



Unit 4

Developing Persuasion & Influencing Skills

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Make decisions about using persuasion versus manipulation
- ✓ Apply the concepts of pushing and pulling when influencing others
- ✓ Describe different techniques for getting persuasive conversations and presentations underway
- ✓ Make a persuasive presentation by using the 5 S's
- ✓ Apply storytelling techniques to extend influence
- ✓ Leverage concepts of neuro linguistic programming in everyday influence and persuasion

Unit 4

Understanding Persuasion

How Persuasion Works

Are you easily persuaded? If someone tries to talk you into something and is using all the powers of influence, what is your reaction?

When you are ready to buy something particular, you may find yourself more easily persuaded than at other times. However, when it comes to activities other than making purchases, we are often exposed to more subtlety. Choosing paint colors for your home or office where there is consensus required can result in more people trying to persuade you of one particular color or another. Or, perhaps you are the one who prefers to be convincing others, and are presenting clear arguments to get what you would like. People who successfully persuade to make a living include salespeople, fundraisers, recruiters, and advertisers. It is helpful to consider the techniques they use in order to be successful.

While there are plenty of techniques that people employ, research conducted by Robert Cialdini over many years became the focus of his excellent book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. The factors that he associates with persuasion are discussed below.

Predictability

People respond to what they expect. If they get a coupon, they expect that they are getting a reduced price, even when the terms of the coupon don't necessarily mean that is the case. If they know that one store is usually cheaper than the other, they tend to buy without checking prices closely. This principle also reflects the impression that high prices are associated with quality products, even though the product may not change.

Reciprocation

This principle describes how we respond by giving back one thing when we are given something else, especially a gift. This is something we see when people send thank-you notes after receiving a gift, as well as the offer of taking a new car for a test drive before you buy it. (Since the salesperson has been kind enough to arrange a ride – a gift – the purchaser may be more receptive to the car.)

Some other examples:

- If your neighbors invite you over for a meal, you return the gesture.
- If a friend invites your child to a birthday party, you return the gesture for their child when it is your child's birthday.

Consistency and Commitment

After we make a decision, our actions will support the choice we made even when we are faced with the knowledge that a better choice might have been a good idea, or when we have to wait a long time for delivery. When it comes to creating gaming systems and smartphones, manufacturers know that they can market the next release as soon as the last one is on the store shelves because their customers do not just need one gaming system or one smartphone. They want to keep up with what is new and they want to use current, leading edge products that meet their needs.

Social Evidence

Marketers work with what works. Although many people dislike the idea of a laugh track (a pre-recorded loop of people laughing that gets played in many television comedies), marketers know that the laugh track engages people in the program. Laugh tracks even help engage listeners when the jokes are bad! The canned laughter makes us laugh because it triggers a response that says, "Hey, you are supposed to find this funny!" And so we laugh.

We respond to statements that something is a "best-selling" item, even though the tag line does not tell us anything about the quality of the item. If you have ever watched a telethon for public television or a charity, you've seen the screen roll with names of everyone who donated, which is a way of saying to people, "Hey, look at what your neighbors are doing. Your name needs to be here too!"

Authority

We tend to believe people who are in positions of authority and trust, whether they actually earned that trust or not. We trust doctors, police, and firefighters. We also trust actors who are dressed as people with authority. Actors do shampoo, makeup, and beauty promotions, and people buy the products even when the claims are unproven or the products are toxic, because we want to believe that they know what they are talking about.

Liking

You already know that you will buy from or be convinced of something by people that you like. This is the likeability factor. Customers will return to shop at stores with friendly or attentive staff because they are likeable, even if the prices are a little higher than the competition if the competition provides lousy service.

Home shopping parties such as Tupperware, Pampered Chef, Epicure, and others have capitalized enormously on the likeability factor. Instead of buying from an unknown sales person, people come to the party to put up with a demonstration, flip through catalogs, look at samples, win prizes, and buy products. While the salesperson is really the one selling, partygoers spend in order to support the hostess, who also happens to be their friend. The friends know that the more money that they spend, the more "free" benefits that the hostess receives in exchange for hosting the party. People at the party are well aware of this, and will also leverage reciprocity by asking this particular hostess to attend the party that they book.

Scarcity

Scarcity is a great technique to drive people's need to have things. Commercials promote upcoming products, and manufacturers will deliberately release small quantities in order to drive up interest in the product. They will even use excuses like having design challenges, materials challenges, or something equally ambiguous. Meanwhile, customers are trying to find one of the scarce copies in order to be part of the special group that has the product.

If you collect loyalty points, you see scarcity at work when the program offers its members a "deal," like being able to buy a highly desirable smartphone that you can only get with the program and is not available in any store. People without enough points can combine points and cash to purchase the item, but unless you are a member of the program, you will not be able to participate.

Self-Interest

Everything that we undertake includes some component of self-interest, and persuaders are very conscious of this. As a standard, people want to get (or believe they have) a good value, and even a great deal, every time they invest energy or spend money on something. Even people who volunteer for altruistic reasons often understand the virtue of reciprocity for their good deeds.

Pre-Assignment Review

Article

Persuading others or influencing other people's behaviors requires carefully applied communication skills. In addition, most of us want to make sure that we are convincing someone (persuading) or exerting influence while avoiding any tendency to manipulate. We are surrounded by efforts of media and individuals who try to influence and persuade us to do, choose, or be something.

Manipulation is the dark side of persuasion that people rarely want to be accused of although in reality, it happens frequently. **Manipulation** is getting someone to do something or give you something that *you* want without regard to how *they* feel about it.

To demonstrate the differences between manipulation and persuasion, let's think about the teenager who wants a new bicycle. This teenager researches the attributes of the bike they want, and then approaches their parents to present a logical, reasonable case that explains why a particular bicycle is perfect. The teen is using persuasion as a way to elicit cooperation from their parents.

On the other hand, a child who has a temper tantrum in the candy aisle at the supermarket is using manipulation. They will do anything to get what they want, regardless of how their parents feel about it, and without regard to how they appear to others.

Persuasion is synonymous with convincing, and is the effort of convincing someone that something is or is not necessary. In contrast, manipulation can incorporate being unscrupulous to get what you want, regardless of how

the manipulator is perceived afterward. Both persuasion and manipulation exert influence, although they use different tactics.

Influence is not the same as popularity. A company, or a concept, can be popular but have no influence over people whatsoever. Popularity (think of last year's "new" band or music star) can be fleeting, but influence has staying power. If you think about the number of people who wear blue jeans most days of the week, this can be ascribed to the influence that the denim industry has had on society. Initially, denim was created as a sturdy work pant, and yet now we have people who wear denim in all kinds of settings, from business to labor. Although some types of denim are more popular than others (denim with stretch added to it, stonewashed denim, stand up denim, colored denim, and so on), denim has staying power. Some types of denim are popular and here for a season or two, whereas others are around for decades.

Assignment

Look through the following statements. Indicate whether each statement is influence, persuasion, or manipulation.

Statement	Influence, Persuasion, or Manipulation?
"This blue color is soft and pretty for the walls."	
"You'd want to show this computer to your friends, wouldn't you?"	
"What kind of message could you be sending if you paint the room blue? How about beige?"	
"That budget is out of control, and this is totally your fault. You are an idiot! You'll never be a project lead again. I'm bringing in Robin Blackwood right now!"	
"Your project is way over budget and has to get into line. What do you suggest we do to get things back on track?"	

Preparing to Persuade

Pushing and Pulling

Pushing and pulling are two ways of applying influence, and both of them have a place in persuasion. People prefer to make choices and decide what they want, so they are mostly inclined to where they are pulled. However, when used together, pushing will help to influence people to make a break away from what's familiar in order to try something that they are pulled to. Sometimes people are stuck in a position, and helping them to break away (whether it involves them changing their mind, setting new goals, or learning new skills) can then make them more ready and open to being pulled in a particular direction.

Pushing is about *selling*, whereas pulling is about *telling*. In business practices we could create an analogy by saying that pushing is used by managers, whereas pulling is used by leaders.

Pulling is more difficult than pushing, but it is more effective in terms of lasting results. When we push, we have no idea where the person will go, other than away from something. On the other hand, pulling has one direction: toward something. Pulling is accomplished by creating desire in the other person, working with what you know about what the other person wants, and understanding the way in which they will decide what they want.

To push, you need some kind of influence over the other person so that they make a shift. This is normally accomplished because you have that person's trust or you have authority over things that they need. The level of authority you have needs to be high enough (or strong enough) that they are obligated to do what you are asking or telling them. At work, this can include the power to fire, demote, or transfer someone to another role. A supervisor is pushing when they tell employees what to do, as opposed to providing an opportunity for them to make choices and their own decisions.

Physical pushing also has a role in the business environment. Security, police forces, and the military can use physical power to get what they need accomplished. This can include the physical removal of unruly employees, as well as protestors on your property, although it can have a lot of negative publicity attached to it.

Learn how to use push and pull in your persuasion so that you can help to create desire or emotional attachment, while helping others to break away from unhelpful behaviors or old patterns.

Communicating with Confidence

Persuasion relies on communication skills. As well, we can gain more of what we want and send stronger messages when we do so confidently. A manager or leader who appears wishy-washy has no influence over their staff. A child having a temper tantrum, on the other hand, has confidence that they are absolutely correct.

Confidence also requires that you have credibility with your audience or employee. People will not listen nor be persuaded by someone they are unable to trust. To be trusted, we have to act in a trustworthy manner. This means that we do what we say we will do, when we say we will do it. It also means that we know and operate

under a system of ethics and that people know what those ethics are.

While not all conversations can be planned ahead, there are many conversations that benefit from a **plan**. When you prepare yourself before initiating a conversation, you are much more likely to deliver an effective message that doesn't get misunderstood, and to deliver it to the right person. Here are some steps that you can take to prepare yourself.

Have a purpose.

Typical purposes for a conversation are to inform or direct, to persuade, or to ask a question.

Decide whether each statement below is to inform or direct, to persuade, or to ask a question.

Statement	Inform/Direct, Persuade, or Ask a Question?
"Fred, we're expecting about 35% more people than usual with the sale today. Please start putting out extra shopping carts and baskets."	
"Joe, I think that we could be prepared for the sale tomorrow if we make sure that all the cash registers have extra supplies when we open."	
"Mike, is there anything else we need before the sale starts tomorrow?"	

Have an outcome.

Ask yourself a few questions to help you decide how to approach the conversation:

- What reaction are you looking for from the listener?
- What do you need the listener to remember?
- What do you need the listener to do after your conversation?

Make sure the receiver is ready.

Some people resent it when we pounce on them unannounced. Others are much more receptive when you simply ask permission. If you are unsure if someone is ready to talk, try these helpful icebreakers:

- Is this a good time to talk?
- Can we talk about something I've been thinking about?
- Would now be a good time to talk, or should I come back later?

- Can I have 15 minutes of your time? (Make sure you stick to just 15 minutes!)

Apply positive intent.

Positive intent means that you have good reasons for saying and doing what you do, and so do other people. If we assume that other people have negative intentions behind their actions, we can create a negative environment where that is the eventual outcome. This can make it very hard to work cooperatively. You will have to practice positive intent yourself and use your communication for good intentions, while assuming that others have that same positive intention. This ultimately means that we avoid making negative assumptions and statements, that we avoid gossip, and that we focus on the future rather than the past.

Self-concept, self-image, and self-esteem can all impact the way that we send and receive messages. Individuals with low self-esteem and a negative self-image tend to operate in a passive style. Other people might think that they are superior to everyone else, resulting in an aggressive style. This creates all kinds of interesting conversations!

Words to Watch Out For

If you want to be known for clear communication, avoid words like:

- I'll try
- Ought to
- Should have
- Must
- Always
- Never

If you are tempted to insert these words into your conversations, replace them with clearer terms. Instead of "I'll try to get back to you later," say "I'll call you back by 4:00 today" (and then make sure that you do!).

Your Inner Self Talk

Be aware of the internal messages you give yourself. If you start from a negative self-concept and negative expectations, your external behavior will likely be non-assertive and you may end up feeling frustrated or angry. The more you replace your self-talk with positive, confident words, the more confident you become. We know that is easily said, and more difficult to realize, but it's worth the results! This helps you build credibility and trust with the people you speak with, since your words and actions will be congruent.

Frame of Reference

A **frame of reference** is a way in which we judge other people. We all make judgments about people, but in order to really get the meaning of what's going on, we need to be able to suspend those judgments and let their meaning come to us unfettered. A communicator's ability to suspend their frame of reference is a critical and important skill because it can build their credibility and make them a more effective communicator.

Your frame of reference is made up of your beliefs, assumptions, values, feelings, judgments, emotions, advice, moods, thoughts, biases, and stress levels at any given moment. Because your frame of reference is so personal and so deeply embedded, it is very difficult to practice suspending it on a regular basis. We all interpret reality from our own vantage point and sometimes we react in a self-serving manner. We have to learn to take others' points of view and feelings, as well as our own, into consideration.

How can we do this? Try to:

- Put others before yourself
- Check things out before jumping to conclusions, making assumptions, or reacting emotionally
- Give others the benefit of the doubt

Suspension of belief is especially appropriate when others need to be understood in order for their tension or stress to be defused.

Think about suspending belief in these situations:

- A police officer who arrives on a violent scene where everyone has a weapon, but someone is declaring their innocence.
- A scene at work where workers are bullying a co-worker. The person who appears to be the victim, however, is a known bully.
- You put your lunch in the fridge when you arrived at work this morning, but when you look in your lunch bag, half the lunch is missing.
- You reach for the last loaf of bread in the bakery at the same time as someone else. The other person looks harried, but otherwise very similar to you.

Getting Off on the Right Foot

Building Rapport

In making a persuasive presentation, whether it is to a group or an individual, there are some essential elements that you can learn. These techniques will help you establish rapport and allow you to make your point and to be heard. They can also encourage others to open up and hear you.

About Rapport

Rapport has been defined as a sense of mutual understanding, respect, and friendliness. It is the presence of a co-operative relationship based on trust and honesty.

Rapport means showing someone that you understand and respect them as a human being and that you support them. This doesn't mean that you have to agree with everything that they say, but you can understand where they are coming from and why they believe in particular things.

It is important to understand when it is appropriate to create rapport and how deeply you want it to go. Let's say that you are a telephone customer service representative. You probably want to create a good rapport to help the customer solve their problem, but since your interaction will be short, you don't need to get to a deeply personal level. And, if you are negotiating, you might need to break rapport in order to make the best decision.

Often, it's not so much what you say as how you say it. Let's look at some ways that you can establish and maintain rapport.

Find common ground.

Whether you are in a customer service role or a manager about to have a conversation with one of your staff, finding common ground helps to establish rapport. Some of us really struggle with small talk, but you will find that it is a helpful skill in finding common ground – something you share with the other person. In the customer example, if they call to tell you that a product has broken and they are frustrated, simply saying, "I understand. I don't like it when things break either. It's really annoying. Let me see how I can help you," lets the person know that you get frustrated when things are broken. If you went to the same school, both love animals, or have the same favorite restaurant, these things help to establish common ground and provide a starting place for further conversations.

Use direct language and deliver a message that is clear, calm, and direct.

Be confident in your message. This means that your tone of voice, vocabulary, and rate of speech convey your feelings. Be careful not to back down (at least not immediately) if you are discussing something that is important to you. Be considerate of other people's ideas, but don't quickly give up on yours, especially when you have it all well thought out.

Factual descriptions and relevant details are more likely to be heard.

Look at this generalization: "Joe never gets his work finished." Compare it to something specific: "Joe has not met his goals for an entire month." Which is more likely to be heard?

Use repetition respectfully to keep things on track.

Conversations can easily get off track, especially if they get emotional or if someone is trying to steer the conversation away from what you felt was important. Don't be afraid to restate your purpose during an interaction.

Body language says it all.

Be as aware of your nonverbal messages as you are about your verbal messages. Also consider other people's communication style. Are they direct or indirect? Passive or assertive? Make sure to also take into account their filters, assumptions, and beliefs. This will help you to keep your message clear.

Matching and Mirroring

There are a few different ways to create and strengthen rapport. Once you have established a basic connection and a mutual sense of trust, then you can work on developing and deepening rapport.

You must use these methods in a discreet manner to avoid irritating or insulting the other person. Not every technique is appropriate in every situation. As well, keep in mind that these are just guidelines, not hard and fast rules.

Matching and Mirroring

One of the easiest ways to develop rapport is to mirror or match the other person's body language and non-verbal signals. We can't stress how important it is to do this subtly so that the other person doesn't feel like they're talking to a parrot! Let's look at some of the techniques that you can try.

Body Language

It is generally very easy to subtly **match** another person's body language, such as their posture, breathing rate, and gestures. If they lean back, you might do the same (subtly, a few moments after they do so). Or, you might perform a **reciprocal movement**; that is, if you start tapping your pencil, I might subtly start tapping my foot in the same rhythm. You might even **mirror** them; if they tilt their head to the left, you might tilt your head to the right.

Of course, you should only mirror the aspects of their body language that feel natural to you.

You also need to keep your own body language in line with what you are saying. If you are saying that you are interested, but your body is leaning away, your eyes are roaming around the room, or you are tapping your foot, you do not look interested at all and your body language is inconsistent with your message.

Voice Characteristics

Never, ever attempt to do an imitation of a person's voice or to match their accent. This is almost always insulting. You can, however, mimic some basic voice features, including:

- Volume of their voice
- Speed (fast or slow)
- Tone (high or low)

Pacing

Pacing techniques can help you achieve a deeper level of rapport. Part of pacing is the matching and mirroring techniques that we just discussed. Another part is including true statements in your conversation to give more credibility to other statements. (Research shows that you must use at least three true statements in a row for this to work.) Hearing several true statements in a row also lowers their guard and makes them more open to agreeing with you.

Imagine that you're at a seminar listening to a sales pitch.

Scenario One

The speaker starts out with, "Thanks for coming! I'm going to tell you about my new product that you'll love."

Does that grab your attention? Are you convinced that you'll love this product?

Scenario Two

Now let's try this. The speaker says:

- It's a beautiful sunny morning!
- It's really early.
- We've all come here for a reason.

Then, he might move into some more speculative statements:

- I know you're all happy to be here.
- I imagine that you're interested in my new product.
- I bet that you would like to do more in less time.

Now he might introduce the statements that are new to you:

- You are going to love this product.
- You won't want to wait to get your hands on this.

How do you feel now?

Leading

Once you have established rapport, you might be able to influence the other person's behavior without them realizing it! Test this with a small gesture, like adjusting your posture or tugging your earlobe. If the person mirrors or matches your gesture in some way, you're all set to continue leading! If not, you'll need to deepen rapport some more.

If the person that you are communicating with is now in a receptive state, you can use your body language to influence their state of mind. For example, if they seem to be in a dissociative state, you can try leaning forward and using more gestures (both associative behaviors) to move them to an associative state.

Remember that the key is to incorporate influencing behaviors subtly and naturally so that the other person isn't offended or annoyed.

Presentation Strategies

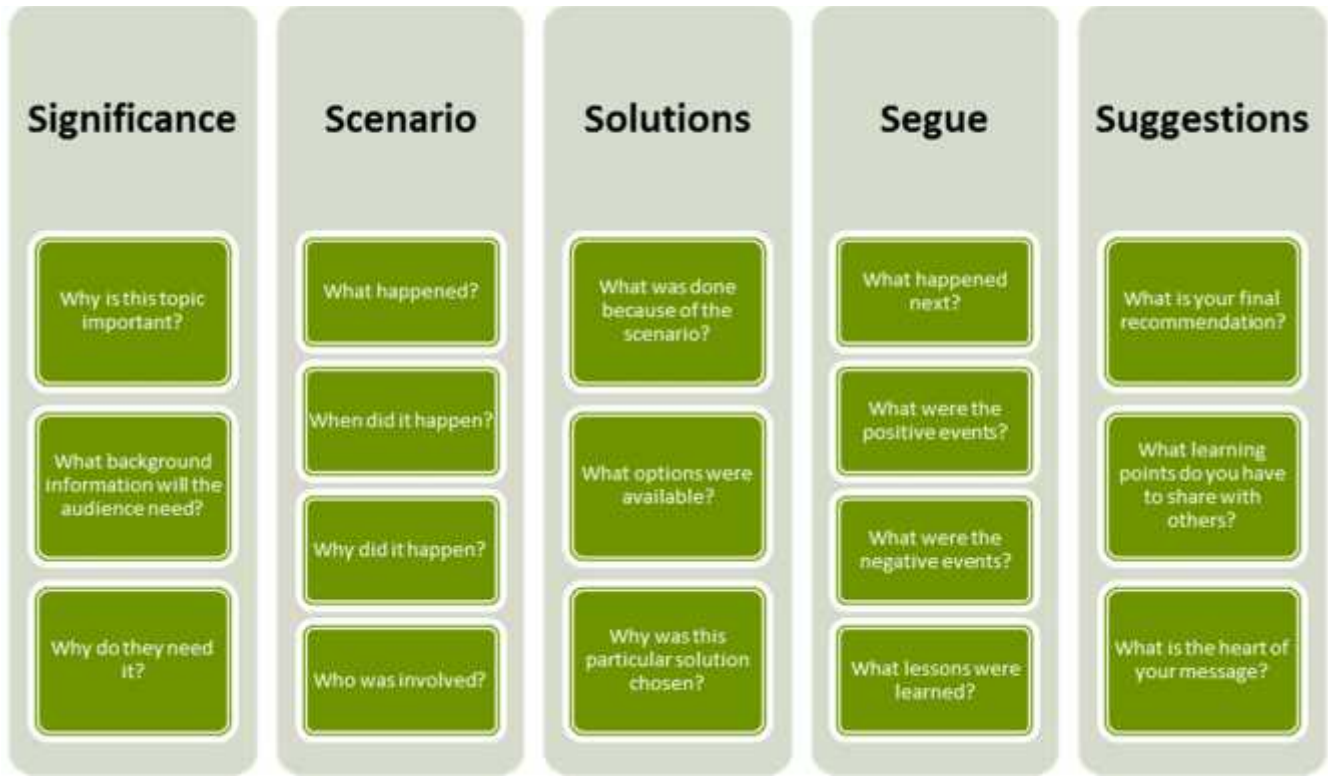
Five Points for Any Presentation

Setting up a Persuasive Presentation

When it comes to persuasion, you may be presenting in front of a group, or you may be in a small setting with just one or two others. It is actually easier to persuade one person at a time, if you can arrange it that way. When alone, people are more likely to think aloud. They also have some room to change their mind if they want to. In front of others, however, people are more conscious of how they appear if they are changing their mind. Even though you may be persuading them, they may not want to express their changed perspective if it is taking place in front of others.

It can be hard to remember to cover all of the bases for any presentation, particularly if you're put on the spot. The Five S approach will work for any size presentation. Even if you're put on the spot in the lunchroom, you can use this approach to provide a quick, complete answer. If you're putting on a large presentation at a meeting, you can use this approach as a framework. Either way, it will help you stay on track so that you tell the audience what they want to know and what they need to know.

The Five S Framework



Example

I was drowning in my task list: too many meetings, too many projects partially completed, and too many e-mails interrupting my every thought. I didn't have anyone that I could delegate to because we are a lean operation. I put a "Do Not Disturb" sign on my door for two hours and turned off my phone. I went everything very carefully. Then, I sat down with my CEO and went through the list. We decided that a couple of projects were no longer on our priority list because of other changes in the business I was not even aware of. A couple more of them we moved to the following quarter. I was able to clear 25% of my schedule just like that! My boss understood why I was so frazzled and helped me to clear the way to concentrate on company priorities. If you are having a hard time getting through things, I recommend a one-on-one with your boss.

Using Stories to Persuade

The Importance of Story

As human beings, we are wired for stories. We don't often hold a whole list of items or facts for long, but we will remember the gist of a good story for a lifetime. Metaphors and analogies are often a part of storytelling.

Using stories can help make your point more memorable and easier to understand. This makes them a helpful persuasive tool. In his book *All Marketers Are Liars*, Seth Godin talks about the power of a story to draw in customers and to persuade. He also shares some things we can learn.

Stories have to make you stand out.

If you simply repeat someone else's story and try to make it sound original, it won't. If you are trying to convince your spouse that a holiday to the Mediterranean is in order, and it is the same story your friends are telling each other, you won't be very convincing. Tell your story.

7-Up called their product "the un-Cola" to differentiate from all of the cola drinks in the marketplace. You have to find something that helps you stand out from the crowd. If there is nothing that makes your story stand out from all the others, your results won't stand out either.

Your story has to be believable.

If your story is not true, your results won't appear. You cannot persuade by telling lies, can you? Well, actually you can! This is why people buy garbage from watching infomercials; they become convinced that this particular gadget will do what they need, make them look like they want, or bring them some kind of status. The reason that stories that actually lie still persuade people is because sometimes people want to agree with you. Once they do agree to something, they do not like to be proven wrong.

Storytelling works when it makes something more.

If you believe storytelling, then you may believe that a different glass makes your wine taste better. Does food cooked in cookware endorsed by a famous chef taste better than that cooked in the same product without an endorsement? If you believe the story that comes with it, it sure does!

Have a beginning, middle, and end.

A story is not the same thing as a paragraph or an argument. A story is complete, with a beginning, middle, and an end. Using this format will help your story to be memorable and to carry your meaning.

Using Neuro Linguistic Programming

Defining Neuro Linguistic Programming

What does Neuro Linguistic Programming mean? Let's break the three words into separate parts.

Neuro

The first part of NLP means our brain. NLP assumes that all behavior comes from and is controlled by the brain.

Linguistic

These behavior processes are represented by the ways that we communicate: our words, our non-verbal signals, and our body language.

Programming

Since we are in charge (consciously or unconsciously) of communicating these processes, we can choose to change how we represent the signals coming from our brain. This set of representations is called a **strategy**.

Neuro + Linguistic + Programming =

Putting it all together, neuro linguistic programming means:

- Thinking about thinking
- Studying how we structure our experiences
- Determining what strategies work in a way that can be modeled, documented, and reproduced
- Creating a way to teach our subconscious (much like how we learn how to walk and talk)

So What Does it Mean?

In other words, NLP is about identifying the ingredients for success, documenting that system, and applying those techniques to improve how we interact with the world. By changing the core of our linguistic system (the unconscious), we can create real change and evolution and get where we want to go. We can also share these systems with others to help them achieve excellence.

Because NLP is so broad and generic, you can apply it in almost any situation. Some examples:

- Coaching and inspiring others by helping others look closely at their interactions with the world
- Identifying how you experience different relationships and how that compares with your ideal outcome for those relationships
- Sharing feedback in a positive, constructive manner that generates real change
- Accepting who you truly are and identifying areas that you would like to grow in
- Managing your thoughts and feelings so that you feel in control of your environment

A Brief History

NLP originated in the 1970's at the University of California. Drs. Richard Bandler and John Grinder began to study how certain therapists got the results that they did. What separated them from the others? What made them excellent?

Their research quickly took on a life of its own, and the first two volumes of the original NLP textbooks (*Patterns of the Hypnotic Techniques of Milton H. Erickson, Volumes One and Two*) were published in 1975 and 1977. (Milton Erickson was the founder of clinical hypnotherapy and is considered an industry leader.)

Throughout the 1970's, NLP's popularity increased. More works by Bandler and Grinder and their development group were published.

However, in 1980 Bandler and Grinder parted, resulting in two decades of legal controversy and copyright issues. During this time, NLP theories were distorted and fragmented, resulting in questions about its credibility and effectiveness.

Luckily, Grinder continued on with his work while the legal issues were in court. When the legal cases were finally resolved in 2000, Bandler and Grinder were able to agree on the ownership of NLP and how to present it. This has resulted in a resurgence of the theory in its true form, with improvements and modifications from the original developers. As well, regulatory and certification bodies have been formed to help resolve the credibility issues seen in the 1990's.

Understanding Common NLP Terms

NLP has its own language. Let's review some of the most common terms.

Belief

Something that we hold true based on feelings rather than facts.

Values

A **map** that helps us evaluate incoming information. Values are typically tied to our **beliefs**.

Chunk

A group of related information that a person can process as a single entity.

Context

Also known as a **frame**. This is the lens through which you perceive things. This lens can be distorted by many different factors. NLP can help you identify the context and respond appropriately.

Conscious

The part of the mind that you're aware of and that is accessible to you. This is the part that might be thinking about what you're learning, or it might be running through your grocery list. The conscious mind can hold five to nine **chunks** of information (called the 7±2 rule).

Unconscious

This simply refers to any area of the brain that we aren't aware of at any given moment, such as the part that controls your breathing, or the part controlling your language centers that are interpreting these words. This doesn't mean you can't be aware of these areas; when I mentioned breath control, you probably became aware of how you're currently breathing.

NLP's definition of unconscious does not include Freud's ideas, or the concept of a subconscious as something other than the brain (for example, the soul or neuron memory).

Reality

Everything that exists outside an individual. Since this is based on perception (their internal reality), knowledge of external reality is always limited and never completely true.

Mental Map

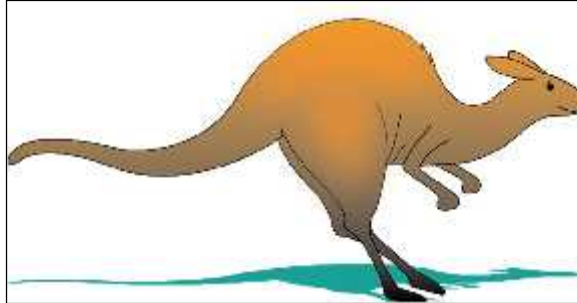
An individual's representation of any given thing. All mental maps are, by definition, not completely accurate, out of date, and subjective. However, they are the best information that we have to go on. It is important to remember that the map is not the territory! Maps can be re-drawn and re-created.

State

Your emotional, physical, and/or mental condition at any given time.

Embedding Positive or Negative Commands

Don't think of an orange kangaroo.



What are you thinking of?

Our subconscious mind can't think in negatives. Have you ever tried telling yourself not to cry? Your mind must first think of crying and then attempt not to do so.

This is why commands like:

- Don't touch that glass
- Don't go anywhere
- There's no need to worry
- Don't drop the ball

Are often ineffective. (Parents and sports coaches in particular know what we're talking about!)

Instead of focusing on what you don't want, **focus on what you do want**. (To use a driving analogy, look where you want to go!) Use a positive command instead. So, the directions above might look like:

- Please keep your hands on the table
- Please stay seated
- Try to relax
- Catch the ball

Influencing Outcomes

We can also use presuppositions and insightful language to help us work with others and achieve an outcome.

Presuppositions as Questions

When you arrive at a restaurant and are seated, the server typically does not ask “Are you thirsty?” They **presuppose** or **assume** that you have come to the restaurant because you are hungry and/or thirsty and therefore would like something to drink. The server usually uses a logical question, such as “What would you like to drink?” rather than asking **if** you would like something to drink.

In other words, you are giving the person a choice, but over elements that you choose. (Of course, in the above example, the person might say, “Nothing,” but it is more likely that they will choose a beverage.)

You might also use a leading question, a rhetorical question, or a statement to obtain the desired result. Some other ways that the server could pose their question might be:

- What can I get you from our premium selection?
- You might be wondering what our drink specials are today.
- Would you like a hot or cold beverage today?
- A coffee would be really warming, wouldn't it?

This technique is only effective if you use it in appropriate situations. For example, if your server approached you and said, “A coffee would be really warming, wouldn't it?” as her opening statement, you might find that strange, patronizing, or even offensive.

However, if you were trying to decide whether to have a soda or a premium cocktail, and the server says, “We have a special cocktail this evening, and it is two dollars off,” you might be swayed towards the premium cocktail.

Insightful Sentences

Another way of moving others towards a desired outcome is by using language that presupposes that you know what they are thinking.

Some **insightful sentence stems** that you can use:

- You might be thinking...
- You're probably wondering...
- You're probably asking yourself...
- I can predict your next move.
- I know what you are thinking/will say.
- You will likely have an answer.

Once again, it is important to use these techniques appropriately. A sales pitch that includes the statement, “You might be wondering how this product can save you time,” isn't terribly presumptuous. But starting a pitch with, “I can predict your next move: you will buy this product!” might irritate some of your potential clients!

Overcoming Challenges

Another way of getting the outcome you want is by learning how to **break down oppositional thinking**. For example, let's say that you are trying to convince your accountant to hire some help for the upcoming tax season. He says, "Those people never do anything right."

You could ask him to **clarify** several parts of that statement:

- Who are "those people?" ("Everyone" is not an answer!)
- Is "never" really true? If the person in question has never prepared a proper tax return, perhaps they should not be an accountant!
- What is the definition of "right?" Is the accountant talking about legally correct or simply the way he would do it?

The goal here is to help the person explore their negative thinking and look at the bigger picture, instead of seeing things through a particular lens.

Further Reading:

- ✓ Bandler, Richard. *Get the Life You Want: The Secrets to Quick and Lasting Life Change with Neuro-Linguistic Programming*. Health Communications Inc., 2008.
- ✓ Bandler, Richard, and John Grinder. *Trance-Formations: Neuro-Linguistic Programming and the Structure of Hypnosis*. Real People, 1981.
- ✓ Cialdini, Robert. *Influence: Science and Practice (5th Edition)*. Prentice Hall, 2008.
- ✓ —. *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion (2nd Edition)*. Collins, 2006.
- ✓ Cialdini, Robert, Noah Goldstein, and Steve Martin. *Yes! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways To Be Persuasive*. Free Press, 2008.
- ✓ Godin, Seth. *All Marketers are Liars*. Portfolio Hardcover, 2009.