

Chapter 4

Forgiving: The NLP Approach

Did I Not Tell You...

**Did I not tell you, “Do not leave, for I am your Friend”?
For in this mirage of nothingness I am the Fountainhead of Life!**

**Even if in anger you leave Me for a hundred thousand years,
In the end you will return, for I am your true Goal!**

**Did I not tell You, “Be not content with worldly forms!”?
For I am the Fashioner of the tabernacle of your contentment!**

**Did I not tell you, “I am the Sea and you are but a single fish”?
Do not be tempted ashore, for I am your Crystal Sea!**

**Did I not tell you, “Do not fly like a bird to the snare!”?
Come to Me, for I am the very Power of your flight!**

**Did I not tell you, “They will rob you and leave you numb with cold”?
But I am the Fire and Warmth and Heat of your desire!**

**Did I not tell you, “They will taint your character,
Until you forget that I am your Source of Purity”?**

**Did I not tell you, “Do not question how I direct your affairs!”?
For I am the Creator without directions.**

If your heart is a lamp, let it lead you to your true path.

And if you are godly, know that I am your Lord.

Rūmī (Nicholson, 1995)

By hoping for another life, a better life, we often forego the pleasure and evade the pain of living this life in time and space as it is presented to us. Getting hurt, is the painful part of our current life, and enjoying life again after we have forgiven the one who has hurt us, is a part of the pleasures that we receive again and again when we have made the decision to make a fresh start, to do it differently this time, or to stop doing what we have been doing before. Is it as easy as it sounds ? Some will say, it's impossible, while others will say, it's easy, but those who have been severely hurt, and who have forgiven the damage and the hurt, continuing their life with a new understanding and compassion, will say, it can be done, but, it is difficult! Not only difficult to do the forgiving, but difficult to continue living with the same individual who has neither grown, nor evolved to a higher plane of consciousness or understanding. The same individual who repeats similar thoughtless actions and fails to see the effects those actions have on others. To face the inevitable suffering that life metes out, we need to embrace and accept it as part of the human condition (Jung, 1983; Malinowski, 1998; and Frankl, 1978).

Living according to Jung (1983) and Frankl (1978) means to remain engrossed in life, which can have different meanings in different cultures according to Malinowski (1998). According to the Bible (1989) the goal of living on this earth is to love God, your neighbour, and yourself. That leads us into the realm of the spirit by seeking and upholding communion with God, into the realm of relationships by fostering positive interactions, and seeking social engagements with the individuals that live around us, and into the realm of the self, by accepting ourselves the way we are.

According to Levine (2001) physical well-being, emotional well-being, and social well-being are the prerequisites for a happy and prosperous life. The two main criteria for living a mature life according to Freud (1938), are to love and to work, while Jung (1978) implores us to confront our shadow side and assimilate our animus or anima (Myers-Briggs and McCaully, 1985). All these facets of life, together with possible unknown physiological weaknesses,

make us very vulnerable to calamities, blunders, and damaging others and ourselves.

Forgiving seems to be an essential part of any mature approach to living, which incorporates the understanding that it is unrealistic to believe all our life problems can be solved. Instead, a new identity will develop as a result of a deeper understanding of life, its hardships, mishaps, misunderstandings, hurtful memories, inadvertent retaliative behaviours, and the many other little hurtful ways in which we consciously and unconsciously lash out at our fellow human beings (Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000). Premature forgiveness can be a real problem, since it only masks the symptoms without clearing up the root cause. As long as angry feelings well up unexpectedly, forgiveness has not been achieved (Droll, 1984; Trainer, 1981). When this occurs, it becomes necessary to go back and work on those issues that were considered to have been cleared up. For that reason, forgiveness cannot be expected to take place immediately after the traumatic event has occurred, nor can one force forgiving behaviours, when the individual is still experiencing acute pain, either physically or psychologically (Droll, 1984; Trainer, 1981; Von Krosigk, 2000). Forgiving should rather be conceptualised as a journey towards understanding one's self as well as the other within the context of living. These activities make forgiving primarily a cognitive activity (Von Krosigk, 2000; Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000), which is primarily directed by the will to forgive. Since Neuro-Linguistic Programming or NLP is primarily a cognitively driven means of changing peoples' thoughts, emotions, and behaviour, it can be used effectively in the process of assisting injured individuals on their journey through pain and anger towards forgiveness.

Chapter 4 takes us on a journey through the landscape of words, phrases, meanings, intentions, and responses to our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours in the interpersonal and individual realm. NLP can be conceptualised as a way to consistently remember successes by way of using cognitive processes for finding out *how* a person thinks, and then clearing up the problem by changing that problematic process of thinking. A description of the underlying principles of the NLP approach to facilitating forgiveness will promote a better understanding of the almost instant, and sometimes astounding changes that occur as a result of seemingly

simple intervention strategies.

An Ecosystemic Epistemology

Ecology, holism, and cybernetics are terms that describe a perspective which is based on an ecosystemic epistemology (Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, and DeLozier, 1980; O'Connor and Lubin, 1984; Stachowiak and Briggs, 1984; Jasnoski, 1984; Bogdan, 1984; Keeney, 1983; 1984; Keeney and Sprenkle, 1982; and Bateson, 1972). An ecosystemic epistemology presupposes that complex phenomena are viewed and observed within the confines of a context with its interconnectedness with other complex phenomena within the confines of their contexts (Malinowski, 1998; Casey, 1998; and Keeney and Sprenkle, 1982). It also involves a focus on patterns of relationships, and it describes a way of seeing events as organised by recursive feedback processes (Bateson, 1991; Keeney, 1983; Keeney and Sprenkle, 1982; Bateson, 1972). The ecosystemic perspective perceives reality as a realm of objects that are brought into the foreground by an observer who describes the points of focus or distinctions by means of language (Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson, 1967; Maturana, 1988; Wittgenstein, 1961). From this perspective, every individual who observes and experiences the same reality, may see and feel something different, and may punctuate a description of that reality in a different way (Maturana and Varela, 1987; Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson, 1967). For that reason one description is not more valid than another, and the described reality cannot be viewed in a fully unbiased and objective way by anyone (Maturana, 1988). Within the larger field of the observed reality, the facilitator, the client, and any number of other connected individuals and things, interact with each other in reciprocal ways (Keeney, 1983). These reciprocal interactions may also be described and punctuated in different ways by the different participants within the larger field of that reality, which makes the attempt to be an objective observer impossible (Maturana, 1988; Maturana and Varela, 1987; Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson, 1967; Bateson, 1979; Keeney, 1983).

Cybernetic explanations are mostly negative, as cybernetic theory assumes that the course of events is subject to restraints (Bateson, 1972; Keeney, 1983). When a number of restraints combine, they may generate a unique determination. The pathways of probable change within such a unique determination are assumed to be governed by equal opportunities for every probability (Hawking, 2001; Keeney, 1983; Bateson, 1972). Events and objects are irrelevant in cybernetic thinking, while the information that is transmitted via these events and objects is considered to be vitally important. Objects and events are only considered as propositions, communications, assumptions, and messages (Bateson, 1972). In order to understand human beings it is important to understand the limitations of their sensory input (Bateson, 1991). It is therefore possible for us to know about the rules that underlie our imaging and perception, but it is impossible to be conscious of their working. Bateson (1991, p.217) explains that “the way in which the image that we see is given depth depends upon essentially Euclidian arguments within the brain and of which the perceiver is unconscious”. The whole shower of impulses itself brought to the brain by the optic nerve, is a totally unconscious business according to Bateson (1991).

When we consider the unique determinations that are governed by equal opportunities for every probability, we realise that there may be a number of outcomes that could be equally appropriate or inappropriate. Since all human beings have limitations regarding their sensory input, we need to ask which opportunity is the most appropriate for this particular individual.

According to Hawking (2001), only some of the probable histories of the universe are suitable for the development of intelligent life, and three dimensional space seems to be one of those probable histories. “As the universe expands, it borrows energy from the gravitational field to create more matter. The positive matter energy is exactly balanced by the negative gravitational energy, so the total energy is zero. When the universe doubles in size, the matter and gravitational energies both double - so twice zero is still zero” (p. 91). The large amount of expansion according to Hawking (2001) smooths out any lumps and bumps that may have

been there in the time when the universe began. Hawking (2001) describes the history of the universe in imaginary time as a perfectly round sphere, and compares it to the corresponding history of the universe in real time, which would be a universe that continued to expand forever in an inflationary manner. During the process of inflation, matter cannot fall together to form or create intelligent life, except when the poles of the sphere are slightly flattened. In that case, according to Hawking (2001) intelligent life can develop, since the corresponding history in real time will at first expand in an accelerated manner and then begin to slow down. When that happens galaxies can form and intelligent life can begin to develop. A number of probable histories may develop, although we do not know which one will be the most probable. Hawking (2001) found that the most probable histories were not completely smooth. They seemed to have tiny ups and downs, and in spite of their minuteness these extremely minuscule surface ripples were observable in the microwaves that come to us from different directions in space. In 1989 the Cosmic Background Explorer satellite made a map of the sky by means of microwaves, which in principle is the blueprint for all the structures in the universe.

When we read about research with regard to the expanding or contracting universe, and begin to imagine the possibilities that all these probable histories contain, it is not difficult to imagine the possibilities all the probable histories in the human mind may contain.

The way in which Hawking (2001) describes the universe is very similar to the way in which Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, and DeLozier (1980) describe the mind. The analogy is surprising when we consider that time and space come to an end when the universe will get increasingly emptier and colder as the stars burn out (Hawking, 2001). As our lives on earth come to an end, we also become increasingly colder until space and time cease to exist when we die.

The probable histories of the universe can also be likened to the probable histories of every individual on this earth. Every time we choose to go into one direction, and thereby forfeit going into all the other directions, we create our personal history. Sometimes however we find the path we have chosen unsatisfactory, and sometimes we find ourselves in a black hole. In such situations time often stands still, and our personal space is pierced or warped. When

light is trapped inside a black hole in the universe, it results in time coming to an end (Hawking, 2001). Similarly, when an individual has a problem and cannot find an answer to his/her dilemma, the positive emotions and possible options for changing whatever needs to be changed, come to an end. This stuck state can be released when history can be recreated by spending imaginary time within the confines of a positive outcome. In the universe, history in imaginary time can be represented as a perfect sphere, according to Hawking (2001), while history in real time expands in an inflationary manner, represented as a sphere that is open at the top and with the sides bending away from the center. When an individual imagines a positive outcome in imaginary time, it can be imagined perfectly like a smooth sphere. When this positive outcome is implemented in real time, the constraints of the individual's circumstances and sensory limitations result in a developmental burst, which can be likened to inflation in the universe. An individual who has formulated a positive outcome and begins to implement it, expands on all levels, by borrowing energy from the center of the self to create circumstances that will propel him/her towards attaining the positive outcome or goal.

When we want to reproduce a particular behaviour that someone else is, or has been using for a particular purpose, we can do so by modelling that particular behaviour (Danzinger, 1997; Bandler and Grinder, 1975; Dilts, 1983). This can be done by creating a pragmatic map or model of that particular behaviour. In NLP it is presupposed that each step in our mental processes is the result of a reactivation of our sensory processes (Kemmerer and Wright, 2002; Shelton and Caramazza, 2001; Martin, Ungerleider, and Haxby, 2000; Zola-Morgan and Squire, 1993; Grinder, 1981). Thinking can thus be understood as the combining and sequencing of mental images, mental sounds, and mental feelings (Kemmerer and Wright, 2002; Shelton and Caramazza, 2001; Martin, Ungerleider, and Haxby, 2000; Zola-Morgan and Squire, 1993; Grinder, 1981). Sensory experience is therefore involved, irrespective of whether the thought process is one of belief, decision making, learning, motivation or something else (Grinder, 1981). In a series of neuropsychological experiments Kemmerer and Wright (2002) focused on the morphological process that is involved in verbal *un*-prefixation, which demonstrated the autonomy of grammatical semantics. In their study

involving people with lesions in certain brain sections, they found that brain damaged individuals performed well on a verb - picture matching test that required them to discriminate between subtle features of verb meanings that are not relevant to *un*-prefixation such as the following: A photograph represents a man heating a pot of soup. The brain-damaged patients are required to select the target verb *heating*, and exclude the error verbs *frying*, and *baking*. The same brain-damaged patients failed a grammatical judgement test that required them to determine whether the meaning of the very same verbs were compatible with the construction in which they appeared. All sentences had the same structure, such as: She (verb) something, and *un*- (verb) something. For example wind, *un*-wind; wrap, *un*-wrap; buckle, *un*-buckle; heat, *un*-heat; capture, *un*-capture; squeeze, *un*-squeeze.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) was then used to determine the extent and location of the damaged brain material, and the application of positron emission tomography (PET) was used to show how the blood flows in a particular region of the brain when individuals perform specific learning and memory tasks (Kemmerer and Wright, 2002; Zola-Morgan and Squire, 1993). Grammatically relevant and grammatically irrelevant aspects of meaning could thus be distinguished. In addition, neuropsychological studies with brain-damaged subjects have reported a dissociation between the meaning of nouns and verbs. When functional neuro-imaging studies were performed on healthy subjects differential patterns of neural activation in the brain were reported by Kemmerer and Wright (2002). However, since language makes it possible to experience a sense of self, and creates the phenomenon of self-awareness according to Maturana (1975), it seems that the meaning of nouns is more important than the meaning of verbs for experiencing a sense of self.

According to Maturana (1975) explanatory schemes, comparisons, meanings, and future plans are all constructed in language, as well as the lineal concept of cause and effect, and the perspective of the passing of time. According to Von Foerster (1976) reality is a frame of reference that can be consistent for at least two observers, and meanings which are determined by the structure of the perceiving system have the tendency to attribute meaning

to the words and the behaviour of the other system (Fourie, 1996). This process can also be described as structural coupling, which according to Anderson and Goolishian (1987) occurs when individuals share ideas by means of verbal and non-verbal communication. Self-reference is the result of the distinctions we draw on the basis of what we perceive, according to Bateson (1979) and Keeney (1983), and reciprocal interaction between any number of connected elements draws all the elements into a larger field. The interactions between the elements within that field are characterised by repetition, recurrence, circularity, cybernetics, redundancy, and pattern, which according to Keeney (1983) denotes recursion. According to Keeney and Sprenkle (1982), recursiveness, relationships, complexity, and contextual interconnectedness are the basis for ecosystemic thinking. Ecosystemic thinking describes a way of seeing events as organised by recursive feedback processes, and involves seeing patterns of relationships in which parts are embedded within the whole (Keeney, 1983). By dividing the world into dualisms automatically incapacitates a participant observer to describe the patterns that organise events, since the focus of attention lies on linear cause-effect thinking. As Bateson (1979) and Keeney (1983) have noted, the distinctions we draw determine what we perceive.

According to Reber (1985) feedback is described as information from the environment that signals to the system that adjustments or modifications need to be made to its responses, which in turn will serve as a basis for future responses. Feedback may thus be seen as a means to operate, regulate, stabilise and keep a system's behaviour within certain acceptable parameters (Bateson, 1991; Keeney, 1983). It is essential to accurately assess the prevailing state of a system, before corrective action is considered. When a system is assessed, the focus lies on the prevailing state of the interrelationships among the elements of the system. A new whole is then synthesized from the elements of the prevailing system to provide a new means of optimizing the system's preferred state or future outcome. Corrective action will therefore only be activated by the perceived difference between the prevailing state and the preferred state of the system (Bateson, 1991; Dilts, Epstein, and Dilts, 1991; Dilts, 1983; Erickson, 1980; Bateson, 1974). Corrective action can be activated by the use of language,

since comparisons, meanings, and future plans are constructed by means of language (Maturana, 1988). According to Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, and DeLozier (1980) corrective action needs to be employed when the facilitator is faced with clients who employ interference phenomena, such as “resistance”, “sabotage”, or “objections”. When dealing with human behaviour and trying to achieve positive outcomes, interference phenomena are the most common obstacles to reaching a goal (Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, and DeLozier (1980). “Experiences such as objections, incongruence, and resistance are utilised as valuable tests for the effectiveness of the installation of a strategy, and objections do not mean the neuro-linguistic programmer has failed in designing a good strategy. Objections are accepted as natural feedback, and utilised to modify the strategy in order to make it more effective.” (Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, and DeLozier, 1980, p. 241). Another aspect of interference phenomena is the understanding that interference is the result of naturally occurring tests for attaining congruence within the personal field of ecological criteria (Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, and DeLozier, 1980). The operation of the strategy should be smooth flowing in case of the following:

- when all the steps are in the appropriate order
- all the representational systems necessary for the particular outcome have been included
- the strategy has been checked against the ‘well-formedness conditions’ (ecological congruence)
- and/or additional resources from the client’s personal history have been included.

In the event of obstacles blocking the smooth flowing of the strategy that has been elicited, the facilitator is required to go back, repeat the elicitation procedure, and make absolutely sure that no steps were inadvertently added or omitted (Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, and DeLozier, 1980). The natural feedback mechanisms thus make it impossible for making mistakes. Should a mistake have occurred, it will show up as an obstacle blocking the smooth flowing of the elicited strategy.

In NLP one of the most effective tools for dealing with interference is the process of reframing

(Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, and DeLozier, 1980; Dilts, 1983; Dilts, Epstein, and Dilts, 1991). Reframing can be understood as a process that changes the way in which some representations or parts of a system fit into a particular system as it functions in a variety of contexts (Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, and DeLozier, 1980; Dilts, 1983; Dilts, Epstein, and Dilts, 1991). When a concept that was previously encountered as an obstruction to the smooth functioning of the system is reframed, the obstacle is transformed into a resource (Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, and DeLozier, 1980; Dilts, 1983; Dilts, Epstein, and Dilts, 1991). "The essential goal of reframing is to create a framework in which all parts of the system become aligned towards achieving the same meta-outcomes ie., survival, protection, and growth, of the system, by accepting and acknowledging all the positive and negative aspects of the system as valuable resources to the system, within the appropriate context" (Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, and DeLozier, 1980, p. 243).

What is Neuro-Linguistic Programming?

Neuro-Linguistic Programming is a system of specific procedures for understanding and utilising communications that produces positive change and personal growth. It is built on the disciplines of linguistics, psychology, and neuro - physiology, and furnishes the user with the ability to communicate effectively, to make changes with ease, and to motivate themselves and others to higher performance levels, easier learning, making decisions, improving creativity, and emotional ease. This is achieved by observing and utilising sensory data. When people incorporate experiences, they register information through their five senses. This sensory data is then organised in a way in which it forms a representation or impression of the world. The representations and impressions that people have made of "their" world are detectable through a process of interpreting their language patterns and by observing their non-verbal indicators when they speak about the impressions and representations they have

made of the world. The NLP Practitioner is therefore able to measurably identify another person's internal thought process. Feedback is the most useful tool in NLP since it provides the NLP Practitioner with information about the effects of his/her behaviours towards others. This information provides the Practitioner with useful choices about what to do, and how to do it differently in a future scenario.

When people come for help, expressing anger, pain, and dissatisfaction, the limitations which they experience usually occur in their representation of the incident in which they were hurt (Bandler and Grinder, 1975). Their representation of the incident is usually expressed by means of the human language, which in itself is a representational system of experience (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991; Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1976; Bandler and Grinder, 1975).

The same territory can be plotted onto a plan in a number of different representational systems in order to assist others in understanding the territory and finding their way traversing the territory (Nye, 1998). In the case of NLP, language is the preferred mode of plotting the territory onto a plan. The linguistic mode is thus the representational system with which the map is constructed. Our experiences are thus represented in terms of rich and complex sets of expressions. To study these expressions individually would be totally overwhelming, and therefore only the rules of these expressions (syntax) are studied (Dilts, 1983). According to the meta -model of language, the rules for these expressions can be studied independently of content (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991; Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1976; Bandler and Grinder, 1975).

The Meta-Model of Language

The transformational model or meta-model of language is an explicit representation of our unconscious, rule governed behaviour. (Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975).The meta program patterns occur on an individual level, and according to Dilts, Epstein and Dilts (1991), individuals tend to use one particular representational system more often than the others,

either, because the preferred representational system is usually more developed than the others, or, the particular representational system is more developed than the others because it is preferred above the rest, and therefore used more often. Linguists use the meta-model when they wish to describe what native speakers intuitively know about their own language. To find out in what way the surface structure and the deep structure are connected, the surface and deep structures are subjected to a series of transformations (Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975). Transformational grammar does not model the existential meaning of a sentence, instead, it models the way in which these sentences are formed, which are the rules of the representations themselves (Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975). The meta-model of language is thus an explicit representation of our unconscious, rule governed behaviour (Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975). A short description of the meta-model of language follows.

According to Dilts, Epstein and Dilts (1991), Dilts(1983), Bandler and Grinder (1976), and Bandler and Grinder (1975), there are three universal ways of representation in which the model we create of our life world by means of linguistic expressions differs from the real thing. These are generalisations, deletions, and distortions.

Generalisation is the process by which elements of the person's model become detached from their original experience and come to represent the entire category of which the experience is an example. For example, when an individual makes racist comments about a colleague, in his/her mind the whole race from which that colleague is one individual, becomes the scapegoat for that colleague's behaviour.

Deletion is a process by which we selectively pay attention to certain dimensions of our experience while we exclude others. For example, anti-semitic statements pick out aspects that are different from the racist statements with which black persons are characterised.

Distortion is the process which allows us to make shifts in our experience of sensory data.

For example, in order to eradicate sexist language, thinking negatively about femaleness needs to be redefined by means of excluding certain elements that previously defined femaleness as worse than maleness.

Linguistic intuitions are universal reflections on the language process itself according to Dilts (1983), which are available to every native speaker of every language. Dilts(1983), and Bandler and Grinder (1975), identify three major categories of linguistic intuitions which are Well-Formedness, Constituent Structure, and Logical Semantic Relations.

Well-formedness refers to groups of words that convey a meaning to the native speakers of that language. These words are recognised as syntactically or semantically arranged in such a way as to convey a possible meaning.

Constituent Structure refers to the consistent judgements that native speakers make about what goes together as a unit or constituent inside a sentence of their language. For example, in the sentence '*The rooster with the colourful tail crowed on the roof*', the words *the* and *rooster* go together as a unit, while the words *rooster* and *with* do not.

Logical Semantic Relations refer to the consistent judgements that native speakers make about the logical relations reflected in the sentences of their language.

- *Completeness*: When native speakers are presented with a verb of their language such as '*hit*', they are able to determine what kind of things within that verb describe a relationship. In English, the verb '*hit*' implies a person or thing hitting, a person or thing being hit, and an instrument being used for the hitting.
- *Ambiguity*: Native speakers recognise that a single sentence such as '*Martine took Max's shirt off*' communicates two distinct meanings.

- *Synonymy*: Native speakers recognise that both of the following sentences convey the same message or meaning. '*Nic looked up the number*', and '*Nic looked the number up.*'
- *Referential Indices*: Native speakers can determine whether a word or phrase picks out a particular object in their experience such as '*my car*' or whether two or more words refer to the same object or class, e.g. the words '*the cat*' and '*herself*', in the sentence '*The cat cleaned herself*'.
- *Presuppositions*: Native speakers can determine what kind of experience the speaker has when uttering a specific sentence, such as '*My bird ruffled its feathers*.' The listener can be certain that the speaker has a bird.

The transformational model or meta-model will now be used to explain what native speakers know intuitively about their own language (Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975). For example, in the sentence, '*The farmer bought a tractor*', a native speaker can intuitively group the words into constituents or units (intuitions about constituent structure), and also what a complete representation of the sentence would be (the completeness of the logical semantic relation) such as: *The farmer* and *bought a tractor*. '*The farmer bought a tractor*.' is called the surface structure.

Intuitions about the meaning or completeness of the logical semantic relation is called the deep structure (Bandler and Grinder, 1975). The deep structure, or the completeness of the logical semantic relation of the sentence '*The farmer bought a tractor*' can be represented by the following sentence: '*The farmer bought a tractor from someone with some money*'.

According to Dilts (1983), and Bandler and Grinder (1975) consistent intuitions by native speakers about sentences can thus be linguistically analysed on two levels: a) surface

structure and b) deep structure. A series of transformations is then employed to demonstrate in what way the surface structure and the deep structure are connected. The process that is employed in order to obtain two different sentences from their common deep structure is called a derivation. For example:

- a) The farmer bought a tractor.
- b) The tractor was bought by the farmer.

The deep structure (the meaning) of the sentences is recognised by native speakers as the same, although the surface structures of the two sentences differ. The passive transformation was conducted for sentence b), and in sentence a) the deletion transformation was used. When language is used to communicate something to someone else, it can be considered as a special case of the use of language to represent something. What we experience needs to be represented to ourselves with the help of language in order to understand our experience (Benveniste, 1971; Fodor, 1975). This is a private process, and it happens without conscious effort on our part. When we use language to represent our representation of our experience to others, we are communicating (Steinberg, 1999; Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975). That is a social process.

When people come in for therapy, their representations of their experiences are represented to the therapist by means of language (Fodor, 1975). This process is often accompanied by deletions, ambiguity, the absence of well-formedness, incompleteness, loss of referential indices, and presuppositions. (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991; Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975). The unconscious rules upon which the meaning (deep structure) of our linguistic representations are based are often disregarded in our verbal linguistic representations. As a result, the surface structure is lacking in clarity, explicitness, and correctness (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991; Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975). It is therefore the task of the therapist to engage in a detective process of unearthing the deep structure (the meaning) of what the client is saying. According to Ryan and Deci (2001) subjective psychological well-being can be conceptualised as a sense of coherence, feeling satisfied with life, and positive affect. The three aspects of their subjective psychological well-being will be reflected in the clients' face,

body posture, and linguistic representations.

Meaning

The procedure for finding the meaning of what the client is saying is a complex process of individual steps on a variety of levels. It is always better to get behavioural examples rather than just talk about the behaviour. The reason for this is based on the principle of 'unconscious competence'(Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991; Dilts,1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975). 'Unconscious competence' means that a person performs a learnt action without having to consciously attend to thinking about the steps that are involved in performing the action. When we learn to drive a car, it can be quite strenuous to attend to changing the gears, pushing the peddles, releasing the hand brake, switching on the indicator, watching the road, listening to people talking in the car, and attending to the directions of the traffic officer at a non-functioning traffic light. When we have driven a car for a few months, driving occurs automatically while we have a conversation with someone else in the car. That is when unconscious competence has been achieved. We are not aware of the steps involved, only of the way we need to go in order to reach our destination.

When behaviours are performed on a regular basis, they can be performed without involving conscious effort. Our energy is thus freed to attend to other tasks or aspects of a task (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991; Dilts,1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975). Getting behavioural examples from the client tells the therapist or NLP Practitioner whether the behaviour is old (performed unconsciously competently), or whether the client has made up the behaviour on the spur of the moment (all the conscious energy is focused on the performance). Behavioural examples are therefore excellent examples for assessing congruence among the behavioural and the verbal levels of a client's representational systems (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991; Dilts,1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975).

The procedure for finding the meaning of what the client is saying also involves the detection

of the client's thinking style. The thinking style is reflected in the kind of verbs the client is using to describe his/her representation of his/her experience. The client is motivated predominantly by visual content, action or kinesthetic content, logical content, and emotion. When the client recounts his/her experience of being mugged, the physiological response to recalling the experience and recounting it by the use of words, will elicit a specific dominant thinking style, that can be detected by listening to the use of verbs (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991; Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975).

Examples of action verbs or phrases are as follows: to handle, to hold, to grip, to strike, to reach etc. By noticing the category of verbs that are used, the client's thinking style is revealed, in this case an action or kinesthetic thinking style was used. When the facilitator knows the client's dominant thinking style, he/she will choose to speak in that style by using action verbs, so that the client can gain clarity and understanding about the issues that the therapist talks about. The client's dominant thinking style can be likened to being unconsciously competent. That means the client hears and understands what is being said without any effort on his/her part. By talking in the client's dominant thinking style, the therapist is making it easy for the client to understand what is being said. When a client feels comfortable, safe, and understood, positive rapport is created, and he/she begins to trust the therapist. For the therapist to be understood 'automatically' is particularly important in a situation in which sensitive issues are dealt with (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991; Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975).

According to Kemmerer and Wright (2002), Shelton and Caramazza (2001), Martin, Ungerleider and Haxby (2000), Rossi (1993), Dilts, Epstein and Dilts (1991), Dilts (1983), and Bandler and Grinder (1975), automatic responses to the environment are governed by our neurological processes. When the client is recounting his/her representation of an experience, the response to approaching a problem is as automatic as the dominant thinking style. According to Dilts, Epstein and Dilts (1991), Dilts (1983), and Bandler and Grinder (1975), there are two possibilities to approaching problems: Towards the positive, is the

proactive approach, and away from the negative, is the reactive approach.

When the therapist notices that the client automatically approaches problems by means of the proactive approach, the therapist will choose activities for the client that will bring him/her closer to what he/she wants to gain. Choosing the client's habitual way of approaching problems eliminates time consuming strategies to teach clients to behave differently. Instead the shortest route to overcoming a problem is selected at the outset of the session (Erickson,1980; Dilts, Epstein and Dilts,1991; Dilts,1983; Bandler and Grinder,1975).

Problems can be viewed from a distance, from very close, or from between the two extremes. When a client views a problem from very close, the resultant emotion can be so overwhelming, that solutions are very hard to generate (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991; Dilts, 1983; and Bandler and Grinder, 1975). When the therapist notices that the client represents the problem in tiny chunks (the client sees a lot of detail from a very close stance), he/she chooses a way to create distance between the client and the problem, with the aim of achieving a position in which the size of the problem is amenable to generating positive solutions or resolutions.

Problems and solutions can be placed into the past, present or future, and the goal of achieving solutions can be set as a long term goal or a short term goal. The present is the only time frame that allows for positive change to take place. Only the present results in action and motivation in the client's life. A habitual time frame set is also an unconsciously competent physiological response to life situations. A therapist who notices that a client is habitually stuck in the past will immediately alter the client's representation of his/her situation by placing it into the present time, thereby opening up the possibilities for change (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts,1991; Dilts,1983; Bandler and Grinder,1975).

Automatic or unconsciously competent responses to problem solving are also governed by our neurological systems. Task oriented (achievement) people automatically think about the choices that are available to reach their goals. They also think of the possible procedures that

can be followed to achieve those goals. Relationship oriented (power, affiliation) people automatically focus on themselves, the other, and/or the context (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991; Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975). When the therapist recognises a task oriented client, he/she will choose a way for changing old patterns of thinking or behaviour by providing a task to the client that will enable him/her to fulfill the criteria for achieving a desired outcome. The client is thus in the most preferred mode for changing his/her life with ease. A task oriented client will therefore need to be given a task that can be followed in order to achieve forgiveness. On the other hand, a relationship oriented client will profit by being asked to see the other person's perspective.

Sensory Representational Systems

The meta program patterns occur on an individual level, and according to Dilts, Epstein and Dilts (1991), a strength in one representational ability is often developed at the expense of another. NLP distinguishes between five sensory representational systems: Visual (sight), Auditory (sound), Kinesthetic (feeling), Olfactory (smell), Gustatory (taste). They are based on the extent to which each representational system for a particular mental step in the strategy is dominant. Whether a representational system is highly developed or less highly developed, is determined by the capability to manipulate, organise, synthesise, and distinguish information within that particular representational system. The extent to which a particular representational system is valued is determined by the impact it has on a person's behaviour. The extent to which a person is conscious of the representational system he/she is using, is a direct function of the extent to which that person is aware of the information being processed through that system. Some people for example have a very highly developed verbal representational system, but the content of what they say is diametrically opposed to what they do. These individuals are conscious of what they say, yet unaware of what they do. Therefore, a distinction needs to be made between the most highly developed, the most highly valued, and the most conscious representational system. Since individuals differ in their abilities to

use their senses, there may be some who have one representational system that is the most highly developed, most valued and most conscious. For some these functions might each involve a different sensory system. For example, some researchers hold their entire project in their mind without knowing what they should write for the different sections (kinesthetic). They do however know what the project will look like when it is finished (visual). Others may have a mental picture of a part of the project (visual), which needs to be written down (kinesthetic), before they are able to continue with the next part of the project. These individuals have no idea what the completed project will look like until it has been written down.

Submodalities

According to Dilts, Epstein and Dilts (1991), Dilts (1983), Bandler and Grinder (1975), sub-modalities in NLP refer to the sub-components of each representational system. Characteristics such as colour, brightness, tone, loudness, temperature, pressure, are a part of the basic qualities of the experiences each representational system senses. For example colour and brightness are sub-components of the visual (V) representational system, while tone and loudness belong to the auditory (A) representational system. Temperature and pressure belong to the kinesthetic (K) representational system, and a sweet smell, and a bad taste belong to the olfactory (O) and gustatory (G) representational systems respectively.

Orientation

Orientation refers to the experiences of the senses that an individual has in the world. When we see something, we can see it either (**e**xternally in the outside world, or (**i**nternally in our memory by (**r**)emembering the event, or seeing it in our imagination by (**c**)onstructing it. For most people remembering something is a left brain activity, while imagining something is a right brain activity (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991; Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975). There are however some individuals for whom these activities take place in the opposite brain halves (Dennison and Dennison, 1989).

Links

Sensory representations can be linked to other representations either sequentially (sequential links) or simultaneously (synesthesia links)(Dilts, Epstein and Dilts,1991; Dennison and Dennison,1989; Dilts,1983; Bandler and Grinder,1975). For example, seeing something in the external environment, can be linked to internal feelings, remembered images, or words, by triggering these feelings, images or words at the time of seeing a particular sight in the external environment. Likewise, a particular feeling can be linked to remembered or constructed pictures, remembered sounds, or other feelings. For example feelings of tension, curiosity, interest and dizziness may arise when a man and woman look into each others eyes, which in turn may trigger feelings of being loved and desired. Sequential links act as triggers, by causing one representation to follow another in a linear chain of events (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts,1991; Dilts,1983; Bandler and Grinder,1975).

See a Problem which Generates a Feeling which Triggers a Question which Stimulates a Fantasy

According to Dilts, Epstein and Dilts (1991), Dilts (1983), and Bandler and Grinder (1975) simultaneous links occur when certain qualities of feelings are linked to certain qualities of imagery, such as visualising the shape of a sound or feeling a colour. For example: When the colour red triggers a feeling of heat, the colour is experienced as a feeling instead of a visual image. In such a case, an image of a colour, and the feeling of temperature are linked, and an overlap between the visual (V) representational system and the kinesthetic (K) representational system occurs.

Effect

The effect, result or purpose of each step of the thought process differs depending on whether we generate a sensory representation (input), evaluate sensory information (test), or change some part of our experience or behaviour in relation to a sensory representation (operate). We are in the operating mode, when specific steps are taken towards achieving a specific

result or goal, by changing some part of our behaviour in relation to the effect it had on others in the past. These sub-operations that function inside a larger framework of the macro structure are the micro processes that need to be performed in order to reach our desired goal or outcome (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991; Dilts, 1983; Bandler and Grinder, 1975). For example people who have difficulty thinking out a new strategy, often think about what they are going to do, while they are simultaneously correcting the practical problems that may arise as a result of their implementing a certain strategy. These people are simultaneously operating on the micro and macro levels, which causes them to either forget what they were going to do, or they begin to judge their work too early and therefore fail to generate enough options for making an informed choice. In this case the creative and judgement processes collide, preventing them from achieving their goal.

Logical Levels

When people say that an experience was good on the one hand and bad on the other, they are responding to the experience on two different levels. There are natural levels of experience or natural hierarchies of experience in our perceptual and language systems, and within our brain structure. Each level organises and controls the information on the level below it, which means that changes taking place on a higher level necessarily affect change on the lower levels. However, change on a lower level does not necessarily affect the upper levels. Dilts, Epstein and Dilts (1991) identify four basic levels of learning and change, with the environmental level representing the context in which our behaviour takes place.

Who I Am (identity)

My Belief System (values and meanings)

My Capabilities (strategies and states)

What I Do or have Done (specific behaviours)

My Environment (external constraints)

Environmental Factors determine the external opportunities or constraints a person has, and the individual needs to answer to the questions **Where ?** and **When ?**

Behaviour is made up of the specific actions or reactions to or within the existing environment, and the individual needs to answer to the question **What ?**

Capabilities guide and give direction to the behavioural actions by means of a mental map, plan or strategy, and the individual needs to answer to the question **How ?**

Beliefs and **Values** provide reinforcement (motivation and permission) that supports or denies the capabilities, and individuals need to answer the question **Why ?**

Identity factors determine the overall purpose or mission, and they shape our beliefs and values through our sense of self. The individual needs to answer the question **Who ?**

Each level is more abstract than the one below, with the identity level being the most abstract, and having the greatest impact on the individual. The different levels of organisation and evaluation refer to processes that will select, access and utilise the information on the level below it, thereby forming a hierarchy of mental strategies organised into a feedback loop which tests **T** the information of the senses in order to check the progress towards the goal (operate) **O** or to change a part of the ongoing experience so that it satisfies the test **T** in order to subsequently exit **E**. A new process or **T.O.T.E.** may then begin by entering the next part of the program (Dilts, Epstein and Dilts, 1991).

When we relate the four logical levels of learning and changing together with the environment in which this learning and change takes place to forgiveness, the natural hierarchies of the experience of forgiveness can be represented as follows:

Identity Mission - To forgive the individual who hurt the self.

Who ? Sense of self - I am an individual who means well.



Beliefs / Values Permission - I am not perfect, it is possible that I can fail.

Why ? Motivation - I have made mistakes in the past.



Capabilities Strategy - It is possible to forgive the one who has hurt me.

How ? Plan - He should know how I feel, and how hurt I was by his behaviour. I will therefore tell him how I feel.



Behaviours Actions - I will meet with him and have a word with him.

What ? Reactions - He may be sorry and apologise.



Environment Opportunities - I could go to his house today, or I could phone him first to make an appointment.

Where ? When ? Constraints - He may not be at home, or he may be busy.

Forgiving is a multi-level process which requires support from all the levels in order to be effective (Von Krosigk, 2000). If one of the levels is not aligned with the other levels, an

interference may hinder the process of forgiving.

The following statements show how forgiving can be restrained by any one of the logical levels.

Identity: “I am a person who cannot forgive.”

Belief: “Forgiving is impossible.”

Capability: “I don’t know how to stop the thoughts concerning the way I was hurt.”

Behaviour: “I don’t know what I can do to think differently about the situation.”

Environment: “There was nothing I could have done to have avoided the hurtful behaviour.”

Forgiving can be assisted or restrained by a particular context. What one person perceives as a limitation may be experienced as a challenge by another (Von Krosigk, 2000). The context that a person chooses may allow that person to be forgiving. Sometimes however, a person may find it impossible to adopt a strategy for being a forgiving person in one context and apply it in another context by adapting certain aspects of the original context to fit the new context (Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000; Von Krosigk, 2000). For example when a client has a problem forgiving their spouse, yet has no problem forgiving their six year old son, the client uses the context in which she forgives her six year old to forgive her spouse. Some strategies may work well in some contexts, and not so well in others. The strategy for forgiving thus needs to be adjusted to fit the goal and the context. The contexts in which people are able to forgive are linked to beliefs and values (Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000; Von Krosigk, 2000). People will perceive certain contexts as inappropriate for forgiving, because of what they believe. For example the belief that deliberately harming another should not be forgiven, will make it very difficult to forgive a spouse within the context of marriage. Forgiving in a particular context is even linked to our identity (Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000; Von Krosigk, 2000). Some people feel they need to learn more about forgiving because they are “a Christian” or “a Saint” or “a Sinner”. However, many of these people are also parents. As parents they are able to forgive their children the little, and later not so little misdemeanors in life, because forgiving their

children is a part of their identity as parents. However, these same people may find it difficult to forgive others who are not their children. The motivation for wanting to forgive is also closely linked to the goal of why we should forgive (Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000; Von Krosigk, 2000). The “why” can be an important stimulus or a severe limitation (Von Krosigk, 2000). Some people can only forgive when they are aware of the good they do by forgiving. Others again may be only able to forgive when they have made the perpetrator feel remorseful. Our values and beliefs are therefore closely linked to our goals.

On a micro level, different kinds of goals can lead to different kinds of results. The sensory system and orientation we choose to represent a goal will also influence how effectively we achieve something (Von Krosigk, 2000). For instance, when we develop an internal picture of an outcome such as forgiving someone, we are organising the process of forgiving around the attempt to make the outer world match our internal picture. This is the reason why sometimes people say they cannot forgive. Their internal picture may entail an emotional embrace with copious tears, while reality looks like a poker faced individual saying “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to hurt you.” If this individual were to change their representation of their goal to another representational system such as an auditory representation, like the words “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to hurt you”, the goal of forgiving could be achieved (Von Krosigk, 2000). **What** we do when we have the desire to forgive depends on **why** we want to achieve the goal of forgiving. This is the ‘meta program’, that will motivate the forgiver to want to forgive. The following is a list of common Meta Program Patterns in relation to the goal of forgiveness:

Approach To Problems

Towards the positive - pro-active (I want to be friends with her again.)

Away from the negative - reactive (I want to stop feeling guilty.)

Chunk Size

Large chunks - generalities (It’s better to be forgiving.)

Small chunks - details (When we talk, I want to know that I can say anything that enters

my head, and I can be sure we can talk about the words that may hurt my friend.)

Time Frame

Short term - long term (I want our friendship to last until we die.)

Past - present - future (Forty years ago we became friends, and I would like it to remain this way until we die.)

Approach To Problem Solving

Task (achievement)

Choices - goals (I want to go and see her to apologise.)

Procedures - operations (When I have apologised, I will show her that I am not as bad as she may think.)

Relationship (power; affiliation)

Self - my, I, me (I am to blame for what happened.)

Other - you, his, their (Your stubbornness contributed to the eruption of my anger.)

Context - we, the company, the market (The market is down, and there is no use crying over the few Rands that we lost.)

Mode Of Comparison

Match (similarities) - consensus (I agree that it was mean of me.)

Mismatch (differences) - confrontation (It is not only I who is to blame.)

Thinking Style

Vision (I can see us being friends as we were before.)

Action (Come on, give me a hug.)

Logic (Yes, I understand your reasoning.)

Emotion (I feel cut up about the way you ignored me.)

Evidence

What is the evidence that one has forgiven?

How does one determine that one has achieved the goals one has set oneself for the process of forgiving?

Does one use one's own feelings to determine whether one has forgiven, or does one use somebody else's response to it?

The answers to the above questions with regard the kind of evidence we need for knowing that we have succeeded to forgive can make a very big difference in what we set out to achieve. In NLP, goals are related to the *criteria* we use to achieve them, while evidence is related to the *criterial equivalence* (Dilts, Epstein, and Dilts, 1991). Criteria and values are generally abstract and ambiguous, and they can come in many shapes, molds, and forms. The critical equivalence however, is the specific sensory or behavioural demonstration that one employs in order to know whether the criterion of value has been met or satisfied. The *procedure to obtain evidence* links WHY (one's reason for wanting to forgive) to HOW (the procedure for achieving forgiving) (Dilts, Epstein, and Dilts, 1991). Within the **Logical Levels** the levels of *Beliefs/Values (WHY?)* and *Capabilities (HOW?)* can be linked by means of the *Evidence Procedure* (Dilts, Epstein, and Dilts, 1991). On the Beliefs/Values level the Evidence Procedure is linked to it by means of the Criterion of Permission/Motivation, and on the Capabilities level the Evidence Procedure is linked to it by means of the Criterial Equivalence of the Map/Strategy/Plan (Dilts, Epstein, and Dilts, 1991). The form of sensory evidence that is used to evaluate whether forgiveness has taken place, will determine to a large extent whether it is accepted and reinforced, or rejected and ignored. One key factor in evidence procedures is the *frame of reference*, which refers to whether one uses one's own response or someone else's. Some people know they have forgiven when they feel relieved (own response), while others need to see someone else nod with approval (another's response).

Operations

Operations are the most tangible expression of the forgiveness process. They involve the actual steps that one takes to produce ideas and actions in order to achieve forgiving. According to Von Krosigk (2000) the steps that may be involved in the forgiveness process were found to be a complex set of mental operations beginning with the

- **conscious decision** to want to forgive.
- Forgiveness can also be conceptualised as **reframing** in the sense that it may mean different things to different people. For example for some it may include reconciliation, while for others it may involve letting go of the incident in one's thoughts and mind, or it may mean physical and/or emotional separation (Von Krosigk, 2000).

The other steps that assist us in producing actions that bring us closer to the achievement of forgiving can all be put together as a group of cognitive operations:

- **replacing bad thoughts with good thoughts**
- **shifting one's focus from the past to the future**
- **suspending judgement**
- **pardoning unalterable conditions**
- **seeing the world holistically**

Together, these cognitive operations produce new ideas and generate new behaviours that may lead to the achievement of forgiving. The result of forgiving may then lead one to be able to remember the hurtful incident without feeling the hurt and experiencing the negative feelings (Von Krosigk, 2000).

Chunking up is equivalent to making a new synthesis, according to Dilts, Epstein, and Dilts (1991), and Bandler and Grinder (1975). It entails the process of putting things together on the micro level in order to create something new on the macro level. For example: Letting go of

the anger, viewing the hurt from the other's perspective, and viewing the injurer compassionately. Together or chunked up, these three operations can produce the desire to want to forgive.

Chunking down is another operation which is similar to separating (Dilts, Epstein, and Dilts, 1991; Bandler and Grinder, 1975). It entails the process of choosing one element from a mixture and separating it from the rest. For example: When we resist forgiving someone, we can perhaps separate the element of being uncompassionate from the other elements in the mixture, and work on this aspect, while we ignore the others.

Lateral chunking (through metaphor and analogy) is another powerful operation in achieving forgiveness. Previously, forgiving was compared to condoning bad behaviour, while today forgiving is compared to assertiveness.

Divergent thinking is a kind of brainstorming in which as many different ideas as possible are being generated and then only a few good ones are filtered out.

Convergent thinking is the direct opposite in which one chooses an outcome e.g. to forgive, and converges on the goal by disregarding everything else that is not directly relevant to achieving it.

All or some of these operations can be employed idiosyncratically in order to move the thoughts and behaviour of those who want to forgive to being able to forgive.

Strategy Elicitation Procedure

When a person has decided that he/she has the desire to forgive, the goal is set. When the person has decided that forgiving means that the friendship that has been broken will be

mended, the outcome is clear. When that is the case, a strategy needs to be devised for reaching that goal or the desired outcome. The detail that is involved in the strategy for reaching the goal / outcome depends on the goal / outcome. Selecting a new member of staff will require a different strategy with different criteria than assisting someone with forgiving.

General patterns for accessing information provide a frame of reference for the strategy that will be followed. This information can be gained by continuously scanning the face and body of the client. The primary representational system, and the obvious accessing cues provide such a frame of reference which also helps the therapist to remain focused. The finer details will surface later. By being patient and relying on the sensory observations of the accessing cues and other cues, information that is outside conscious awareness will come to the fore. Often, an unconscious behavioural cue will precede a verbal answer to the question that was asked, and that is the reason for trying to get behavioural examples of the strategy rather than talking about it. It is very important to observe closely which behavioural cues the client is unconsciously sending out. These unconscious signals from the client can be picked up by the therapist when s/he observes the client with a diffused gaze that travels across the whole body of the client. While the client is recounting an incident, or responding to questions, the therapist will attend to the movement of the eyes. The psychological well-being of the client can be recognised in the way the client's eyes move sideways or up, while sadness and other similar emotions are reflected in the clients eyes by looking down. If a particular step is missed by the therapist, the strategy needs to be re-accessed. If the missed part is an essential piece for following the strategy, it definitely has to be repeated.

When the ground has been prepared, specific examples of success and failure need to be accessed. In the case of forgiveness, behavioural examples of having forgiven in the past, and having failed to forgive in the past need to be elicited. In the case of difficulty in providing behavioural demonstrations, it may be useful to orient the client to specific incidences in the past. For example: "Think of a specific time in your life when you forgave someone, and you knew inside that you had actually forgiven that someone completely." By asking such a

question, the client is requested to go back in time and find an incident of success. When a successful incident has been found, the client needs to be asked to put him/herself fully back into that instance, relive the forgiving experience, and recite the steps, sequences, and details involved in that process loudly. By doing that, the client accesses his/her own success-strategy, and allows the therapist to know the way in which it was achieved. The content is relatively unimportant in this instance. It is the mental process that should be remembered by the therapist.

Similar contents and different outcomes

Sometimes, it is necessary to elicit the strategies for two examples that are similar in content but differ in outcome. For example: “Think of baking a cake for someone’s birthday and getting a big thank you for your love and effort ... Now try to remember baking a cake for someone’s birthday getting nothing for your love and effort, not even a little thank you. Find out what is different between the two experiences.” The answer will disclose what is essential for a successful strategy and an unsuccessful strategy.

Different contents and same process

Eliciting three examples that differ in content as much as possible but are examples of using the same process to achieve success or failure is another option that may be useful.

For example: “Think of a time when you tried to do good, but hurt someone instead ... Think of an instance when you hurt someone on purpose ... Think of an example when you hurt someone inadvertently. Find out what is similar about the thought process and your physiology in the different instances.”

Finding the beginning and end of a strategy

In order to find the end of a strategy, identify the beginning and ask “*What happened next?*” until you reach the end of the strategy.

In order to find the beginning of the strategy, identify the end by asking “*How did you know you had finished?*” Then continue to ask “*And what happened before that?* Until you reach the

beginning.

Questions for eliciting a specific behaviour

When specific behaviours such as *Convince Yourself, Motivate Yourself, Make a Decision, Learn Something, Be Creative, Be Assertive, Remember Something* need to be elicited, the following questions can be asked :

“How do you know when you’ve been able to satisfactorily *convince yourself* ?”

“When you are able to *convince yourself*, what lets you know you have finished?”

“Think of what it is like to be absolutely sure you’ve been able to *convince yourself*.”

“What lets you know you are not yet finished with your strategy to *convince yourself*.”

“What lets you know you are not yet ready to move on to something else?”

“What is a demonstration that you have successfully been able to *convince yourself*.?”

“How do you know whether you have done well or poorly when you *convince yourself*? ”

“What specifically do you do when you are preparing yourself to *convince yourself*? ”

“What procedure do you go through to make sure you are ready to *convince yourself*? ”

For a thinking strategy to be modelled, it needs to be remembered, and for it to be remembered, it needs to be organised. A simple but effective way of organising information about how someone is thinking follows:

The **representational system** consists of the five senses: **Visual** (sight), **Auditory** (sound), **Kinesthetic** (feeling), **Olfactory** (smell), **Gustatory** (taste). For a particular mental step in a strategy, one of the senses is usually dominant.

The **sub-modalities** consist of a special set of qualities that are unique for each one of the five senses, and they can be critical to the thought process. Only the three representational systems and their sub-modalities that are relevant to the process of forgiving will be described in more detail.

VISUAL	AUDITORY	KINESTHETIC
Brightness (dim, bright)	Volume (loud, soft)	Texture (rough, smooth)
Size (large, small)	Tone (bass, treble)	Movement (fast, slow)
Colour (black, green)	Pitch (high, low)	Location
Area (large, small)	Intensity (strong, weak)	Tempo (fast, slow)
Distance (near, far)	Rhythm	Distance (close, far)
Focus (clear, blurred)		Duration (constant)
		Temperature (hot, cold)
		Weight (heavy, light)

Orientation refers to the sensory system that is oriented **externally** towards the outside world or **internally** towards either **remembered** or **constructed** experiences.

Linkage refers to the way in which a particular step or sense is linked to others. For example if it is part of an overlap or **synesthesia** it can be represented as **see-feel (V>K), hear-see (A>V), feel-see (K>V), hear-feel(A>K)**. If the linkage is not an automatic synesthesia, it can be a **congruent response, a polarity response, or a meta response** (a response about something) to the previous step).

Effect refers to the result, or purpose of a particular step. The effect could be noted to either **access, organise, evaluate or judge** information. This step could be used to test information from the senses, or to operate on the information, which refers to changing some part of the ongoing experience.

When the information from the **representational system** with its **sub-modalities**, the **orientation, linkage**, and **effect** has been elicited, it can be confirmed by observing the

following physiological processes: **body posture, accessing cues** (breathing rate, noises, facial expression, skin colour), **gestures, eye movements**, and **language patterns**.

Response to problems

Our environment changes continuously, and suddenly an old tested recipe may become a severe limitation. When the evidence for our problem solving procedure (operations) comes up with negative results, the most important aspect for succeeding is to recognise the way in which we respond to negative results. Even though something may have worked in the past does not mean that it will continue to work. A constant feedback loop between goals, evidences and operations is the constant in the incremental change equation, and the smoothness of this feedback loop depends on the beliefs that are linked to the process of feedback and evaluation. A bind may be created by our beliefs, when a discrepancy is created between our evidence procedure for succeeding to forgive, and the way we respond to the reality of this evidence. Our belief may still be linked to the old belief system in which forgiving was considered condoning bad behaviour, or relinquishing one's power because of personal weakness (Von Krosigk, 2000).

Conditions for Evaluating Forgiveness

The conditions for evaluating whether forgiveness has been achieved depend upon the complex equivalence of the aspects that provide meaning to the client. There are three stages, the dreamer, realist, and critic stage, in which evaluations need to be made.

Dreamer Stage

The dreamer stage is the idealistic stage. We state in positive terms what we would like to have or do, by asking the questions: *What is possible? What is the goal? What will we be doing?* (As opposed to what will we stop doing, avoid or quit.) *What is the outcome?* Eg. I am letting go of the anger towards my father, and respond to him with kindness. The goal should be stated in the first person (I), in the present (. . . am letting go of . . . , and respond to him. . .), and contain verbs or doing words (letting go, respond).

Realist Stage

The realist stage is the stage in which we make sure that whatever we intend doing is possible on a practical level. We also need to make sure that the intended behaviour can be initiated and maintained by the appropriate person, by asking the question: *Can the appropriate person do it?* Eg. I am letting go of the anger towards my father, and respond to him with kindness, is possible to do by myself.

The progress must be testable through sensory experience, by asking the questions: *What are the performance criteria? How will they be tested? How will we know if the goal is achieved?* I will know that the goal is achieved, when I am able to communicate with my father in a warm tone. My performance criteria can be tested by listening to my voice which will remain warm.

Critic Stage

The critic stage is the stage in which we must be certain that what we are doing preserves any by-products of the current way(s) of achieving the goal, by asking the questions: *What positive things do we get out of our current way(s) of doing things? How can we keep those things when we implement the way for achieving the goal?* The positive things I get out of doing what I am currently doing is to have a relationship with my father, albeit a negative one. When we implement the goal I can continue to have a relationship with my father.

We must also be certain that what we are going to do is ecological for everyone concerned, and that it is appropriately contextualised, by asking the questions: *Who will be affected by this way of achieving our goal? Under what conditions would you not want to implement this way of achieving your goal?* Letting go of the anger towards my father, and responding to him with kindness is ecologically positive for all concerned. It is appropriately contextualised, since I am the one who was angry, and I am going to respond with kindness, which will affect my father and myself in a positive way.

The key elements and principles that are involved in the process of achieving forgiveness by means of NLP have now been identified and defined. A discussion of the tools and strategies that are needed to implement these new behaviours will now follow.

Implementation

Within the *realist stage* there are two phases of the implementation process: The *conceptual phase* and the *operational phase*.

The operational phase of the strategy is initiated with a set of words, and the goal is stated to ourselves in the form of an “As If” frame, e.g. “If I could already do this, what would I look like?” By stating our goal in such a way, we are connecting the “As If” statement relating to our outcome to our visual imagination. To operationalise our desired outcome in the form of the “As If” statement, we begin by looking down and to the left, in order to facilitate our ability to hear and record that outcome statement in our brain.

When we have heard and recorded our outcome statement in our brain, we need to look up and to the right, in order to make a constructed picture of ourselves being successful. This can perhaps be made easier by seeing ourselves on an imaginary film screen in our mind. If the

client has difficulty getting to this stage, we can take three possible approaches to help, such as to ‘chunk down’, ‘to remember a similar situation’, and ‘to role model’.

By chunking down, we break the process into smaller pieces such as visualising the first step of an interaction instead of the whole interaction.

If the client finds it difficult or impossible to construct an image of the desired outcome, ask if he/she has done something similar in the past. If the answer is “yes”, ask what that looked like. Then ask him/her to model their own behaviour for the desired outcome, by relating it to that similar past experience.

If no similar past experiences are available for the person, one can inquire whether there are any role models from whom the behaviour could be learnt. If the answer is “no”, one can become a role model for the client by play acting the desired behaviour.

The meta position is a dissociated state from which it is easy to examine the problematic state and the resourceful state. From the meta position we can think about both states without being overly involved with one. The meta position is taken when the client needs to practice the new behaviour, which entails constant feedback from the client and the therapist.

Feedback refers to the responses of the client and the therapist. When the client visualises the desired action, the therapist keeps track of the physiological signs of the client in the problematic state, and the resourceful state. In the problematic state, the client may swallow hard, breathe in the upper lung area, or a higher pitch in the voice may be evident. When the client has accessed the resourceful state in which the new behaviour is being enacted, the physiological signs may include relaxed facial features, particularly around the mouth and jaw line, a lower pitch in the voice, and relaxed breathing. When the client experiences difficulty in accessing the desired state, the therapist can guide him/her with words. For example, the client finds it difficult to relax when he/she faces the father in the visualisation, the therapist can

assist by guiding him/her into a relaxed state by using words such as: "Go to a place in your past where you were completely relaxed. Notice how your breathing is calm, and your facial muscles are soft. Notice how you can break into a smile at any moment". When the client's physiology is relaxed, the therapist can assist him/her by finding an incident in the past in which he/she felt calm, compassionate, and kind towards someone. The therapist can guide the client from feeling compassionate and kind in one situation into the context of the desired goal, by using words such as: "Notice how your body feels when you are relaxed, compassionate and kind. While you are in that state, allow your father to enter the room in your mind, and begin to have a conversation with him".

Focus on remaining relaxed, compassionate and kind. Think of your father in a way that induces those feelings in you. Complete the conversation with compassion, understanding, and kindness, and notice the feedback you get from your father. When the client has achieved a conversation with his/her father in the mind, by remaining relaxed, compassionate, and kind, the goal has been achieved. The possibility of forgiveness is now one step closer to becoming a reality for the client.

Anchoring is a technique for deliberately establishing a conditioned response in another person by using words or gestures. When the desired outcome or goal has been achieved, the new behaviour should be anchored in the body in order to make the client unconsciously competent in performing the behaviour when it is appropriate in a specific context. Anchoring can be done by asking the client to put him/herself into the resourceful state, and imagine his/her father enter the room being furious. The therapist can now guide the client through the process of conversation with his/her father in a relaxed, compassionate, and kind way. If everything went well, the therapist can ask the client to choose another incident in his/her mind where his/her father was furious, and go through the process alone. The new stimulus (the visual input of the furious father) is the anchor that can be used to trigger the associated experience (conversing with the father in a relaxed, compassionate, and kind way) again and again.

When the newly learnt behaviour has become automatic as a result of anchoring past incidences to behaviour change in the present, the new behaviour needs to be tested in future scenarios. The therapist may then ask the client to think of a situation in the near future, and later once more in the distant future in which the father features as a furious man, and ask the client to respond to his father. If the new behaviour of relaxed kindness happens automatically, and can be repeated automatically for more distant future scenarios, the new behaviour has been installed, and the client's goal/outcome has been achieved. If the new behaviour does not happen automatically, something else needs to be resolved first, and the elicitation procedure needs to be repeated carefully in order to detect the parts that are blocking the generation of new behaviour.

Conclusion

A general outline of the underlying principles of the NLP approach to facilitating forgiveness has been described. In addition to these underlying principles a number of specific NLP techniques are also involved in the facilitation of forgiveness. These specific NLP techniques are employed for specific purposes in order to achieve specific outcomes. Every situation is unique, and the type of problem that needs to be forgiven differs considerably from one individual to the next. It is therefore essential for the facilitator to remain flexible in his/ her behaviour, to respond positively to the problematic state of each individual, and to remain sensitive to underlying issues that may need to be cleared up, before the actual problem can be addressed. The specific techniques that are relevant to the problematic thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and/or behaviour of a particular research participant, will be described in detail in chapters 5 to 9. Each one of these chapters will be devoted to one participant and his/her story of hurt, together with a synopsis of the special, individualised change techniques that were applicable to each research participant, in order to achieve a forgiving stance towards his/her perpetrator. Comments on the NLP interventions will attempt to clarify those aspects

of the special change techniques that were employed in the individual cases, but have not been described in this chapter. Chapter 5 will follow now with Wyatt's story of hurt, and his amazing release from pain, anger, and unforgiveness.