



The following article is reproduced from a recent [ANLP](#) posting:

What is this NLP thing?

Let's start with some of the ideas or phrases people use to describe what NLP is:

- It's a tool for modelling excellence.
- It's a type of therapy that can really help people feel better about themselves.
- It's a quick fix solution to what have been long term problems, such as phobias...
- It's a communication tool, and a way of influencing people.
- It's for improving sales techniques and closure rates.
- It's for business consultants, particularly those interested in change management.
- It's about the way we talk to each other, and to ourselves
- It's what Paul McKenna and Derren Brown do on the telly.
- It's a way of mapping human neurology and creating rapid brain change.

Wow! Are you any the wiser? You see, your experience of NLP could be one or many of these explanations, or something we haven't even thought of mentioning. One of the difficulties of telling people what NLP is; is that it can be all of these things. It's complex, and diverse and multi-faceted. It offers solutions and ways of thinking about many of the problems and issues that crop up in all of the above areas, and all those ones we haven't mentioned yet.

Most of you will have come to an understanding of, or interest in NLP through media sources like magazines and newspaper articles, and in particular television programmes and personalities. If we asked you to put your hand in the air if you'd heard of NLP through the work of Paul McKenna, Derren Brown or David Blaine, we doubt there would be many of you left sitting with your hands in your lap!

That's great, and now you know that NLP is an enormous subject. But it still doesn't really explain how Paul McKenna can make you thin, how Derren Brown can do unbelievable card tricks, or how you can lead a happier life. Yet, NLP can be of incredible use to you, and is well worth exploring further, so read on...

Within NLP circles the understanding of what NLP can do, begins with a comprehension of where it comes from. Here's the accepted legend for you. Back in the 70's, a brilliant young mathematician, Richard Bandler, teamed up with a brilliant linguist, John Grinder. Together they began to explore human perception and experience.

They believed that there is no such thing as 'natural talent.' By this they meant people who were gifted at something, but when asked how they had come by that gift said things like:

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"Oh! I don't know, I guess I was just born with it..."

"It's intuitive..."

"I can't really explain it, it just happens..."

Bandler and Grinder believed, and set out to prove, that people who are brilliant, geniuses, excellence embodied, are the same as everyone else. The main difference between a genius and the man on the street is that at some point the genius learned how to be brilliant, but didn't know when or how. Some people find this hard to swallow, but given the fact that it gives us a chance to believe that one day we can compose like Mozart, or play football like David Beckham, we're willing to go with it for now!

Bandler and Grinder set about exploring how this is possible by studying and creating models of various people who were considered to be outstanding in their chosen field. This process became known as 'modelling', and is the fundamental skill which underpins all of the NLP tools.

Bandler and Grinder used their models of excellence to map how people teach themselves excellence. They felt that for what they had discovered to be truly successful, they would have to be able to teach an average person how to be brilliant at something in the same way as the 'masters'. They called this collection of teachings, NLP - Neuro Linguistic Programming.

What they found is that their understanding of the human brain and how it communicates with itself, and shares that communication with other people had far wider implications in terms of skills, than just teaching and understanding excellence. Knowing how the brain creates learning's and patterns, and how to show and teach that to others meant that they were also able to create tools by which to 'undo' or change patterns of behaviour and learning's which were less than excellent, such as fears and phobias for example.

One of the brilliant things about modelling as the foundation stone of NLP is that it has always allowed for the adoption and adaptation of a huge range of techniques from many other disciplines which have been proven to work. In conjunction with the new techniques Bandler and Grinder created it means that NLP has a flexibility and range of skills far beyond the capacity of most other disciplines which claim to have similar reach.

The other thing to understand about NLP, and which sometimes gets lost in the huge amount of technical manuals and 'how to' books available, is that it is the outcome which is the most important part of what NLP can do. NLP can help you define and set a desired outcome, and then achieve it. The tools are the stepping stones, but it is that crucial definition of outcome which is the difference that makes the difference.

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So, what really is NLP? It's a way of finding out what it is you truly want, and helping you find a set of techniques that really work for you to achieve that goal, whether it be learning to be happy, or finding ways to become a multi-millionaire. Over the next few weeks, we'll be exploring some of the fundamental beliefs and techniques of NLP to give you a clearer idea of how you can achieve this for yourself.

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