

## Chapter 1

# Combining Coaching and NLP for Great Results

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Noticing how coaching and NLP overlap
  - ▶ Looking at a career in coaching
  - ▶ Getting up to speed on NLP
  - ▶ Tapping into the potential for powerful change
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*One isn't necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest.*

–Maya Angelou

**C**oaching – like living an authentic life to its fullest – involves the courage to be honest and true to yourself in order to reach your potential. Welcome to a journey of exploration that encompasses two exciting, rewarding and fascinating worlds: coaching and NLP!

Coaching and NLP are *not* the same thing, as I explain in this chapter, yet they do make for happy bedfellows. With their common foundation in the service of the client, NLP and coaching naturally complement each other.

Whether you desire a specific type of change, or stability while the world around you is changing, coaching and NLP have much to offer you and your clients. The aim of this chapter – and indeed, the entire book – is to support your development as a person and a coach by sparking new ideas and introducing you to some tried and tested ways of coaching with NLP.

## *Establishing the Differences between Coaching and NLP*

People often ask me what the difference is between working with a coach and working with an NLP Practitioner or Master Practitioner. Employing a coach is a creative and collaborative relationship that focuses on *incremental and continuous* change. Coaching works with subtle fine-tuning to encourage a different way of thinking, being and doing. Hiring an NLP practitioner is more likely to be for a one-off session to address a particular issue around personal change. An NLP client may experience a dramatic breakthrough at a single intensive session, while coaching tends to have its ups and downs over a period of sessions. Indeed, an individual coaching session may not seem important at the time, yet it contributes to some deeper understanding in the longer term.

Coaches come from very different disciplines and schools of training. What makes the best stand out is that they are not wedded to one approach; they remain hungry for learning. To be a coach requires you to look at yourself, to do the inner work of self-reflection and personal growth. You need to demonstrate the services you offer by ‘walking the talk’ yourself and investing in your own on-going coaching.

People often hire an NLP-trained coach because they want someone with the steadfastness required to go to hard places, someone able to explore the challenging emotional reasons that drive behaviour. Potential clients may have heard about particular NLP tools and techniques, or they feel that coaching with someone who’s undergone a different kind of coach training yields a richer experience.



Coaching and NLP take different routes to achieve the same end result: to leave clients in a better place physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually than when they started. Both disciplines address challenges of self-awareness and relationships with others. Bring NLP and coaching together and you have a winning combination to find the unconscious brilliance in each human being.

Both NLP and coaching offer a wealth of practical tools. Neither discipline expects one particular process to be followed to the letter. They offer the flexibility to choose which approach is best for the client at any given time.

## *Pursuing a Coaching Career*

Coaching is a fast-growing profession, attracting plenty of interest from both the world of personal development and the business world.

Coaching's increasingly popular because it addresses the challenge of living a fulfilling existence in a complex world. It explores an individual or team's experience from two angles – externally and internally – and synergistically combines them:

- ✓ The external perspective looks at the context in which someone is operating, their behaviour and communication with others.
- ✓ The internal perspective addresses an individual's thoughts, feelings and motivation.

Coaches are naturally curious people who listen and ask questions; even on holiday their eyes and ears are tuned into what's going on with those around them. Like an engineer who likes to find out how machines work, a coach sees another person as a set of intriguing interlocking parts, some running smoothly, others in need of extra oil on the rusty parts. Sound like anyone you know?



Picture the scene. The sun is setting on a white Caribbean beach. A coach walks into a hotel bar with his wife, and they strike up a conversation with a fellow guest who's sipping her pina colada. Over cocktails, the lady explains that she's a landscape architect, staying on the island to redesign a series of gardens for a prestigious hotel group. The coach asks, 'What's important to you about your work here?' That one question and a chance meeting open up an evening of animated conversation that developed into a business-coaching relationship that has lasted for nearly two years.

## Defining coaching

Many people and organisations define coaching. You probably have your working definition of what a coach does. The following are some of my favourites:

- ✓ **From the International Coach Federation:** *Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential.*
- ✓ **From Association for Coaching:** *A collaborative solution-focused, results-orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of work performance, life experience, self-directed learning and personal growth of the coachee.*
- ✓ **From Tim Gallwey, author of *The Inner Game of Tennis*:** *There is always an inner game being played in your mind, no matter what outer game you are playing. How aware you are of this game can make all the difference between success and failure in the outer game.*



Whatever your definition, coaching is a relationship that brings out the very best in both client and coach. During coaching, a special conversation takes place that's completely focused on the client's needs in a way that empowers him to dream bigger dreams, increase performance, articulate what he wants and work out how to get what he most desires.

Being a coach is like working as a sculptor who chips away at a piece of marble to reveal the strength and beauty of the person inside. To reach the desired result calls for skill and sensitivity. Yet in the coaching relationship, the client guides the sculptor as to how to use the chisel and where to tap for the best results, giving permission to poke in some areas and stay away from others. Read more about the design of this coach-client relationship in Chapter 3.

## *Surveying opportunities*

Professional coaches help clients in various spheres of activity. Some common types of coaches include the following:

- ✓ **Life or personal coaches** work with clients on areas where they want their lives to be different. Some clients may have lost their mojo, their zest for living; others just know they have a dream they want to make real. Perhaps they've had one too many challenges from health and relationships, money or family issues and need an independent coach to help them get back on track. Some life coaches specialise in particular fields, such as relationships or finances, while others help groups such as new parents, teenagers or people about to retire.



Life or personal coaching is the foundation for other areas of coaching because people don't separate career and business issues from the rest of their lives. For example, an executive with health issues or worries about supporting his children is affected by these aspects of his life when he comes to work, even if they aren't the prime agenda.

- ✓ **Career coaches** work with clients who want to change jobs or manage their careers. Career coaching shifts clients from waiting to be talent-spotted into a more proactive mode about their careers. While most of the activities in this book apply to career coaches, Chapter 15 focuses on the specific challenges of career coaching with NLP.
- ✓ **Business coaches** work with business owners and managers on work-related issues. Although this type of coaching mainly concentrates on the individual or team in the business context rather than the business systems and processes themselves, these coaches still must be comfortable working in the business world.

The overall benefit of this coaching impacts the success of the entire business. For example, a business director may need clarity on vision and direction or face specific challenges with an aspect of the operations. Business coaching is also valuable for raising team performance. See Chapter 12 for more on coaching in a team context.

- ✓ **Executive coaches** work with leaders and top executives who are often stepping into a larger role and need a trusted space in which to express the pressures they are under, discuss upcoming decisions and develop their leadership approaches. Senior executives have the potential to make vast profits or strides forward for their organisations, but often no one in their organisations can talk honestly with them. The return on investment when executives talk with coaches about their key challenges, hopes, dreams, fears and insecurities and then work towards their full potential can be huge. You may hire an executive coach to prepare for a change of role (like joining a board of directors), to enhance your personal impact or at times of stress, change, conflict or crisis.



In addition to formal coaching contracts, many people take on coaching-type assignments even when the name 'coach' is not in their job descriptions. Developing your coaching skills can enrich many fields of activity. The core coaching competencies I cover in Chapter 3 show you how coaching qualities such as effective communication are beneficial whether you're a parent, business leader or bus driver.

## Identifying potential

Coaching involves pushing through the boundaries of potential to ensure that you are the creator of your own positive experiences. The worlds of sport and performing arts assumed long ago that top performers need coaches to raise their game; business has taken longer to catch up with this realisation. In fact, in many organisations, the higher you go, the less training or support you get. Many consider Tim Gallwey, US coach and author of *The Inner Game of Tennis* (Pan Books), to be the father of coaching. In his classic book, Gallwey talks about a person's performance being equal to their potential less interference. He expresses this principle with the equation:

$$P = p - i: \text{Performance is equal to potential less interference}$$

As a coach, you work with clients to identify, honour and transform their points of resistance, closing in on that interference that prevents them performing to their full potential. You also encourages clients to stretch and grow, leapfrogging beyond what they ever considered possible, letting any interference melt away to achieve much more than they may have considered possible.



## Living the dream

What have you achieved in your life that you never believed you could? Take a moment to think back to something you accomplished, something that once seemed impossible for you. Perhaps you recall a job you've done, the home you live in, the family life you've created, some milestone in a hobby or sport that you've reached, an exam you've passed or a setback you've overcome.

As you think about your achievement, notice the spring in your step, the fizz of excitement inside, the smile of contentment and the satisfaction that results when you can validate yourself and your actions, however small.

Now think about this: you are living an earlier dream. You are the creator of your present, already perfect life. See Chapter 16 for more on ideas for envisioning and then living your future goals.

Tim Gallwey brought the principles of the inner mind games from the world of professional tennis and golf coaching into the world of business- and life coaching. Gallwey introduced the concept of Self 1 and Self 2, which he'd spotted in clients' thought patterns when he coached tennis.

- ✓ **Self 1** is the critical voice. It is constantly reminding Self 2 to 'keep it firm, watch that ball, your opponent's about to hit back hard, oh my goodness, turn sideways, racket back, stupid you, you hit it in the net.' Self 1 tells Self 2 what to do as if Self 2 is really stupid and needs to be bullied into action.
- ✓ **Self 2** is the natural, talented, all-watching, unconsciously competent learning machine. Self 2 includes the all-powerful unconscious mind that never forgets, hears everything and is bright and intelligent. NLP recognises that the unconscious mind is incredibly powerful.

The assistance Gallwey gave to his tennis players was to quieten down Self 1 and allow Self 2 freedom to play. He then applied the same principle to the broader field of coach training with the suggestion: get out of the client's way. Coaching is not about telling, but about allowing clients' natural resourcefulness to shine through by inviting them to become curious about their experiences.

In a strong coaching relationship, you find someone who truly believes in you and validates you for who you are, your identity and your contribution to the world in terms of mission and purpose. You enter into a sponsorship relationship with another person.



NLP developer and trainer Robert Dilts talks about *Big C* coaching. Chapter 5 covers the classic Dilts's Logical Levels model, which looks at the client's experience in terms of the six levels:

- ✓ The environment in which the client operates.
- ✓ The behaviours that support excellence.
- ✓ The capabilities and skills developed.
- ✓ The beliefs and values that inspire.
- ✓ The sense of identity that feels authentic.
- ✓ The purpose that guides direction.

Behavioural coaching operates at the three lower levels of environment, behaviour, capabilities and skills – all things that Dilts refers to as *small c* coaching. To achieve potential in the coaching relationship, you need to nurture at all six levels, Dilts's Big C style of coaching. When you support all six levels, you awaken your clients to their purpose in life and help them realise their full potential. Read more about the power of aligning with a strong sense of purpose in Chapter 9.



Every client deserves a coach who truly believes in new possibilities and sponsors him along the way. If you don't have a strong belief in the potential of your client, suggest the client finds another coach to work with.

## *Recognising boundaries with therapy and consultancy*

Defining something subtle is often easier when you state what it isn't rather than what it is and then notice the distinctions. Coaching is not therapy and not consulting, yet you encounter grey areas around the edges, particularly as more therapists and consultants are moving into offering coaching services.

As a coach, take some time to formulate your own definitions and distinctions regarding the following disciplines, particularly if you come to coaching from a therapeutic or consulting background. Be prepared to explain your definitions to those you work with and recognise where you feel qualified to support your clients.

- ✓ **Therapy** works through troubled emotional experiences, usually taking a slow approach to peeling away the layers of emotion to uncover and then shift persistent discomfort. Often therapy clients don't know what



their pain is about and need a very safe space to explore. They may have depressive, addictive, unpredictable, abusive or obsessive behaviours and experiences. They may struggle to form emotional attachments. Therapy provides a healing and remedial approach from qualified and supervised professionals.

The overlap between coaching and therapy tends to occur where clients are stressed, overwhelmed or have suffered a personal setback and require a coach who is comfortable in holding an emotionally-charged space confidently and knows the limits of his abilities. NLP-trained coaches have some tools to resolve certain emotional issues, including fears and phobias, but unless they're separately qualified, they aren't therapists. (See Chapter 18 for more on resolving emotional issues.)

The terminology around counselling, therapy, and psychotherapy varies from country to country, according to different training and qualifications. I use the word *therapy* to indicate any one-to-one work with a qualified professional health worker in the field of mental well-being.

- ✓ **Consulting** is an advice-giving and problem-solving space where the consultant works with clients' problems and helps them come to appropriate solutions. Good consultants listen and ask insightful questions, and are brought in to give practical answers to problems. Consultants typically have extensive relevant personal experience.

Many independent business consultants refer to themselves as coaches, yet typically they instruct and give information rather than ask questions and allow clients to come up with their own answers. Consultancy can breed a dependency culture in which clients often look to their consultants rather than become experts in their own businesses or lives. Those hiring executive coaches should be mindful of whether they are really looking for a consultant or mentor and hire accordingly.

- ✓ **Mentoring** involves someone who gives advice, support and guidance based on personal experience and who may make introductions. Boundaries between coaching and mentoring can sometimes become blurred when a coach is hired because he has experience in the issues a client wants to solve.

The ideal mentor works with clients in a coaching style to allow the clients to develop their own skills in line with their natural talents and interests rather than replicating the mentor's approach. Mentors can act as powerful models of excellence and mentoring may happen organically without any formal contracting or exchange of money if you find someone who can be helpful to you.



Coaches often wear both coach and mentor hats. Some people hire me as a coach because I've written books several times before. These individuals are really looking for a mentor who can give practical tips and guidance on writing.



## Raising the game through supervision

As you develop as a coach, particularly in business, you'll be asked: 'What about your supervision arrangements?' Supervision began as a requirement in the therapeutic professions and is now applied to the coaching process too. Coaching supervision offers a safe space to reflect on the details of the work you do as a coach. It may take place with a group of coaches or on a one-to-one basis with an experienced supervisor. Coaches can get embroiled in their clients' lives and supervision makes you step back and scrutinise what's happening objectively.

To engage in supervision, you need to be curious, honest and open to learning. In this environment you feel supported without judgement and will look at your coaching interventions: how you operate with your clients; your beliefs and values; and the wider context in which your clients work or live. You gain feedback and insight that leads to greater skill as a coach and the ability to remain ethical and professional, as well as protection for the client.

To find a supervisor, approach the various professional coaching bodies for recommendations.

With my coaching hat on, I may say, 'I hear you want to write. Tell me about your energy for this.' My pure coaching questions tap into their motivation, passion and purpose. Switching into mentoring mode, I might say: 'You need to develop a convincing proposal and submit it to a publisher. This is what it must look like.' My mentoring approach directs the client down a particular path based on my personal experiences as an author.



Mentoring and consulting often assume that the answers lie with the external expert; coaching assumes that the client is the expert.

## Starting with NLP

*Neuro-linguistic Programming* (NLP) is defined as the study of the structure of subjective experience, or more simply, as an everyday form of psychology. The indication that it's a great fit with coaching begins with the name Neuro-linguistic Programming in which:

- ✓ **Neuro** refers to thought processes.
- ✓ **Linguistic** examines language structure.
- ✓ **Programming** addresses patterns and sequences of actions.

In short, NLP is about thoughts, words and action – all absolutely essential aspects to consider in any coaching session or programme!

When you begin exploring NLP, you acquire new perspectives on everyday experiences. NLP gives you much more than a set of tools; it gives you a whole new way of thinking that shapes your behaviour on a day-to-day basis.

For example, you separate out the *content* of what is happening from the *structure*. This distinction is invaluable as a coach, enabling you to reach beyond and beneath the words in a coaching conversation.



Consider Max. He's been asked to give the best man's speech at his old school friend's wedding and has been putting off working on it. A conventional starting point addresses the *content* of *what* Max is going to say from start to finish, writing the script, creating some visuals and practising his most embarrassing jokes. By contrast, the NLP approach is interested in the *structure* of *how* the best man and wedding party may experience the speech at all the stages from the moment he gets up to speak until he finishes.

An NLP coach invites Max to consider:

- ✓ What may be the sights, sounds and feelings of the speaker and audience at different stages?
- ✓ How would Max like other key people to experience his speech and what would he like them to tell others after the event?
- ✓ How might Max change the emotional state of the people at specific points in his speech – for example, shifting from curiosity through surprise to good-natured fun simply by behaving differently?
- ✓ What is Max's own emotional state about giving the speech? At what point is he most confident and where might he struggle?
- ✓ What resources will help him perform at his best?
- ✓ How does Max prefer to tell stories – conveying the big picture or fine detail?

With NLP, instead of staying in the first person of yourself and your own world, you develop the ability to take different perspectives. You step into a second viewpoint and imagine what it's like to experience the world as another person or group of people. You step into a third viewpoint and observe the world from the perspective of an independent observer. Chapter 12 gives the low-down on the various perceptual positions.

## ***Appreciating structure***

By studying the structure of experience with NLP as your guide, you begin to notice that all communication (including a coaching conversation) has a natural structure from beginning to end, and you can deliberately shape that structure to achieve specific outcomes.

Whether you're working with a client in a one-off session or over a period of time, the interaction shifts through three stages from beginning, through the middle to the end:

- ✓ **Introduction** is the warm-up where you get to know each other, build rapport, trust, set expectations and define the agenda for the relationship. This is known as the *pre-frame*.

Rushing through this stage is tempting, yet allowing plenty of time in this early contracting phase pays dividends in the long-run. Chapter 3 looks in more detail at setting clear expectations from the outset. In the wedding speech scenario, Max needs to connect with his audience to get their attention so they're curious and want to hear more.

- ✓ **Change work** is the filling in the sandwich, where the work takes place and people are changed by the experience. In an NLP session, the change work may be a particular intervention like a phobia cure or parts integration.

In coaching, the questioning and listening often leads to new awareness for the client. In the wedding example I mention in the preceding section, the change work is the key speech messages and interaction between best man and wedding guests that effects change.

Whatever the specific situation, learning takes place at both conscious and unconscious levels though the interpersonal relationship. (Chapter 2 looks at the conscious and unconscious levels some more.)

- ✓ **Closure** is the wrap-up: action-planning and ownership are handed back to the client to take the learning away. The closure part of any interaction needs to be planned for so that the client is never left feeling rushed or short-changed. In Chapter 4 you find guidance on ensuring that the ending of any coaching alliance is elegant. Likewise, in the wedding speech, Max needs to plan the final part of his speech, so that his audience remembers the experience after he's finished.

## ***Relying on a robust framework that really works***

NLP has been around since the mid-1970s and continues to gather momentum with thousands of courses on offer worldwide. John Grinder and Richard Bandler, the co-creators of NLP, were interested in the communication skills of leading therapists of their day and developed some key models and ideas through their research at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

## You're not alone

You inevitably face times in life when you're not quite living the life you really want – or perhaps you have an intuitive sense that life could be better if only you knew how. These moments may last just a short while or seem to go on indefinitely.

When you tackle your challenges by yourself, you usually get stuck. You simply don't know where to look for the answers. When you work with a coach, however, your coach can assist you to look for answers in places you hadn't

considered. It's just like looking for your lost door keys alone and going round in circles until someone invites you to retrace your steps and notice what you're overlooking.

Employing a professional guide on any journey allows you to visit new places and take on greater adventures. A professional coach is not there to tell you where to go, only to show you how you create your own journey and give you the power to define for yourself where you might like to travel next.

Their work centred on modelling excellence, paying attention to the unconscious processing as well as the observable qualities of their first models: Fritz Perls, the father of Gestalt; the great family therapist Virginia Satir; and the renowned hypnotherapist Milton Erickson. They were also influenced by, among others, Carol Rogers of person-centred therapy; Eric Berne, founder of Transactional Analysis and Gregory Bateson's work in psychiatry, cybernetics and systems theory.

Today, NLP has spread to diverse industry sectors and nations. You're as likely to find NLP training for IT workers in Mumbai as for teachers in the Far East and the military in the US. NLP is universally applicable in all these situations because it's founded on four key principles to create communication excellence:

- ✔ **Rapport.** Building a relationship with others and with yourself is the fundamental premise of NLP and an important gift for coaching. For example, a key challenge for many clients is how to say 'no' to a request or disagree with another person while holding their attention and maintaining rapport. I look at ways of creating and sustaining rapport in Chapter 2.
- ✔ **Sensory awareness.** As you recognise just how powerful your sensory filters are, you can engage your natural sight, sound, touch, feelings, taste and smell capabilities to your benefit. Chapter 7 guides you through the process of making goals more exciting by including sensory information that engages the unconscious as well as conscious mind. In Chapter 17, you discover the power of engaging the finer aspects of the senses, known as *submodalities*, in creating new beliefs.

- ✓ **Outcome thinking.** The ultimate question in NLP coaching is ‘What do you want?’ Coaches guide clients’ attention to what they want to be different as a result of coaching. NLP focuses strongly on future outcomes to shift people to make the best decisions and explore new possibilities. In order to shape up goals and make them attainable, NLP offers the well-formed outcome model detailed in Chapter 7.
- ✓ **Behavioural flexibility.** People’s hunger for coaching increases when what they are currently doing isn’t working so well for them; they’ve hit some kind of block or resistance. NLP adopts the working assumption that the person who is most flexible in any system gets the best results – the one who experiments with new ideas and ways of operating. One way to harness NLP tools for greater flexibility is to encourage clients to adopt different perceptual positions, as I discuss in Chapter 12.

## *Turning to tools and models for change*

In addition to a powerful, flexible overall framework, NLP also offers a wealth of key models that you can quickly build into coaching interventions. The following NLP tools and models appear throughout the book:

- ✓ **NLP presuppositions** are assumptions that establish a powerful mindset for coaching. Read more about presuppositions in Chapter 2.
- ✓ **The SCORE model** is one of the quick-win models you can read about in Chapter 5. Have this model in your head to ensure your coaching doesn’t drift into storytelling or lose its direction.
- ✓ **The Logical Levels model** of alignment and change developed by NLP leader Robert Dilts. I explain it more fully in Chapter 5 and this alignment involves finding a sense of purpose in everyday activities.
- ✓ **Representational systems** explore individuals’ ways of representing their sensory experiences. Turn to Chapters 2 and 7 for more.
- ✓ **The Meta Model**, one of the original NLP language models with its explanation of the filters of distortion, deletion and generalisation, is valuable to gain specific information on a coaching issue. You can explore more about these filters in Chapter 6.
- ✓ **Well-formed outcomes** are the fundamental tool of NLP goal-setting. Check out Chapter 7 to discover more on goal-setting.
- ✓ **Metaprograms** are some of the unconscious mental filters that direct what you pay attention to, how you process information and how you then communicate to others. In Chapter 10 you find the nitty-gritty on these powerful patterns.

- ✓ Effective coaching involves unpacking your client's **strategies**, the sequence of their thought patterns. Turn to Chapter 11 to find out more.
- ✓ When clients can **model excellence**, they have the opportunity to fast-track change by making the most of others' examples. Chapter 11 details how modelling works.
- ✓ **Perceptual positions** involve imagining you're in someone else's shoes as well as taking an independent-observer position on an issue. See Chapter 12 for more.
- ✓ **The grief and loss process** is a useful tool for clients with unresolved grief. Chapter 13 shows how these steps allow clients to retain the positive aspects of a person or experience that is now lost to them.
- ✓ **Time lines** help you working in the here and now as well as move towards the future and recognise the impact of past experience. Chapter 16 shows how to play with NLP concepts of time.
- ✓ Shifting an entrenched belief system is a challenging task in coaching. Working with the subtleties of **submodalities** in Chapter 17 show how this is possible.
- ✓ **Anchors** are a classic NLP technique to manage emotional states. See Chapter 18.
- ✓ **Parts integration and reframing** is a more advanced technique for resolving issues of internal conflict and tension between different needs and demands. See Chapter 19.

## Getting into the Dreaming Habit

The world today is pragmatic and critical, so much so that time to dream is squeezed. Allow time to get out of the cognitive, logical thought processes and create a sense of spaciousness where you can explore creatively.



Take yourself off to a beautiful space where you can allow your imagination to run freely. If possible, take a walk in the woods or by a lake, sea or river. Climb a hill or find a quiet and comfortable seat in a room you enjoy.

In this quiet moment, begin the habit of self-coaching. Consider the contexts in which you want to develop your coaching skills and services. Ask yourself:

- ✓ In what industries, organisations or settings do you want to provide coaching? What geographies or types of people come to mind?
- ✓ What are you curious to learn more about right now?

- ✓ What is your dream for coaching?
- ✓ What would be an outstanding outcome for you?
- ✓ What difference can you make for others if you become the coach you imagine?



Allow yourself to frame one question that you would like to answer for yourself while you read other portions of *Coaching with NLP For Dummies*. Capture this question in one word and keep that word in a safe place to remind you of your dream. And if you prefer, capture an image, a perfume, taste or sound that you can return to as you read other chapters in this book.

## Peace and happiness

'Can you make me happy?' asks the potential coaching client as he looks for a coach. No, a coach's role isn't to make a client happy! Taking on responsibility for anyone else's happiness is an impossible task. Yet a sense of peace and happiness inevitably emerges from masterful coaching. In fact, the best news is that coaching is really good fun.

Clients may arrive in the coaching space with a sense of being out of control of their lives, as if life is being done to them by some external power. The more people feel like they're guiding their own direction, the greater their sense of contentment.

Concepts like peace, fulfilment and happiness are often considered to be something desirable for the future and elusive given day-to-day challenges. Clients say, 'Life will be good when ...' and then go on to list myriad things – when the children grow up, when I have a new job, when my business is successful, when I have more time ...

Yet everyone can choose peace and happiness in the moment on a daily basis. Ongoing personal exploration and developing a relationship with yourself are key – and fortunately the essential activities in coaching!

Recognising you have choices may increase a sense of comfort with not knowing and ambiguity in life. With every decision you take, whether that's about the exercise you do today, the business calls you'll make, the people you speak to or the ideas you hold in your head, you create the person you are and in turn the experiences you have.

By shining a light on his present life, the one he's created, and answers powerful questions, the client learns to notice his ability to influence his current state of happiness and what he can do right now to give himself the happiness and peace he desires.

