

# How to be Brilliant

WORDS DONALD MACNAUGHTON

**“Don't ask what the world needs – ask what makes you come alive and go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”  
– Howard Thurman**

One of the most effective methodologies which I have found to enhance personal effectiveness is the psychology of Neuro-Linguistic-Programming or NLP. Its evolution dates back to the 1970s when, at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Richard Bandler and John Grinder set out on a quest which transformed the personal development movement. The question they posed was “What was the difference that made the difference?” This allowed the great therapeutic geniuses of time Milton Erickson, Virginia Satir and Fritz Perls to be so successful. Through their discoveries NLP was born and continues to develop in many areas including business, health and education.

So what is NLP? A psychology of personal excellence, an incredible communication model to help you understand yourself and other people and more than anything an attitude of curiosity about what is possible for yourself and others.

## Let's look closer. NLP is:

**1:** The maps you make in your mind about how the world is, based on your past experiences, your attitudes and beliefs.

**2:** The stories you tell yourself about what is happening and how you communicate that story to others.

**3:** How you use your body, your physiology.

Why is NLP useful in business? For a manager it allows you to communicate more effectively with your team, clarify and achieve your goals and connect people to their values and that of the organisation. Another powerful example of using NLP is to manage your emotional state and well-being. One of the basic premises of NLP is that everything you do has a structure which can be modelled helping you become more successful. Emotional states or feelings are no different.

So, with that in mind here is a useful model which will enhance your ability to deal effectively with your emotions. If you imagine that an emotion, such as happiness, is made up of three basic internal pillars, which are:

**1:** Your body.

**2:** What you focus on at any given moment.

**3:** The movies you play in your mind; your internal chatter and the pictures that this chatter creates.

Now, by paying attention to how these pillars show up when you are happy, sad, excited, you can be aware quicker of the emotion you are feeling. The benefits of increasing this awareness is that most

people tend to be ‘creatures of habit’ responding very instinctively to the external environment even if the response is sometimes not the most positive. If you allow a destructive emotion to grow, it can quickly be like driving down a motorway with no exit, taking you to a destination where you didn't want to go but was very difficult to avoid. Through noticing and increasing your awareness of your body, your thoughts and what you focus on, you can find an exit sooner and move to a more positive emotion.

Think to yourself, “Is this the most useful place emotionally for me to be just now?” If when you feel anxious, you tend to notice your shoulders rising, your breathing getting shallower and your focus going to possible negative consequences – then relax your shoulders, deepen your breathing, think of a pleasant thought and the feeling will change. It's very hard to feel down when you're standing tall, smiling, with your eyes looking up. As Abraham Lincoln said “Most people are about as happy as they make their minds to be.” ■

**Donald runs NLP courses throughout the year. For details email: [donald@zonedinperformance.com](mailto:donald@zonedinperformance.com) or call 01463 795888**