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RAPPORT

The Magazine for
NLP Professionals

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Judith Lowe

New Direction, Same Core Skills and Principles

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October – Scare yourself



By Eve Menezes Cunningham

This Hallowe'en month, what might you do to scare yourself (in the nicest possible way)?

In which areas of your life, work and relationships might you be in a bit of a rut? Are you stuck in your comfort zone?

How can you keep growth and movement fun, like Hallowe'en? You don't want to push yourself too hard, freak yourself out entirely and scuttle back to the centre of a shrunken comfort zone.

In terms of being past, present or future focused, mentally scan your life and see where, in this regard, your biggest obstacles lie.

Does thinking about your **past** (trauma, unresolved loss and grief, anything else) get in the way of living life to the full now? Are there conversations you might want to have with your parents, relatives, old friends, exes, anyone else who might be able to shed light on this time and help you move forward? Maybe a therapist can help you make peace with your past (scary as that might feel) and move on?

What about your **present**? In which areas of your life are you nicely challenged with enough excitement (even a little anxiety) to keep you on your toes? Are any areas completely safe? Is there something you long to do to shake things up a little? Maybe you have lots of things in your present that scare

“Is there something you long to do to shake things up a little?”

you enough already and it's a matter of taking the plunge and either getting on with whatever you need to do or setting new boundaries and taking these things off your plate.

In terms of your **future**, you might want to imagine yourself near the end of a long, happy and very fulfilled life. When you think about Future You, however many decades from now, what do you hope to be remembering? What scares you most and what might you learn from it (e.g. the idea of being all alone at the end may make you prioritise relationships

more in your present)?

Once you've identified something (start small – you don't have to only scare yourself in October but can take little scary steps throughout the year), imagine yourself doing it. You wouldn't get into a rollercoaster without safety checks in place. How can you support yourself as much as possible? Again, the easier you make it on yourself, the more likely you are to be encouraged by your progress and do something else.

You might remember the old story about Bruce Springsteen and Carly Simon describing the palpitations, sweat and coursing adrenaline before a performance? Simon described stage fright (and stopped performing for a while) while Springsteen talked about the excitement.

What do you tell yourself about these scary aspects of your life? How might you reframe things? Bring a playful, Hallowe'en dare approach to your challenge and see how brave you can be, having fun as you expand your comfort zone. ■

Judith Lowe

New Direction, Same Core Skills and Principles

Judith Lowe recently moved her focus away from delivering NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner Courses into applied NLP Masterclasses and 'NLP in the Wild' visits to places such as British Museum and the Tate Galleries. She is also reviving 'Passion in Action' with Judy DeLozier later in the year. She spoke to *Andy Cooté* about her life in NLP, the influences that shaped it and the next stage of her journey.

At school, where she read the complete works of Shakespeare by the age of 15, and at York University, acting was an important activity for Judith. 'After University I went into the professional theatre for about seven years. One of my first roles was Ophelia in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. It's a wonderful play.'

Judith acknowledges that her training style has aspects of theatre and performance in it. 'John Grinder once said that the perfect training for an NLP person is acting. You get so much – behavioural variability, being able to use your voice, being able to use your body, being able to relate to people in multiple kinds of ways, having lots of intuitions about second position. Creating something in the moment for everybody who's there. I think it's a great base to come to NLP from.'

Judith first encountered NLP in London when, between jobs, she was working with women's groups and teaching self-defence. 'We evolved between us a very creative form of self-defence which was very NLP-like. It was very much about state, about being creative in the moment, about being able to share frames and change frames. I did a little BBC series called *Streetwise*. I could always seem to help people be more confident. When I came across *Frogs into Princes*, there it was; a really cogent model of what I had been trying to say. It helped me to code that and have it in conscious models.'

Judith started her Practitioner in 1988 with David Gordon at UKTC. 'I thought he was just fantastic. Robert Dilts did a weekend on our Practitioner and I was sold. I loved that it wasn't just a bag of tricks, this rather sort of shallow form of NLP as it is sometimes presented. It had that range and breadth and depth that I was looking for. Robert is very intellectually curious. He's always very well read. He's produced the most astonishing range of work, I think, in our field and I really resonated to his approach.'

Alongside NLP, Judith has also spent 30 years learning the Alexander Technique. 'I joke when I tell people about it that I've

“Judith acknowledges that her training style has aspects of theatre and performance in it”

spent 30 years learning how to get in and out of a chair. At one level it's very simple but I think it has lots of correspondences with NLP. In the same way that NLP allows us to start opening up new sorts of possibilities, new ways of talking, new ways of relating, new ways of thinking about the issues that we have, the same thing can happen in the body. Rather than have this neuro-muscular locked-in preferred way of moving and breathing and speaking, you can start to loosen that out and come back to a kind of neutral, a kind of "know nothing" state. New choices become possible because you're not just driving down the same old road.'

The roots of what has become PPD Learning were in PACE where Judith undertook her Master Practitioner training in 1989/90. 'David Gaster, who started PACE, was a friend and colleague of John Grinder, which is why PACE always had New Code NLP at its heart. If you can get the state right, then anything can happen. You're truly open to learning, you're open to changing things. The transformation is a natural emergent property of getting that state just right.'

Judith's Master Practitioner also had a very influential trainer teaching on it. 'John Grinder did five days at Kenwood House on Hampstead Heath. John really loved experiential learning and patterning and we did things like "Stopping the World", a special state from Carlos Castaneda's *Don Juan*. I think that's where I first got into the idea that patterns and modelling are really the heart of NLP.'

Judith's friend Julian Russell had by then also bought into PACE which became Pace Personal Development – later PPD. 'I started teaching Practitioner, became part of the assisting and then the training team on the Master Practitioner and then the Training Director. In 2003, I bought the company. Mine was

“ We’ve always put modelling at the heart of our programmes ”



the latest version of that company which had relationships with people like Robert Dilts, Steve Gilligan, John Grinder, Judy DeLozier, David Gordon, Charles Faulkner and Christina Hall. We’ve got a rather wonderful record of history and contribution in the field in the UK.’

As the world changes, people need different approaches. Judith points out that a company like PPD is always evolving and updating the programmes, the teaching, the materials, the content and the styles whilst, ‘maintaining a steady focus on the core curriculum and on the skills and principles. Ultimately it’s about being able to model, about being able to work from skills and principles in NLP rather than techniques. We need to nurture acquiring the skill set and working from those first principles. Understanding about communication,

understanding what learning is, understanding what a map is, what a filter is, and how to be able to play around with all the different dimensions of NLP in a useful, ethical and congruent ecological way.

‘We’ve always put modelling at the heart of our programmes. That’s how you know someone knows NLP – they can do modelling in the moment, work out how it is somebody’s thinking. We’ve got our three major indicators that we’re looking for. How they’re using language, how they’re using their bodies and breathing and the kinds and types of imagery and representations that they’re making. And so you can move around in a systemic way with that structure.’

Gregory Bateson plays a significant role in Judith’s thinking and philosophy. Again, John Grinder was influential in that. →

➔ 'I went to see John before I had done my Masters with him and he said reading Bateson "is like reading poetry". I know how to read poetry, it's one of my deep skills. I bought *Steps to An Ecology of Mind* – pre-internet. I had an increasing pile of encyclopaedias alongside me to look up the words he used. I remonstrated with John that he had told me it was like reading poetry. In *Whispering in the Wind*, John says again that Bateson to him is like reading poetry and there's a little footnote that says, "apologies to Judith Lowe". If you think of *Turtles all the Way Down* as being a love poem to Bateson, I think that material came into the body of our company in the mid to late 1980s and stayed there with its own kind of energy and created something inside all of us. I've been really influenced by Bateson. Now I can read him and enjoy so much the fact that he's interested in the arts, in biology, in neuroscience, in learning, in relationship and in communication. It's just amazing, an astounding figure.'

Last year, Judith took time out from running courses to consider how she could contribute at a level beyond the marketplace of Practitioner, Master Practitioner. 'I wanted to start creating something for people who have core NLP and who want to deepen their practice and extend and enrich and expand what they're able to do with NLP – a return to the more experiential, experimental, live, creative aspects of NLP.'

The first strand is being called 'NLP in the Wild'. 'We've been in the British Museum and we're about to do this thing called Tate à Tate (which will have happened by the time you read this). We're going on a kind of journey to two Tate museums, the river trip between will be a metaphor for flow and change and transformation. We'll be a group of people who have a shared language and shared maps. It will be a little bit structured and taught by me but it will also be about the emergence of a conversation about art, expression and communication and the conscious and unconscious that Bateson talks about in that wonderful essay, "Style, Grace and Information in Primitive Art" published in *An Ecology of Mind*. It's like taking our practice group on the road.'

The second strand is a series of Master Classes focused around and taking a wide ranging view of a topic. 'We've done one on the idea of cognitive bias and the next (in October 2014) will cover Stress, Anxiety and Depression. It is for coaches, trainers and anybody on their NLP journey who wants to explore how people are stressing themselves and ask what's the structure of that, how can we model it, what sorts of tools have we got? There are lots of things where NLP touches into a lot of other approaches without actually being them. I think we've got a huge contribution to make and I want to start unveiling and presenting some of that in a more focused way for people. I do think NLP can help us be more rational and be more heartfelt as well. Virginia Satir was very passionate about her work being heartfelt. I think that's something, sometimes we can lose sight of a little bit.'

Passion in Action was developed over 10 years ago by Judith with Judy DeLozier.

“I wanted to start creating something for people who want to deepen their practice”

It is scheduled as a residential weekend in December, 2014 with Judy DeLozier taking part. 'I now have the opportunity to fit it into the schedule again and spend time creating it as an event and as an experience for people. Judy and I used to talk about how it would be great to create a home for people who want to use their NLP to make a difference whether it is with a small, personal project or a big global all-encompassing one.'

'When I first took over PPD, Judy and I created this programme and a community to help support a series of projects. Many of them are still unfolding and contributing and the leadership qualities that we supported in people are still active in people's communities. We had a guy who worked in a big communications business in the city. They put him in charge of a project to help people with special needs to be able to come to work in the company. We modelled how he had done that and the thing that people loved was he said "I didn't know what I was going to do or how I was going to do it, I just decided I'd do it anyway". That year, two other people modelled this guy's project and they made it happen inside their own companies.'

Judith is also co-sponsoring – with Robbie Steinhouse at the NLP School – Robert Dilts and Stephen Gilligan as they deliver a Generative Coaching programme in London over six months from the end of October 2014. 'It's a model of people working together and bringing out the best of what we can do, as a field.'

Judith tells me she feels like she is on a lifelong journey. 'The people that Bandler and Grinder modelled were all in their late seventies, at the height of their game. So I've possibly got another 20 years to contribute in order to continue to really deepen and enrich my own work and my own contribution. I've had some time to read and to think and I'm really enjoying working with Jonathan Goldsmith to be able to put these things together and be woken up in some new ways with it. So far people have absolutely loved what we've done. I think it's just very exciting.' ■



NLP and leadership

By Sue Stockdale and Clive Steeper

Introduction

NLP can be very effective in helping leaders to improve their performance. Yet sometimes the NLP label can get in the way. Some people have a preconceived idea about what NLP does, and for example may view it as manipulative. Others have heard it is very effective and want to learn more about it.

Over the years we have both used NLP techniques as part of leadership and coaching programmes. The focus is generally more on the outcome that the NLP technique is intended to achieve rather than using it as the label to describe 'what' is being done. In this way, we have found that it avoids potential resistance from some who make assumptions about what NLP represents.

This article highlights three examples of NLP techniques that have been successfully used to develop leaders so we hope that this article will encourage more NLP Practitioners to use the tools with confidence rather than be concerned about whether it is described as an NLP tool or not.

Case 1: Leveraging team strengths

The first example was working with a team within a large organisation to help them be more effective in communicating and influencing others, especially external stakeholders. Whilst various members of the team regularly met different external stakeholders, what the team was not doing was sharing any best practices internally. This meant that the organisation did not benefit from the collective learning about how to approach and influence external stakeholders and each other more effectively.

To improve collective learning each member of the team was asked to highlight one behaviour they had observed that they felt was a strength in the team. For example, one person was excellent at bringing his colleagues into the discussion. We then used a series of questions, based on the Neurological Levels of Change, to uncover what enabled that individual to excel in that behaviour. It was the first time the team had talked about the beliefs and values that drove their behaviour.

“ Sometimes the NLP label can get in the way ”



In another example, the Director of the team talked about what enabled him to be good at chairing meetings and maintaining a positive atmosphere. He realised that his beliefs were around building relationships for the long term, and therefore being prepared to only challenge or fight for things when they were core to the long term. This meant sometimes being prepared to let issues go, and not fight for every point, as he wanted to 'win the war, not every battle'.

This was a real eye opener for some of the team, who had never been aware of this, and tended to go into meetings to win every argument. It gave them new understanding and appreciation of how to better handle themselves in meetings.

Case 2: Long-term timeline

One of the common issues that arises in coaching sessions is the issue of time management. Clients often have a sense of being overloaded, and have difficulty in prioritising between the short and long term. This feeling of overwhelm can then become a blocker to change as they find it hard to imagine from their current vantage point that things could be different.

One technique that we have found extremely useful is the timeline exercise to help the client get a sense from a new perspective of how the future could be. Once they are able to have that future focus, they can more easily describe how it looks, sounds or feels to them. For example: I feel calm and organised, I have delegated key day to day tasks to my assistant, our team is energised and we meet every morning to ensure a common focus. From here the person can move backwards along the time line from the future to the present, to notice the obstacles that have been overcome, or issues that were addressed in order to make the future a reality. As the coach, it can be helpful to use Clean Language to avoid making any assumptions about their situation, and also to pay attention to ensure that the client uses present tense to describe their future as if it is now, i.e. I am, *not* I will be.

We used this exercise as part of a nationwide Leadership Academy training programme and it was extremely well received. People found that they gained new insight and greater commitment to their future goals.

Case 3: Learning from another industry

Finally, our third example involved modelling the activity of

“The feeling of being overwhelmed can become a blocker to change”

'communicating effectively in a high risk environment'. The aim was to discover what trainers could learn about communication from motorsport driving instructors who give members of the public an experience in driving a high performance car on a race circuit, such as Silverstone.

The research used a series of questions based on NLP Modelling, to learn more about what enabled these instructors to communicate effectively with a complete stranger and encourage them to drive in a high performance car at speeds over 100mph, whilst remaining relaxed.

What the research showed was that all the instructors had the ability to think ahead, assess and process a huge amount of information quickly and communicate key information in good time to the driver.

In other words, their excellence was all about the timing and quality of their communication, and this began even before they got into the car with the driver.

The same principles apply to trainers. Think about the timing and quality of your communication and how it may be influencing participants. For example, sending out last minute emails containing programme information may cause undue concern or uncertainty amongst participants. (*1)

Summary

Sometimes the label is less important than the product. So it can be more effective to use an NLP tool and notice the results than it is to introduce the term 'NLP' first and face resistance. ■



Reference

(*1) For more detailed findings see the Industrial and Commercial Training Journal, www.emeraldinsight.com.

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Becoming who you are as a practitioner

Taking stock and moving on...

In this series of articles for *Rapport*, leading life coach, speaker and business coach *Rasheed Ogunlaru* author of 'Soul Trader' looks at how you find your unique, authentic path and 'Become Who You Are' as a practitioner. Our journey will take us through the mindset, map, skillset, team, toolkit, marketing, cash, customers, champions, management and mindfulness you need to start or develop your practice in a way that is true to you. Last issue we began with mindset and we now move on to the skillset/stocktake.



Rasheed Ogunlaru

A quick recap

Being your own boss is a completely different proposition to being employed, as you may know only too well. In my first article in issue 40, we looked at the mindset and motivational aspects of running your own practice. In short, assuming two NLP practitioners and coaches have similar levels of ability and potential, it's the one with the mindset, passion and purpose that is aligned that is likely to stay on track, progress and overcome the challenges – as in any field. If you missed it you may want to look it up in your back issues. Once you know your mission and motives, and have steadied your mindset then you are really ready for the next steps in your journey.

The importance of taking stock

Whether you are at the initial stages of considering a future in NLP, coaching or personal development or whether you've been in the business for decades and are running a successful, lucrative practice, taking stock is equally important. As with working in a shop you will constantly need to stop and take stock because things will change: your life, your clients, the economy, society, technology and your industry.

Skillset

So let's start off by taking a look at your skillset. There are two aspects to this:

- 1 The professional skills, qualifications and experience that you need dependent on the stage of your career and what you are aspiring to
- 2 The business related skills and knowhow that you need to continually stay on track and develop your business.

“We're trained up to the hilt, but do we have the skills to run our business?”



The first of these two may be most straightforward. Where are you with your professional skills and training? Once you've got your core training remember we all need on-going development, critical reflection and support to stay sharp with our skills.

The second of these is where – as a business coach – I find that many people get caught out. Sure we're trained up to the hilt, but do we have the skills that we actually need to run our business? And an NLP, training or coaching practice *is* a business. We need to be business-like and we need business acumen. The good news is you will have some of these skills from your professional background. There are (broadly speaking) three areas of skill: finance, marketing and operations. The chances are

that you'll have skills in some and will be weaker in other areas. You do not need to excel in all these areas but you need to be confident and competent enough across the board.

I liken this to being the captain of the ship. You do not need to excel at all the disciplines involved but you need to know where the ship is going, you need to have a sound overview of the ship, you are responsible to it remaining shipshape and you need to select the crew that will get you to your destination. We will pick up on this when we look at: 'The Team' in a future article in this series.

Tip: Keep your eyes and ears open online, in person and in good on-going professional and business development events, conferences, seminars and talks. Get on mailing lists, get networking, talk regularly with contacts and utilise resources like *Rapport*. Recently, I attended an event that was good on-going development and it came about through an unlikely source of an invite through one of my new contacts.

Self audit

It's all very well knowing about the skills that you have and the steps that you need to take but you also really need to know yourself in order to thrive and survive. This is the awareness and mindfulness that links our stocktake to the mindset we explored in the first article.

Tip: Carry out a personal SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) for (i)

“To succeed you need to be completely single minded and completely open minded”

yourself and (ii) for your business. You can combine these or carry them out separately. This will really help you get a sound grasp of the actions you'll need to address immediately and over the coming years.

I can't express how powerful a SWOT analysis can be. It combines the self-audit and skills audit. I also recommend one every time you're making a notable change in your business or if you extend or set up a new one. I remember years ago setting up a separate retreats business with a contact of mine. We planned to run retreats in the UK and overseas. On completing the SWOT we realised that there were just too many logistics, concerns, threats and factors out of our hands when it came to retreats overseas so we decided to start off with only domestic retreats. This saved us a lot of time, money and headache.

Stocktake

We need to both stocktake and take stock.

- Stocktake: we will look at this more closely in a future article in tool kit and technology but consider what tools and resources that you need in order to help your practice grow. You may well actually produce tools, resources or sell these to clients. Keep on top of this. Know the numbers. →



CERTIFICATION

“We become so focused on what is right that we stop seeing the signs”

- Keep an eye on where the stock is, when you need new stock, when stocks are low and when you need to consider introducing a new line.
- Take stock: step back and regularly look at where you are, the ground you've covered, the challenges that you are facing and the way ahead.

Tip: Put in place a regular review for your business. It may be as brief as 10 minutes a week (as I do) or it may be lengthier detailed affair. I recommend weekly or fortnightly as I find things can change a lot in a month. Do what's right for you and your business and see how you go.

Know yourself and don't kid yourself

As a business coach I observe myself, clients and many of the self-employed people/business owners I know and meet. One of the things I talk about in my book *Soul Trader* is what I call 'the blindness of the visionary' or 'the blindness of the entrepreneur'. What can happen is that we become so focused on what we believe is right or what we are passionate about that we stop seeing the signs, we don't really listen to others, we get stuck in our viewpoint. As an NLP specialist be aware of this. It isn't just something that clients come to you with that you help them to reframe, overcome, unblock and move forward on – it's something you need to be alert to in the running of your own practice. Be honest with yourself about what you're good at, what you enjoy, what you don't like doing, where your weaknesses are. Spot the things that you avoid doing. Spot the things that you are distracted by.

I heard a wonderful story of someone who walked into a business and noticed the sales team were not on the phone. They were doing admin

and other stuff afraid of picking up the phone and making calls. Whether this is wholly true or an exaggeration it makes a good point. What happens is we do what we like and avoid what we don't like. What you don't like still needs doing. How can you address the areas that you don't like or aren't strong at?

Tip: Be on the lookout for those who have strengths in areas where you have weaknesses. Build a pool of contacts with skills across various disciplines whose advice and support you can call on when you need it and offer your help to them.

Tip: spot the times when you need help and when you may need tips, guidance, mentoring, coaching, business advice, technical, marketing, admin or other support – or simply hire a skilled freelancer to do a specific task that you need help with.

To succeed you need to be – at one and the same time – completely single minded and completely open minded. You need to be completely focused on what you're doing and where you're going but you need to be completely open and alert to what's going on.

Next time

In the next article in the series 'The Map and the terrain' we will build on what we've covered before and blend your vision with a wider awareness of your environment to help you flourish in it. ■

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