

Non-Verbal Communication/ Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a powerful intervention methodology in the field of human behavior. The word **Neuro** indicates that NLP includes the latest knowledge of how the human brain actually works. **Linguistic** refers to both the verbal and non-verbal elements of communication. **Programming** refers to the recognition and control of patterns in human thought, communication, and behavior.

People use NLP in areas such as organization development, training, education, sales, and negotiation. It has been used in the United States in the Carter White House, the Pentagon, and is taught internationally. A book by the developers has been translated into Dutch, Swedish, and German.

NLP was developed in the early 1970's by Richard Bandler, Ph.D., an information scientist, and John Grinder, Ph.D., a linguist. According to the researchers, people think primarily in terms of either pictures, feelings, or sounds, and prefer one of these modes of thinking over another. In addition, people use certain kinds of adjectives, adverbs, and verbs when speaking that indicate their preference.

The researchers studied the communication styles and techniques of powerful and highly successful people. Through their studies, Bandler and Grinder discovered common patterns of behavior, especially in the ways influential people communicated with others. These common patterns have been isolated, understood, and can be taught to others. NLP training is designed to provide the real "nuts and bolts" of human communication necessary for true effectiveness.

The implication is that if you speak to someone who, for example, thinks visually using words that are visually oriented ("I see what you mean." or "That is very clear.") , you will have greater rapport with that person because you will be "speaking his/her language." This is important to us as facilitators, trainers, and consultants in building liking and respect.

NLP takes a simple truth: we tend to trust people who are like us. NLP can show us how to build deep and lasting business relationships by responding to the clues clients offer on how they think, feel and prefer to communicate. NLP is completely "customer-centered," teaching how to acknowledge and adapt to the unique way a client expresses him/herself. What follows are six techniques that you can use to better understand clients and improve your communication and as a result your relationship with them.

1. ***Match or mirror your client's body movements***
 - a. keep it subtle
 - b. adopt a similar posture or gesture rather than mimic
2. ***Match or mirror your client's voice***
 - a. rate of speech

- b. volume
 - c. pattern or rhythm of speech
 - d. sentence length
3. *Match your client's **moods***
 - a. do a "temperature check" of customer's current mood
 - b. respect and fall in step with customer's frame of mind at least temporarily
 - c. eventually lead him/her into a solution-oriented or more positive vein
 4. *Use **statements of fact** to help your client into a "yes mode"*
 - a. repeat statements made by customer or statements that are undeniably true
 - b. begin or end statements with phrases that ask for agreement, such as ". . . right?" ". . . okay?" "Would you agree . . . ?" ". . . isn't it?" "In your experience . . ." "Have you found . . ."
 5. *Match your client's **objection***
 - a. agree with your client's objection to eliminate the adversarial relationship
 - b. lead with a statement of fact that refocuses the client's attention
 6. *Watch your client's **eye movements** and respond in the proper communication channel*
 - a. when your client's eyes **move up**, he/she is using the **visual** channel and is seeing pictures
 - b. when your client's eyes **move back and forth** or **down to your right**, he/she is using the **audio** channel and is hearing sounds
 - c. when your client's eyes **move down to your left**, he/she is using the **feeling** channel and is feeling an emotional reaction
 - d. once you've recognized the communication channel your client is using, match that channel in the words and phrases you use.

Let's look at each of these communication channels starting with the visual channel. When clients look up they are using the visual channel. More specifically, when they look up and to your **right**, they see pictures of something they've seen before - a clear image from the mind's memory bank.

When they look up and to your **left**, they are imagining something they haven't seen yet (e.g. how a certain intervention may help them). Knowing that your client is using a visual communication channel enables you to communicate with them visually. What follows are some words (certainly not an exhaustive list) likely to be used by someone using the **visual** channel:

Analyze	Cognizant	Foresee	Observe
Angle	Discern	Get perspective on	Obscure
Appears	Distinct	Hazy idea	Peep
Aspect	Distinctive	Horse of another	Perceive

Beyond a shadow of a doubt	Dream Examine	color Image	Picture Plain
Bird's eye view	Eye-to-eye	Inspect	Read
Clarity	Flash	Look	Realize
Clear	Focus	Mental picture	See
Catch a glimpse of	Fuzzy	Mind's eye	View

In addition to being attentive to the words above, here are some additional tips to keep in mind when communicating with a client who uses the **visual** channel.

- 1. Use charts, graphs, photos, overheads and slides.** Use the whiteboard with visual people. A picture is worth a thousand words to them. Instead of just saying how profits will go up or costs will come down, paint them a vivid picture.
- 2. Use visual words:** "Is that clear to you?" "Does that look good to you?" "Let me show you." "I want you to imagine yourself using this technique."
- 3. If you want your customer to think visually or to imagine something, glance upward as you speak.** By looking up, you'll guide your customer to do the same, enhancing his or her ability to form a lasting mental picture.
- 4. Remember "dressing for success"** is very important when you call on highly visual people. They judge your professionalism by the visual impact you project with your clothes, your car, your briefcase and your presentation.

When customers look down and over to your **left**, they are thinking about feelings and emotions. Tell them, for example, how satisfied, contented and proud they will feel after being involved in the intervention you're proposing. Help them get a feel for the result by involving as many of their senses as you can. One way to do this would be to get the client to role play or practice the situation or the technique you're proposing with you. Following are some words (again, not exhaustive) likely to be used by someone using the **feeling** channel:

Active	Get a handle on	Lukewarm	Sore
Affected	Get in touch with	Motion	Stand out
Bear down on	Get your goat	Muddled	Stir up
Boil down	Grip	Pull strings	Strike
Charge	Hands-on	Rough	Support
Come to grips	Hang tough	Seize	Take on
Cool	Heated debate	Sensation	Test
Concrete	Heavy	Shallow	Tie up
Cutting edge	Hot-headed	Shock	Tight
Deep	Hustle	Slip-up	Touch
Embrace	Intuition (having)	Smooth	Uptight
Fall apart	Keep your shirt on	Snap	Vie for

Float

Lose your shirt on

Soft

Whip

Here are some tips to keep in mind when communicating with a client who uses the feeling channel.

1. **Use physical, action and emotional words:** "How do you feel about confronting that person?" "Are you comfortable with these options?" "I want to get a handle on your exact requirements."
2. **Glance down to the right occasionally.** They will intuitively know you care very much about what you say.
3. **Meet them face-to-face whenever possible.** Don't rely on a phone call or a piece of paper to do your communicating with this kind of prospect.
4. **Get them physically involved with your ideas and suggestions.** Let them do something whenever you can. Whether it's to role play a confrontation, or practice a presentation, or draw something on paper, or enter some data into the computer, somehow get them actively involved.
5. **Make sure this client is physically comfortable** in any meeting. If they're not, they'll ignore much of what you try to communicate to them.
6. **Shake his/her hand** when you leave the person and say, ". . . then we've agreed . . ."

When clients look back and forth or down and to your **right**, they are talking to themselves or hearing words or voices stored in their memory bank. When talking to clients like this, use lots of words because they are used to and prefer more words. Use greater detail about the features and benefits of what you're trying to influence them about. What follows are some words (again, not an exhaustive list) likely to be used by someone using the **audio** channel.

Amplify

Announce

Blabber

Converse

Discuss

Dissonant

Earful

Express

Give an ear to

Hear me out

Hidden message

Hold your tongue

Hush

Idle talk

Inquire

Listen

Mention

Noise

Outspoken

Proclaim

Purr

Quiet

Roar

Rumor

Say

Shout

Silence

Sounding

board

Speechless

State

Tell

Tone

Tuned into

Unheard of

Utter

Voice

Informed

Wordy

Yell

Here are some tips to keep in mind when communicating with a client who is sound oriented and uses the **audio** channel.

1. **Use testimonials and endorsements.** Since they think with words rather than pictures and feelings, they're strongly interested by testimonials. Quote the endorsement word for word.
2. **Use changes in tonality, pitch, volume and speech rate** to verbally punctuate your most important points. Auditory thinkers pay as much attention to how you say it as to what you say.
3. **Use audio-oriented words:** "Does that sound good to you?" "Are we in harmony on that point?" "Do I need to amplify anything we've covered?"
4. **Use cassette tapes with audio-oriented thinkers** in addition to using visual information. An audio-oriented thinker may readily listen to tapes, while expensive written material may sit around unread.
5. **Call auditory clients on the telephone frequently.** Even a brief conversation can mean a great deal.