

NLP and NLP Principles

Source: NLP Workbook by Joseph O'Conner

What is NLP?

NLP stands for Neuro- Linguistic Programming

NLP is the study and science of excellence. Neuro-Linguistic Programming was developed by John Grinder and Richard Bandler. It is defined as a model of interpersonal communication chiefly concerned with the relationship between successful patterns of behaviour and the subjective experiences (esp. patterns of thought) underlying them. It is also a system of alternative therapy which seeks to educate people in self-awareness and effective communication, and to change their patterns of mental and emotional behaviour.

What are the Principles of NLP?

The 13 presuppositions are the central principles of NLP, its guiding philosophy, its 'beliefs'. These principles are not claimed to be true or universal. You do not have to believe they are true. They are called 'presuppositions' because you *pre-suppose* them to be true and then act as if they were. Basically, they form a set of ethical principles for life.

1 *People respond to their experience, not to reality itself.*

We do not know what reality is. Our senses, beliefs and past experience give us a map of the world from which to operate, but a map can never be completely accurate, otherwise it would be the same as the ground it covers. We do not know the territory, so for us, the map *is* the territory. Some maps are better than others for finding your way around. We navigate life like a ship through a dangerous area of sea; as long as the map shows the main hazards, we will be fine. When maps are faulty, we are in danger of running aground. NLP is the art of changing these maps so we have greater freedom of action.

2 *Having a choice is better than not having a choice.*

Always try to have a map that gives you the widest number of choices. Always act to increase choice. The more choices you have, the freer you are and the more influence you have.

3 *People make the best choice they can at the time.*

A person always makes the best choice they can, given their map of the world. The

choice may be self-defeating, bizarre or evil, but for them, it seems the best way forward. Give them a better choice and they will take it. Even better, give them a superior map with more choices on it.

4 *People work perfectly.*

No one is wrong or broken. We are all executing our strategies perfectly, but the strategies may be poorly designed and ineffective. Find out how you and others operate, so a strategy can be changed to something more useful and desirable.

5 *All actions have a purpose.*

Our actions are not random; we are always trying to achieve something, although we may not be aware of what that is.

6 *Every behaviour has a positive intention.*

All our actions have at least one purpose – to achieve something that we value and that benefits us. NLP separates the intention behind an action from the action itself. A person is not their behaviour. When a person has a better choice of behaviour that also achieves their positive intention, they will take it.

7 *The unconscious mind balances the conscious; it is not malicious.*

The unconscious is everything that is not in consciousness at the present moment. It contains all the resources we need to live in balance.

8 *The meaning of the communication is not simply what you intend, but also the response you get.* This response may be different from the one you wanted, but there are no failures in communication, only responses and feedback. If you are not getting the result you want, change what you are doing. Take responsibility for the communication.

9 *We already have all the resources we need or we can create them.*

There are no unresourceful people, only unresourceful states of mind.

10 *Mind and body form a system. They are different expressions of the one person.*

Mind and body interact and influence each other. It is not possible to make a change in one without the other being affected. When we think differently, our bodies change. When we act differently, we change our thoughts and feelings.

11 *We process all information through our senses.*

Developing your senses so they become more acute gives you better information and helps you think more clearly.

12 *Modelling successful performance leads to excellence.*

If one person can do something, it is possible to model it and teach it to others. In this way everyone can learn to get better results in their own way. You do not become a clone of the person you are modelling – you learn from them.

13 *If you want to understand, act.* The learning is in the doing.