

NLP is not a therapy. PERIOD!

If NLP is not a therapy, then what is it?

by John La Valle (president of the international society of NLP)

NLP is a meta discipline. That is, it is a discipline of disciplines. It is the study of the structure of subjective experience and what can be calculated from that. The greatest misconception about the technology is that it is about therapy and that is about as far from the truth as one can get!

Richard Bandler and John Grinder put together a technology, based mostly on the modeling work of Richard Bandler.

And the earliest modeling of anyone was of Fritz Perls and Virginia Satir. Fritz Perls was a Gestalt therapist and Virginia Satir a family therapist. And so, the first two people that Richard Bandler came in contact with, purely out of convenience based on work Richard was doing with a publisher, were therapists. Later on came Milton Erickson, and then many others.

Early on, Richard and John realized that the technology could be used in many applications, as it is a meta discipline!

Now, after many years, and with many arguments about NLP, let's make **a few distinctions about the technology.**

1. It is about how the brain works and language, and brain chemistry and the effects of states on learning. It is an educational tool, to be sure.

2. Because it is a meta discipline, it works wherever anyone has a brain, and wants to learn to use it more effectively, efficiently, elegantly, etc. 3. It has two identifiable parts: Skills and the Applications of those skills.

Most of whatever is out there in the marketplace are „applications“ of the basic skills of the technology. It seems that people have confused the two. The phobia cure, for example, is an application, a technique. Persuasion Engineering™ is an „application“, etc.

And the worst is when people have taken parts of the basic technology and mixed it with other discipline, and call that NLP.

For example, someone learns NLP and develops their skill at communicating more effectively and perhaps even learns a „technique“ in NLP and now uses that in their own practice. Then they profess they are practitioners of NLP or use NLP in their practice. While part of this may be true, part of it is misleading. If they've learned „anchoring“, and use that, what they are using it with is NOT NLP. The anchoring that comes from NLP is called anchoring. NLP is composed of more than just that.

Now that NLP is enjoying certain amounts of publicity because of its effectiveness, even the field of psychology is trying to lay claim to their jurisdiction over NLP, but it's too late.

Firstly, the field of psychology poo-pooed NLP early on as such things as bogus, non-substantive, etc. The fact of the matter is that the basis for psychology is theory, opinion and guess work. It is based on statistics and scientific data. NLP is based on models, mathematically calculated and formulated. It is NOT scientific, as it defies science and statistics. Now that NLP is getting the recognition it deserves because of its results, lots of people want to jump in on NLP as a marketing phenomena.

Richard Bandler himself and to this day professes that NLP is not therapy, nor is it about therapy.

It is about education and teaching people to run their own brains. It is being used by teachers, sports coaches, personal coaches, doctors, lawyers, nurses, clergy people, accountants, negotiators, managers, entrepreneurs, motivational speakers, and so on and so on.

Just because people use some of the skills of NLP, or teach some of the skills of NLP, that

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competence
confidence
congruence
chance

does not make what they are doing NLP. Period. As one of my associates, Albert Abrahamian, so succinctly points out: If you take a part from a Mercedes and use it in an Audi, that does not make the Audi a Mercedes. Simple enough to understand.

Now, with all the ballyhoo about who owns what, it's important to remember this: without NLP, as it was developed, as it was meant to be used, the people out there complaining and whining about *who owns what*, wouldn't be where they are today selling NLP if it wasn't for the basic technology that they themselves didn't develop. They may have put together their own techniques, named them, etc. but those techniques could not be put together without the ingredients of the basics of NLP. Perhaps these people are experiencing a lack of their own success, I don't know. Their whining and complaining does not make any significant contribution to the field and they should get over that.

There are many people developing new „applications“ of NLP. One I know of is in the medical field. He is teaching doctors to *use* NLP in a way that helps their clients!! This is commendable. New applications are just that: applications of NLP. For those who think they have a new „model“, they should not call it NLP, or refer to it as NLP, but take the challenge and market it as something totally new. Then they can test their assertions. Anything that's truly a new *model* will be tremendously successful and prove to be a worthy contribution to the field of human development.

There is a woman, Kate Benson, who has made significant contributions to education and specifically the training of teachers so they can be more effective with their students, using NLP. As a matter of fact, here's a most recent announcement about it:

Announcement!! Richard Bandler appoints Kate Benson. „International Director of Education“ for The Society of NLP™! Kate has been training & developing thousands of teachers for many years now and has been at the forefront of education and the brainchild of some of the most creative approaches for educators in the classroom! Announcement!! Richard Bandler appoints Kate Benson. „International Director of Education“ for The Society of NLP™! Kate has been training & developing thousands of teachers for many years now and has been at the forefront of education and the brainchild of some of the most creative approaches for educators in the classroom!

Then there are people, and so-called „umbrella organizations“, claiming to have jurisdiction over NLP and that one must train with them in order to be qualified and properly endorsed in order to use NLP, etc. This is totally inaccurate and false. There are even some people who say that a serious NLP trainer must be a therapist and/or an psychologist and or a life consultant, because NLP is influencing the psyche of human beings and therefore only qualified people as ACADEMICS (!) should be a trainer of NLP. Well, you don't need to be somebody special or to have some special kind of degree, which is not NLP, in order to use or to train NLP. NLP is an own discipline. This is exactly what Richard Bandler continues to say: It's about teaching people to run their own brains so they don't need others to do it for them. By the way, Psyche comes from Greek for „spirit or soul“ and so holidays will influence people's psyche, and so will movements, journeys, parties, etc. etc. etc.

None of the NLP skills are restricted to any special profession, it all depends on the context in which the NLP skills are used.

The basic technology (and most/all of the applications like phobia cure ...), is made up of certain intellectual properties. **To make the clearest of distinctions, the best ones to track are copyrights.** These are NOT in any public domain and are protected properties. So, some people who may be claiming jurisdiction may themselves be in violation of certain copyrights. And they certainly do not have any jurisdiction. If they believe they do, ask them to clearly identify which intellectual property is theirs.

Now, none of this is meant to frighten people away from learning NLP, but to serve as a suggestion to educate yourself about who may be claiming what, and to check out any trainer making specific claims. If they are training people in NLP and are including other disciplines in their curriculum, they are not teaching NLP. If they say they're teaching NLP and including, for example, Eric, they are NOT teaching NLP purely, but are mixing the disciplines. Period. Eric is NOT part of the technology known as NLP. Check the curriculum. Psychology is NOT part of NLP and NLP is NOT part of psychology. **Take care not to invest more time and money on something you don't need.** An NLP certification is for NLP Practitioners and NLP Master Practitioners, not other disciplines, including psychotherapy, cognitive behavior, psychology, etc. You'll even notice that many NLP Practitioner Programs are longer than necessary because they include other disciplines that are NOT part of NLP and are NOT required to become an NLP Practitioner, Master Practitioner or Trainer. You will end up spending more time in the classroom learning what is NOT NLP and this not only confuses people, but also detracts from the technology of NLP itself! It is also very misleading because they deal with all the techniques and applications. NLP is about Freedom and it is imprisoning to be stuck, following exactly the steps of a technique! They clearly don't understand what NLP is about!

Yvonne van Dyck brings it to the point! Yvonne van Dyck's passion is to accompany trainers, coaches, women up and on to THEIR unique fulfilled and successful way - and to transfer it as into action! As she says so very well: „Fulfilled people are always successful - successful people not always fulfilled!“

Practitioner requirements as designated by The Society of NLP -Richard Bandler, can be found at: <http://www.purenlp.com/praccert.htm> and for Master Practitioners at:

<http://www.purenlp.com/mpcert.htm>. You'll notice there are NO „time in class“ or number of hours requirements and NO inclusion of other disciplines.

Anyone professing to teach NLP ought to be able to demonstrate it, as well..

If they cannot, think about it!

