

# NLP Practitioner Skills & Techniques



Keith W Fail

512.507.5464

Executive Coaching, Training,  
and Project Management  
<http://NLPResourcesAustin.com>

The Practitioner Training teaches at a number of different levels: skills, procedures, and attitudes. These tend not to be content specific, but rather are applicable in a variety of contexts including parenting, relationships, therapy, business and project management, consulting, coaching, training, teaching, counseling, etc.

The following is a list of skills and techniques that are typically taught in most NLP practitioner programs:

## TECHNIQUES:

Techniques are what NLP is most often known for. These are algorithms (recipes or formula if you will) that have been proven effective in producing a particular desired outcome in clients. Many techniques in NLP are designed to help people make personal changes that they desire. This is because Richard Bandler and John Grinder, the founders of NLP, started by modeling unusually talented therapists. They reasoned that if they could find ways to help people learn, grow and change, then that would support learning any other areas in which people wanted to learn. Practitioner Techniques typically include:

- New Behavior Generator
- Circle of Excellence
- Change History
- Outcome Frame Procedure
- Meta-Outcome Procedure
- Aligning Neurological Levels
- Mapping Across Sub-Modalities
- Swish Sub-Modalities
- Phobia / Trauma Cure
- Godiva Chocolate Pattern
- Future Pacing
- Tape Editing
- Parts Party
- Eliciting & Sorting Polarities (visual squash)
- Six-Step Reframe
- Context Reframe
- Meaning Reframe
- Therapeutic Metaphor
- Re Imprinting Belief Change:
- Mentor Pattern
- Walking with Grace and Power
- Walking Belief Change

## SKILLS:

While techniques tend to be step-by-step procedures for accomplishing a particular goal, skills are the foundation of distinctions and behaviors that facilitate effective working with other people. The skills components of NLP are used in conjunction with the techniques and at any time when you are working with yourself or interacting with another person to achieve their outcome. NLP Practitioner level skills include:

### Internal Flexibility Skills

- Rapport Skills –
  - Matching and Mirroring Physiology –
  - Backtracking – precisely and via paraphrase
  - Matching and Mirroring Key Values Words -
  - Process Words (VAK) Matching –
- Personal State Management Skills
  - Self anchoring,
  - Witness consciousness
  - Centering and extending

- Holding the space
- Recovery strategies
- Wrap up routines
- Reflective Mirror of the Client

### **Sensory Acuity Skills**

- Overt Information gathering skills
  - Calibrating meta-model violations as dysfunctions in the clients model of the world
  - Utilizing meta-model questions, reframes, hypnotic language, outcome frame procedure questions to update their model of the world
  - Outcome frame procedure – calibrating outcome frame violations and correcting them by questioning the client
  - Determining the structure of the Current Problem State
  - Eliciting Sensory Based Behavioral Descriptions –
  - Using Meta-Model Questions to determine the structure of the client’s model of the world.
- Calibration – Covert Information Gathering Skills
  - Calibration of Rapport / Not Rapport
  - Calibration of Agreement / Disagreement
  - Calibration of Congruence / Incongruence
  - Calibration of Problem State and Outcome State to “test” your intervention work –
  - Calibration of Parts
  - Calibration of Client’s Perceptual Position
  - Calibration of Eye Accessing Movements to identify cognitive sequences (strategies)
  - Calibration of Submodalities from client’s words and behaviors
  - Calibration of client’s model of time and habits
  - Eliciting and Calibrating Strategies –

### **Behavioral Flexibility Skills –**

- Pacing & Leading –
  - Overt Break State skill
  - Covert Pattern Interrupt skill
  - Shaping Behavior with reward and punishment
  - Process Words (VAK) - Utilization and Leading from one VAK to another or from one strategy to another
  - Eliciting States in clients – Leading to client States and/or Behavior with Hypnotic Process Language
  - Educating clients about Submodalities and Eliciting Submodalities of their states for contrastive analysis
  - Utilizing and leading clients use of time
  - Eliciting meta-outcomes and hierarchies of values, and hierarchies of positive intent
  - Hypnotic Linguaging Skills – Process Language
  - State Management (your own and the client’s) –
  - Managing Perceptual Positions – dissociation from negatives, association into positives, switching with others for understanding
- Anchoring and Re-Anchoring Skills -
  - Physical (tactile) anchoring
  - Spatial anchoring by moving in space
  - Verbal anchoring via words and tonality
  - Pacing and leading perceptual positions
  - Change History
  - New Behavior Generator
  - Collapsing anchors
  - Chaining anchors
  - Sliding anchors
  - Installing Strategies and Building New Strategies
- Verbal Change Intervention tools
  - Using Meta-Model Distinctions to Ask Questions that Expand a Person’s Map of the World –
  - Backtracking with elbow room
  - Verbal Context Reframing
  - Verbal Meaning or Cause/Effect Reframing
  - Using Metaphors and Stories to Help Another Person Change –
- Submodality Interventions –
  - Swish,
  - Phobia/Trauma Cure,
  - Submodality Map-Across,

- Grief Resolution technique
- Belief Change Interventions –
  - Counter example belief change,
  - Verbal reframe belief change,
  - Walking belief change,
  - Submodality belief change,
  - Re-Imprint belief change,
  - Aligning Neurological Levels technique
- Future Pacing and Mental Rehearsal and Tape Editing
- Story telling
  - Therapeutic Metaphor creation
  - Story Delivery Skills
- Parts Work
  - Educating clients about parts and eliciting, fleshing out, and sorting parts for negotiation and integration
  - Accessing unconscious ideo-dynamic responses like finger signals or communication with the unconscious mind
  - Satir Parts Party to get to know your parts
  - 6-Step Reframing and Parts Negotiation
  - Eliciting, Sorting, and Integrating Parts
- Tasking for action and diagnosis based on results.

### **Living By the Presuppositions of NLP**

Finally, the NLP presuppositions are a set of guiding principles that provide a foundation of values for performing NLP. These are not necessarily held to be true, but rather are found to be useful tenants to adopt in that they provide the most utility and effectiveness in most situations. In cases where they are less than pragmatic, NLPers are encouraged to adopt any more useful position and do something else that works better. Nevertheless, becoming masterful at NLP generally includes learning to live from these presuppositions.

These presuppositions don't necessarily make sense to most people until after they have the experience of participating in a Practitioner Training and find in a practical and behavioral way what these mean in practice.

1. People are like map makers.
2. People's maps are made of pictures, sounds, feelings, tastes, and smells.
3. The map is not the territory.
4. People respond to their maps of reality, not to reality.
5. If you change your map you'll change your state.
6. Some maps are out of awareness.
7. Behind every behavior is a positive intention.
8. Choice is better than no choice.
9. People always make the best choices available to them.
10. The most flexible element in any system tends to have the most influence in the results that system produces.
11. Communication is redundant
12. The meaning of a communication is the response it elicits.
13. People work perfectly to produce the results that they're getting.
14. Every behavior is useful in some context.
15. If it's possible in the world, it's possible for me.
16. Chunking: small chunks to learn big stuff.
17. People have all the resources needed to make the changes they want; what they may need is access to these resources at appropriate times and places.
18. There is no such thing as failure, only feedback.
19. The quality of our lives is determined by the quality of our communication.
20. Mind and body are part of the same system and affect each other.

## ADDITIONAL SKILLS FOR COACHES THERAPISTS AND PEOPLE HELPERS USING NLP

There are a number of additional distinctions, skills, and techniques that are useful for people who want to apply the NLP practitioner course to working with other people as a coach, trainer, counselor, or consultant. These include:

- Distinguishing the different Stages of Personal Change – how to select interventions according to where your clients is in the process
- Distinguishing the different levels of people helping
- Sponsorship skills and attitudes required for deep work
- Intake interview skills
  - Intake forms and procedures
  - Calibrating the MRI Model of client meta-programs and utilizing it to meet the client in their model of the world
  - Taking a client history
  - Figuring out what the client really needs,
  - Building an intervention plan
  - Determining the Logical Level the client uses to frame their problem or opportunity – and framing at the appropriate level
- Documenting client case notes – keeping client notes for additional insight and marketing, memory, and your protection
- Planning Interventions
- Documenting intervention and follow up tasks and results
- Understanding cognitive distortions clients are exhibiting habitually
- Understanding client defense mechanisms, coping mechanisms, and underlying psycho-dynamics
- Ecology, Ethics, and Integrity: Your responsibilities and rights, the clients responsibilities and rights
- Holding up the Mirror to Your Self – seeing ourselves in our clients, clients who project, blame, deny, justify, rationalize, shame, quit, and feel obligated rather than at choice.
- Building a client base – spreading the word through networking, marketing, and presentations, and a specific, well-defined service niche
- Pricing of services and how to build up to charging for your services and making a living
- Intention, Integrity, Accountability, and Commitment – recognizing above the line and below the line behavior, Chris Avery model and the 6 coping strategies
- Standing for the Client's Highest and Best Self
- Core Personal Change Processes/Strategies: Permission, Acceptance, Forgiveness, Gratitude, Judgment, Evaluation, Deciding, Choosing, Commitment
- Power of Deep Sponsorship – the first job of a people helper, therapist, coach, consultant
- The Three Primal Energies of a people helper – Tenderness, Fierceness, and Playfulness
- Five states of change – healing, destruction, penetration, stabilization, revelation
- Campbell's Hero's Journey as a development stage model of the Identity
- Roots and Seeds of NLP – Where NLP came from, where it is going, and why you might want to participate
- EFT – the technique you can give to your clients – why it works from NLP perspective
- Behavioral Shaping – using anchors to reward and punish and shape the behaviors you want
- Cognitive Distortions – the various ways that clients can be broken and what to do about it
- Listening for and Correcting Unconscious Hedges and Incongruities in Client Goals and Commitments - speaking for self versus other people, using qualifiers on goals and commitments,
- Valence Scaling as a tool for calibration and client commitment – key valences reveal problems at the level of beliefs
- Multi-Person Dynamics lead to Personal Development – recognize the patterns between people but do normally work on the individual level.
- Perturbation Theory, mind as a complex dynamic system, and chaos theory as a model of change
- The Power of Meta-States to Destabilize and then Re-Stabilize Client Reality
- The Power of Clean Language/Clean Space to Destabilize and then Re-Stabilize Client Reality
- Listening for the Client's Story they tell about Themselves and then Changing That Story
- Dealing with recalcitrant clients, therapist killers, and excessive mental masturbation from really bright or educated clients.
- Recognizing suicidal or homicidal tendencies and dealing with them professionally and ethically
- Recognizing mental illness and helping the client get help at the right level of service from the right professional – referring clients

### MODELING:

Most of the skills and techniques of NLP were discovered by modeling people who naturally were able to produce excellent results. Ultimately NLP is about modeling exemplar behavior and making those models available to others who wish to be able to do what the exemplar can do. The skills, concepts, and techniques of NLP are used to elicit detailed cognitive and behavioral strategies along with belief and identity structures that represent to details of how a person produces the excellent results. This is then used as a pattern to generate protocols that allow others to adopt these skills to their contexts and experience.

In this way, NLP is ultimately about creating a world to which we want to belong.