

The New Code of NLP

An introduction to the important and distinguishing features of New Code NLP.

Introduction

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is an incredibly powerful discipline that enables people to unblock the structures of human communication and human excellence. By doing so people can think, communicate and manage themselves, and others, more effectively.

NLP explores the relationships between how we think (*neuro*), how we communicate (*linguistic*) and our patterns of behaviour and emotion (*programmes*).

By studying and learning from these relationships people can effectively transform the way they traditionally think and act, adopting new, far more successful models of human excellence. (This activity is called modelling and is a key feature that distinguishes NLP from mainstream psychology).

In effect, NLP is a powerful change management tool that transforms the way people think and act to have the greatest impact both professionally and personally. That's why NLP is one of the most powerful skills used in personal development, psychology, sales, sports coaching and many forms of business management and consulting.

The Origins of NLP

NLP was originated in the 1970's by Dr. John Grinder, at that time an associate professor of Linguistics at the University of California, Santa Cruz and Richard Bandler, who was a fourth year psychology student at the time.

Grinder and Bandler began their NLP quest by modelling three "therapeutic geniuses" that included Fritz Perls, Virginia Satir and Milton Erickson. These geniuses were outstanding as professional agents of change, working in the domain of therapy. All three geniuses, Perls, Satir and Erickson performed their magic from a perspective of unconscious excellence. The geniuses did not present Grinder and Bandler with a conscious description of their behaviour, instead the modellers (Grinder and Bandler) unconsciously absorbed the patterning inherent in the geniuses to the point where they were able to replicate those same patterns and results.

Furthermore, Bandler and Grinder were then able to codify those patterns so modelled and effectively train other people how to apply those patterns for results. So, through NLP Modelling, Grinder and Bandler made explicit the tacit skills of those geniuses and the field of NLP was born.

John Grinder now refers to this initial field of work with Richard Bandler, and the patterns codified and presented in those formative times, as NLP "classic code".

Classic & New Codes

The “New Code” of NLP is essentially a reorganisation and recoding of the fundamentals of NLP. The recoding was begun by classic code NLP co-creator John Grinder with Judith DeLozier in the early 1980’s and has been developed further in recent years by Grinder with Carmen Bostic St. Clair.

One of the primary objectives of developing the New Code of NLP was an attempt to address several design flaws that were observed in the classic coding. During an interview in Boulder, Colorado (1996), John Grinder offered the following perspective:

“The context which stimulated the development of the New Code by DeLozier and myself in the mid-80’s contained two characteristics which I wished at the time to correct:

[Firstly] there were a large number of people who had trapped themselves in a ritualistic practice in a mechanical way of the patterns which we had created. The New Code carries with it an elegant simplification of the classic code as well as certain presuppositional traps which serve as a gate against ritualistic behavior.... [and]...

The second objective I had in the development of the New Code was to provide a context at a logical level much higher than had been previously attempted. This involves the setting of ethical, cultural and intellectual frames which indicate in what way specifically, NLP is a step or stage in a larger historical process - that is, where it fits into the western cultural and intellectual development.”

So what are some of the essential differences between the classic and New Codes of NLP?

Probably, the most essential difference is specification of the appropriate roles of both conscious attention and the unconscious mind – with the resultant emphasis on ecological change. In fact, the effective interplay and balance between these two minds can be the difference that makes the real difference in NLP change work.

In contrast, the historic application of classic code NLP was oriented towards conscious manipulation of internal representations (visual images, sounds, and sensations) with no formal or explicit engagement of the unconscious mind. Often an outcome was chosen in isolation and a process implemented to shift from the present state to the desired state. If the outcome had unfortunate consequences to the person's lifestyle, family or social system, this became apparent through feedback in real time.

What unfolds though, as a result of John Grinder and others quest to bring excellence to NLP and correct some of the serious coding flaws inherent in classic code, is a new and refined set of patterns that significantly advance the quality of change work in NLP. You will notice that these patterns, briefly described below, specifically address the involvement, interplay and alignment of both conscious attention and unconscious minds in change work. Essential in any New Code of NLP endeavour.

New Code Patterning

Explicit framing for conscious involvement

One of the roles of conscious attention is “framing” that is, defining the context to be examined and / or the desired outcome to be considered. Framing identifies the parameters within which the unconscious will operate to make links, develop resources and consider likely consequences.

In New Code NLP, the interplay and balance between both conscious and unconscious is extremely important. Both attentions have an important and explicit role to play in the change process.

Alignment of intention, outcome & consequence

One of the key patterns included in New Code of NLP is John Grinder's outcome, intention and consequences model – ensuring greater ecology in the change process. Application of this model enables the desired outcome to be aligned with possible consequences (*intended or otherwise*) of achieving the outcome and the intent for pursuing it. Additionally, working at the level of intent for an outcome allows for multiple options to be considered.

John Grinder has expressed concern about the lack of ecology in the use of classic code patterns when used to pursue outcomes in isolation from the rest of the subject's life.

Formal engagement of the unconscious

It is generally understood that the unconscious mind has access to a greater range of possibilities than conscious attention. The unconscious mind is able to work extremely effectively with patterns and multiple time frames, logical levels and perceptual positions in creating ecological change. It is here where meaningful and sustainable change takes place.

When the classic code was developed, there was no explicit reference to the unconscious mind and no formal means of engaging with it. This has been rectified in the New Code and is an essential element.

Arranging unconscious selection of resources

With appropriate conscious framing and formal involvement of the unconscious mind, it is possible for a person wanting a change to consult their unconscious mind about consciously identified proposals and select possible resources for achieving their outcome.

Initially this consultation can take the form of establishing a non verbal “signal system” (communication channel) between conscious and unconscious minds. This can then be in the form of a simple “yes” or “no” responses to offering fully formed ideas to the conscious mind - in response to proposals and questions required to achieve a desired.

These signals form the basis of content-free consulting where the unconscious mind is able to identify, develop and select resources for change – which can then be offered back to the conscious attention.

Emphasizing state rather than behaviour

The New Code of NLP attends to changing state instead of replacing one behaviour directly with a single, different behaviour in the same context (that is, at the same logical level). A change in state leads to a range of different, naturally occurring behaviour (a higher logical level intervention).

When the state is directly associated with (and into) the context, the client's behaviour can alter spontaneously in response to the conditions they find there. This manipulation at the level of state is, in effect, significantly more generative.

Building content-free, high performance states

One aspect of a New Code design for training and coaching is the use of activities and games to develop content free high performance states in participants. Once elicited, these states can be applied to any context where someone wants to enhance their performance.

The use of content-free, high performance states leads to more robust changes and better generalizations of those changes into people's lives. It is also congruent with the idea that ethical application of NLP be content-free.

Editors Note: The patterns briefly described above relate to the specific roles of conscious attention and unconscious minds in New Code NLP. Additionally, the interested practitioner would find other New Code NLP patterning including the use of multiple perceptual positions, logical levels /chunking and the verbal package models in effective NLP change work.

Implications for New Code NLP Consulting

So what are the implications for NLP New Code applied to the world of business consulting, where content is often considered to be King? Or is it?

Organisation Development specialists have long known the benefits of adopting a process-oriented approach to initiating and sustaining organisation change. By assisting clients to pay attention to specific process events that occur in their environment - and crafting specific interventions to address these - the effective consultant is able to utilise New Code NLP to orchestrate significant changes at individual, work group and organisational levels.

Executive Coaches are beginning to appreciate the advantages that content-free, high performance coaching offer over traditional coaching approaches. Quite simply, New Code NLP Coaching leads to more robust changes and better generalizations of those changes into people's lives. It also avoids any risk of imposing consultants' values on their clients, which is a serious drawback of content oriented models, for example conventional psychotherapy, counselling or coaching.

Training and Development practitioners seeking to close the "knowing/doing gap" and accelerate return on investment (ROI) are discovering that formulaic, pre-packaged techniques in recipe or scripted form just don't deliver lasting results. In NLP terms, this classic code approach tends to creates mechanistic

technicians - rather than competent artists who understand and work with the underlying patterns and forms for accelerated learning, development and change. In contrast, New Code NLP learning design is both elegant and minimalist, focusing on the discovery of the underlying patterns – and developing unconscious competence.

Conclusion

In summary, if you are considering the services of a business consultant, trainer or coach who purports to be competent in the technologies of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), you should insist on engaging someone who is highly qualified, competent and congruent in the New Code of NLP.

Settle for nothing less.

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