

A Brief History of NLP

Neuro Linguistic Programming was developed in the 1970s as a result of a research project on human communication conducted by John Grinder, a professor of Linguistics, and Richard Bandler, a postgraduate psychologist.

Grinder and Bandler studied three outstanding therapists: -

- ☀ Fritz Perls (the originator of Gestalt Therapy),
- ☀ Virginia Satir (an eminent Family Therapist) and
- ☀ Milton Erickson (a world famous hypnotherapist)

with the aim of identifying the patterns they used.

Rather than concern themselves with developing new theories, they sought to reproduce specific, successful and repeatable patterns of behaviour that successful therapists used, and that worked in practice, in a way that could be taught to others. While the three therapists they modelled were very different personalities, the underlying patterns elicited proved to be surprisingly similar.

From the initial work, Grinder and Bandler produced two language models, the Meta Model and the Milton Model, together with a range of 'change techniques'. They also formalised the techniques and approaches they had used to study or model the work of the therapists.

From these initial models, NLP developed two complementary aspects:-

- ☑ Firstly as a **process to discover patterns of excellence in any field**, known as modelling, involving breaking down complex human performance into small enough chunks so that the critical components can be replicated and taught to others.
- ☑ Secondly NLP developed as a **'how to' technology** - helping others to learn the underlying patterns of thinking and communicating used by outstanding people and develop skills that enhance the effectiveness of communication, facilitate personal change, accelerate learning, and enrich enjoyment of life.