

# a career to get out of bed for

Neuro linguistic programming (NLP) originated from the study of the attitude and strategies of individuals who were successful in helping individuals change. Michael Beale asks whether it can help you with your career.

■ **NLP is about using how you communicate and think to create methodologies for successful performance and applying the techniques that result from this modelling. In addition to modelling good performance NLP will help you to develop three core competencies: setting outcomes, improving your behavioural choices in any situation and improving the way you interpret other people's responses.**

The initial NLP models were about personal change, hence the interest of people like Paul McKenna and Derren Brown. However, over the past 30 years NLP has brought useful results to people in nearly every walk of life. Most really successful consultants, coaches and company change agents have had some exposure to NLP.

### **An NLP coach**

A visit to an NLP coach is usually the first step towards involvement in NLP. The coach is likely to suggest that you define what you see as the direction and overall outcome of your career. The most important attribute of the outcome is that you find it motivating; it's something you want to get out of bed for!

Ideally you will be able to imagine the outcome in at least three senses. You will be able to see, hear and feel what it will be like to

achieve it. The outcome should be based on what you want to achieve; not what you want to avoid. You should consider the impact of achieving the outcome on those closest to you; if it's not in their interests consider the implications now rather than later. Finally you should ensure that the steps to achieve it are under your control.

Your coach is likely to suggest you monitor your attitude towards your wished for outcome and review it as soon as it ceases to motivate you. Many people become slightly lost after achieving their short-term goals.

Your coach should also help you improve the way you work on a day to day basis. The coach may ask you to consider your attitude and beliefs towards meetings with customers and suppliers or in interviews and appraisals. Your attitude can range from confident and curious to powerful and professional and tends to lead your behaviour.

Therefore a pragmatic way of rehearsing for a meeting can be to rehearse the mixture of attitudes that are most likely to help you achieve the result you want. Similarly what you believe about yourself and the people in the meeting can affect your behaviour and hence the result of the meeting.

Another way an NLP coach can help is if your career ever appears to get stuck. Even the

most successful careers can be seen as more of a series of cycles than a straight line. What seem to be career troughs can in fact be used as valuable times for reflection in which to develop a new direction. Most people successfully navigate these times. However, a coach can help you through the process.

### **Developing your career**

A coach will have the skills to make most meetings stimulating and useful. You may want to discuss issues that are very close to you and a good coach will enable you to do this. A meeting in the context of career development might cover:

- confirmation that you are genuinely happy to go ahead
- exploration of what your key values are in terms of work, to ensure the direction you set will help you achieve what you want and keep you motivated
- exploration of what you want, what it will be like to get it and some next steps towards getting there
- approaches or solutions to any problems you may foresee in achieving your next steps
- a technique of some sort if appropriate (visualisation and or kinaesthetic timeline techniques can be extremely useful)

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# career

- a future pace exercise helping you imagine yourself behaving appropriately in the future or to solve any issue you had
- confirmation that you have found the meeting useful and agreement of next steps.

#### Who will benefit from NLP?

Many company training schemes and MBAs now include some type of NLP training. Business performance coaching, sales, leadership, presentation impact and consultancy are all areas where NLP based training can be particularly effective.

When structured correctly the participants will be able to share best practice and learn from one another's skills and attitudes enabling a genuine and sustainable improvement in performance.

Would you benefit as an individual from NLP training? Ask yourself if you need to influence others in your role. Are you a catalyst or agent of change? Are you prepared to explore your own values and beliefs and how they impact on your performance? If the answer is yes, then NLP training is likely to have a strong positive impact on your current role and career and be a good investment of your time and budget.

On the other hand your role may be about protecting the status quo. You may already

know all you need to know about yourself and others and you may believe that change must simply be dealt with rather than benefited from. If this is the case NLP training is unlikely to be a good investment of your time or budget.

The best business-focused NLP training will involve a certain amount of exploration of your own comfort zones; it therefore requires a certain amount of courage to get the most out of the training.

#### What do others say?

Most delegates feed back the benefits of NLP training in three areas:

- a set of pragmatic and useful communication tools
- an exploration of their own objectives and plans
- the mental resources to tackle new opportunities.

Pragmatic communication tools include:

- improved questioning skills
- improved goal setting skills
- awareness of thinking styles and filters
- problem solving techniques
- coaching techniques
- presentation techniques.

NLP will help you develop the most appropriate attitude and mindset to take on a new role or benefit from a new opportunity. This can be particularly useful when taking on a larger than usual challenge or in a situation where you are helping others change and develop.

#### So, can NLP help you in your career?

Those that are drawn to NLP get real and lasting benefit from it although some people find it a little too challenging or simply aren't attracted to it.

My suggestion is that you try it and then make your own decision. The potential benefits are large enough to justify the effort. ■

Michael Beale is a Richard Bandler licensed NLP trainer and business performance coach.

#### Come and find out for yourself

Michael Beale will give a free lecture for ACCA UK on neuro linguistic programming on 1 December in central London.

To make a booking please contact Emma Hale on **020 7396 5911**.