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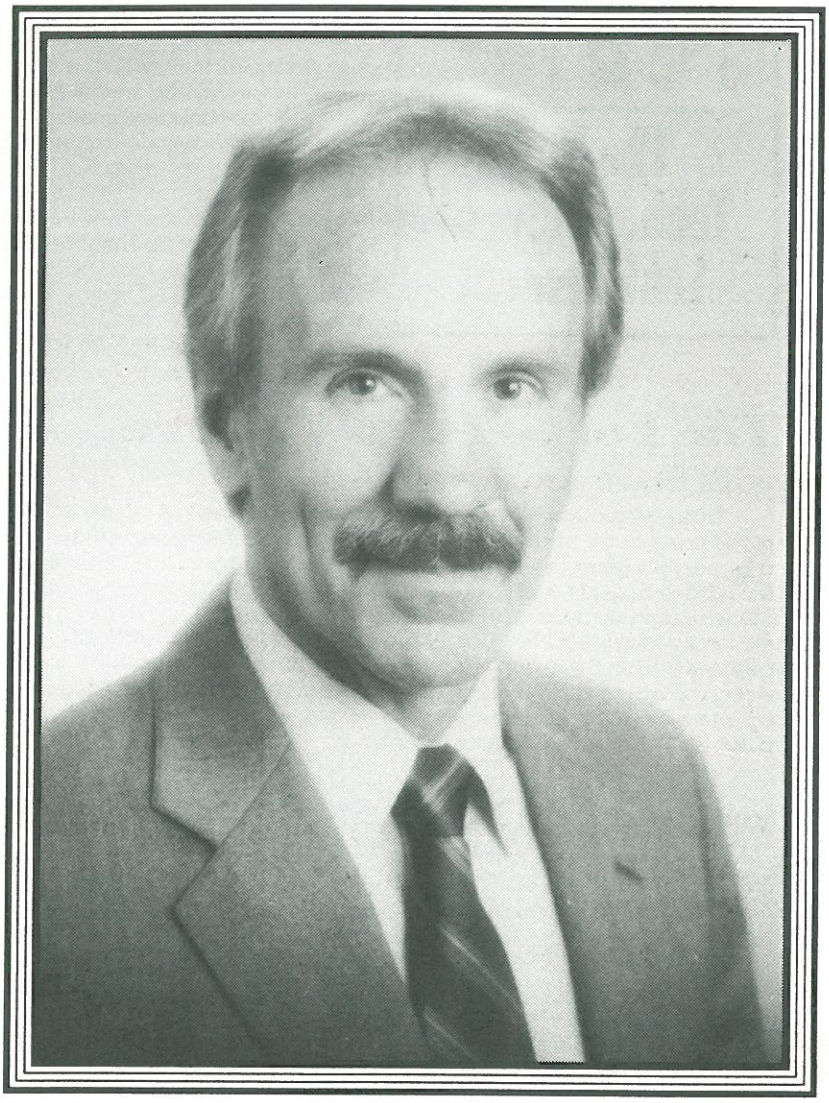
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Presuppositions in Family Therapy
Steve Andreas

The Feldenkrais and Erickson Parallels, Part V
Mark Reese

A Second Look at NLP
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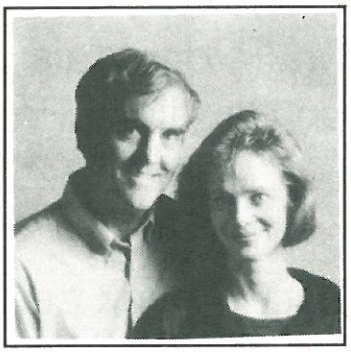
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Nearly 70 individuals from across North America, many of them international trainers, will be sharing their talents, skills, insights and developments in over 50 presentations. Pockets of folks are contributing time and energy towards "extra-curricular" activity development, such as Tai Chi, Modern Dance, Folk Dance, entertainment, and perhaps even a "Murder Mystery." All of this speaks as a sign of robust health for the NLP community!

Topics run the gamut, sure to expand practical tools and applications, titillate exploration, provoke deep processing and possibility thinking, tie-up loose ends and questions, promote your services, resolve conflict, and perhaps even stir up a little conflict. Hey, a bubbling pot indicates life...action...camera! Something tells me our Eighth Annual Conference in Toronto will hold historical significance.

To pique your interest, some titles of presentations: "An Immunologist Views the Allergy Technique," "Applications of NLP with Teenagers at Risk," "NLP in Dealing with Financial Dysfunction," "Nicely Laid Plans: Using NLP to Market NLP," "From Addiction to Possibility," " Empowerment and Control: Resolving the Paradox," "Posing as Parents," "Making

Please turn to page 4.

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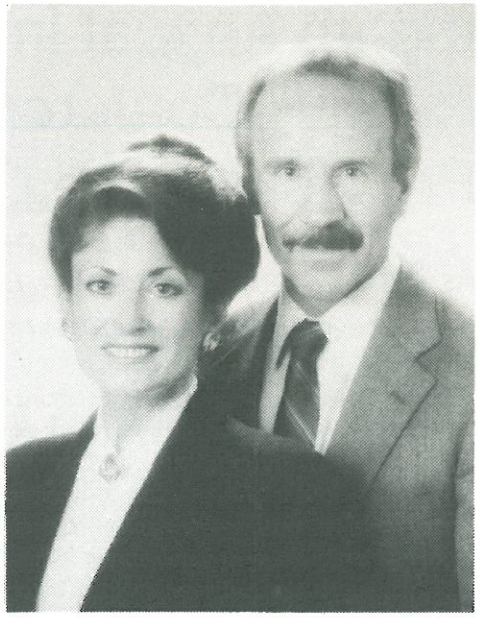
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Respectfully,

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Write the editor at the address on page 3.

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Changes to the 90/91 NANLP Membership Directory

Page VII	Delte Communication Savvy
Page VII	Add Institute of NLP Midlantic
Page VIII	Add John Bross to the Massachusetts Inst. of NLP
Page VIII	Add Metamorphous, 2082 Tawney Rd., Ottawa, Ontario K1G 1B8, 613-739-5657
Page X	Delete NLP Institute of Washington D.C.
Page XI	Change address for Western States Training to: 1569 E. Waterbury Dr.
Page XII	Change telephone number of Mental Sofware Corp to: 312-761-2053
Page 8	Change telephone number of Bill Goodrich to: 303-694-4274 and he is a Member (ME)
Page 17	Change telephone number of Judith Frey to: 708 as area code for H & O
Page 22	Add Lorrie Collins, Fitness & Yoga Center, 1741 Minturn Lane, Indianapolis, IN 46260 (O)317-257-4165 (H)317-253-7302
Page 45	Alyce Skelton is a Member Practitioner (ME)
Page 60	Change address for Valerie Wise to: 11 E. Orange Grove Rd., #2714, Tucson AZ 85704 (H)602-297-7503
Page 76	Pat O'Reilly is a Master Practitioner (MA)
Page 88	Add Marie Margenau-Spatz and Pat O'Reilly to the Trainers Section

Presuppositions in Family Therapy

by Steve Andreas

Most NLPers (readers of the NLP Connection) are familiar with presuppositions and how important they were to Erickson's work and in NLP. This article points out the therapeutic use of presuppositions in Family Therapy. This article is the introduction to Appendix I from Virginia Satir: The Patterns of Her Magic. *© 1991 Science and Behavior Books.*

One of the most powerful patterns in Virginia Satir's work with clients is her use of presuppositions to change their perceptions and beliefs. The power of presuppositions for therapeutic change is vastly underappreciated, even by those with good hypnotic training. People can agree or disagree with direct statements, but presuppositions are typically accepted unconsciously and not even noticed consciously. Some examples of other master therapists' use of presuppositions illustrate this well.

Carl Whitaker

About eight years ago I observed Whitaker interview a couple on the first day of a weekend workshop. The couple had been divorced for five years, and had been in therapy longer than that. They sat next to each other in excellent nonverbal rapport, matching each other's body posture and breathing.

During the interview, they were reasonable and considerate with each other. Clearly, they had worked through their differences over the years. I found myself wondering why they didn't remarry; they seemed to get along so well.

Since there wasn't much for Whitaker to do with the couple, he asked them to bring in their two teenage sons the next day. The "rebel" son who lived with the father did not come in, but the "model" son who lived with the mother did.

The contrast with the previous day was striking. The mother and father sat much farther apart, with the son between them and much closer to the mother. Although the father's behavior was about the same as on the previous day, the mother was transformed. She was far more animated and sexy, particularly when talking to, or about, her son - which was most of the time. She spoke at length about how many activities they shared, how she confided in him, how well they got along together, etc. Whether you call this "enmeshment" or "violation of generational boundaries," it was clear that the mother was overinvolved with her son, and was responding to him much more like a lover than a son.

Right after the mother had related yet another example of how well she and her son got along, Whitaker gestured to her and to her son as he said, "So your second marriage worked out much better than your first one," and then gestured toward the father. The mother looked as if her brain had stopped working for several seconds. Obviously she had never thought of her relationship with her son as a "marriage" before; from then on it would be impossible for her to keep from thinking of it in that way. As Whitaker is fond of saying, "People can agree with me, or they can disagree with me, *but they can't ignore me.*"

Much of the power of Whitaker's statement to the mother comes from his *presupposing* that they are married. She can agree that her second marriage is better, or disagree and say that it isn't better, but it is much harder for her to reject the presupposition that she is acting as if she is married to her son - particularly when she has just completed a long list of interactions that are typical of a good marriage!

Even if the mother consciously rejects Whitaker's remark, it will still have its impact. Since most parents don't want to be married to their children, the mother can't avoid considering her involvement with her son in this light. Before, she had only been thinking, "Do I have a close relationship with my son or not?" Now, she will think, "Is it too close? Am I treating him like a spouse?" and she will avoid acting in ways that are too intimate. The son will do the same with his mother.

> *"People can agree with me, or they can disagree with me, but they can't ignore me."*
> Carl Whitaker

Milton Erickson

In the late 1950's, Milton Erickson was a guest speaker demonstrating his work at the VA Hospital in Palo Alto, California. Psychiatrists brought in their toughest clients for Erickson to work with one at a time.

One of these clients was a young man who had committed a wide variety of serious violent offenses. He had been waiting in the hall, watching as other patients were taken in and brought out later - often still clearly in trance.

When they finally took the young man in, he had no idea what awaited him. Erickson first asked the psychiatrist, "Why have you brought this boy to me?" After the psychiatrist listed the many offenses the boy had committed, Erickson commanded the psychiatrist, "Go sit down." Erickson then turned to the boy, gazed intently into his eyes, and said, "How surprised will you be when all your behavior changes completely next week?" The boy looked startled and said, "I'll be *very* surprised!" Erickson then turned to the psychiatrist and said, "Take this boy away."

The psychiatrist thought that Erickson had decided not to work with him. However, a week later all the boy's destructive behavior did, in fact, change completely.

Erickson had undoubtedly noticed the boy's heightened receptivity, and decided to deliver the presupposition that all his behavior would change. Erickson didn't ask the boy, "Will your behavior change or not?" Erickson's question *presupposed* that the boy's behavior would change; it's only a question of how *surprised* the boy will be *when* it changes.

When the boy's response - verbal and nonverbal - told Erickson that the boy had completely accepted this presupposition, he knew he had succeeded, so he dismissed him to avoid undoing what he had accomplished. If the boy had said, "I *would* be surprised," or if he had looked doubtful, Erickson would have gone on to try some other intervention. However, the boy said "I *will be* very surprised," indicating that he had accepted Erickson's presupposition that the change would occur.

There were other important presuppositions that supported this brilliant intervention. When Erickson asks, "Why have you brought this *boy* to me?" he presupposes that the patient is a child, with all that that connotes - being immature, having a lot to learn, being dependent, needing guidance, etc. Then when he commands the psychiatrist to "Go sit down," Erickson presupposes that the psychiatrist (who has been in a parental role to the "boy" he brought) is himself in a position to take orders from Erickson.

With these two short utterances. Erickson sets himself up as an authority superior to those who have been dealing with the boy - all by presupposition and implication. Without these earlier presuppositions, it is unlikely that his later question would have had such an impact.

With three short comments Minuchin has transformed the family's perceptions.

Most of the presuppositions that are useful in therapy are not as global as this example of Erickson's, or as stunning as the Whitaker example. Nevertheless, they can be just as effective in getting significant shifts in perception and behavior. A number of small presuppositional shifts can work together to affect families powerfully.

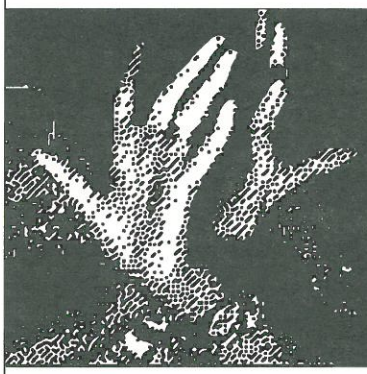
Salvador Minuchin

One of my favorite examples of the use of successive presuppositions is a session in which Minuchin is seeing a family for the first time.

The problem that brings the family in is that the ten-year-old son is sniffing gasoline. Immediately after the introductions,

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Minuchin turns to the boy and says, "I understand you like to sniff gasoline. What do you think you are, an automobile?" This joking comment had an immediate impact. Everyone relaxed a little, and the problem became a little less insoluble.

The joke is fairly obvious. Not so obvious is the presupposition that serious matters can be discussed with humor. Even less apparent is the fact that Minuchin has planted a presupposition by using the words "you like to." In contrast, "You sniff," or "You have to," or "You feel driven to" would deliver very different presuppositions about the problem. Those kinds of statements would presuppose that the behavior is out of the boy's control, and therefore difficult to change. "You like to" presupposes that the behavior results from the child's own *desires*, not some crazy or incomprehensible compulsion.

In his next statement to the boy, Minuchin builds on this: "Which do you prefer - unleaded or regular?" Everyone relaxes a bit more as this second joking comment shifts the family's attention again. They were thinking of the boy's behavior as a serious problem beyond everyone's control, not as an expression of the child's preferences. Of course, the consequences of sniffing gasoline can be serious. Nevertheless, refocusing the family's attention in this way makes the problem easier to solve.

Next, Minuchin smells and then takes a sip of herb tea he has been holding, and says, "I wonder what kind of tea this is." Then he turns to the boy, offers him his cup, and says, "Since you have a good nose, tell me what kind of tea this is." This comment builds on the previous ones, refocusing attention from preference to the learned ability that makes preference possible. Minuchin has also presupposed that the boy "has a good nose," and is able to make some discriminations that Minuchin can't. This makes the boy superior to Minuchin in this respect, and alters the implicit hierarchy of the superior therapist/needy family.

When the family came in, they probably thought of the boy's behavior as crazy, incomprehensible, and uncontrollable. With three short comments Minuchin has transformed the family's perceptions. Now they are thinking of the behavior as an expression of the boy's preferences, and one that demonstrates a positive ability to discriminate. The "uncontrollable problem" is already three significant steps closer to a solution, because family members are thinking about it in a very different way. Rather than criticizing, reprimanding, or interrogating the boy, Minuchin has implicitly complimented him on his skill at discrimination. This provides a positive basis for guiding the boy toward using these skills in ways other than sniffing gasoline.

Of course, more needed to be done. Minuchin gathered information that demonstrated that the boy was a "parental child" with major responsibility for his four-year-old twin brothers, and he worked toward reorganizing the family so that the ten-year-old could have his own childhood, free of parental responsibilities.

(The Appendix I goes on to describe how presuppositions work in terms of submodalities, and to train in the construction and nonverbal delivery of presuppositions.)

Steve Andreas is Co-director of NLP Comprehensive and co-author of several classic NLP books.

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March 14-17, April 11-14,	
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A SECOND LOOK AT NLP

By Marilyn Darling

Editor's note: *This article was published in* Training *magazine in 1988. I'm printing it here for three purposes: 1) To provide useful information to our members who are relatively new to NLP and can use this information for their own understanding, 2) For members to show to friends and associates who want to learn more about NLP, and 3) To illustrate a successful public education article that presents NLP objectively.*

Marilyn Darling has written a new introduction to the article, explaining her strategy in getting the article published. Her is the new introduction. She calls it:

A Second Look at a Second Look

I spent my early twenties in Santa Cruz, so it's no surprise that I was imprinted with the presuppositions of NLP. As had David Gordon and Leslie Cameron-Bandler before me, I took my masters degree in psychology at Lone Mountain College in 1977-78, under the direct supervision of Richard Bandler. I had NLP for breakfast, NLP for lunch and NLP for dinner.

Then, for reasons I need not describe here, I found myself flung far afield into the world of microcomputer software marketing. I had contact with not a single NLP soul for over seven years, until, 3000 miles away in Boston, a friend mentioned that a network was forming of practitioners of a powerful new art...

I joined. Being somewhat experienced at writing articles and getting them published, I offered my services to write an article. The result was "A Second Look at NLP," which got published in *TRAINING* magazine in January, 1988.

I began to get so many calls about the article from people who wanted to know where they could learn more about NLP that I became curious and went to the library to research articles on the subject. Looking through InfoTrack, I found, to my amazement, that there were virtually no articles listed.

Then I recalled my conversation with the senior editor at *TRAINING* magazine, who was then Ron Zemke (Now of *Service America!* fame). When I mentioned that I wanted to write an article on NLP, I noticed a certain tenseness in his voice. Then I explained my time away from the field and the perspective it had given me. I told him my major premise for the article, which was that as NLP was getting handed down generation to generation, the focus seemed to be drawn away from the purpose and presuppositions toward the techniques and the miracle claims.

Ron was thrilled. He admitted that he had been sent articles by many NLPer's who could not step aside and take an objective look at the field, which is a criterion used by most professional journal editors to select material for their publication. In other words, he felt that they would not be in a position to pace the objections he anticipated from his audience. Was my article too negative? I don't know. But I will say that of all the calls I received, not a one was from someone saying "thank you for steering me away from that evil field."

As to what I said in the article, I am encouraged by some of the recent efforts made by Robert Dilts and others to bring attention back to the generative side of NLP and to lessen the focus on its artifacts. While I was away from the field for seven years, those presuppositions were taking root and reorganizing my experiences. My experience now is that, while I may not be able to demonstrate my expertise in timelines or swish patterns, my brain has organized itself in such a way that my intuitions about how to solve problems in contexts about which I have little or no experience are innovative and well respected by more contextually-experienced clients.

When John Parmater recently called me to ask if I would mind if he reprinted the article, he commented that one of the questions he wants to pursue in the newsletter is whether NLP is a business, a scientific field or a cult. I personally hope we are one of the former two, though I still worry that we carry a "thought virus" (to use a Diltsian phrase) with elements of the latter. I observe that as our novice edge wears off, we get better at presenting ourselves to our various publics. I would be thrilled to see a broader range of professional articles published in the non-NLP press. Published articles help build the credibility of us all, and make it easier to mention NLP to our clients and co-workers without flinching.

So, as you read (or reread) "A Second Look...," you can think about what you have to say about this field, then call an editor and put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard)!

Now . . . The original article.

A Second Look at NLP

Just when you thought you'd heard the end of the subject, one more seemingly normal acquaintance becomes enamored with Neuro-Linguistic Programming - NLP, as it is known to those who love and hate it. Some of its adherents can remind you of cult worshipers. As soon as you mention those three magic letters, their eyes brighten, color flows into their cheeks and you know that if you stick around, it could turn into a very long evening.

NLP. It's been associated with everything from fixing a jury to firewalking. What is it that gets otherwise normal people so excited? If you ask believers about it, you're likely to get odd descriptions of how people's faces change color several times a minute, or baffling claims about how you can divine a person's thoughts from the way she moves her eyes. You may hear stories, told with a sense of mystic awe, about Richard Bandler and John Grinder in their mountain hideaways in Santa Cruz, CA: how they can cure a phobia in 10 minutes just by touching people at exactly the right moment.

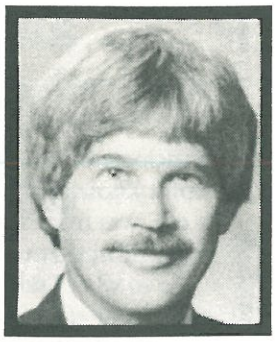
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Letter from the President

"The Gift of NANLP"

Tim Hallbom





This year's NANLP Conference, our ninth Annual Conference, promises us an exciting and worthwhile experience. John Grinder, NLP's co-developer, is providing the keynote, more than fifty others will be presenting and John and his colleague, Carmine St. Clair, will be providing a Pre-conference Intensive the day before the conference.

The theme of Developing Global Vision seems particularly appropriate given our world situation. Hopefully, some day our world leaders will have more access to NLP and its presuppositions.





We are all also looking forward to visiting Toronto and enjoying Canadian hospitality. See you there. Thanks to Teresa Robbins and her committee for the incredible amount of thoughtful work they have put into this conference.

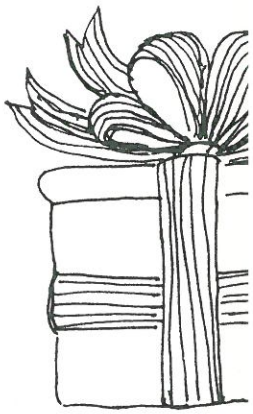
ELECTIONS

It won't be long before you receive your ballots for the election of NANLP officers. Your fast response is really helpful to get the vote tabulated in time for the conference. Your vote is important and you <u>are</u> NANLP. Please exercise your right to vote.



NANLP: "What's in it for me?"

As I travel around the country to provide training in various NLP institutes I take time to talk about NANLP - what it is and how important I feel the organization is. Often people ask "What's really in it for me?" As I think about my answer the intangible benefits seem even more valuable than the tangible ones. At present our organization offers some networking services not available elsewhere in the field of Neuro-Linguistic Programming.



1. The newsletter, *The Connection*, is becoming a fine journal offering applications, articles and news about what's happening in the field.

2. The annual Conference provides an opportunity to meet other NLPers, to share your ideas and to learn from others. The quality of the presentations, the keynote and the fact that there are far more applications than slots for presentations is evidence of the success of the conferences.



3. The Regional Conferences provide the same kind of experience on a smaller scale and are more accessible.

4. The Directory is clearly a tangible benefit for referral and networking.



5. The health insurance program provided quality insurance at a lower rate for many.

6. As local chapters form they are organizing study groups and tape lending libraries.



7. The special interest groups - clinical, educational, health, business and research promise steady evolution.

These visible benefits are not the most important ones that NANLP provides, in my opinion. For me it is the credibility and legitimacy that NANLP provides this growing field. NANLP has become a very positive part of the identity of the field. The newly formed Public Education Committee, the Research Committee, the Literacy Project, and the Guidelines for Practitioner and Master Practitioner training all lend a sense of credibility to the field that goes beyond any one person or institute, particularly in the long run.



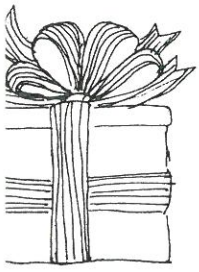


3. The Literacy Project (and other future service projects) promise to let the public discover NLP in a quality way.

4. The recommended guidelines for Practitioner and Master Practitioner training also gives NLP credibility in the eyes of the world. For example, a couple of years ago in the State of Utah a bill was proposed to the State Legislature to limit counseling practices to only professional groups. The bill was defeated, in part due to the efforts of NLP Practitioners who used the guidelines as evidence that their activities were legitimate. (By the way, I'm forming a committee to review the guidelines. They are currently more content oriented than process oriented and are in need of revision. If you are interested in participating and in having input please let me know as soon as possible.)

These "Intangibles" are what make NANLP really worth joining. Over time they'll really help to increase the value of your practitioner certification in the workplace and to the consumer of your services.





1. The Research Committee and Research Special Interest Section (largely thanks to the efforts of Lyle Chubb) has amassed a great deal of the NLP research to date. A project at the University of Connecticut is being explored which will further the research efforts.

2. The Public Education Committee is slowly organizing to let people beyond the NLP community know about NLP's amazing potential.

As we move through the 1990's it is important that the NANLP Board and whomever is in the President's position maintain a long range mission of building credibility, legitimacy, and unity as an organization. If you are a member of NANLP, you are NANLP. Make your voice heard. Get active and help present our incredible technology to the world.

Tim Hallbom

Or, worse, the NLP enthusiast may ask you a ridiculous question like, "How do you *know* how to spell your name?"

And then he'll *watch* you.

NLP has been evolving since the mid-1970's. Unfortunately, practitioners and fans sometimes get so wrapped up in the tricks and techniques-eye movements, hypnosis, gaining rapport and such-that they communicate (and maybe understand) fewer and fewer of the underlying theories and discoveries that lend NLP its potential value. This leaves most of us to understand and evaluate it. With NLP, it's tough to become an intelligent critic, let alone an informed consumer.

What, if anything, does NLP have to offer to the training and development field? This article does not include any illustrations of how to read eye movements. It won't teach you how to put anyone in a trance or how to walk over burning coals. I will try to describe how NLP came about, and how it is used-and misused-in the business context.

MODELING

Bandler and Grinder's early work was done strictly in therapeutic settings. But the communication issues and processes they uncovered often are encountered in the business setting.

While studying math and computers at Stanford University in the mid-1970's, Richard Bandler became fascinated by the gestalt therapy concepts of psychologist Fritz Perls and family therapist Virginia Satir. He studied their techniques and began to hold gestalt sessions. He invited John Grinder, a professor of linguistics at the University of California, Santa Cruz, to attend some of them.

They made a deal. If Bandler could teach Grinder how to *do* what he did, Grinder would try to describe what Bandler was doing linguistically. From that beginning, they began to "model" communication and behavioral-change techniques using linguistics. Among the people they modeled at work were Satir, Perls and medical hypnotist Milton Erickson.

Why was modeling necessary? For the same reason that a skilled trainer who studied an expert is often more successful at teaching the expert's skills to others. When skilled people try to explain or teach what they do, they discover that many of their skills are completely unconscious. Or they find it difficult to put into words some of the nuances that make them successful. Or they try to teach others in the way they learned, assuming that if it worked for them, it can work for everyone.

For any combination of reasons, exceptionally skilled people may be unsuccessful at passing on their gifts. Bandler and Grinder believed it possible to break down everything that makes up a "talent" into observable, describable relationships and bits of information, making it easier for others to learn the talent.

They discovered that the gifted therapists they studied were successful not so much because of any one technique that worked magically over and over, but because they had learned how to observe and listen to their clients very closely. Bandler and Grinder concluded that gifted communicators are masters at living in other people's worlds and at learning how to use people's own experiences and resources to help them change.

What sort of information were they picking up? Modern linguistics starts from the premise that "the map is not the territory." In other words, any particular way of looking at the world does not tell us everything there is to know. Because we are not the thing we observe, our "maps" have gaps in them -

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gaps that we often fill in ourselves in order to make sense of things by generalizing from our past experiences. This *distorts* out map of the world.

For example, for many years we used a standard IQ test as *the map* for intelligence. We observed that minorities in the United States tended to score lower on those tests than members of the majority population. It was logical to conclude that the minority population was less intelligent, as a whole, than the white majority, because of this faulty map. "Genetic differences" were used for years to justify separate and unequal treatment.

Bandler and Grinder used a series of linguistic rules to develop a process they called the Meta-Model, a technique that could be used to listen for the "gaps" clients reveal in their attitudes and perceptions, and to generate a series of questions that could be asked to fill in those gaps. This technique exposed distortions and generalizations in people's attitudes and behavior - distortions that had been maintained unconsciously but were no longer useful, or were being applies in the wrong contexts. For example, the Meta-Model could be used as follows to break a mis-perception. Note the focus of the specific words and phrases the "client" is using:

"My boss hates me."

"How do you know he hates you?"

"Because every time I make a suggestion, he looks at the ground and mumbles something."

"Every time?"

"Well, at least recently."

"How recently?"

"Oh, say the past two weeks."

"Did you know that he's been under the gun for the past couple of weeks to submit next year's budget?"

"No, I didn't."

"When you look down at the ground and mumble when someone makes a suggestion to you, does it always mean you hate them?"

"No I guess not."

"The next time that happens, why don't you ask him if it would be better to talk about your idea at a different time and see if he takes you up on it."

As they refined their ability to codify client experiences more precisely using spoken language, Bandler and Grinder began to look for other sources of information based of nonverbal behavior, including visual clues (eye movements, changes in skin color, breathing, muscle tension) and auditory clues (pitch, volume, pace). They claimed that these techniques, pulled together, helped explain how therapists were able to gather a staggering amount of information about their clients.

Many, if not most, of the information techniques that make up NLP are not unique to NLP, and have not been billed as such-at least not by Bandler and Grinder. Because a number of techniques have been modeled directly from Erickson, Satir, Perls and many others, experienced therapists, trainers and consultants may recognize the ideas of their favorite schools of thought being described within the NLP context. Other techniques are not discouraged in NLP, they are valued. What NLP *tries* to do is test and remove any inappropriate limitations, so that the core ideas can be applies in any situations where they would be useful.

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QUICK CHANGE ARTISTS

The possibilities sound wonderful: a clearer understanding of goals, a deeper, more complete perception of the people around us, and the ability to teach "unteachable" skills.

So what's the problem? Because I've observed NLP from a distance for several years, it strikes me that for a system of thought that appears useful in so many ways, NLP hasn't lived up to its claims. There should be no phobias left. Everyone should have perfect pitch. Most, if not all, of the world's ills should have been vanquished by now.

I think one of NLP's biggest weakness is that Bandler and Grinder - as well as many of their students - show an unnerving tendency to overstate their case. They have made bold and sometimes unsubstantiated claims - phobia cures in 10 minutes, lifelong perfect pitch, etc. And they repeat mythic tales of power and wonder, I remember Bandler and Grinder announcing at one point that they were learning how to walk through walls-or at least how to make large groups of people believe they saw them do it.

If such claims were true, NLP should be universally acknowledged as one of the century's greatest discoveries. In fact, it languishes in relative obscurity, largely ignored by the academic and business worlds. the real crime here is against one of NLP's own guiding principles: "Know thine audience." Outrageous claims drive people away in hordes (Tony Robbins' trendy NLP-based fire-walking seminars seem to be an exception, at least so far). Concentrating on building a reputation through example and keeping NLP's basic premises in mind would do a lot to give the techniques the hearing they deserve.

The philosophy espoused by NLP is a challenge. Not all "certified practitioners" have been able to "get it." It is relatively easy to memorize techniques, even to become skilled enough at a particular "trick" to impress people. But it takes time, effort and dedication to test and break deeply ingrained limitations. The limitations and ulterior motives of some practitioners have been translated into the NLP message.

Take rigidity, for example. It's possible for NLP to become as rigid as any other tool because of a trainer's need to be "right." In fact, as NLP gets passed down through the generations, as it were, its techniques are becoming compartmentalized - treated rather like a cookbook of change, which on a creativity scale of one to ten would rate somewhere below zero. The techniques become inflexible and unadaptable as a result.

There is now a prescribed "phobia cure" which is different in some concrete way from the "insomnia cure." The methods often are taught in a step-by-step process without the framework that allows them to be used creatively in other situations.

Bandler and Grinder warned their students not to let any technique take on a life of its own. Each one should always be evaluated for its usefulness is effecting a desired change. Yet novices can stumble into a cookbook course on NLP and end up learning some particular set of techniques that may or may not be applicable to their needs. They are likely to walk away slightly bewildered and totally unimpressed.

Compounding the problem is a jargon jungle that gets darker and denser with each new technique. "Fourtuples," "Meta-Model," "Swish Patterns," "Submodalities" and, indeed, "Neuro-Linguistic Programming" itself, are terms that trip lightly off the tongues of NLP practitioners. While some of them serve as useful shorthand, they create a Berlin Wall between the learned and the curious.

For these reasons(and because of people who promote NLP as a weapon to use in clawing your way to the top), NLP has moved at a snail's pace in the training and development world.

If all this doesn't scare you away, if you're still intrigued by the possibility that beneath the manure there lies a pony, then we should answer the question,"How might I use NLP in training and development?"

CHANGE

Two of the most obvious uses to which NLP can be put in business are: 1) creating personal and group change and 2) discovering and teaching the skills of various experts.

Although NLP grew from therapeutic soil, advocates argue that its change process is equally applicable to evaluating and facilitating group dynamics, to training (especially when an organizational change is involved) or to self-development. Here is a bare-bones outline of a NLP approach to the task of creating change in a group environment.

1. What exactly is the change desired? Define precisely the goal a group or business wants to reach. Define it in terms of how it will look and feel. Define the goal so that its soundness can be tested, so group members will be motivated to reach it, and so they'll know when and if they've arrived.

2. What's stopping them? Determine exactly when the group members' internal limits (defined as information, actions or beliefs that demonstrate discrepancies between their "map" and the actual territory) get in the way of their desired actions, objectives or growth.

3. What purpose do these limits serve and how are they applied? Find out why the limits are there and what decisions they affect.

4. What works and when? What should be tossed out? Break down the limitations into valid and invalid discriminations, based on their value in facilitating action or growth in particular contexts.

5. What would work better, and when should it be used? For information, actions or beliefs that you find to be invalid, substitute (using any of a variety of techniques) different information, a different viewpoint or a different way of getting something done.

6. On the whole, does the group function better as a result of this change effort? Test the group's new information, actions of beliefs to make sure they are working to the group's benefit in the proper situations, and that no unanticipated changes have been made that might harm the group's ability to function in other areas (referred to as an "ecological check").

The NLP change process focuses on getting to a desired objective by removing all obstacles, including limiting perceptions.

But while this may look like a fairly straightforward procedure - easy to talk about, if not easy to DO - there is no right way to get from step one to step six. Bandler and Grinder would say, "If it works (and it doesn't upset the ecology of the system), use it." NLP techniques add value to the process by fine-tuning the group members' observation skills and by teaching them how to

respond with flexibility to the situation.

SKILLS

The process of discovering and teaching unique skills offers some of the most exciting potential for using NLP in business, The best teachers a company could ever hire, in terms of passing on skills that are uniquely suited to its business objectives and environment, are on the company's payroll already.

Unfortunately, top performers seldom have the time or the ability to teach others what they know; at least they rarely seem to make efficient and effective teachers. NLP's claim is that a skilled practitioner can work with (or "model") top performers to understand the conscious and unconscious elements of the skills that make them successful-and can teach those skills to others.

NLP practitioners are using these modeling skills across the country to teach such talents as singing, composing, speed-reading, creative writing and leadership. By using NLP skills, they say, people inside your company can teach things like project management, public speaking or sales and customer service-and do it as well as, or better than, an outside consultant.

The basic NLP skills that are fundamental to understanding individual and group learning processes also can be applied to any training process. These skills simply ensure that the "message sent" is the "message received" and that the style trainers use to present the material meets the learning needs of the audience. Obviously, neither of those objectives are by any means unique to NLP. NLP just offers a certain approach to achieving them.

IS IT MANIPULATIVE?

Can NLP techniques be used to manipulate people to do something against their best interests? Sure. More than once? Less likely. Can the same be said of a great many other psychological techniques? Of course.

We are all persuasive to some degree. Ministers are some of the most persuasive people I know. And as the Jim and Tammy Bakker debacle demonstrated, their persuasiveness can be used for all sorts of ends. But as recent events also demonstrated, what comes around goes around.

The concept of a person's or a groups *ecology* - its integrity as a system - is considered by ethical NLP practitioners to be a critical aspect of any change of training effort. If the ecology is not honored, the change won't stick. It's like sales: The most successful sales people, over the long run, are those who understand and satisfy *all* of their customers' needs.

What it comes down to is that like so many skills and tools, NLP can be used for many different purposes-some helpful, others limiting and manipulative. Should we throw out NLP because it can be used for the latter? NLP's basic philosophy is both sound and exciting in what it can offer us as a basis for learning and change.

But buyer beware. NLP certification, though conceived with good intentions, does not guarantee a thing. When you go shopping for an NLP expert, you'll have to rely on your own judgment.

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A MINI GLOSSARY

NLP has "stolen" many ideas from the fields of linguistics and cybernetics. Some examples: *Nominalized experience.* "Nominalization" is a linguistic term that refers to turning a process into a name or an event. Once a process is named, it can be bound and categorized. Saying, "I have a fear of high places," serves to bundle together a group of sensations that result from certain perceptions and memories into a thing that exists on its own. "Attitude," "talent," "intention" and "phobia" are all words we use to compartmentalize our experience into a sort of shorthand as a way to understand and talk about it.

Unfortunately, two things happen when we "nominalize" our experiences. First, listeners understand the words we use based not on our experience, but on theirs. Second, once the experience "exits" on its own, it is seen as somehow separate from us and accessible to change. NLP practitioners try to bring nominalizations back into direct experience so that the original experiences or processes can be examined more closely and, if a conflict exists, modified or eliminated.

Ecology and well-formed outcomes. Within the context of NLP, human beings are viewed as "ecological systems." The concept of ecology is internal to the field of cybernetics - the study of systems. When a change happens in one part of the system, it affects other parts as well. This is what people mean when they caution, "Be careful what you wish for because your wish may come true."

Changes produce side effects. People quit smoking and gain 20 pounds. I know a man who attended a poorly run assertiveness-training seminar only to find that the result of his "new" self was increased tension headaches and the loss of several close friends. He had no contextual cues as to when NOT to be assertive.

Ideally, NLP practitioners can accurately predict what side effects a change might precipitate because they gather more specific information about how a client's internal systems function now, and because they help the client define a very specific objective or outcome. They can actually observe, test for and mitigate unintended changes.

The law of requisite variety. This law of the field of cybernetics states that the element in a system that exhibits the greatest variety of behavior is the controlling factor in the system. In the realm of human communication, the law holds that the person who demonstrates the most flexibility - the largest repertoire of options in response to a given situation - is the person likely to control or be successful in that situation.

As Bandler and Grinder put it, "When what you're doing isn't working, try almost anything else until you get the outcome you're looking for." This point is that when speaking English to someone who doesn't understand the language, yelling the same thing louder will not get your point across. There are a few implications in that one for training, aren't there?



Marilyn Darling is president of Signet Consulting Group, Boston, MA. She provides executive coaching, modeling, strategic communications and OD services. Her clients include the Harvard Medical School, Bank of Boston, IBM, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and SunLife of Canada. She was previously president of Learning to Learn, Inc., a provider of critical thinking skills courses to corporations and universities.

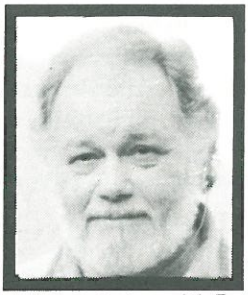
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Feldenkrais and Erickson Parallels, Part V: Re-languaging Somatic Difficulties

By Mark Reese, Ph.D.

The author is introducing the term "relanguaging" to describe the linguistic and philosophical shifts Feldenkrais invoked in his work with people, analogous to NLP's "reframing" of people's problems in ways more conducive to improvement and change.

People commonly view their specific somatic problems as separate entities, removed from the somatopsychic self. This stems from the inherited cultural notion that the body is a mechanical assemblage of parts at best only partially connected to the mind-identified person. In standard medical practice, clinical diagnosis is used to detect and isolate the cause of a person's difficulty and to treat and, if possible, eradicate it. The cause is typically isolated in a malfunctioning *part* of the body or isolated in the system's scarcity or over-abundance of a particular biochemical substance.

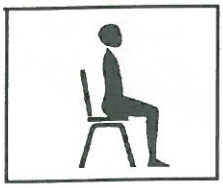
Feldenkrais sought to resituate people's problems through active participation in a learning process. He demonstrated that people usually have the means to become aware of how they can make themselves feel better, or worse. With this awareness, individuals have the freedom to choose the behavior that is most congenial to their comfort and well-being. The beginning of this learning process often entails a change in thinking, a *relanguaging* of problems in order to set people on the road to learning.

Ten years ago, in a large public workshop in San Francisco, a woman asked Feldenkrais for an exercise for her Achilles tendonitis. Feldenkrais replied, "If you have a tendonitis, neither I nor you can do anything for you. Because, you see, the tendonitis is you." Feldenkrais *relanguaged* her sense of *having* a tendonitis, to seeing the tendonitis as an expression of herself.

Feldenkrais explained that "specific" exercises are aimed at improving isolated parts of the body, and this ignores how the human system functions as a whole. In fact, it turned out that the woman's tendonitis had resulted from her having ignored her total being while she vigorously walked up and down hills for three months as a specific exercise for her heart. Feldenkrais emphasized that if one wants to improve the foot, or any other

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part of the self, one should improve the organization of the entire self.

Specific, problem-oriented exercises can actually maintain problems by reinforcing a fixed belief and way of thinking about them. For example, individuals who spend years receiving treatments and doing endless exercises to correct curvature of the spine are often unsuccessful in alleviating their discomforts. Having defined their condition as a specific structural problem, their minds remain closed to alternative interpretations and avenues of improvement. These people may not have realized that perfect spinal alignment is not necessary for painfree, functional movement.

Thus, Feldenkrais *relanguaged* "structural" problems in "functional" terms. When a person came to him with a problem, Feldenkrais would not ask for a description of the problem. Instead he would ask his students what they would like to be able to do that they felt unable to do at the present time. When a woman who was diagnosed as having MS came to Feldenkrais, he told her, "I don't deal with disease. I can, however, help you to do the things you remember being able to do." When people would reiterate the elaborate, and oftentimes conflicting, technical diagnoses they had received in the past, Feldenkrais sought to *relanguage* their problems into sensory terms, thus liberating their physicality from the mystification of technical jargon.

Understanding function necessitates a holism. In functional thinking, the *relationships* between parts are primary, not the parts themselves. When a student complained of pain in a specific part of the body, Feldenkrais would *relanguage* the problem in the context of learning to improve the quality of a particular movement. The location of a pain or discomfort may be a poor source of information about what is functionally amiss. Pain, or tension, is "located" in the nervous system's patterns of activity; it is not located in a particular body part, though we may feel it "there." Tensions generally refer to *learned patterns* of faulty muscular usage. By learning a new, healthier organization of the body, one can spontaneously eliminate many pains and tensions. When one is functionally integrated, movement is accomplished with minimal muscular exertion and minimal wear and tear on the body, and improvements in self-esteem and overall well-being.

Mark Reese, Ph.D., worked with Dr. Feldenkrais for eight years, and since 1983 has been one of the foremost teachers of the Feldenkrais Method. Mark has published two papers comparing the work of Moshe Feldenkrais and Milton Erickson and has presented at numerous mental health and physical therapy conferences. He has led professional training programs and advanced trainings for Feldenkrais practitioners throughout the world, and will begin a teacher-training program in the Feldenkrais Method in Los Angeles in March, 1991.

In 1983, Mark Reese and David Zemach-Bersin formed Sensory Motor Learning Systems, an institute which develops Feldenkrais-based health and fitness and movement programs and audiotapes, including "Relaxercise" and "TMJ Health." They are co-authors of the popular introduction to the Feldenkrais system, Relaxercise (Harper and Row, 1990).

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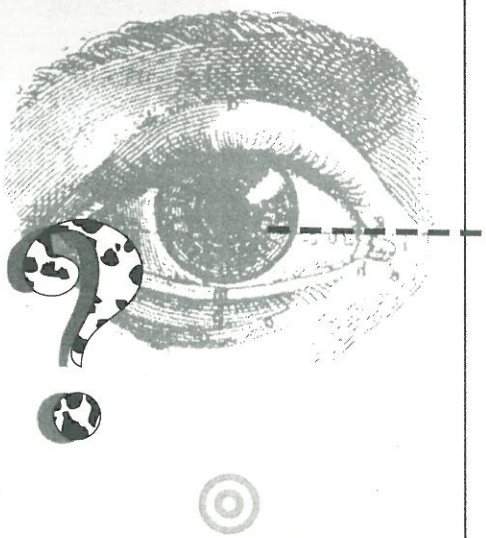
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Conference dates are April 26, 27 and 28, 1991. Be sure you put that bright spot on your time-line into your daytimers and calendars as will...and we'll see you in Toronto! Is it any wonder that the line from the Pointer Sisters song "I'm so excited!" keeps running through my mind?

For information, call Teresa Robbins at

(208) 343-0097 or Laura Shaw at (317) 636-6059.

Teresa Robbins

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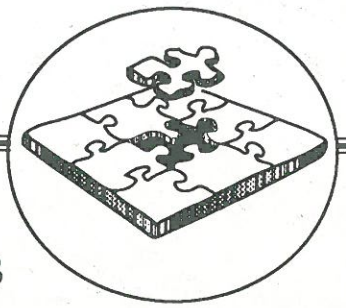
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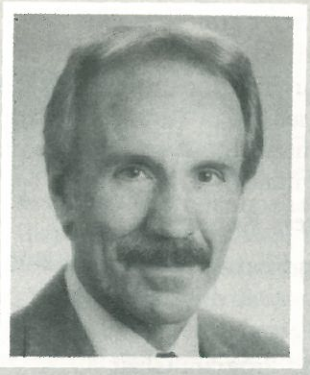
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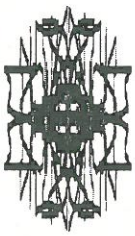
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