**D**r Chris Steele still seems surprised to have gone from talking to one person for ten minutes to reaching millions through *This Morning* and other TV slots.

He was recently awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Guild of Health Writers and remains modest about all the people he's helped keep healthier.

Dr Steele always wanted to be a doctor but never imagined he'd spend so much time on TV. "I was Richard and Judy's GP when I first started on *This Morning* but that wasn't the only reason. I've been qualified over 40 years. 30 years ago, I did work to help people stop smoking and became recognised as an international expert on smoking cessation.

"Apparently, they'd tested several doctors and eventually asked the producers, 'Have you tried our GP?' Their producers were like, 'Who the hell...?' but I had television experience. Once I was on national TV, patients never questioned what I did. That was a change I noticed. My patients would be boasting, 'That's my GP!'"

At the Guild of Health Writers Awards, Dr Chris mentioned the long struggle before he was allowed to show women how to check themselves for possible breast cancer. The pink ribbon climate we know today didn't exist and there was a lot of resistance. But once he was allowed to do a segment, the phone lines were flooded with grateful callers. Still, he says, it took a really long time before he was allowed to show men how to check themselves for potential signs of testicular cancer.

"You've just got to dig your heels in," he says. "Because I was working in smoking cessation, I ran two very big smoking clinics here in the teaching hospital in Manchester. I was teaching them long before nicotine gum came out. I started prescribing it even though we were told it couldn't be prescribed on the NHS. They cut the cost of these prescriptions off my salary. I ended up in a tribunal against Norman Fowler, then Secretary of State. I won, he appealed and I won the



**“That was a difficult time. Dogged determination got me through”**

appeal. That was a difficult time. Dogged determination got me through. I disagreed completely. I'm a Geordie. We can be quite obstinate. That was a major challenge which dragged on for years.

"My next big one was *This Morning*. I've been on 21 years now since first day but at first, I was terrified doing live television phone ins. If a fashion expert makes a mistake, it doesn't matter. But giving medical advice, you can't make a mistake. You don't know what they're going to ask or have their medical notes."

Apart from the births of his four children, Dr Steele says getting his MBE a few years ago has been his biggest highlight. "Visiting the Queen. That was awesome, that was. Don't ask what she said to me - I can't remember. Apparently, that's quite common. Getting the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Guild of Health Writers was another highlight.

Getting Health Writer of the Year a few years ago. Qualifying as a doctor, getting married, doing *This Morning* and beating the government."

Of his four children, one is a musician and another is an athlete. "My wife's a nurse. We said to them, 'What do you like

doing? If that gives you enjoyment and you can put a roof over your head and food on your table, you're very lucky.' And both my sons are doing that."

Dr Steele was recently diagnosed with Coeliac Disease. "Coeliac disease means you're reacting to gluten," he says. "You can't tolerate it. Therefore you have to go onto a strict gluten free diet for life. Gluten is hidden in wheat and wheat products. Bread, pizza, pasta, pastries, cakes, biscuits but also unexpectedly in fish fingers, sausages and things like that. I'm 65 so for 64 years I was eating normally and then you've got to change those eating habits. You've got to. If you don't you get the stomach aches. I was very aware of what coeliac can do.

"At first, the specialist thought it was IBS so I got treatment for IBS and didn't get any better. I don't have IBS. The specialist did blood tests





and a biopsy so my message is, if you're diagnosed with IBS and given treatment and not improving after a couple of months, go back to the doctor and ask about possible diagnosis of coeliac disease. It's a very simple blood test for coeliac – tTG blood test.

"The odd thing is that I've been the Ambassador for Coeliac UK for four years. I'm going to resign from sexually transmitted diseases!" he joked. He is also a patron for charities raising awareness about bowel cancer and meningitis as he likes to use his high profile to raise awareness and, hopefully, save lives.

"Before you go to the doctor, write down the questions you want to ask. If you're getting results, take someone with you. They might be saying you've got a tumour and you need someone there who can

**“ The more you learn  
the more you realise  
you don't know ”**

what he wished he'd known when he was first starting out as a doctor, he said, "I wish I'd known a lot more medicine. OK, you've done the medical course, five or six years, and think you know it all: Going from being a student to a respected member of society. But you know nothing at all. The more you learn the more you realise you don't know." ■

take in what's being said. Ask your doctor to write down results."

When I asked

Find out more about Dr Chris at [www.thefamilygp.com](http://www.thefamilygp.com) Learn more about Coeliac UK at [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk)  
Read Coeliac Disease: What you need to know (Sheldon, £7.99, out in May) by Alex Gazzola (with a Foreword by Dr Steele).

# If we Grow Together We Grow Stronger

By Reb Veale

**J**udging by the number of conversations on a theme that have cropped up between myself, friends and colleagues recently, I have drawn the conclusion that we are at a frontier in the world of NLP training. Our world is facing all manner of challenges and opportunities – environmental catastrophes, the economic situation, nation's struggle for democracy, the concept of the 'Big Society' etc. So, what place does NLP training have in today's world and, for that matter...

**“ So, what place does NLP training have in today's world and, for that matter... tomorrow's? ”**

tomorrow's? I once heard John Grinder say it would be criminal if NLP training remained exactly the same as it originally was in the early days of the nascent study.

Whilst watching a TV programme recently, where a celebrity 'trouble shooter' was seeking to revolutionise the practise of selling houses, I noticed a very brief reference to the 'tired and shonky sales training' the estate agents had previously received; illustrated by a few PowerPoint slides with VAK accompanied by some stock emoticon clip art. It was a stark reminder to me how NLP training is sometimes reduced to a clichéd 30 minute session of 'look in the eyes, not around the eyes, you're under'- type pressure sales and manipulation technique training. How sad and infuriating, all at the same time.

This, for me, underlines the crucial need to distinguish between simply training students in 'tricks' and engaging their minds, hearts and attitudes through sharing the underpinning principles of NLP, or as Wyatt Woodsmall puts it, 'training NLP strategists, not just technicians'. The exciting aspect is that there is a genuine groundswell in the NLP community towards more meaningful and sustainable training. In a recent thread on

the ANLP LinkedIn discussion forum, Marie Faire highlighted the need for us as trainers to ensure that our students are aware of the boundaries of safe practise, as created by the appropriate combination of competence, confidence and ecology.

In the Sunday Times recently, an article understandably examining wasteful spending in UK local authorities, referred conspicuously to the 'waste' of 400 council employees being trained in 'controversial neurolinguistic programming techniques popularised by television hypnotist Paul McKenna' (Rayment, Henry & Flynn, ST 13.2.11). To be clear, I am not criticising the writers' conclusions, the council's spending strategy or the training itself; more so, I lament the all-too-common



misconceptions that seep into the public arena through online discussion fora and articles that appear to arrive at the 'cult-like, snake oil salesman' conclusions about NLP through no direct experience of NLP training itself, rather from well-publicised horror stories that linger in the public's consciousness. Time to redress the balance then.

A quick search engine foray into 'NLP training courses' will proffer a dizzying array of advertised programmes in many widely varying



## “ there is a genuine groundswell in the NLP community towards more meaningful and sustainable training ”

formats and lengths. There are 'intensive' 7 day Practitioner trainings (albeit, my own students report that our longer trainings are somewhat intensive too!), comprehensive 16 to 24 day Practitioners, trainings held on consecutive days, spread over four or five modules, or over a weekend per month for a year. Of course, my own company's trainings reflect a format that I believe supports the widest combination of learning preferences effectively to achieve the professional standards to which I subscribe, but even more importantly; I uphold the provision of choice for the prospective Practitioner. Fortunately, forward-thinking colleague trainers such as Judith Lowe, John Field and others have researched and created some genuinely useful guides to help the public make the best decision for their own training.

How do we support students before and during training – again, the variety may lead to confusion. Some trainers offer audio CDs of previous trainings as preparation, or suggested reading lists of such trusted classics as the NLP Workbook by Joseph O'Connor or last year's excellent NLP Principles in Practice by Lisa Wake. And of course, there are sets of integration questions, which are bemoaned and triumphantly celebrated in equal measure and which guide the Practitioner student's research, lend structure to their learning and provide evidence of their journey from theoretical overwhelm commonly at the outset to behavioural and attitudinal integration by certification.

What many of our own students are increasingly interested in at the point of first enquiry is the demonstrated relevance of their Practitioner or Master Practitioner experience and qualification to their job role, their career aspirations or to their life in general. Here, I am increasingly grateful to the generosity of our previous students for remaining happy to discuss their experience with prospective students, as well as having gratitude to colleagues in the NLP community who share their research studies and applications focus.

Sally Vanson's work to provide a university

accredited pathway for NLP and coaching courses is an example of how the community of NLP training providers are not now waiting expectantly for people to take NLP seriously, but are proactively mapping course content and outcomes to existing competency and academic frameworks to drive standards even further. The more we 'talk the same language' as the individuals, companies and organisations that we train and enable them to understand the everyday relevance of NLP training, the less 'contentious' it will be deemed (notwithstanding some NLPers who clearly enjoy the mismatching agenda!).

I wonder how many of us have attended management or leadership development, or business training courses in assertiveness, communication skills, coaching, teambuilding, managing performance and have found ourselves thinking 'this is undercover NLP'? Whilst I can completely understand the decision to sometimes delay 'labelling' content explicitly as NLP at the consultancy stage to avoid uninformed prejudice creating an unnecessary barrier; I firmly believe in crediting fields of study appropriately, whether this is within applied training or within a Practitioner training, where an expert, modeller or another field is due credit.

If being too embarrassed to espouse NLP principles in training and pretending that NLP is some kind of omnipotent panacea are the equally unsatisfactory polar opposites; I feel that we have an opportunity and duty to keep pursuing a path of transparency and partnership with those listening from outside our community. Thanks to excellent ongoing studies in applied NLP; in education, health, coaching, business and therapy; there are more and more training choices for those who are seeking niche applied trainings or an informed general training.

One of the most exciting aspects for me of being an NLP Trainer at the moment is the collegiate, respectful and generous attitude of other NLP Trainers. I am occasionally asked by prospective students what I think of my 'competitors' and I can understand their initial

scepticism when I say that I genuinely don't perceive other trainers as competitors.

At the outstanding NLP Conference in November, I always learn so very much from my colleagues' seminars and my fellow delegates – how could I exclude these experiences by viewing them as competition? In both her NLP conference seminar about 'sponsorship' and a recent online discussion thread about 'Coalition NLP', ANLP's Karen Moxom encouraged our community to explore how we can all benefit by pursuing credibility for NLP itself.

This continues to build on and incorporate the research-driven approach that the NLP Research and Recognition Project ([www.nlprandr.org](http://www.nlprandr.org)) is driving at a global level, which will build an evidence base that allows us to place relevance, credibility and a commitment to professional standards at the heart of every NLP training in the future.

So, in true NLP style...the call to action ;) How will each of us choose to make our mark on NLP and NLP training in the future, starting now? We can make a small but regular donation to the NLP Research and Recognition Project to help fund ground-breaking research or volunteer your time and talent (see the website for details). We can do a piece of research in our own area of interest - I am happy to declare my own prior limiting beliefs about carrying out research, which were thankfully amply answered by the down-to-earth and supportive approach evident at ANLP's second International NLP Research Conference held at Cardiff University in July 2010.

We can encourage our own Practitioner students to take up the research gauntlet. We can ensure that NLP's lifeblood, modelling is the focus of Master Practitioner training and can sponsor our students to contribute their modelling projects to the NLP community. I am, of course, grateful to the skilful and caring trainers who have shared NLP with me and count among my trainers my own students, from whom I continue to learn and be enriched. If we grow together, we grow stronger and this can only help our common ANLP aim, 'to maintain standards and encourage best practice amongst NLP Professionals and inform the public about the benefits and applications of NLP'. ■

**Reb Veale** is an INLPTA certified NLP Trainer, qualified coach, business psychologist and Managing Director of Reveal Solutions Training Ltd. She is also co-author of the Reveal More™ range of coach development products; GROW Coaching Cards (also available as iPhone apps), a GROW Coaching DVD, an MBTI audio CD and a free Feedback download, which can all be found at [www.revealsolutions.co.uk/shop-products.asp](http://www.revealsolutions.co.uk/shop-products.asp). Our NLP course details are also on our website. Our Reveal More blog is at <http://revealmore.wordpress.com/>. Twitter: Reveal Solutions and Reveal More. Contact [reb@revealsolutions.co.uk](mailto:reb@revealsolutions.co.uk) or visit our website.