

*“Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.” – Rumi*

The fundamental principles outlined are Neuro Linguistic Programing (NLP) techniques and if applied can change the quality of your relationships not only within and with yourself but with others. Information provided below is from exerts from information and tips provided by [The Coaching Room](#).

Working on one’s self and taking responsibility for your part in forming, maintaining or revitalising your relationship is the first step in the right direction.

### **Tip #1 - HAVE A BETTER RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU FIRST**

If you have a highly conditional relationship with yourself, you will have a highly conditional relationship with others. If other people need to meet stringent standards and expectations just to be accepted and approved by you, those are the same standards and expectations you will be holding like a cage over your esteem just to experience your own acceptance and approval.

Have you ever noticed that the things you harshly judge others about are the same things you would judge, and do judge, yourself about? Have you ever noticed that when you are totally okay with being a particular way in the world (e.g. being unpunctual) that you tend not to judge others for being the same (e.g. unpunctual)? It is only when you reject an aspect of yourself that you project that same rejection onto others.

In the alternative, have you noticed when you do the opposite of the standards and expectations you judge others to. For example, let’s say you are unpunctual as a practice and when you are forced to wait at the doctor’s surgery past your appointment time, things well up inside, you become frustrated and angry, judgment thoughts rage through your mind. So you mismatch by holding a different standard or expectation on others then you do for yourself. Mismatching is often in the shadow of you and not easily noticeable until someone else points it out.

The more okay you can be with your own fallibility, the more permission you have to make mistakes, to be a human being, not a perfect being, the more okay you will be with the fallibility and humanness in others. After all, a

community with fallibility at its heart is a human community. So this NLP tip is to relax, give yourself permission to be where you are, doing the best you are doing, because everyone around you is doing their best too.

And if you see something you really don't like in another person, ask yourself the question -  
*"How might what I am seeing, be me I am seeing?"*

## Tip #2 - ENGAGE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS FROM THE RIGHT STATE

Your emotional state grounds your behaviour and what you pay attention to. Have you ever noticed that when you are in a bad mood, you tend to make bad decisions and see the worst? When you are in a good mood, you tend to make good decisions and see the best? This is also true in relationships.

Before you engage in your relationships, especially in important conversations, stop, pause and ask yourself - *"Am I in the best state for this conversation/interaction right now? And are they?"*

## Tip #3 - OPEN YOUR HAND IF YOU WANT TO BE HELD

Rumi the poet named at the outset penned the above beautiful metaphor. What it speaks to is that many people wait for others to come to them, wait for others to talk to them, wait for others to say sorry first, wait for others to make the next move. If you are waiting for the world to come to you, for relationships to come to you, you may be waiting...awhile.

Waiting, not because there are none available, or you aren't deserving, but because most of the time the rest of the world is waiting also, they are waiting for, YOU.

If you would like to engage in a broader range of relationships, or more deeply into your current relationships there is a unique opportunity for you to lead what you would like to receive in the world by going or doing first. And here's the thing... if you haven't put yourself out there then you already have a "no" so you have nothing to lose, and only a "yes" to gain.

## Tip #4 - VOICE YOUR UNIQUENESS AND BE YOURSELF

You are unique. Look at your thumb, that thumb print you have on your body, for you to find one identical to it, the numbers are one in sixty-four billion. So in sixty-four billion thumbprints time you'll find one identical to yours and that's just your thumbprint. To get ten fingerprints the same we're talking trillions to find fingerprints exactly the same.

Now imagine the rest of you. You are an expression that is totally unique, there has never been a human being identical to you in all of the history of human beings. As a metaphor you are a diamond so rare, so incredibly rare as to be absolutely priceless, that you are worthless, utterly worthless as a commodity; because there wouldn't be enough money in the world to pay for your rarity, that's how incomparable you are.

Yet many people spend their time comparing and judging themselves against someone else. Trying to be someone else, or live their life to someone else.

Comparing yourself in any way to any other is like looking for one of the sixty-four billion fingerprints just so you can claim "we're the same". Does that sound logical. You are you and they are themselves, stop comparing and judging yourself by the comparison.

The danger of trying to be someone else, or playing your life to someone else is that you will never actually successfully be able to do it. The more you try, the more expectations you will have to unsuccessfully juggle. No matter how hard you try or how perfect you aim to become, there will always be some who likes your company and some who don't. This NLP tip is to be yourself, save all of that energy and vitality and be with the people it takes no effort to be 'you' around.

### **Tip #5 - PACE FOR INSTANT RAPPORT**

When you find you want to get into rapport with someone more fully (maybe it's a significant conversation you're about to have at work/home, or you are meeting someone for the first time) a powerful NLP technique is pacing for rapport.

Pacing is all about matching the other person, which is, entering into the person's world to be there with him or her, which means to literally take on

the movements, neurology, words, understandings, etc. of the other person and match them with our own.

Because we are typically not aware of these facets of our ongoing experience, they lie outside of our conscious awareness, pacing communicates at an unconscious level. It says, "I understand. I know your world, I can sense and feel and think in terms of your world of experience."

By pacing or matching another's words and non-verbal expressions (i.e., breathing, standing, gestures, etc.) we create the magic of rapport. It says I like you (I - am like - you). This creates safety. Mastering this art of pacing will develop your ability to establish rapport with people quickly and proficiently.

One of the simplest and easiest ways to pace is to match the person's body language. If their legs are crossed, your legs are crossed, their arms folded, your arms are folded, they speak fast, you speak fast, they speak slowly, you speak slowly. **Note**, matching is not mimicking. If a person senses you are mimicking them this will likely disengage rapport. So next time you are relating with someone, check your physiology, are you physiologically in rapport or out of it?

## Tip # 6 - LET GO OF YOUR PERFECTIONISM AND SHARE YOUR HUMANITY INSTEAD

A temptation for many people is to only share the parts of them that they think are great and excellent, and hide the parts that aren't perfect – hide vulnerability, insecurity, fallibility, hide the human parts.

The seductive illusion to be aware of playing in the background of your mind is that "people will love me for my perfections and shun me for my imperfections". Perhaps some people will.

Here is the trap: when you are only willing to share the glory of you and are not okay to share the rest, the message you may be inadvertently communicating to others is that it is only safe for them to share their glory and nothing else. Now you're only able to connect, relate and find common ground with some people and only some of the time, because not everyone feels glorious or has glory to share all of the time. Everyone however, can relate to vulnerability, to fallibility, everyone can relate to being human and

not perfect – because that’s what we are. So is it necessary for you to hide your true self?

The more okay you are to share yourself (the delight and the disaster) the safer and more willing others will feel to share of themselves as well.

### Tip #7 - PUT THE RELATIONSHIP FIRST, TASK SECOND

This next tip is short, yet powerful. As we all rush around in life, we can experience more and more request or even demands to do things and get stuff done. This is as true in our personal space as much as it is in our professional lives. Often, we want or need the agreement or cooperation from those around us, be it our life partner, children or work colleagues to get these things done. Have you noticed how difficult that can be sometimes? Particularly with your children or your staff?

The probability is that you have been putting tasks to be done as more front and center than the quality of your relating and relationship with these ‘significant others’.

The tip - take some time out with these ‘others’ and put your relationship, connection and care of them first and foremost. If you can do this in a genuine and consistent way, you may be moved at how much easier it is to get all those other tasks done.

### Tip #8 - LOOK AT YOUR RELATIONSHIPS SYSTEMICALLY, NOT TRANSACTION-ALLY

This tip goes hand in hand with putting the relationship before the task. At the heart of most relationships is the old adage – you scratch my back, and I’ll scratch yours. The question is, is that a systemic approach? Are you looking at the relationship **as a whole** or is it based solely on this transactional style of thinking? What’s in it for me?

The transactional approach encourages individuals to work together towards obtaining a mutual benefit from each other. Such transactional relationships can be with our significant others, our colleagues, we can even have it with our kids (be good and you will get my affection and approval, misbehave and you will get my dissatisfaction and disapproval).

What can happen sometimes though is a narrowing of focus on the individual value exchange of a 'transaction', and a loss of sight on the value of the relationship as a whole. Do you really have to give to get?

Here's an example of transactional thinking at its best – your partner, co-worker, child, said they were going to do something that you were relying on them to do. They didn't. They forgot, they promised they wouldn't, but they did and now it has cost you unfairly. You did all of the back scratching and received none back, in fact the 'transaction' has put you out. For many people a tempting and common response would be anger, frustration and communicating to the offending party verbally or non-verbally that they have messed up and cost you and maybe even deserve your anger.

A powerful NLP tip is to stop, pause and ask yourself "*Is your response to them though seemingly warranted in the moment, facilitating the kind of relationship you would like as whole?*" Sometimes a response to an individual situation seems appropriate, until you **step back** and **consider its impact on the whole and whether it will bring you closer or further away to what you want long term.**

## Tip #9 - BE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOU, AND ALLOW OTHERS TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEMSELVES

The sanity line can be drawn between what you are responsible for, and what you are responsible to. You can only be responsible for what you can control, and the number of things you control is surprisingly small. You control:

- \* **Your thinking**
- \* **Your feeling**
- \* **Your behaving**
- \* **Your speaking**

In NLP these are referred to as your four powers, and that's it. You literally do not control anything else. You don't control anyone else's thinking, anyone else's feeling, anyone else's behaving, or speaking - much as you might like to, which means you cannot be responsible for them. Any time you step outside of your four powers and try to be responsible for someone else:

- \* **Having a good time**
- \* **Feeling a certain way**
- \* **Behaving a particular way**
- \* **Seeing things the way you see them**

You are inviting stress into your life because you are trying to control things that are outside your power. Worse, as you become overly responsible, you encourage others to be under-responsible “*if it’s your job to make me feel good, then it’s your fault when I choose to feel bad*”. This NLP tip is to be responsible for you. You may be responsible **to** others externally e.g. duty of care, societal laws etc., but you aren’t intrinsically responsible **for** what they decide to think, feel, do, or say. *Phew* what a relief, that’s a lot of work you can save yourself from having to worry about.

#### **Tip #10 - DON’T WORRY ABOUT WHAT OTHERS MAY SAY ABOUT YOU, THEY AREN’T REALLY TALKING ABOUT YOU**

For you to judge someone you need criteria through which to judge them, such criteria would be based on your values, your standards and your beliefs about what is important and what isn’t. Those values, standards and beliefs probably have either come directly, or have been influenced heavily by your upbringing, as well as your potential future, what you think is important in it as well as where it is you want to go in life.

Notice all of that criteria through which you need in order to judge revolves around you and has nothing to do with anyone else! When you are judging another, you aren’t actually judging them so much as you are judging you in their shoes. Likewise, when someone else is making a judgement about you, they aren’t really talking about you because their criteria has nothing to do with you and everything to do with them.

So this NLP tip is to relax around what people think, say or judge about you. They aren’t really talking about ‘you’ they are talking about themselves.

#### **Tip #11 - NOTHING KILLS RELATIONSHIPS FASTER THAN MIND-READING**

Every time you assume you know the intentions behind a person's behaviour and they haven't told you, you are mind reading. Mind reading is the scourge of relationship, the fastest way to kill rapport, and 9 out of 10 times you will get it wrong.

Here is an example – you are in traffic driving along normally and an expensive car behind you is beeping incessantly and weaving dangerously in and out of traffic. You haven't done anything wrong, you can't go any faster but the guy behind you is beeping at you anyway. The mind reading commences "what is this guy's problem? Look at his car, he probably thinks he is above the rest of us and traffic is beneath him, what a jerk". The car pulls up beside you and you lean out the window about to give him a piece of your mind.

That is, until you see he is in an utter panic and there's a pregnant lady who looks like she is going into labour in the back seat. How do you feel about him now?

Chances are you have gone from thinking "what a jerk" to "oh my, I hope he gets there in time". This is a simple example (and by the way a true story) of how easy it is to assume negative intentions for behaviours we don't like receiving. And the problem with that, just like in the example, is we don't treat people based on what their true intentions actually are (which are often never as bad as we think they are), we treat them based on what we mind-read them to be.

Here are some other examples:

- \* **You forgot to do the dishes because you don't care about me.**
- \* **You're using that tone of voice because you blame me.**
- \* **You didn't invite me to that gathering because I am obviously not important to you.**
- \* **You raised your voice because you are trying to bully me.**

Next time you receive a behaviour that you don't particularly like, before assuming, check in and ask "What was your intention with this? This is how I interpreted it, is that what it meant to you?"

## Tip #12 - THE FASTEST WAY TO GET THE WORST FROM SOMEONE IS TO TREAT THEM LIKE YOU EXPECTING TO RECEIVE IT

Think your partner, employee, child, friend is lazy? Inconsiderate? Ungrateful? Then a great way to keep them there is to treat them as if that is a true reflection of who they are and what you expect from them. Now they have nothing to gain from being anything other than they are, and if they truly have difficulty, they know they can rely on you to reinforce it and emphasize it. Sound motivating?

Leading people to their best means relating to their possibility, not their probability. I don't mean lying to them and saying they did a great job when actually they haven't been accountable. Give honest feedback (see how with tip 13) about their behaviour and how it is impacting the environment, the family, the workplace, but do so in service and in connection with what they are capable of, not of the limit they are demonstrating now.

When you treat someone like you expect the best from them because of what you wholeheartedly believe about them, you acknowledge, encourage, and honour them, and more importantly, facilitate a vision of them that is worth living up to. Sound motivating?

## Tip #13 - GIVE FEEDBACK, NOT JUDGEMENTS

Sometimes you need to give feedback and hold people accountable, and not all feedback may be received with open arms. If you want to give feedback in service of truly helping another change, particularly if the feedback is critical in nature, use sensory based language, not evaluative.

Sensory based language is – “here is what I saw, here is what I heard, here is the action you took and the effect that it had”. For example “Bob, when you spoke to that client, I heard you speak in a brusque tone, you didn't say hello, you didn't say thank you, and you weren't smiling. Our customer service policy is to smile, welcome our guests and make them feel comfortable. When the client walked over to you she was smiling, by the end of the conversation she was not”.

Sensory based language is impossible to argue with, it is centered on behaviours not the person, and it provides feedback that is useful because it highlights the actions that require correction as in the above example.

Evaluative feedback on the other hand is not sensory based, is typically centered on the person and doesn't provide any meaningful information. For example "Bob that was a terrible display of customer service, some of the worst I have ever seen, get your act together". What can Bob improve based on that information?

In the words of Dr. Michael Hall, the founder of Neuro-Semantics, *"If you need to say something that may be confronting, you can say almost anything to anybody if you use sensory based descriptive language"*.

Induce someone into a state where they feel attacked, inadequate or vulnerable however and you can count on their being defensive in response.

#### **Tip #14 - WHEN IN CONFLICT - STEP OUTSIDE OF YOUR VIEW, YOU CAN COME BACK TO IT LATER**

Most people get stuck in conflict for as long as they aren't able to get past their own view. Realise that in any conflict, there is your view, and their view. Both are subjective realities and both are true for the person holding the view. If you want to resolve conflict, take a moment to step out of your view in order to understand and gain clarity on theirs. Step into their shoes so to speak and try their view on.

This doesn't mean you have to agree, but when you are focused on understanding, rather than proving wrong, the other person loses much of their impetus to defend because you are no longer attacking. Because you have heard them, they are more likely now to hear you, and together you are able to arrive at a more informed truth of the situation, rather than the partial truth of either position.

A pro NLP tip is to step back from both positions and look at what both sides are missing, like "they are both arguing for the same thing - care for the relationship, they just differ in opinion on how to actualize that care".

#### **Tip #15 - REALISE THAT THE ONLY PERSON YOU CAN CHANGE IN THE WORLD IS YOU**

Mohandas Gandhi is quoted as saying *“Be the change you want to see in the world”*. You are after all, the only person you are capable of changing. That doesn't mean you don't have influence, you do, but the greatest influence you have is in leading by example. So the final NLP tip, is before you go and try to change anyone else ask *“how can I be the change I wish to see here?”* and if you find yourself in conflict or difficult situations ask yourself *“how am I showing up in a way that is facilitating what I am getting?”*