NLP Techniques and Concepts for Better Human Relationships

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The quality of one's relationships determines the quality of one's life. When it comes down to the greatest life satisfaction, building and maintaining great relationships are key to a happy and successful life.

Some people naturally have good relationship skills whilst others may have to work hard at it. The good news is that any skill can be developed. What is required is the desire and the intention. A skill consists of mental strategies (thinking patterns), beliefs, and predominant behaviours which demonstrates the skill level. These mental strategies can be replicated consciously to demonstrate the desires behaviours.

NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) is the study of human excellence that was built on modelling successful behaviours. This means that anyone can replicate the success models and have better outcomes in life. NLP presents several concepts, models, frameworks, and techniques that can be effectively used to consciously improve one's relationships in life.

NLP knowledge about human relationships essentially revolves around three aspects: (1) understanding one's self, (2) understanding other's personalities, temperaments, and behaviours, and (3) specific techniques and approaches in communication.

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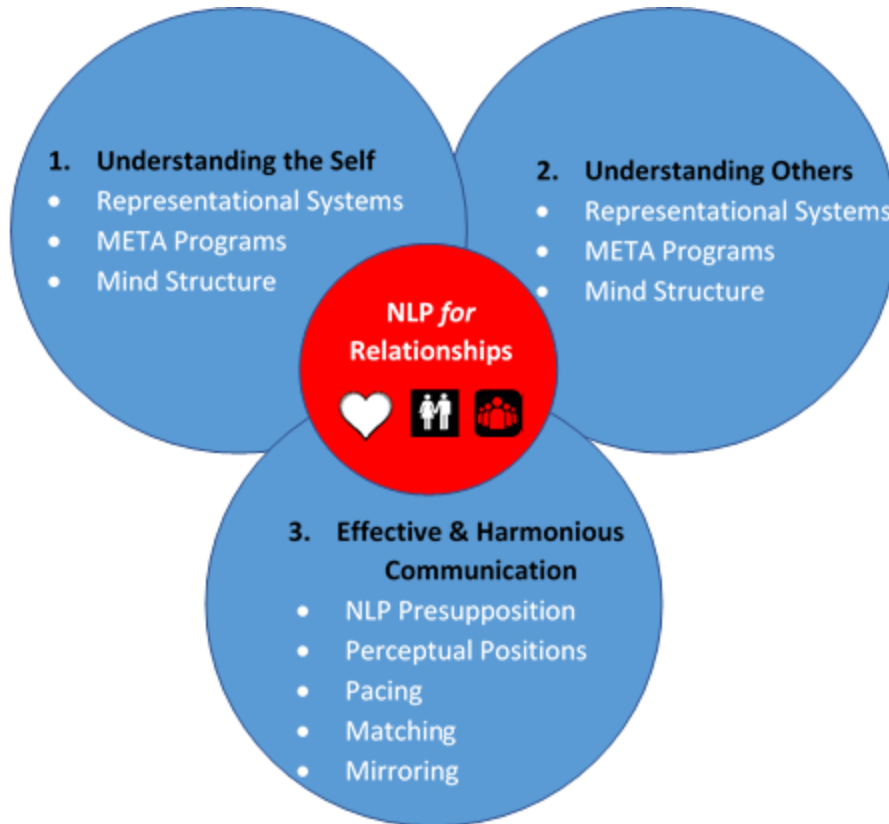
(1) Minimize Communication Gaps by Understanding the Self and Others

In NLP, **Representational Systems** portray the fact that different people have different dominant preferences of coding experiences – i.e. communicating, learning and understanding information in one of four ways. Although information is taken in through the five senses, people have an unconscious preference for which one of the senses they use as the dominant function.

The four types of representational systems are as follows:

1. *Visual* – people who are visual learn information with pictures, are well-groomed, organized and sit erect.
2. *Auditory* – people who are auditory learn by listening, remember information by following steps and procedures, and responds to a certain tone of voice or set of words.
3. *Kinesthetic* – people who are kinesthetic learn by doing or walking through something and pay attention to how things feel, both physically and emotionally.

4. Internal dialogue (ID) – people who are ID want to learn things that 'make sense', are generally well-learned and have accumulated a lot of knowledge. Understanding one's own representational system as well as those of other's helps fill any gaps in communication.

META Programming is another technique which helps one develop higher order skills to develop effective and harmonious communication with others. META Programming refers to unconscious patterns of thinking which control the way one perceives information. Understanding the different personality types and temperaments of self and others (which are relatively stable characteristics overtime) can help one understand how to communicate with people that operate from a different thinking and behavioural pattern. By learning this knowledge, one can develop a better connection with others and establish rapport.

(2) Build Rapport and Develop Strong Connections

Congruence in communication is the essence of effective communication. In NLP, congruence means that both verbal and non-verbal communication are conveying the same message. Studies indicate that 93% of communication occurs non-verbally (i.e. through body language) whilst only 7% of communication is verbal. Therefore, it is important for one to master the art of both verbal and non-verbal communication to effectively interact with others and achieve desired results.

In NLP, **Rapport** is one of the key essentials to effective and harmonious communication. It refers to the ability to relate to others in a way that creates trust and understanding. It is the ability to see the other's point of view and encourage them to understand one's own point of view. Using rapport enables the similarities between people to increase whilst the differences between them are minimized.

There are over eighty NLP techniques for building and maintaining rapport. Below are a few of them:

1. Matching – this technique involves one replicating the other's physical behaviour. For example, if the other person places their hand on the table, one would follow suit and do the same.
2. Mirroring – this involves imitating the behaviours of another in a subtle manner. Mirroring behaviours can include body posture, hand gestures, facial expressions and

more. For example, if the other person crosses their left leg, then one would cross their right leg.

3. *Pacing* – this refers to aligning behaviour with the other's model of the world by matching their speed of movement. For instance, if a person is moving very slowly, one would slow down their own movements and match the speed of movement with the other.

Ensuring one is congruent when communicating by matching body language with what one says produces clearer communication lines with others.

(3) Minimize Conflicts and Increase the Level of Harmony

NLP Practitioners live by a key set of principles known as **NLP Presuppositions**. One such presupposition is "Respect for the other person's model of the world". People often tend to think that their way of looking at the world is "right" and that it is the reality. This is simply not the case when one realizes that individuals have unique maps of the world and are constantly operating on this perceived reality. Thus, it is important to try to understand another's perspective and respect differences of opinion. Instead of defending one's own viewpoint, it is best to see things through a detached lens and offer understanding and empathy to others involved.

Moreover, an NLP process known as **Perceptual Positions** encourages one to consider one's own needs as well as the other person's model of the world while recognizing that an objective or third person perspective works most effectively to see things in an unbiased way. By doing so, the best possible outcome for all can be achieved.

Great relationships are designed on purpose, not by accident. Working collaboratively with other people and utilizing the above NLP techniques can create significantly positive results in both personal and professional relationships.

*There's a whole lot more you can learn from NLP – the techniques and knowledge gained in NLP are too lengthy to sum up in a short blog post. If you are interested in transforming your life and relationships to greater heights, consider taking part in our Signature Training, **NLP Entry Level Certification Course**. Visit www.nlpsrilanka.com for more information.*