



the
SPIRIT *of*
revised edition **NLP**

**The Process, Meaning
And Criteria For Mastering NLP**

L. Michael Hall Ph.D.

The Spirit of NLP

The Process, Meaning and Criteria for Mastering NLP

Revised Edition

L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.



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Foreword

Introducing *The Spirit of NLP*

The Meaning, Process, and Criteria for Mastering NLP

“NLP is an attitude, backed by a methodology that leaves
behind a trail of techniques.”

—Richard Bandler

What truly is the very spirit of NLP? What distinguishes a Practitioner of this art of modeling excellence from a Master Practitioner? Wherein lie the distinctive meanings and criteria involved in mastering the NLP model? What process enables us to master it?

I wrote the following, based first upon my own Master Practitioner Training and Trainer’s Training with Richard Bandler. To this I have also added (or contaminated, as the case may be) my own experiences and readings over the years with regard to the field of NLP, first as a psychotherapist and then as a trainer. I have done so in order to answer these initial questions.

Years have now passed since my original training with Richard Bandler, and yet my initial appreciation of Richard, who began this field with what I have here designated as *The Spirit of NLP*, has grown. I speak now of that playful, curious, outrageous, and passionate attitude that both he and John Grinder brought to, and learned from, the original three ‘therapeutic wizards’ (Fritz Perls, Virginia Satir, and Milton Erickson).

As I got to know Richard through the trainings and then worked with him to edit and produce various materials, I became aware of his role as the creative genius behind NLP. Many do not seem to see this or recognize his genius. Perhaps they are disconcerted or offended by the rough exterior that he presents. And he certainly can offend when he wants to! Yet beneath it, especially when he and John began their journey, he has a spirit of passion in ‘going for it’ and a curiosity for all things possible. This very spirit functions, foundationally, to endow NLP today with a quality of the dramatic and the dynamic.

The NLP paradigm, as a communication and behavioral model, arose in part when the men and women who later became the co-founders and developers of NLP began to translate Bandler. Even John Grinder became involved for this very reason. Apparently he found in the young brash kid at the university someone who had an incredible natural ability to imitate the voice, tonality, and patterns of Perls and Satir after listening to them on audiotape. John wanted to learn that genius. And Richard also wanted to learn *how* he did it. So, with Richard's gift and John's genius for pulling something apart linguistically, NLP was born.

Bandler and Grinder originally set out to model Virginia Satir, Fritz Perls, and Milton Erickson. And yet as they did, they became aware of Richard's genius in unconsciously imitating the experts with astonishing ease and speed. Even surprising himself with his ability at modeling of Perls and Satir, he and John set out to pull apart the component pieces in terms of neurology and language in order to understand how this magic worked and how they could enable others to access the same excellence.

Richard Bandler's spirit, then, with his wild and wonderful ideas, his gruff style, and his unpredictable curiosity lies at the heart of this revolutionary technology for human resourcefulness. In this perspective, NLP reflects and represents his genius of modeling.

I first realized this by reading all of the 'classic' seminar books edited by Steve and Connirae Andreas. From those works, I decided to begin my own NLP training with Richard Bandler. Later, in 1989, during a Master Practitioner training in San Diego, I took extensive notes. I later published these with the approval of NLP Products and Promotions for the participants.

In 1990, Richard asked me to create another set of notes, this time for his Trainers' Training. After that adventure, Richard asked me to transcribe his work with *Applied Neuro Dynamics*, given during a London Seminar, as well as a training in hypnosis. I transcribed and edited the materials that later became the basis for the book, *Time for A Change*. Simultaneously, Richard was wanting to revive the Society of NLP. So I worked with him with regard to producing a directory that would describe the Society, present articles of contemporary and cutting-edge aspects of NLP, and make a

complete listing of all the members. In spite of four months' work on that project however, it never saw the light of day.

In the years since, I have not only continued to use and develop NLP as part of my psychotherapeutic practice as a cognitive psychologist, but I have conducted numerous NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner trainings. More recently, I researched and published articles (in *Anchor Point* and *NLP World*) regarding the historical roots of NLP in the works of Alfred Korzybski and Gregory Bateson. I also wrote a series on *The Almost Inventors of NLP*. For my doctorate in cognitive psychology, I created an integration of NLP with several other models (i.e. Reality Therapy, Adlerian, Frankl's Logotherapy, Ellis' REBT, etc). (See *Languaging*, 1996).

The Spirit of NLP currently extends and expands the notes that I originally made. I have reformatted the text to focus primarily on conveying *the spirit* of NLP. At the same time, I think that it does offer, to a large degree, a tribute to the genius, attitude, and passion of Richard Bandler as one of the co-founders of this domain.

I believe that identifying that spirit, specifying its components and discovering its strategy, offers a significant contribution to the ongoing development of NLP. Wouldn't you like to have the strategy that Richard used (along with John) in coming up with NLP in the first place?

Of course, the NLP model itself says that we all inevitably keep manifesting our states and strategies in our ongoing communications anyway. Does it not make sense then that Richard Bandler would continue to construct, design, and present his trainings of NLP in a way that would manifest at least some of his original 'spirit' or strategy which made this field possible? I believe so.

Having started with these understandings and assumptions, I have constructed the text as you now find it. You will find in these pages most of the essential academic and informational data within the NLP Master Practitioner training. And you will find more. You will find within, behind, and beyond the words of the text, the spirit of NLP.

Chapter Two

Learning the Art of Trance

[Derived primarily from both Richard Bandler and Don Wolfe]

What we have traditionally labeled 'hypnosis' or 'trance' plays a central role in the communication model of NLP. If hypnosis sounds scary, then as you begin to realize that it is nothing more than "the misunderstood nature of communication" (Hall, 1994), you can then relax in understanding how this part of communication works in human mind-and-neurology.

After all, going inside one's own mind and accessing or reaccessing internal representations—pictures, sounds, words, actions, sensations, smells, tastes, and so on—simply describes the experience that we call 'trance.' We all do it. We go inside by directing our attention, not to the things we see, hear, or feel on the outside, but on the inside. And we do this all the time because in this way we make sense of what someone else is saying. It describes how we think.

Now within the domain of experience called hypnosis there are many phenomena that we describe as 'hypnotic.' Actually there is no human skill or power that you can do in trance that you cannot also do in the waking state. Trance simply makes it much easier and quicker. One such phenomenon within this domain is 'time distortion.'

What question would a Master Practitioner ask first about time distortion? What other questions at both content and process levels could you come up with? Time distortion can provide someone with a tremendous personal resource.

Using Time Distortion for Mastering NLP

You will need practice in distorting time in order to have this as a resource which works to your benefit and which allows you to induce a state in which your experience seems to slow down. To do this, take the experience of motoring off an interstate highway doing 70 mph. Driving along the off ramp the car is now moving at 30 mph and it suddenly seems as though you are creeping along and everything seems to go o o s o o o s l o o o o w! →●

Presuppositions operate as some of the most important drivers of hypnosis. In fact, communicating by connotation often evokes states more effectively than attempting to communicate directly by denotation. The following exercise is designed to enable you to practice utilizing presuppositions so that you can alter your own state or the state of someone else. Notice the effect this exercise has on others.

Presupposing Trance

- 1) Write ten statements that presuppose that someone has begun, even now, to experience going into a deep, comfortable, and relaxing state of trance. Stuff these sentences with semantically packed presuppositions that will enable the person to become relaxed. As you do this, remember that we use language as the doorway to the unconscious, as it is part of our genetic wiring. So go ahead and use it to the full in order to utilize this resource.
- 2) Read the sentences. Once you have your sentences, get into groups of four and do the following: B reads two of his/her sentences to A, using a tonality in which voice inflections go down at the end of each sentence. Have some nice trancy music playing in the background, and B should practice speaking at the tempo of that music. When B has finished reading the two sentences, s/he then points to person C, who then reads out two sentences, using the same beat. D then completes this by reading two sentences to A.

- 3) Change places so that everyone has a go. When you have finished reading to the first person, rotate places to allow each person to have the experience of being the subject. In this way everyone accesses a pleasant and mildly relaxed state for the next exercise.

Debriefing

What kind of statements presuppose the experience and the development of trance? What states did you find worked best for you, and best for the others in your group?

One group generated the following:

You can wonder how deeply you will experience the sense of relaxation this time.

Your unconscious mind can access a pleasant memory of a place where you experienced feeling warm and comfortable, and felt at peace with yourself.

And your eyes will only blink as often as the sense of comfort deepens in your deepest self.

And you will sense your breathing with more awareness as you allow the images in your mind to become softer and softer in hue.

And your sense of serenity within will allow you to deepen your comfort ever so gently.

And with every growing awareness of your arms you will become comfortable in the comfort that you can take within yourself, and trust your unconscious to give you learnings from this experience.

And the sounds and vibrations of the music in the air around you will also enable you to flow into the music, as you let it enter into you, and then float down even deeper.

Chapter Five

Master Level

Persuasive Reframing

The Sleight of Mouth Patterns

[Derived from Chris Hall & Max Steinbach]

A card illusionist does a sleight of hand movement by performing a set of actions which distracts the viewers' attention from what s/he is doing. The viewers' attention is thereby drawn to one place, while the significant occurrences take place elsewhere. This 'mis-direction'—the sleight of hand—tricks the observer by creating an illusion which then results in a shock to consciousness. This process has been codified in the statement which encourages more illusion: "The hand is quicker than the eye."

The same kind of thing can, and does, occur with verbal behavior. It actually happens all the time in human interactions. Yet do such interactions occur just for fun and enjoyment, for a win/win situation for all involved, or to pull the wool over someone's eyes in order to take advantage of them? The ecology question addresses these concerns. For while manipulating someone to your sole advantage may work, it will only do so in the short term. In the long term, it will fail.

The NLP model assumes this ethical position because it operates within a systemic and long-term perspective. It also employs the presupposition that when people become resourceful, empowered, and at their best, they bring out their best, rather than their worst. This underscores the importance of the win/win perspective in personal relationships and communicating. It also eliminates any need to manipulate other people for negative ends, because doing so will only rebound on the manipulator. And since NLP grew out of a systemic paradigm which encourages systemic thinking, it therefore strongly disavows any behavior that creates long-term pain for others.

I would encourage you therefore to remember this with regard to the following about Sleight of Mouth patterns. Obviously, when we translate something as powerful as the Meta-Model into a conversational model we incorporate many powerful verbal forms which an unethical person could certainly misuse.

From a persuasion standpoint, we often find it easier and quicker to utilize a Sleight of Mouth pattern when communicating with a client, customer, loved one, or friend. We do so in order to redirect our listener's brain to the option of a new point of view. And we do this rather than go through all the trouble of Meta-Modeling. Instead, we reframe the person by using one of the Sleight of Mouth formats. And if the person buys it, then, presto! S/he will suddenly have a new perspective! We have provided a new and enhancing meaning to something that otherwise would have produced an unproductive state.

Conceptually, whenever we offer a different viewpoint, we essentially *frame* a piece of behavior (or understanding) in a way that transforms its meaning. The following Sleight of Mouth patterns offer ways for redirecting the brains of others as we attempt to expand their perspective, which then expands their model of the world which, in turn, makes their experiences bigger, broader, more expansive and more empowered. It truly offers them a positive gift. These patterns also grew out of another communication principle, namely, that people will fight you tooth and nail when they feel attacked. Induce someone into a state where s/he feels threatened, attacked, inadequate, or vulnerable, and you can count on all of his or her defence mechanisms going up. And that will further complicate communication clarity.

In view of that, these Sleight of Mouth patterns provide ways whereby we can track a person back to the experiences out of which the certain learnings (or beliefs) arose. In this way, we activate the central Meta-Model strategy. Then we can redirect the person's brain (e.g. the Swish pattern) to new and better understandings and perspectives (i.e. the reframing pattern) that offer more productive and useful ways of thinking about what s/he wants (i.e. the desired outcome pattern).

What problems do most of us have in life? Are they not about how easily we become entrenched and enmeshed in our maps, and how we so easily confuse our maps with reality? We forget that our perspectives, beliefs, understandings, 'drives', and so on, only exist as mental-neurological maps of reality, and are not the event itself. Korzybski described this as 'identifying' (identify map and territory). And yet reality involves far more than our mere maps of it. Our words and perceptions function inherently as fallible and limited constructions, so sometimes we really do need to have them shifted so that we can develop more enhancing maps.

Using the following Sleight of Mouth patterns we can engage in some extremely elegant 'map- shifting' with ourselves and others. As you practice them, notice if they shift you, or if you think they would create a shift for someone else. Some will elicit pleasant shifts. Some will evoke unpleasant shifts. Since we exist as "a semantic class of life" (Korzybski), whenever our internal representations shift, so does our experience, our neurology, our identity, etc. This is where 'the magic' occurs, so get out your wand, and let the magical times begin.

How to make these Verbal Transformations

- 1) Notice the Meta-Model distinctions that people offer you in their language. The Sleight of Mouth patterns arise from three Meta-Model distinctions (complex equivalence, mind reading, and cause-effect) which deal with larger level meanings.

Surface structures at this level frequently express beliefs. These may concern causation beliefs (C-E) which we can identify by listening for causative words (because, if, then, in order to, so that). Or they may concern meaning beliefs which we can hear in complex equivalences and universal quantifiers (all, always, never). As we listen for these words in the surface statements, we can then meta-model them.

- 2) Create an $X = Y$ equation in your head, or cheat and do it on paper! Or, cheat in an even more creative way and write the equation on the blackboard in your mind. Formulate what the person says in such a way that you have some external

Chapter Nine

Visiting More Exotic and Empowering States

[Derived primarily from Richard Bandler]

In NLP, we use 'state' as a shorthand term for a total mind-body, linguistic-semantic-neurological phenomenon. The state you experience at any given moment (and you always experience some state) will have components of thought, internal representation, neurology, physiology, emotion, beliefs, values, etc. These function in a way that can be resourceful or limiting, productive or sabotaging, positive or negative, pleasant or painful, empowering or disempowering.

Learning about states in order to manage them more effectively, is part and parcel of Practitioner training. In mastering this training, you will want to gain a firm grasp of the skills and principles of state management. Then you will no longer stand at the mercy of every stimulus, mood, event or person that happens to come your way. You will have developed the ability to sustain the spirit of NLP, know how to interrupt non-productive states, and access those states which keep you resilient, learning, highly motivated, and at your best.

Chaining States of Consciousness

Once you know about how states work in terms of their component parts (sensory based information, language, physiology), how to interrupt a state, how to access and transform a state, you will then have all the pieces that make you ready to develop the higher level skill of chaining states together. Chaining states creates a process whereby you (or anyone else for that matter) can move away from a state that you find limiting and unresourceful, to one that allows you to be more resourceful.

Check this out. Think of a time or a situation where you would find this ability to change your state particularly useful. Does a time come to mind? For example, you may have experienced a time when what you wanted was to shift from a depressed state to a totally joyful state—but that involved too much of a jump to make. Some people have drawn erroneous conclusions from their understanding of NLP that a person can go from feeling totally down and defeated, to feeling totally excited by just anchoring. It simply does not work that way! And even if it did, who wants the manic-depressive strategy for living day by day?

Sometimes we simply have to first move to a less unresourceful state, then to another one which gives us less problems, then to a more neutral state. From there we can steer ourselves to a mildly resourceful state; then to a more powerful resourceful state; and finally to an intensely ferocious resourceful state. Sometimes a person has to gently nudge him or herself from state to state so that s/he experiences the state shifts as more ecological and respectful.

The wonderful thing about this chaining states procedure is that you do not need to create any new neurological equipment inside yourself in order to achieve it. You already have all the necessary equipment. In fact, you already do this every day anyway, do you not? After all, when you wake up in the morning, you wake up in some state. But you don't stay there all day. Something happens in the external world, or in your mind, and lo and behold, you shift states; you get into another state. Nor do you then stay in that one all day. You are continually shifting out of one state into another. And so on.

Suppose now that you kept a journal of all the states you went in and out of during the day? You would probably find that you go in and out of half a dozen to perhaps two dozen states over the course of a day. If you continued to journal over weeks and months, you would probably discover that you have your favorites—states of choice. You have your habitual up states and your habitual down ones. In other words, you naturally veer from state to state.

You might also discover that sometimes you get into a state and you stay there for a long time, perhaps for hours. And that you

This fully revised edition of *The Spirit of NLP* represents the core of a brilliant Richard Bandler master training. It also includes significant contributions from other master trainers, including Eric Robbie, Wyatt Woodsmall, Tad James, Christina Hall and the late Will McDonald. Providing a deeper understanding of the true genius of the co-developer of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), it includes mastery of the neurology of NLP, and developmental work associated with sleight of mouth patterns. Systematically tackling the areas of Programming, Linguistics and Neurology, *The Spirit of NLP* is ideal for all those wishing to update and expand their understanding of the subject, or wanting a fresh and exciting new perspective on NLP. An outstanding contribution to its field, this book broadens and develops the existing NLP model, taking it into new and dynamic domains.

“Essential reading for all those who want to go beyond Practitioner level.”

Frank Daniels, NLP trainer

“I stand in awe of the genius of L. Michael Hall.”

Judith Pearson, Psychotherapist and Certified NLP Trainer/Practitioner

L. Michael Hall Ph.D. has authored many groundbreaking works on communication, neuro-linguistics, emotions, and motivation. He is one of the foremost NLP theorists writing today, and is dedicated to taking its techniques into new and exciting realms of therapy and personal development. L. Michael Hall works as a psychotherapist and trainer in Grand Junction, Colorado.



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NLP is now in its fifth decade and for the first time we have a reliable book that offers a history of NLP. The Origins of Neuro-Linguistic Programming is both a story and collection of stories. The theme of the main narrative is the creation of NLP; the collection of stories is a rich anthology from the people who were there at the beginning and others who came along after the foundation was in place. An enjoyable, exciting, and informative adventure through the brilliant and quirky origins of NLP. This book is a hymn to the spirit of curiosity, creativity, collaboration, and adventure. Julian Russell, Executive Coach and Director of The Life Talent Programme.