

Glossary of NLP Terms

Accessing Cues:

Subtle behaviour that will both help to trigger and indicate which representational* system a person is using to think with. Typical types of accessing cues include eye movements, voice tone, tempo, body posture and breathing patterns. i.e.* seeing, hearing, touching (feeling), smelling and tasting. This means that by watching and listening carefully you can get clues of how (not what) a person is thinking.

Anchoring:

The process of associating an internal response with an external trigger (similar to classical conditioning). This means the response may be accessed quickly, and sometimes covertly. In reality this is what advertising is about i.e. linking good feelings to a product. In NLP terms it's about noticing when an individual is in a strong emotional state and making a sound, touch or visual anchor so that the individual links their emotional state to that sound, touch or visual anchor. When done correctly repeating the anchor will enable the individual to re-access the state.

Auditory:

Related to hearing or the sense of hearing. Clues as to a person thinking auditory are eyes level, middle range breathing and speaking, and using words such as: Announce, audible, communicate, discuss, dissonant, earshot, gossip, listen, loud, mention, remark, ring, say, silence, tone, vocal etc. It is always worth ensuring that you develop and use a vocabulary, which includes a full range of visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory and gustatory words – you're likely to appeal to a wider audience.

Behaviour:

Robert Dilts defined behaviour as the specific physical actions and reactions through which we interact with people and environment around us. Peter Honey, not NLP but still useful, defines behaviour as any overt, or obvious action – includes everything we say, as well as all non-verbal movements. One of the main benefits of NLP training is to increase behavioural flexibility, so that you have more choice as to how you respond in any situation.

Three NLP pre-suppositions (useful beliefs) specifically include the word behaviour:

- The positive worth of an individual is held constant, while the value and appropriateness of internal or external behaviour is questioned
- There is a positive intention motivating every behaviour, and a context in which every behaviour has value
- Feedback vs. Failure – All results and behaviours are achievements, whether they are desired outcomes for a given task/context or not.

Beliefs:

Robert Dilts defined beliefs as: Closely held generalisations about (1) cause, (2) meaning, (3) boundaries in a) the world around us b) our behaviour c) our capabilities, and d) our identities.

Beliefs function at a different level to concrete reality and serve to guide and interpret our perceptions of reality. Beliefs can be notoriously difficult to change through typical rules of logic or rational thinking. In addition to considering if a belief is true or not, it can be worthwhile considering if it is useful, and if not - what would be more useful to believe?

Calibration

Robert Dilts defined calibration as: The process of learning to read another person's unconscious, non-verbal responses in an ongoing interaction by pairing observable cues with specific internal response. An application of this could be if you met someone new and wanted to know if they were telling the truth or not, you could ask them some questions to which you already knew the answer. You could notice how they reacted when they were telling the truth - and when they weren't. You would then be in a better position to determine whether they were telling the truth in the future.

Chunking and chunk size

- Organising or breaking down some experience into bigger or smaller pieces
- Chunking up involves moving to a larger more abstract level of information.
- Chunking down involves moving to a more specific and concrete level of information
- Chunking laterally involves finding other examples at the same level of information

To chunk up you can ask question like: Why? For what purpose? What's that a part of?

To chunk down you can ask: What specifically? How specifically? What parts does it have?

To chunk laterally you can ask: And what else? Give me another example?

Applications include including creativity exercises and mediation. When two people disagree its often possible to help them agree by asking them to 'chunk up' as to what they really want.

When they've agreed at a 'high chunk' level they are often much more likely to tackle the detail positively and come to an agreement.

Congruence:

When all of a person internal beliefs, strategies and behaviours are fully in agreement and orientated to securing a desired outcome. In a way the result is trust. If we trust someone it's usually because they are congruent. A congruent person is also much more likely to achieve their objectives. Many NLP techniques, for example - outcomes, sub modalities and parts integration, can be used to help people become more congruent.

Context:

The context is the framework surrounding a particular event. This framework will often determine how a particular experience or event is interpreted. An example could be time or place. Would the experience or event be different if it occurred at a different time or place? What can you learn by imagining experiencing the event in a different time or place?

Criteria:

The values or standards a person uses to make decisions and judgments. It is usually extremely useful to understand your own and other peoples criteria in both business and personnel situations. The simplest question to ask is - what's important to you about X, what else? - although you often need to be in rapport to get a useful answer. Or a slightly more complex alternative - when you last made a decision about Y, what was important to you? How has that changed in the current situation? If you find somebody (or yourself) suddenly gets upset - you may have discovered one of their (or your) key values.

Deep structure:

The sensory maps (both conscious and unconscious) that people use to organise and guide their behaviour. Between deep structure and surface structure (e.g. speech) we distort, delete and generalise. In NLP we use questions from the meta-model to check on distortions and generalisations and recover some of the lost information from deletions.

Future Pacing:

The process of mentally rehearsing oneself through some future situation in order to ensure that the desired behaviour will occur naturally and automatically. It is incredibly useful both for your own use in mentally preparing for an event and for testing the effect of an intervention with a client. By carefully watching your clients response you can test how effective you've been. If it hasn't worked as well as you want you know you need to do something else!

Gustatory:

Relating to taste or the sense of taste. One of the known 5-senses which include visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, gustatory and smell. Gustatory words include sweet, bitter, salty and sour. Its nearly always worth noticing which sensory words your clients use and including all the senses in you communication - so next time your planning a presentation -add a few taste words and notice if you get a different response.

Installation:

The process of facilitating the acquisition of a new strategy or behaviour. A new strategy may be installed through some combination of NLP skills or techniques and/or any combination thereof. Think of a time you got somebody to do something different on a consistent basis - you successfully installed a strategy.

Kinaesthetic:

Relating to body sensations. In NLP the term kinesthetic is used to encompass all kinds of feelings including tactile, visceral and emotional. Individuals who are strongly kinesthetic will tend to breathe more deeply, use 'feeling' words such as foundation, grasp, hold, pressure, touch etc and may react more slowly to situations (and may react more strongly!).

Meta Model:

The meta model is a model developed by John Grinder and Richard Bandler that defines syntactic environments by which one can detect and challenge deletions, generalisations and distortions. In practice it's a series of questions that are based on language and when done in the right way can be very useful to: Understand something better, help somebody check their logic or cause profound change in a client's thinking. I remember (as a marketing manager) being in a sales meeting just after having learnt the meta model. When attacked with a series of fairly aggressive questions (part of the territory for a marketing manager) - I found I really enjoyed batting them back. Not an intended use of the meta model - but delightfully practical!

Meta Programs:

A process by which one sorts through multiple generalisations simultaneously. As such, Meta programs control how and when a person will engage any set of strategies in a given context. An example of the use of a Meta Program (there are many) is to be aware some people are motivated towards things (money, happiness, carrots etc) while some are motivated away from things (poverty, loosing their jobs, sticks etc). To motivate someone it helps if you know whether they are motivated towards or away from things. Hence the metaphorical question 'is he motivated by a carrot or a stick?'

Metaphor:

Stories, parables and analogies. It's worth remembering that stories etc are and always have been one of the strongest mediums for getting a message across. It's worth being aware that when we run 'presentation skills' seminars and ask delegates 'How do you know when someone really knows their subject?' The most common answer is "they illustrate what they say with stories". On a related point I recently attended a corporate 'story telling' seminar. Not cheap at £1500 a day and not strictly NLP, however a reminder of story telling is potential.

A metaphor: A colleague asked me last Monday 'what do delegates achieve by attending our seminars?' In most cases the answer is simply to fine tune their communication, thinking and creativity skills - key skills for their business - and have some fun while doing so. However for those that want to become proficient NLP'ers I liken it to learning to ride a bike. Our job is to get you practicing NLP competently and safely as quickly as possible. Once you've achieved that you can learn more at any speed you want - and I'm continually surprised how quickly some people become really good.

Modelling:

The act of creating a calculus which describes a given system. NLP came from modelling successful people. From our point of view a model doesn't need to be 'true' it just needs to work! As part of our practitioner accreditation we expect all delegates to complete a simple modelling project - like the story telling exercise I started with the idea is surprisingly simple - but the results can be really significant.

NLP - Neuro-Linguistic Programming

The study of the structure of subjective experience and what can be calculated from that. I'll resist the temptation to add a lot. If you can just notice a little bit more of what's going on in the world, and hear and maybe even feel, taste and smell a bit more - you'll be moving in the right direction.

Olfactory

Relating to the sense of smell While we tend to concentrate on the visual, auditory and kinesthetic aspects of any experience its worth reemerging both the olfactory and gustatory senses, which when they are present can be very powerful. Adding one or two olfactory and or gustatory words can even add an enticing taste to a business presentation.

Outcomes

Goals or desired states that a person aspires to achieve. I find one of the most satisfying aspects of NLP is to help people (enjoyably) explore what they really want. A good outcome is: Positive (that is something you want rather than you want to avoid) Under your control (acquiring the skills to get a new job is under your control - actually getting a specific job may not be). You can imagine achieving it in at least three senses (e.g. you can see, hear and feel what it would be like to achieve your outcome - and maybe smell and taste it too!) It's ecological (Getting it will do you good). And sometimes the best question is to simply ask people what they want!

Parts

A metaphorical way talking about independent programmes and strategies of behaviour. Transactional analysis talks about your 'parent, adult and child' parts. They're not real but can be useful as a way of thinking about or explaining things - just remember to integrate them when you've finished! Parts can be used in persuasion 'There is a part of you that really wants to benefit from this course, can't you feel how strongly it wants to attend and help you learn?

Rapport

The presence of trust, harmony and cooperation in a relationship. In NLP this is normally achieved by adjusting some aspect of your behaviour to be similar to some aspects of another's behaviour. This may include your body posture, body movement, voice quality or breathing rate.

When you've achieved rapport with an individual you can more easily lead them. A good way of understanding rapport better is: when you meet someone the first time and get on really well with them, spend just a few seconds noticing what's going on.

Secondary Gain

Where some seemingly negative or problematic behaviour carries out some positive function at some level. E.g. smoking may help a person to relax or help them fit a particular self image. To be effective any change needs to address the secondary gain, e.g. if smoking is relaxing then the change needs to provide an alternative way of relaxing. Secondary gain is also particularly important in organisational change. It is almost impossible to change an organisations culture unless you change the reward structure to fit.

State

The total ongoing mental and physical condition from which a person is acting. State is one of the most important concepts in NLP. Your physical and mental condition leads everything you do. One of the most important benefits of NLP is that it enables you to explore how you can change your own state, and to consider what would be the most useful state for any particular context. Sometimes the most useful preparation you can do before you go into a meeting is decide what would be the best state to achieve the outcome you want: Curious? Angry? Powerful? Fierce? Supportive? Focused? It can make a significant difference

Strategy

A set of explicit mental and behavioural steps used to achieve a specific outcome. It can be useful to know a clients strategy in say, buying a car from the initial trigger to the final purchase, and identifying which representational system are involved in which order. Presenting back using the same order of representational systems can be very persuasive. Another application can be finding the strategy a client has in having a problem. This can be done by getting your client to teach you to have the 'problem'. When you understand it, it is much easier to break down.

Sub-Modalities

The special sensory qualities perceived by each of the five senses. For example, visual sub-modalities include colour, shape, movement, brightness, depth etc., auditory sub-modalities include volume, pitch, tempo etc., and kinesthetic sub-modalities include pressure, temperature, texture, location etc. We experience the outside (and inside?) world through our 5 senses. Sub-modalities can be described as the structure of each sense. While we can't change the actual experience of something that has happened in the past, we may be able to change how the experience is structured and therefore how the memory is experienced or remembered. If you have a memory that is remembered as a picture you are very likely to be able to change the experience of that memory by changing the brightness, distance or focus of that picture.