

SECOND EDITION

The Magic of



Demystified

Byron Lewis

Praise for *Magic of NLP Demystified Second Edition*

Byron Lewis has offered another fine texture to the tapestry that is NLP through his book *Magic of NLP Demystified*, Second Edition. This book is a very rich and deep presentation of the most important building blocks in Neuro Linguistic Programming and the relationship to Psychology. In fact if you don't understand in depth these patterns then you don't know NLP. This book will very much enhance the map of NLP in the field.

Judith Delozier, Author and co-developer of NLP

My original copy of *Magic of NLP Demystified* is threadbare. Well thumbed and coffee stained it was an invaluable early guide to NLP for me. Now in 2012 I'm delighted that Byron Lewis has revisited the territory. The new distinctions they make offer new insights. I'm going to be returning to this new text many times too. Simple to read but not simplistic Lewis provides an easy way in to the magic of language and change.

Ian McDermott, Founder, International Teaching Seminars

I have been using *Magic of NLP Demystified* as per-study for my NLP Certification programmes since 1995. It is a fantastic, simple to read introduction to some of the most important communication models that Neuro Linguistic Programming has to offer. Whether you are an entrepreneur, teacher, manager, salesperson, coach, parent or just someone who wants to communicate more powerfully, this book will enable you to unlock some of the magic that is NLP!

David Shephard, Certified Master Trainer Of NLP, President of The American Board Of NLP, Co-Author of *Presenting Magically*

Whether you've just fallen in love with NLP or you are an old-timer who was trained many years ago, you'll find great value in *Magic of NLP Demystified* - as a newcomer you will be enriched by material fundamental to NLP and you'll discover the roots from which many current techniques have grown. More experienced practitioners will gain from a thorough review of the heart of the model brought up to date with links to the latest discoveries in neuroscience. Lewis has produced a highly readable and experiential book, yet it has gravitas that only years of living and teaching

NLP can bring. This second edition of the *Magic of NLP Demystified* is a must for every serious student of NLP.

James Lawley and Penny Tompkins, Authors of *Metaphors in Mind: Transformation through Symbolic Modelling*

The new edition of *Magic of NLP Demystified* is an excellent book that anyone committed to becoming a professional communicator needs to have. It deals with the very heart of NLP – the language model that makes up the very best Communication Model that anyone has yet to come up with. I'm grateful for the addition to the additional Meta-Model distinctions that I contributed. Byron Lewis has created an excellent update of their foundational work!

L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.

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Introduction

[W]e must learn to understand the “out-of-awareness” aspects of communication. We must never assume that we are fully aware of what we communicate to someone else. There exists in the world today tremendous distortions in meaning as men try to communicate with one another.

Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language*

In his book *Persuasion and Healing*, Jerome Frank identified the major goals of various approaches to psychotherapy. These include efforts to reduce the client’s distress, increase his self-esteem, help him to function better at work and in his relationships, and “heighten his sense of control over himself and his environment” (p. 200). It is important to note that, as we become aware of some of those “out-of-awareness” aspects of communication referred to by Edward Hall, we enhance the sense of control that Frank has identified as a major goal of psychotherapy. This book is dedicated to improving our ability to perceive, identify, and utilize certain aspects of the communicative process that are not normally in our conscious awareness.

This is also a book about change. It is a collection of effective tools for assisting in the resolution of problems found in many settings. The patterns discussed can assist anyone to more fully participate in and control the growth experience of positive change.

The Meta principles¹ presented in this book encompass many schools of psychological thought. They include elements from each of the following areas of psychology: *behavioral psychology*, which emphasizes observable behavior and stimulus–response connections; *humanistic psychology*, which stresses free will and subjective experience; *cognitive theory*, which covers the transformation of sensory stimulation in terms of coding, storing in memory, and retrieval systems; *traditional psychotherapy*, which deals with conscious and unconscious distinctions of thoughts, fears, and wishes that may or may not manifest themselves in awareness; and information drawn from various neurological studies, especially studies of changes that occur in the nervous system. The term “meta” is used because

the model that is developed is *about* rather than *a part* of all of these, and the emphasis is on the processes of change.

This book does not propose a new approach to psychotherapy, a new “philosophy of life,” or a new way to get “it.” What it does offer is the opportunity to experience personality and communication as *processes*. The text presents a blend of research, theory, and relevant portions of transcripts from therapeutic sessions and educational seminars. The emphasis is on models, for it is through them that we can share a wide range of complex experiences. The medium of study is the process of communication, and special attention is paid to areas generally thought to be unconscious or unaware communicative behavior.

It has been our experience that, with the help of a teacher, counselor, or therapist, people are able to resolve many of their problems. There is often a certain degree of change in personality as a result of insight gained or behavioral modifications programmed into the individual during the sessions. This change assists the individual in “coping” with particular difficulties. What these therapeutic experiences usually do not do, however, is systematically create a *reference structure* – a set of experiences – that would enable a person to change his coping patterns in response to *new* difficulties. In our work with people, we have found that by presenting information to them in specific ways, that is, by being explicit about the *processes* involved in change and positive growth, clients can learn to have many of the same resources the teacher and therapist have for solving problems. This systematic *demystification* of normally out-of-awareness aspects of communication gives the client a heightened sense of control over himself and his environment.² Although this is not true for every client, the patterns used to obtain the information about a client’s communicative behavior remain the same. Various ways of utilizing this information are presented in the text.

Throughout the book, a variety of techniques are provided as pragmatic applications of the material. They also draw the reader’s attention to the processes involved in personality development and maintenance. Use of these processes may assist you in helping those you work and live with to discover more choices about how they perceive the world and themselves and what they might do to lead more comfortable and productive lives. The methods covered in this book may be learned quite rapidly. They are not meant, however, to take the place of any currently in-use psychotherapeutic methodologies. They are offered as an adjunct to existing tech-

niques and as a perceptual paradigm for the serious student of human behavior, communication, and personality.

Throughout we interchange the terms “model of the world,” “map,” and “model of reality.” They all stand for the same concept in this book.³ There are also places where we have shortened the term “representational system” to simply “system.” In these cases, the meaning of the word will be obvious from its context.

With some practice, you may soon find many of the techniques and the perceptual acuity presented here coming into use in your everyday patterns of communication as well as in the professional setting. We invite you to use this book as an opportunity to explore the variables of both internal communication processes and the behavior called “communication” that we experience continuously as social beings.

Notes to the Introduction

1. At the time this book was originally published, there was some confusion regarding the use of the term Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). Because of the threat (real or imagined) of legal action for “unauthorized” use of the term NLP, we decided to refrain from using it and settled on Meta principles instead. These Meta principles are not to be confused with the presuppositions identified by Wolfgang Walker, as translated and outlined by Tosey and Mathison (2009). We strongly recommend the reader see their very comprehensive discussion of these presuppositions and their roots in cybernetics in that book.
2. In support of this approach, a working description of NLP offered by Dilts and DeLozier (2000): Defined as *the study of the structure of subjective experience*, NLP studies the patterns or “programming” created by the interaction between the brain (“neuro”), language (“linguistics”) and the body. From the NLP perspective, it is this interaction that produces both effective and ineffective behavior, and is responsible for the processes behind both human excellence and pathology (p. 849 original emphasis).

3. Tosey and Mathison (2009) present a very enlightening discussion of representationalism: the notion that our internal experiences are mere representations of some external “reality.” They suggest the map vs. model discussions found in many early NLP writings likely originated with Gregory Bateson. They also expand upon the original concept and suggest ultimately that, while the concept of internal representations in NLP is not representationalism, such views “continue to appear, epitomized by the NLP ‘communication model’” (p. 69).

The Meta Model: Overview

In 1975 Richard Bandler and John Grinder published a book that outlined their now popular Meta Model: *The Structure of Magic, Vol. I*.³ This is a linguistic (digital) tool which has proven extremely useful in therapeutic as well as other settings. It is based on the observation that human behavior, especially linguistic behavior, is rule governed. The same processes of generalization, deletion, and distortion used in creating our models of reality are also used in the creation of our linguistic representations of experience.

L. Michael Hall (unless otherwise noted, all citations attributed to Hall in this chapter come from his book, *Communication Magic*, 2001) observed that the original presentation of the Meta Model in Bandler and Grinder's *The Structure of Magic* was "without form. The ideas were there, the terminology was there, but it was structureless. It appeared first in no sequential or orderly form ... the ideas lacked a user-friendly form" (p. 149). One of the major contributions made by one of the authors of this book (Frank Pucelik) was to organize the model as it is presented here. This, by the way, was in great part the inspiration behind the use of the word *demystified* in the title of this work, because this well-organized presentation makes it so much more *accessible*.

As it is presented here, the Meta Model includes several distinctions not in the original, and the format has been altered. The basic assumptions still apply however. Since it is a linguistic tool, the Meta Model relies on the natural intuitions of any native speaker of the English language.⁴ We would like to point out also that the model that follows has been expanded to include Hall's unique contribution of nine new distinctions. We will refer to the summary of Hall's version of the Meta Model (see Appendix D) regularly throughout this chapter, because it is a version regularly being taught in Neuro-Linguistic Programming seminars and courses.

Transformational Grammar

At the time of this book's original publication, a contemporary school of linguistics⁵ proposed a relationship between what is spoken or written by an individual and a deeper internal linguistic representation. Still a useful model of language, Transformational Grammar calls the production of a

sentence, the actual sound or written sequence of symbols and phrases, the surface structure (SS). The deep structure (DS) is also a system of symbols and phrases, but it is much more complex and abstract. The DS is the complete linguistic representation of a person's experience that might be considered the intent or the thought behind the SS sentence.

The theory is that the DS is transformed into SS by a series of rules. Transformational grammarians say that the DS and the SS are related by certain formal operations that conform to the concepts of generalizations, deletion, and distortion covered in Chapter 1.

Of note, Hall points out that, while transformational grammar formed the basis for Bandler and Grinder's original Meta Model, shortly after their book was published, linguists including Noam Chomsky had abandoned it and moved on to other linguistic models such as Generative Semantics. Hall based his own work in part on Korzybski's General Semantics epistemological model which he says "provides a much fuller and more accurate paradigm for the Meta-Model" (p. 293). He goes on to say that, like General Semantics, the Meta Model "focuses primarily on identifying poor mapping (ill-formedness) that prevents full and resourceful living ... As a neuro-linguistic model, it seeks to identify expressions that mark our problem areas in mapping (in one's schema or model of the world) that affect psychological functioning (how we think, feel, speak, behave, relate, etc.)" (p. 295).

In any communication, the spoken or written language (SS) provides the listener with a rich variety of information about the speaker. It indicates how that person makes sense of the world, how he distorts his perceptions, and when and where those distortions occur. Predicates, for example, may indicate his preferred representational system. The surface structure can also indicate when and what kinds of experiences the speaker systematically leaves out of his representation of the world. By assisting the speaker in "reconnecting" with the unspoken portion of his digital representation of experience (DS) you begin a process of exploration. This process can fill in gaps of understanding that may occur between you and assist the speaker in recognizing and confronting limitations to growth and experience he may not even have known existed.

Meta Model Violations

Any time you are reading or listening to a person speak and you find yourself having to “go inside” to understand what is being said, it is a pretty good indication that you have experienced what is called a “Meta Model violation.” The fact that you are confused or that you need to internally generate information that is missing from or distorted in the speaker’s SS is a cue that your intuitive processes as a native speaker are being utilized. This is a valuable process because it allows the speaker/writer to share a great deal of information rapidly without needing to fill in all the missing pieces. However, the same process may drastically limit the speaker’s ability to express what he really means. A person’s language can also indicate areas where he has limits on his ability to perceive the full richness of certain experiences. The result of such limitations and distortions may be that the speaker has few choices about how to feel or behave in certain situations.

Meta Model Responses

What the Meta Model does is make explicit those semantic and syntactic contexts, those expressions in which Meta Model violations occur. Once they can be systematically recognized, there are specific Meta Model responses that you can use to recover deleted material and to assist the speaker in reconnecting with his deep structure. Reconnecting with the fullest linguistic representation of a person’s experience can aid him in understanding how certain generalizations, deletions, and distortions cause pain and limit choice and perception. This paves the way for healthy growth and positive change.

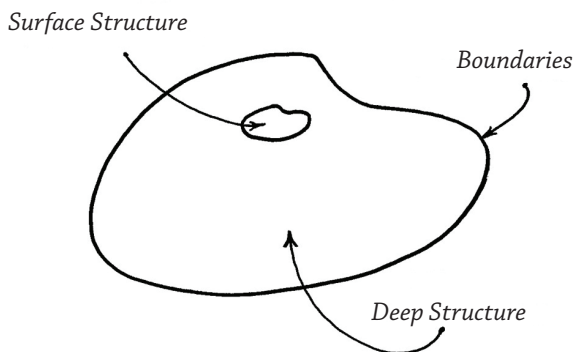
The Meta Model as originally presented in this chapter is a set of nine⁶ linguistic distinctions that can be grouped into three categories. The first category, *gathering information*, begins the process of uncovering and exploring specific portions of the speaker’s experience that are missing from his surface structure or that are presented in a distorted form. The second category, *expanding limits*, provides you with tools to assist the speaker in defining and then expanding the boundaries or limitations of his model of the world. This self-exploration assists the speaker in gaining more choices in both behavior and perception. The final category, *changing meanings*, continues the process of growth and expansion by exploring

with the speaker how he understands himself and his relationship with the people around him and with the world in general. With this revised edition, we have included an additional category, expanding the model with nine new distinctions identified by Hall (2001).

Meta Model Diagram #1

The deep structure is the most complete linguistic representation that a person could give to experience. This is symbolized by the larger form below. The deep structure includes the boundary line and all the space contained within it.

The surface structure is the portion of the deep structure expressed by an individual when he speaks or writes. It is represented by the smaller shape that lies within the larger form. Notice in the illustration below how the “shape” of the SS conforms to the “shape” of the DS. Since the transformational processes of creating the SS from the DS are essentially the same as the processes we use to create our models of reality, the SS is an invaluable indicator of how the speaker perceives the world around him. It is through the SS that we gain clues about the rest of the speaker’s model. With the aid of the first category of Meta Model responses to violations, we gain more information about the larger portion of the model below, the DS.



We highly recommend that anyone learning the Meta Model read this chapter carefully in order to get the general feel and logic of the model.

Then go back to the beginning and start with the first distinction. Attuning yourself to each distinction, hearing it when it comes up, and being able to respond with the appropriate Meta Model response smoothly and naturally usually takes about one week. Then you can easily go on to the next distinction, knowing that the first has become a comfortable, functional habit. Doing this with each distinction will enable you to rapidly and easily incorporate the Meta Model as an exceptionally powerful communication tool.⁷

The Meta Model Outline

This outline is provided as a guide to this section. Notice that there are nine linguistic distinctions in the first three categories and an additional nine in the last category. The text will also define several sub-distinctions.

- I. Gathering information
 - A. Referential index
 - B. Nominalizations
 - C. Unspecified verbs

- II. Expanding limits
 - A. Modal operators
 - B. Universal quantifiers

- III. Changing meanings
 - A. Mind reading
 - B. Cause and effect
 - C. Lost performative
 - D. Complex equivalence

- IV. The Hall extensions
 - A. Over/under defined terms
 - B. Delusional verbal splits
 - C. Either/or phrases
 - D. Multiordinality
 - E. Static words
 - F. Pseudo words
 - G. Identification
 - H. Personalizing
 - I. Metaphors

Note: As many of the Meta Model distinctions are described, they are linked to one or more of the communication categories described in Chapter 2. However, we need to recognize something that Hall observed: that our attempt in this work to “correlate the Meta-Model distinctions to the representational systems ... do not fit very well for most people. Undoubtedly that’s why we do not find them carried over into other NLP books” (p. 142). However, we hope that this deprecation will not discourage the reader from conducting his own research to discover if and when such linguistic idiosyncrasies do combine with the other behaviors and characteristics in the communications categories model presented in Chapter 2.

Gathering Information

Referential Index

In a sentence, the person or thing doing or receiving the action of the verb is called the “referential index.” In the Meta Model, these nouns are important because they are SS representations that demonstrate where the speaker has generalized, deleted, or distorted information from his DS.⁸

There are five referential index Meta Model violations. The four that follow include deleted, unspecified, generalized, and reversed referential index. The fifth distinction, nominalizations, forms its own special category.

1. *Deleted referential index* is where the speaker of the sentence simply leaves out the referent. For example, in the sentence, “The window was broken,” the agent or actor of the verb “was broken” has been deleted. Of course, there are certain situations where it is obvious that more information is needed. If it were *my* window in the example above, I would immediately ask, “*Who* broke it?” However, there are many other times when lack of information in a sentence can lead to misunderstanding. The following illustration gives one example of possible consequences of deleting the referent. By the time the young woman provides the missing information, it is already too late.

With new and updated material, particularly new Meta Model distinctions, this is the second edition of a work which has long been regarded as one of the best introductions to NLP. The Language of Communication model it introduces is a remarkable approach to the study of human communication and therapeutic change.

Managers, sales people, consultants, therapists, parents, educators and everyone interested in or involved with influential communication and personal change will benefit from reading this book. Nicely illustrated and written in an informal and entertaining style, it illustrates the power of language to change and influence people and provides practical ways of acquiring these skills. It is the best description there is of the NLP Meta Model and its practical use and is now completely up to date.

‘This book is a very rich and deep presentation of the most important building blocks in NeuroLinguistic Programming and its relationship to psychology.’

Judith Delozier, author and co-developer of NLP

‘Byron Lewis has produced a highly readable and experiential book, yet it has gravitas that only years of living and teaching NLP can bring. ... a must for every serious student of NLP.’

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‘Simple to read but not simplistic, *The Magic of NLP Demystified* provides an easy way in to the magic of language and change.’

Ian McDermott, Founder, International Teaching Seminars



Byron Lewis M.A. studied under Dr John Grinder, participating in the original research that laid the foundations for NLP. During the 1980s he was the director of the Meta Training Institute, conducting seminars and workshops in the field of NLP. Since then he has specialised in the field of addictions and has worked as a Drug and Alcohol Abuse Counselor, Outpatient Clinical Director (Supervisory Counseling Psychologist), County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Outpatient Program Director and County Health Department Senior Analyst. He is the author of *Sobriety Demystified: Getting Clean and Sober with NLP and CBT*.

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