

Work / Life

NEUROLINGUISTIC
PRESUPPOSITIONS
(NLP)

Highlights

- [Neurolinguistic Presuppositions](#)
- [Volunteer Job Opportunities](#)
- [The Red Marble](#)
- [The WHOLE Apple a Day . . .](#)
- [Why We Love Kids](#)
- [The Dance of Chaos](#)
- [How To Squeeze the Most Out of Your Time](#)
- [How To Improve Your Odds of Collecting on a Rebate](#)

NAVIGATOR

The foundation for NLP is a set of presuppositions (beliefs) about ourselves and the world we live in. These presuppositions also serve as principles to guide how we live our lives.

1. The meaning of communication is the response it produces.

Your intended communication is not always what is understood by the other person. It does not matter what you intend, what matters are the results you generate from your words, tone of voice, and body language.

Being flexible, you can change how you are communicating until you achieve your desired result.

Consider the following situation. I am a man and I notice a female co-worker has a new dress. I decide to pay her a complement (my intention). I say to her "Gee you look terrific in that dress." She immediately gets mad and leaves the room. I do not know what is going on in her mind, but obviously she heard my message very differently from what I intended. Maybe in her model of the world and through her filters she felt I was "hitting on her." The next time I see her, I could continue with the same behavior and think all sorts of bad things about her. Or, I can realize that I did not achieve what I intended and find different ways to communicate with her so that we can have a productive working relationship.

2. There is no failure, only feedback.

You try something and it doesn't work out the way you planned. How often do you interpret this as failure? Or maybe, it is simply information that you can use to change what you are doing in order to move closer to the result you want.

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

—Thomas Alva Edison, scientist and inventor.

How would your life change if you viewed failure as simply feedback—an opportunity to learn how not to do something and be flexible in developing a new way to achieve your intended outcome?

How different would work be if failure were viewed as feedback? Would you and others be more inclined to explore new ways to get your work done more efficiently and effectively, with more fun?

"It is better to have enough ideas for some of them to be wrong, than to be always right by having no ideas at all."

—Edward de Bono

3. Every behavior has a positive intention.

No matter how strange, hurtful, or inappropriate people's behavior may seem to you, to the people engaging in that behavior it makes sense in their model of the world. They see the behavior as the best or only way of meeting their need or achieving their outcome.

Similar ways to express this presupposition include the following:

- Everyone is doing the best he/she can with the resources available to him/her.
- Every behavior is useful in some context.
- Everyone is always doing what he/she believes is right.

- This is the best choice available to a person given the circumstances as he/she sees it.

The key is to appreciate the positive intention of the other person's behavior. This does not mean that you view the other person's behavior as positive. On the contrary, you may find it quite distasteful. You need to look behind the behavior to notice a positive intention for the other person, for you, or for someone else. Once you have an understanding of the positive intention, explore alternative ways to help the person achieve it.

As an example, assume you are having a discussion with someone and he/she begins to raise his/her voice, yell, knock things off the table, and run from the room. From your perspective, this certainly is not viewed as positive behavior. Now look at it from the other person's perspective. What could possibly be the positive intention behind this behavior? Maybe the person did not feel safe or felt overwhelmed in the conversation with you. Given the resources he/she had available to him/her at that moment, this was the only option he/she had to get some space or flee to a place of safety. Assuming this is the case, the next time a similar situation arises is there something you could do to help the person achieve a positive intention in a different way that would assist you in achieving your outcome at the same time?

Could you use this approach to improve your relationship with your boss? Your co-workers? Your family? Your children? Your spouse?

4. There are no unresourceful people, only unresourceful states.

This presupposition is similar to the previous one.

People already have the resources they need to succeed. Sometimes they get themselves into a state of mind (overwhelmed, sad, angry) that prevents these resources from being readily available.

5. You are in charge of your mind and therefore your results.

You are the one who chooses the filters (beliefs, values, decisions, etc.) that determine your maps, your model of the world, and how you experience different events. You are also the one who can change these filters to gain a different perspective on the world and potentially significantly different results.

To sum up, you can simply read the above presuppositions, or you can begin to put them into action by making them a way of life. In so doing, you have the opportunity to change your reality, your results, and your life! Here are two ways you may wish to consider:

1. Begin to incorporate these presuppositions into your life by selecting a different presupposition each day. Read it over carefully during the day, at work, and at home. Notice when this presupposition applies and what other courses of action are available to you to achieve what you want in life.

2. Identify a situation in the past in which you did not perform as well as you could have. Take each presupposition one at a time and review the situation from each of these perspectives. As you do, notice what you can learn about yourself, about others, and about what other choices are available to you to obtain a different result—should a similar circumstance arise in the future.

(Source: Roger Ellerton Ph.D., ISP, CMC, Renewal Technologies, www.renewal.ca)

WEBSITE PICKS

Volunteer Job Opportunities (www.idealists.org)

This site has over 33,000 nonprofit and community organizations in 165 countries. These organizations can be searched by name, location, or mission. There are thousands of volunteer opportunities around the world. In addition, you will find information on job openings, internships, events, and resources.

INSPIRATION

The Red Marble

During the waning years of the depression in a small Idaho community, I used to stop by Mr. Miller's roadside stand for farm-fresh produce as the season made it available. Food and money were still extremely scarce, and bartering was used extensively.

One day, Mr. Miller was bagging some early potatoes for me. I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature, ragged but clean, hungrily appraising a basket of freshly picked green peas.

I paid for my potatoes but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes. Pondering the peas, I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller and the ragged boy next to me.

"Hello Barry, how are you today?"

"H'lo, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admirin' them peas ... sure look good."

"They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?"

"Fine. Gittin' stronger alla' time."

"Good. Anything I can help you with?"

No, Sir. Jus' admirin' them peas."

"Would you like to take some home?" "No, Sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'em with."

"Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?"

"All I got's my prize marble here."

"Is that right? Let me see it."

"Here 'tis. She's a dandy."

"I can see that. Hmmmm, only thing is this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home?"

"Not zackley ... but almost."

"Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble."

"Sure will. Thanks Mr. Miller."

Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me. With a smile she said, "There are two other boys like him in our community; all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes, or whatever. When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, perhaps."

I left the stand smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved to Colorado but I never forgot the story of this man, the boys, and their bartering.

Several years went by, each more rapid than the previous one. Just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community and while I was there learned that Mr. Miller had died. They were having his viewing that evening

and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them.

Upon arrival at the mortuary, we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could. Ahead of us in line were three young men. One was in an army uniform and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts, all very professional looking.

They approached Mrs. Miller, standing composed and smiling by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her, and moved on to the casket. Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one, each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket.

Each left the mortuary awkwardly, wiping his eyes. Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and mentioned the story she had told me about the marbles. With her eyes glistening, she took my hand and led me to the casket.

"Those three young men who just left were the boys I told you about. They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim 'traded' them. Now, at last when Jim could not change his mind about color or size . . . they came to pay their debt."

"We've never had a great, deal of the wealth of this world," she confided, "but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho."

With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three exquisitely shined red marbles.

Moral: We will not be remembered by our words, but by our kind deeds.

(Author Unknown)

HEALTHY FOOD TIP

The WHOLE Apple a Day...

Try starting your day with a whole apple rather than that cup of coffee, and you may feel the same pick-up, with many more benefits and no side effects.

Apple peels have high concentrations of special compounds (phenols) that may assist in the prevention of chronic diseases. Apple peel powder may be used in various food products to add phytochemicals and promote good health, provided the peel has been freeze-dried or air-dried. During applesauce and canned apple manufacturing, the antioxidant-rich peels of apples are discarded, but the highest content of the important phenols and antioxidants are in the peel.

Apple peels are also shown to more effectively inhibit the growth of human liver-cancer cells and other tumor cells than the other apple components.

The high content of phenolic compounds, antioxidant activity, and antiproliferative activity of apple peels indicate that they may impart health benefits when consumed, and should be regarded as a valuable source of antioxidants.

(Source: *Journal of Agriculture & Food Chemistry* (2003) 51(3):609–14. Excerpted by Betty Kamen, Ph.D., and Michael Rosenbaum, M.D. at www.bettykamen.com)

HUMOR

Why We Love Kids

NUDITY: I was driving with my three young children one warm summer evening when a woman in the convertible ahead of us stood up and waved. She was stark naked! As I was reeling from the shock, I heard my 5-year-old shout from the back seat, “Mom! That lady isn’t wearing a seat belt!”

HONESTY: My son Zachary, age 4, came screaming out of the bathroom to tell me he’d dropped his toothbrush in the toilet. So I fished it out and threw it in the garbage. Zachary stood there thinking for a moment, then ran to my bathroom and came out with my toothbrush. He held it up and said with a charming little smile, “We better throw this one out too then, ‘cause it fell in the toilet a few days ago.”

OPINIONS: On the first day of school, a first-grader handed his teacher a note from his mother. The note read, “The opinions expressed by this child are not necessarily those of his parents.”

KETCHUP: A woman was trying hard to get the ketchup to come out of the jar. During her struggle the phone rang, so she asked her 4-year-old daughter to answer the phone. “It’s the minister, Mommy,” the child said to her mother. Then she added, “Mommy can’t come to the phone to talk to you right now. She’s hitting the bottle.”

MORE NUDITY: A little boy got lost at the YMCA and found himself in the women’s locker room. When he was spotted, the room burst into shrieks, with ladies grabbing towels and running for cover. The little boy watched in amazement and then asked, “What’s the matter, haven’t you ever seen a little boy before?”

POLICE # 1: While taking a routine vandalism report at an elementary school, I was interrupted by a little girl about 6 years old. Looking up and down at my uniform, she asked, “Are you a cop?”

“Yes,” I answered and continued writing the report.

“My mother said if I ever needed help I should ask the police. Is that right?”

“Yes, that’s right,” I told her.

“Well, then,” she said as she extended her foot toward me, “would you please tie my shoe?”

POLICE # 2: It was the end of the day when I parked my police van in front of the station. As I gathered my equipment, my K-9 partner, Jake, was barking, and I saw a little boy staring in at me. “Is that a dog you got back there?” he asked.

“It sure is,” I replied.

Puzzled, the boy looked at me and then towards the back of the van. Finally he said, “What’d he do?”

ELDERLY: While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers, and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, “The Tooth Fairy will never believe this!”

DRESS-UP: A little girl was watching her parents dress for a party. When she saw her dad donning his tuxedo, she warned, “Daddy, you shouldn’t wear that suit.”

“And why not, darling?”

“You know that it always gives you a headache the next morning.”

DEATH: While walking along the sidewalk in front of his church, our minister heard the intoning of a prayer that nearly made his collar wilt. Apparently, his 5-year-old son and his playmates had found a dead robin. Feeling that proper burial should be performed, they had secured a small box and cotton batting, then dug a hole and made ready for the disposal of the deceased. The minister’s son was chosen to say the appropriate prayers and with sonorous dignity intoned his version of what he thought his father always said: “Glory be unto the Faaaather, and unto the Sonnn . . . and into the hole he goooses!”

SCHOOL: A little girl had just finished her first week of school. “I’m just wasting my time,” she said to her mother. “I can’t read, I can’t write, and they won’t let me talk!”

BIBLE: A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages. “Mama, look what I found,” the boy called out.

“What have you got there, dear?”

With astonishment in the young boy’s voice, he answered, “I think it’s Adam’s underwear!”

FOR REFLECTION

The Dance of Chaos

Around and around we dance the dance,
Back and forth in turn we play the game,
Thinking we’re winning out over chance
By keeping things insanely the same.

A moment of clarity perchance arrives,
But the chaos around us sweeps it away;
And even that which we see with our own eyes
Can no longer save us. We have lost our way.

Is there hope for one among us whose gallant
Desire is to change the cycles of her life,
To renew feelings for herself, her talents?
Yes, there is hope, but it is not without strife.

To change my life, its path and momentum,
Choices must be made, and painful honesty
Must always prevail; Otherwise, to become
A whole person is only a fantasy.

Making the decision to change is not change;
It’s only the first step along the way.
My task is to remain alert, for a wide range
Of obstacles can occur to block the way.

I’m not one, I’m many personalities,
An idea which eludes me so easily.
I focus on my problems, thinking I see
Who I am, and what it is I want to be.

But the part of me that’s been in charge so long
Is very clever and has more than one face,
Likes its power over me, and sees no wrong
In whatever it does to maintain its place.

If I am to rise above my world today,
I have to stay focused on my goal,
Not dropping my guard or letting my mind stray
To things which put me back into an old role.

The thinking that got me where I was before
Tricks me into thinking things are better now.
I decide I don’t need my goals anymore
For I can choose what I will and won’t allow.

However, patiently waiting in the wings,
Eager to sabotage, are the incumbents.
To my life-changing decisions, their strength brings
Resistance, thoughts, emotions—all so intense!

With persistence, I break down my defenses.
Through the struggle, even when I reminisce,
I see hurt, anger, love, all my pretenses,
And know the answer has to be synthesis.

But which ones do I throw away if indeed
There lies within the deepest hurt or anger
A kernel of purity encased in needs,
Needs which became distorted from what
they were?
Self-discovery will bring both joy and pain

As I untangle my life's choices, making
It seem like familiar chaos once again
When the hardened walls within begin cracking.

A moment of clarity again arrives,
But the chaos no longer sweeps it away;
And even that which I see with my own eyes
Is no longer clouded. I have found my way!

(Source: Dannye Williamsen)

WORK AND LIFE

How To Squeeze the Most Out of Your Time.

How do you start your day? Years ago I started planning mine by writing everything down I would have to do, the night before. I found that drawing up your list the night before prompts your subconscious to work on your plans and goals while you sleep. When you wake up, you feel ready to tackle your challenges.

When prioritizing and planning your time, consider the following points:

Key questions.

What is the highest value-added action I can do?

What can I, and only I, do that I've done well before to make a difference?

Why am I on the payroll?

The answers to these questions help identify all that needs to be done and in what order. That, in turn, will bolster personal productivity.

Values.

Decide what's important to you, and in what order. Make sure your values don't conflict with work. Energy spent worrying diminishes your abilities.

Consequences.

Every action has consequences—good and bad. Consider what rewards you'd reap by completing a task. Then, compare those rewards with the consequences of putting it aside. This process makes it easier to see which goals have a higher value.

The Pareto Principle.

Vilfredo Pareto, a 19th-century engineer, argued that 20 percent of what you do accounts for 80 percent of the value. When considering the importance of a task, ask yourself whether it's among the 20 percent that creates the most value.

Urgency vs. Importance.

An unexpected phone call or a drop-in visitor may be urgent, but the consequences of dealing with either may not be important in the long run. The urgent is other-oriented; it's caused by someone else. Important things are self-directed and have the greatest value for you.

The Limiting Step.

Standing between you and what you want to achieve is the limiting step. That's the bottleneck that determines how quickly you can reach your

goal. It's important to identify that step and focus single-mindedly on getting that one thing done.

A Written Plan.

Lists of goals, tasks, and objectives are of no help unless they're written. Putting your plans on paper makes a seemingly elusive goal more concrete. There's a connection that takes place between the brain and the hand. When you don't write it down, it's fuzzy, but as you write it and revise it, it becomes clear.

Visualization.

See yourself doing what you need to get done. Visualization trains the subconscious to focus on completing tasks. Say, for example, that you want to begin each morning by exercising. Visualizing yourself doing sit-ups and push-ups the night before conditions the mind to do those the next day. When you prime your mind, it wakes you up even before the alarm clock goes off.

Remember you are a winner and preparation goes a long way in helping you achieve all your goals.

(Source: Brian Tracy, speaker, author, consultant. www.briantracy.com)

FINANCES

How To Improve Your Odds of Collecting on a Rebate

Industry professionals, consumer advocates, and veteran shoppers have these tips for improving your odds of collecting on rebate claims:

- Before you leave the store, make sure the UPC code is still on the box. At stores that sell returned merchandise, the UPC code may already have been used for a rebate, making your request ineligible.
- Test the product to make sure it works before sending in the rebate.
- Read the rules carefully. Some require you to circle the product on the receipt. Others have strict deadlines. Make sure you've included the right mailing address. "Follow instructions to a 'T'," said Linda Badger, a staff attorney for the Federal Trade Commission. "Sometimes they ask for the original UPC code. Other times, the serial number."
- Make sure you get enough receipts when buying multiple products. Consumer Paul Houle of Costa Mesa, CA, who says he has collected \$2,245 on 114 rebates in the past 18 months, said, "If you purchase more than one rebate product, and the store doesn't print enough copies, you're in trouble. I've learned to carefully read online rebates before I buy."
- Write legibly. David McIntyre, president of Global Fulfillment Systems, suggests using a mailing label, but that's not always allowed. Some rebate claims must be handwritten.

- Keep copies of everything, especially the rebate form, so you know whom to contact if your rebate is lost or rejected.
- "Staple everything together. Missing UPC codes are sometimes found stuck in an envelope," IOgear marketing specialist Dave Green said.
- If you run into a problem with your claim, don't call to yell at the person on the other end of the phone. "If someone cusses out the CEO, they're not going to get the rebate," said Bradley Morse, vice president of marketing at D-Link Systems Inc. "Cool heads prevail."
- If your request is rejected, complain. Ask for the manager. Write to the CEO. Send copies of your complaints to Government agencies. File a complaint with the agencies.

Where to complain:

Federal Trade Commission:
www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer.htm

Better Business Bureau:
www.bbbonline.com/consumer/complaint.asp

You can always complain to the store where you bought the product, even though most rebates are from the manufacturer and have nothing to do with the store. Many retailers pride themselves on customer service and may be willing to grant your rebate to appease a customer.

A few consumer Web sites are loaded with tips and contact numbers: TechBargains offers phone numbers and addresses for several manufacturers, retailers, and rebate fulfillment centers at www.techbargains.com/rebates.cfm (toward the bottom).

The Rip-off Report, at www.ripoffreport.com, lets you search for complaints made against a specific merchant. It also offers merchants a way to rebut charges. Its editor, Ed Magedson, who favors Federal standards for rebates, said he has received some 35,000 complaints regarding mail-in rebates in less than 2 years. His Phoenix-based site tries to step in when it can and has had success in calling manufacturers and retailers about rebate problems, he said.

(Source: Tamara Chuang, *The Orange County Register*, published on 02/23/04)

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An on-line version of this newsletter may be found at <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codec/cc/navig6.pdf>