

NLP & The Martial Arts

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If there was a way you could learn martial arts faster & be more effective, would you take it? If there were a discovery that didn't involve any artificial additives, yet was able to turn you into a dynamic whirlwind; fast focused & accurate, would you follow it? What if this new discovery promised to eradicate your fear & your anger, leaving you calm under pressure, would you want it? Is it possible? Absolutely 100% Yes!!! You see the 'Masters of Old' knew something that a lot of us do not.. how to step into the zone at will. What's the Zone you ask? It's that place where everything slows down. The place when you see



every attack, every defence. You know what your opponent is going to do before they do it. It's almost as if you can read their mind!! When you're in that place you know you cannot lose. You are all things. It sounds like mystical mumbo jumbo, but if you've experienced it, even fleetingly, you understand what I mean.

So how do you get there? What is this magic discovery? It's called Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) and if you want to supercharge not only your training but your life, read on.

What is NLP I hear you say? Well

Neuro refers to our nervous system, the mental pathways of our five senses by which we see, hear, feel, taste and smell. **Linguistic** refers to our ability to use language and how specific words and phrases mirror our mental worlds. Linguistic also refers to our 'silent language' of postures, gestures, and habits that reveal our thinking styles, beliefs, and more. **Programming** is borrowed from computer science, to suggest that our thoughts, feelings, and actions are simply habitual programs that can be changed by upgrading our 'mental software.'

It arose from studying high-achievers who consistently attained exceptional results in their personal and professional lives.. What was learned from these exceptional people has been shaped into models that anyone can learn from and apply is the study of what works in thinking, language and behaviour. (Tiger Woods, Roger Federer, Lewis Hamilton all use a form of NLP)The way of coding and reproducing excellence that enables you to consistently achieve the results that you want, in your life. Now the key word is 'consistently', time after time. This means that once you've learned these methods and apply them, you will always achieve excellent results. Still interested?

Try this little experiment...



Have you ever ridden on a roller coaster or some other amusement park ride? Think back to a specific time. Now imagine that you can see this ride from a significant distance away. Now watching from here can you see yourself over there on the ride? Notice how you feel watching yourself from this distant viewpoint. Next, step into your seat on the ride, so that you can feel your hands on the guard rail in front of you. As you look down the track, see the scenery flashing by, feel the rattling motion of the ride as you are tossed to and fro and hear the screams from those around you. Notice how you feel on as you re-experience the ride. Being on the ride, feeling it move you around, is a very different experience from imagining you are watching yourself on that same ride in the distance.

These two very different perspectives have different mental structures. Being on the ride is engaging and exciting, what NLP calls 'associated'. Watching the ride from a distance is calming and detached, what NLP calls 'disassociated'. Through NLP you can discover how to use these and many other specific experiential structures to supercharge you in training and to supercharge you in life.

Where has this been used and how successful was it?

There are many documented cases of NLP successes great and small. Governments, Businessmen & top class sportsmen use techniques from NLP to enhance their performance. The following success story is how the *United States Army* improved their basic pistol shooting training:

In the 1980's a team including Wyatt Woodsmall, Anthony Robbins and other leading NLP trainers went to the U.S army and promised to "increase their results in half the time"! They were given control of the basic pistol shooting training: a 4-day training with a 70% success rate.

Firstly Robbins, Woodsmall, and their crew modelled the top marksmen to find out how they were so good. With this information they broke this down in to a set of processes.

Knowing that for most people, the most important feeling was the feeling of being a winner, they then coached the basic pistol shooting recruits in steps used by the 'Top Marksmen'. Then they removed any guns that didn't shoot one hundred percent straight - experienced marksmen can adjust for slight discrepancies, but beginners just miss the target. Next, they started with the targets at $\frac{1}{4}$ of the distance they would be for the final exams.

When the trainee soldiers could hit the targets consistently, they were moved back to $\frac{1}{2}$ distance, then $\frac{3}{4}$ distance, and finally full target distance. The *result?* 1½days later, 100% of trainees passed the course - a 30% improvement in less than half the time! The saving to the U.S army was immense & NLP was firmly embedded in their teaching program.

So how can it benefit you?

Most of us naturally model, we've been doing it since we were young. Just watch little children. What NLP does is provide a tried and tested path and structure so that you're not just copying the actions but also the mind set of someone who is highly successful. They say that the definition of insanity 'is to do what you've always done and expect different results' its just not possible. Like banging your head against a brick wall the result is the same... pain!!

If you want to have more choices about your behaviour and emotions, to enhance your communication and relationships and develop new abilities in your thinking, then NLP can provide you with the knowledge you need to make it happen.

Imagine if you could::

- Stop that negative thinking!! - E.g. 'I'll never be any good'.
- Improve your performance – According to Sports psychologists, the difference between 4th place and 1st place is mental.
- Increase motivation and energy – Understand how to get more from your training, when and how to rest.
- Increase Self Confidence – Believe in yourself.
- Overcome Procrastination – stop putting off what needs to be done.
- Destroy Fears and Phobias – understand why certain things frighten you and how to deal with them easily.
- Create your desired self-image – how to be who you really want to be.
- Communicate to produce the kind of results you want – did you know that most of us tell people what we don't want them to do, but we never say what we actually want.
- Inspire and Engage others – be seen as a role model by others.
- Attain peak performance in your art – crank up your performance to the next level
- Manage your moods – be in control of your 'state of mind'

One of the many things you will discover, is how to use positive emotions when you most need them; to be calm, reassured, confident, focused. After all isn't what defines the 'Top Performers', the ability to find the right solution at the right time?

Are there any tips you can give me?

Okay I hear you say that's all well and good but I don't have time to do all that stuff in the middle of a bout. Ahh, this is why practice is so important. By continuous practice, correctly, you will be able to produce the result you require at will. You will become calm in the blink of an eye. Just like the 'Masters of Old'. You see there are four stages to learning. Let's use kicking and punching as an analogy:



The first stage is called Unconscious Incompetence - When you don't know anything about kicking and punching, you don't know what you don't know!!.

The second stage is called Conscious Incompetence – when you know that kicking and punching exists in the context of Martial Arts, you may believe 'a kick is a kick and a punch is a punch'.

The third stage is called Conscious Competence – when you start learning how to kick and punch you realise 'that a kick isn't a kick and a punch isn't a punch'. In other words realise how many components there are to correct kicking and punching: breath control, focus, balance, accuracy, mass x acceleration etc.

The fourth stage is called Unconscious Competence – when you know how to kick and punch ride, you realise 'a kick is a kick and a punch is a punch'. In other words, you no longer think about the minute detail, all the hours of practice take over and it becomes automatic.

Circle of Excellence ¹

The following exercise will help you transfer positive feelings from the past to a time and place when you really need it:

1. **Relive Confidence.** Stand up and let yourself go back to a time in your mind when you were really, really confident. A time when you knew you couldn't fail. Now relive that moment, seeing what you saw, hearing what you heard and feeling what you felt.
2. **Circle of Excellence.** As the confidence begins to build inside of you, imagine a coloured circle on the floor around your feet. What colour is the circle? How about giving the circle a soft hum, indicating its real power. When that feeling of confidence is at its greatest within you, step out of the circle, leaving those confident feelings inside the circle. I know this seems unusual.. you can do it.
3. **Selecting Cues.** Now think of a specific time in your future when you want to have that same feeling of confidence . See and hear what will be there just before you want to feel confident. You could be about to step into a competition ring or you could be in class facing a senior, you could even be standing in front of the class.
4. **Linking.** As soon as those cues are clear in your mind step back into the circle and feel those confident feelings again. Imagine that situation unfolding around you in the future with these confident feelings fully available to you.
5. **Check Results.** Now step outside the circle again, leaving those confident feelings there in the circle. Outside the circle, take a moment and think again of that up and coming event. You'll find you'll automatically recall those confident feelings. This means you've already pre-programmed yourself for that upcoming event. You're feeling better about it and it hasn't even happened yet. When it arrives, you'll find yourself naturally responding more confidently.



To be like the 'Masters of Old', you have to practice physically as well as re-hearse mentally. Imagine yourself practising. Where are your weaknesses? Where are your strengths?

To summarise.....

In Your Mind

- Where can you improve? Firstly 'disassociate' yourself and view yourself doing the things you wish to improve on in your mind.
- Now 'associate' yourself. Step into your body and experience yourself improving things. Improve that weakness; make it stronger, less noticeable.
- Repeat this process over and over in your mind until the area you wish to improve feels better, stronger.

Physically

- Now physically practise, you will find you have already improved.
- Repeat the process as you did in your mind, your speed of improvement will be at least twice as fast.

The more you perform this process the *better* you will get at it & the *better* will be the results you experience.

Try this experiment

Over the next few weeks when you're next in class: observe the best student in the class. What do they do when they come into the class? How do they behave in the class? How do they warm up? How do they practice? What do they do just before they break, Spar or do their patterns (forms, poomse, patterns etc)? What do they do when they complete the aforementioned? What do they look like like what are their facial expressions? Observe



every detail that you can, make notes if possible. If you have an opportunity, ask them questions about what you've observed. Once you've gathered all the information use it to imitate what they do. If you have problems in certain areas, look at how you can improve that area. Ask them how they would overcome the difficulty you are facing.

Please understand if you want improvement, you must be curious, observe and practise



mentally as well as physically. Maybe one day you could be a great Master!!

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¹*Adapted from 'NLP - The New Technology of Achievement'*