

## Neuro-Linguistic Programming for Managers

### What is NLP or Neuro-Linguistic Programming or NLP ?

These three letters indicate the three fundamental components of human experience and interaction: thought (Neuro), language (Linguistic), habitual modes of action (Programming). NLP is original and effective because of its goal: modelling human excellency. This consists in defining the way one organizes the different aspects of one's experience in order to obtain an active result. Modelling makes an active practice comprehensible, therefore accessible and transmissible to all. Those who use NLP wish to understand “how it works when it works” rather than explain “why it doesn't work”.

John Grinder and Richard Bandler, the co-founders of NLP, created the base of this now internationally recognized discipline in the 1970s, with more than thirty years of subsequent NLP development by Robert Dilts\*. Dilts simple and effective models apply to communication, learning and human change, and encourage to the growth of individuals as well as the growth of organizations.

NLP rests on a body of principles, such as:

- It is not possible not to communicate among human beings; silence is an act of communication like any other.
- Most of information is behavioral: 93% of human communication is nonverbal.
- “The map is not the territory”: Every human being has his representation of reality, which is unique. Limitations often occur when mental maps need to be updated.
- Every behavior is, or has been initially animated by an often unconscious positive intention.
- Everyone makes the best possible choices with what resources they have at that moment.
- Every human being has the necessary resources to reach his goal in life.
- There is no failure, only learning experiences containing information.

NLP is a school of pragmatic thought pertaining to various aspects of human functioning and development.

For instance, the “Logical Levels” of the mind model, formalized by Robert Dilts\* enables us to distinguish information from different levels of abstraction. In a given environment (Where and When?), the observed behaviors (What?) are organized by cognitive processes (How?) whose engagement depends on individual motivations and permissions (Why?), and on their integration within an notion of identity (Who?) and within a system of belonging (For who else?). These distinctions help avoid many cognitive traps and develop a greater outlook on developmental projects.

A personal journey with NLP helps to acquire a methodology of efficiency which naturally fits into the world of organizations, whether it is managing, negotiating, selling, promoting, organizing or implementing changes or quality policies.

NLP methods probably represent high technology in individual or organizational change. Their specialty lies in bringing attention to the internal rules that initiate and maintain efficiency or inefficiency within a system, and in influencing those guidelines subtly.

Other approaches or complementary methods fit in beside NLP, for personal and professional development.

The *Process Com*© approach focuses on the inwardness of experiences, in order to better understand the psychological dynamics of individuals, the specifics of their world maps, their strong points and their motivations, in order to better adapt our modes of communication.

The *Palo Alto's Systemic Approach* focuses on the exteriority of individuals and their interactions within a human system. This approach offers modes of thought and of action which restore or reinforce the functionality and performance of the system.

It is everyone's responsibility, however, to verify the ethics and the qualifications of the instructors in these various methods.

### **Manager personal development through NLP**

Taking on a leadership role is often uncomfortable. How can we be comfortable when constantly assessing the correct distance with others, in order to be efficient? How can one find the correct balance between archaic coercive methods and too much familiarity? That is indeed the manager's dilemma!

Etymologically, to be authoritative means “to increase”, “to augment”. A manager's authority is recognized when he inspires a level of trust that increases skill sets and facilitates team building. An authoritative manager is therefore, in the first sense of the term, the one who authorizes others to express the best of themselves. A manager makes his collaborators grow.

Where does authority come from, and how can we develop it? External sources of authority like entitlement, status, family ties and diplomas are insufficient in the long term because they do not create legitimacy. Internal sources of authority can be linked to a way of proceeding that is recognized by peers. The most legitimate authority spawns from the authorization to be ourselves, to live in alignment with our own fundamental values, feeling in charge of our own life and contributing to a better world. This authority is expressed through presence, charisma, a natural authority over others and joy in leadership.

We do not learn this authority at school, but rather through self-reflection and, sometimes, experience. NLP invites us to discover and experience this. Discovering who we are and what makes us unique, having the legitimate feeling of being ourselves without any reliance on dominance or submission. Maintaining the right distance with ourselves is the key to maintaining the right distance with others, which is the condition to a durable authority. The manager's mission can then take on its true dimension: permitting individual and collective talents to emerge, serving the interests of individuals, the company, and the world we wish to belong to.

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\*Encyclopedia of systemic NLP : <http://nlpuniversitypress.com/>

Robert Dilts : <http://www.nlpu.com> Robert Dilts: <http://www.nlpu.com>

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