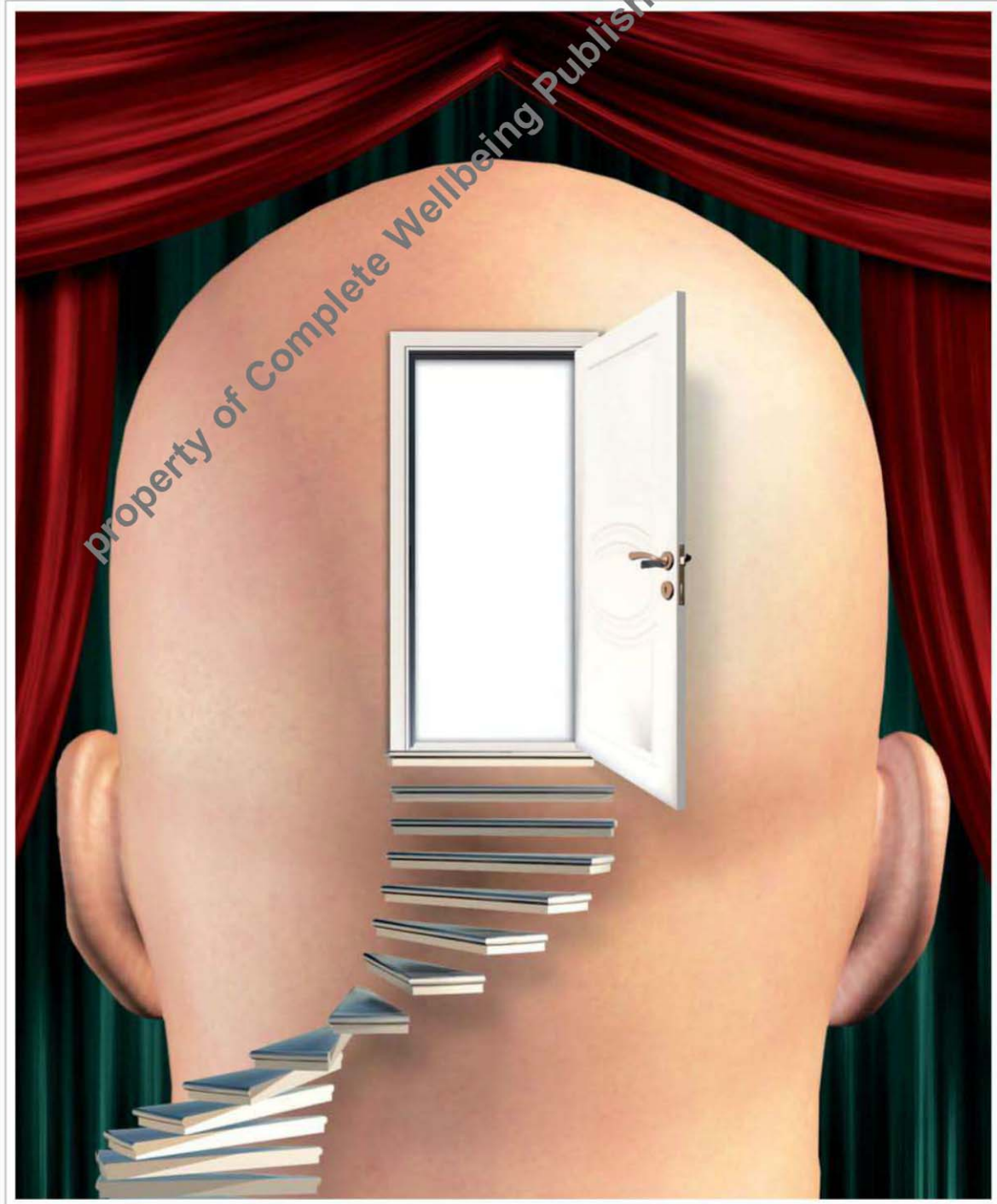


# Rethink your way to success

Learn how NLP can direct all your experiences towards excellence

■ By David Lincoln



"I am so scared to give that presentation next week as my boss [and his boss] will be watching and listening to me," pleaded Ritesh, a senior sales executive with a Bangalore-based MNC. Whether it's the competitive world of business or matters of personal relationships, our thoughts and emotions dictate our behaviours. The trouble is, most of us are unaware of how our brain [or mind] works. It is therefore no surprise that we do not realise the extent of damage our thoughts and language cause to ourselves and to others. For example, the brain cannot compute negatives, so a statement like 'don't do that' is interpreted as, 'I must do this now so that I will not do it next time.' Think about it—How often do we tell children 'Do not' only to find the same prohibited action carried out?

When it comes to illnesses of the body, our language can also be instrumental in preventing us from healing quickly. Here is a simple example: If you constantly say, "I have a cold," your mind reads this as something to hold on to—that you 'have'. Your sub-conscious mind then programmes the body and the immune system to hold on to the cold so that you 'have' it for longer.

### How does NLP help?

Positive thinking methods like those discussed in *The Secret* [the book and the film] teach us to always talk in positive terms. Neuro Linguistic Programming [NLP] adds to this thought process by including the concept of Clearly Defined Outcomes. In the previous instance, for example, when we display the symptoms of a cold [or any other illness], we need to speak positively and elaborate on a clear outcome in our mind. This instructs our brains to act accordingly. So, instead of saying, 'I have a cold' you can change it to, 'I am allowing a virus to pass through my body and will assist it on its way out as much as I can. The act of coughing, sneezing and other methods are all used to help my body easily expel the virus.' NLP believes that by consciously staying aware of the language that we use in a day-to-day basis, we can identify problems that we are creating in our health and in our lives.

### The school of excellence

NLP is also often known as the study of excellence. The core principle of NLP is based on modelling excellence, not only of other people but also in reference to our own personal experiences of excellence. By studying our own experiences with excellence, we are able to recreate the same thoughts and actions later, at will.

Take the example of Ritesh, who is terrified of public speaking. In order to make his presentation in a confident and informative manner, Ritesh must get into a relaxed frame of mind.

An NLP practitioner will first use the popular 10 minute phobia-cure to rid the Ritesh of his fears. After that the practitioner will teach him how to get into the state he want to be in, for the future presentations. This is done using a technique known as 'The Circle of Excellence'.

NLP promotes the theory that it is better to dwell on our experiences during times of excellence i.e. when everything was going well, rather than on times when things were not so good.

The main aim of NLP is change. Remember the famous saying, 'If you always do what you did; you will always get what you got.' In much the same way, NLP believes that if you want something different, you must do something different. NLP also recognises that people not only learn things in different ways but that they understand things in different ways. Keeping



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### NLP—A brief overview

Neuro Linguistic Programming or NLP is a relatively new science of the mind that originated in the 1970s in California, USA. First developed by Richard Bandler and John Grinder, this technique was subsequently enhanced and added to by many others. The term can be explained by understanding each word of the acronym NLP—Neuro [N] applies to the neurotransmitters in the brain and the process in which they communicate within the body and mind. Linguistic [L] refers to the way the neurons communicate internally and in turn affect our external interactions with other people and things. Programming [P] refers to the 'programmes' that play in the mind, mostly without any conscious awareness. To sum it up, Neuro Linguistic Programming [NLP] is the user's manual for the brain.



this in mind, one of the first assumptions is that everybody is different and that everybody has their own ideas and interpretations of all aspects of their lives.

In NLP terms, we call this a Presupposition or something that we always assume is present and correct. One such Presupposition is 'everybody has his or her own model of the world'.

In psychotherapy, NLP comes under the Brief Psychotherapy, which is described as 'Problem Driven Solution Orientated' therapy. That's because it does not dwell on the past or the possible causes of a problem but instead focuses on working out a solution for the problem at hand.

In business situations, NLP concentrates on finding the differentiating factor that will change our regular way of working or under-

stand. This takes us back to one of the basic principles of NLP—Modelling i.e. if one person can do it, then other people can certainly learn how to do it. Therefore, by studying people who are good at what they do, you can transfer the same positive skills to yourself to enhance your own ability. Modelling is not just copying, as copying will only give you the basic idea of the task. Modelling involves looking deeper into 'how' somebody does something. NLP techniques help investigate the way the subconscious operates and achieves the excellence required. These subconscious steps are, by the very nature of things, totally unknown to the person being modelled.

### **It's never too late to have a happy childhood**

The science and art of NLP has created many such techniques to see and understand how other human beings think. Thinking is a core human activity that differentiates us from other animals and thinking is the basis of everything we do. NLP is akin to neurology, in that various methods are used to discover how people think and how they arrive at conclusions that turn into actions. The logic is that if you are not succeeding in your work or play, it is largely due to the way you are thinking. Therefore, understanding the mechanics of thinking will

help you change your thoughts and provide you with the tools for a better life.

Let us take a closer look at a common problem experienced by many people. So many of us are paralysed by a past problem that prevents any movement forward. The human concept of time is a man-made device to explain and understand the movements of the sun, moon and earth. In the mind or the brain, time as we know it ceases to exist. An incident in the past can feel like it happened today. Using this belief, NLP tackles all problems of the past as if they exist in the present. In theory, you rewrite your own history with the help of various NLP techniques. For example, during a session of NLP, you may be asked to address a past problem and think of another, better way in which you could have tackled the situation that would have resulted in a different outcome. As you re-live your thought process and emotions of the past, you begin to resolve the problem in the present. When the problem is solved, your negative thoughts and feelings are removed and cease to have an impression on your present and your future.

### **How to master your mind**

NLP has many such techniques and processes that enable you to change your thinking and thus enhance your life. There are two main ways that a person can benefit from NLP processes. One way is to seek out an NLP practitioner and take a few sessions to help change your way of thinking. A good place to start is [www.anlpindia.info](http://www.anlpindia.info), the website of the governing organisation in India. Here you will find a list of NLP practitioners in your area.

Another option is to do a course in NLP—an entry-level course is known as an NLP Practitioner Programme and typically runs for about five days on a full-time basis. NLP training is generally divided into two parts—the theory and the actual practice of techniques that are powerful enough to push you towards a newer, more empowering direction. A simple Google search for NLP courses will give you list of teachers and institutes offering such programmes all over India.

This has been a very brief look at the science and art that is called NLP. I refer to this amazing mental tool as an 'open source software for the brain,' for once you have mastered the techniques and processes; there is almost nothing beyond your reach!



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## **UNDERSTANDING THE MECHANICS OF THINKING WILL HELP YOU CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS AND PROVIDE TOOLS FOR A BETTER LIFE**