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# Introduction

Suzanne Henwood

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Don't be frightened to dream dreams – it is by dreaming that you start to become what you want to become

As busy healthcare practitioners, I imagine you are already over-committed with work, CPD and other responsibilities, so why should you take valuable time out to read this book? Well, we believe this is probably one of the most important books you will ever read on developing excellence in healthcare practice, through developing yourself. This is a book to inspire and motivate you, to increase your self-awareness and to empower you so that you can be whatever it is you want to be. It is about recognising the potential within you and empowering you so that you may thrive and be a respected expert practitioner and leader in your field. It is our belief that by focusing on you and your internal development, you will achieve far more than in many other CPD activities, which are focused on a specific ability or competence to practise in a particular clinical area. This book is different; it will change you at your very core – if you want it to. It will help you to find out who you are and where you are going. This book is an investment in you.

Whether you are currently thriving in your career, getting by, or struggling to go to work every day, whether you work in a supportive and learning environment, or whether you are working in a more negative environment where there is little regard for your own development and where you do not feel valued, this book can take you to the next level on your own personal and career pathway. Whether you have just qualified, or whether you are close to retirement, this book is equally relevant to you.

Walt Disney is famously quoted as saying ‘If you can dream it, you can do it’. What do you dream? What is it you want to achieve? What in the past has been holding you back? If you read this book dreaming your dreams and openly and honestly engaging with the tools and techniques we outline, you will change, you will grow, and our hope is that you will find renewed passion in your profession, compassion for your patients and you will hugely increase your ability to achieve and be successful.

Are you ready to start a journey that could change the way you think? This book will give you the tools to help you thrive within change. It will give you the ability to recharge your batteries as and when they need recharging, and it will give you renewed focus and energy. You will learn more about yourself so that you can give even more of yourself at work (and at home). We have been so impressed with the impact of the tools in our own work and lives that we had to share them with you. When you have your own stories of change to tell, get in touch – we would love to hear how this book helped you.

Why are we so passionate about sharing this material with you? As a healthcare practitioner myself, I know how stressful the healthcare environment can be. I understand the pressures that have to be faced by individual practitioners and health service departments. I have seen and worked in some of the difficult cultures that exist within healthcare, as well as being privileged to have worked in wonderfully supportive and inspiring departments, where I knew exactly why I had become a healthcare professional. Now I want to do what I can to help practitioners realise their full potential and be the very best they can be, regardless of where they are working. The tools in this book can be an enormous help both to those who are struggling and those who are thriving. I hope that in helping individuals we can, little by little, work together to continually improve the services we provide. By reading this book, I hope you too become inspired afresh; and that through your own journey you will also get excited again about the power you have as an individual to make a difference and to influence change. Through a philosophy of respect and a deep desire to care for patients, I hope that together, in small stages, we can model professional pride in being a healthcare practitioner. I hope that you take the things you learn from this book and share them. I hope that you find renewed enthusiasm for caring and providing for patients in new and innovative ways by finding your own power within. This is the vision that I share with you. Even now I hope you are feeling excited, that you are already thinking of all the things you want to do to make a difference, all the things you want to achieve; even now let yourself feel how good that is going to feel – feel and imagine what it is going to be like to do the job you love, in the way that you want, where you know you are making a real difference. Maybe you are lucky enough to be in that position already. If this is not yet reality for you and this is a vision that you have for yourself, then read on and I, along with my co-

authors, will show you how to move things forward so that your vision becomes your reality. It would be a privilege to share some of that journey with you through the pages of this book.

## About the book

This book is designed as a tool kit to enable you to increase your own self-awareness in order to allow you to achieve self-empowerment – skills that are fundamental to leadership at any level, but also we believe essential to all healthcare practitioners. The book is designed to give you tools that you can use to increase your flexibility in an ever-changing environment, to allow you to thrive within periods of change. It is a book which focuses on you, your needs and your values, as it is our belief that change has to start within. It is through personal change that we will have the maximum impact on the environment we work in.

You can read the book from front to back, and that might be a useful start to give yourself an initial overview of what it can offer, to begin to inspire you and excite you about the possibilities for further development. Each tool can then be used and applied to your own needs and can be used at your own pace. You can select which tool you want to use to reflect where you are on your own journey or to respond to a particular issue of concern you are currently facing. Each tool is flexible and can be used time and time again in different contexts, so you can refer back to it regularly and re-use it, each time moving further on and revealing deeper and deeper layers about yourself. Many of the tools are available on the website referred to later in this chapter.

The chapters are written by three very different people, with very different backgrounds, professionally and geographically, though we all now work as coaches and/or trainers offering services to healthcare practitioners, many of whom have contributed their stories to this book to give you a real sense of where the tools have already been successfully used in healthcare practice. While we have aimed to bring the style of the book into one cohesive whole, we have allowed the individuality of each author to remain, giving you even greater access to a variety of approaches and perspectives on this important subject. We have all contributed to all of the chapters, the name on any one chapter represents the person who led that chapter; the material within has been developed and refined by each of us to give it even greater potential impact.

The key to this book, as we have already said, is a focus on self. Change starts internally. It is through internal change that we see external changes in behaviour and in our impact on others. If we get that focus wrong, we will not be as successful and nothing will really change.

There is a wonderful story I have often heard told and which I have re-written here in the context of modern day healthcare. It is the story of two nurses from the same ward both of whom have been qualified for two years and are looking to move to new jobs. They hear about an excellent coach and decide to approach this person to obtain advice on changing jobs:

Nurse 1: 'So, as I said, I am thinking of moving to the hospital in the neighbouring Trust. Do you know of it?'

Coach: 'I do.'

Nurse 1: 'Can you tell me what it is like?'

Coach: 'What is the hospital like that you are thinking of leaving?'

Nurse 1: 'It isn't very nice. The staff are not friendly, I am not well supported and I never seem to fit in.'

Coach: 'You will find the hospital in the neighbouring Trust very similar.'

The first nurse left the session confused. She had been looking for direction.

The second nurse booked an appointment with the same coach.

Nurse 2: 'So, as I said, I am thinking of moving to the hospital in the neighbouring Trust. Do you know of it?'

Coach: 'I do.'

Nurse 2: 'Can you tell me what it is like?'

Coach: 'What is the hospital like that you are thinking of leaving?'

Nurse 2: 'It's great. I get on really well with the staff, I am challenged and have learnt a great deal.'

Coach: 'You will find the hospital in the neighbouring Trust very similar.'

If there is one key lesson to learn in this book it is get to know yourself completely and then change aspects in you that are not producing the results you want. You will be surprised how quickly things around you change once you have made that sincere change within yourself. You will see things differently and people will see you differently, and consequently everything changes. How great will you feel when you have made the changes you want and start to get the results you want?

So, we urge you to go on. Give yourself the time and scope you need to make this work for you. Treat yourself to some real devotional time and get to know who you are. We guarantee that it will be time well spent and you will benefit both personally and professionally.

It is worth saying what the book is not. It is not a theoretical text and does not spend a great deal of time looking at either the history or development of the tools we describe, or indeed at the evidence for their effectiveness. Texts to establish the history and credibility of NLP already exist. We do, however, offer at the

end of the book a recommended reading list, which offers some of our favourite books on the subjects raised here. If it suits your own way of learning and you like to see evidence of the potential benefit of new techniques some or all of these books may help you to understand the tools more deeply and see for yourself how you could apply them in practice. And it may be that as you work through the tools and experience change within yourself, you will be happy to use them as we present them here. Maybe even now you are thinking about how you learn and about how you might use these tools in your practice. Do whatever it takes for you to use this material effectively. This 'how to,' if you like, of using NLP and other coaching techniques is offered to you as a healthcare practitioner, with the hope that you use the skills to the full in your professional practice and in your personal life.

Having said what the book is not, let us explain why we believe it is essential reading for healthcare practitioners. It is our belief that if the contents of this book are applied in practice they will have a huge impact on you as a person, both within your own personal life and in your professional practice. It provides tools which can be used in practice to manage difficult situations and to enable you to get the results you want. It also provides a framework to reflect on your own practice, which is frequently a requirement of CPD programmes.

Perhaps it would be worth you spending a few moments, before you start reading the book fully, just thinking about what it is you want to get out of the book, what your needs are, what it is you hope to learn for you. Just make a note of what it is you want in your own development; what it was that made you pick up this book. What would make this the best book on personal and professional development you have ever read?

What would make this the best personal and professional development book I have ever read?

Now you have looked specifically at what you hope to gain from the book, let us outline for you what we believe it will offer.

The book starts by introducing you to the concepts of NLP and coaching. While NLP techniques are not the only tools described in the book, they form a large part of it, and we want to share with you briefly where NLP came from and the power that it offers. We also explore some of the wider aspects of coaching, and we are delighted to have alongside us a qualified and experienced coach from New Zealand, Liz Holland, who has more than 35 years' experience in the health sector as a practitioner, manager and influencer at government level. Liz will help us to introduce the benefits of coaching in healthcare, and will explain some of the 'Coach U' tools and techniques to complement the NLP techniques that Jim and I will explain. We will introduce the importance of the mind-body link and some of the potential benefits to you in pursuing this material, taking you way beyond just professional development and expert practice.

NLP and coaching can have a beneficial impact on your health and well-being too, by giving you a sense of inner strength, peace, satisfaction and congruence (or being aligned inside), which leads to renewed motivation to fulfil your purpose in life. We will introduce to you the concept of timing and why there is no better time than now to begin your journey with us.

You will see that throughout the book we bring you real-life examples of where the tools and techniques have been used in practice. In order to retain the anonymity of our clients, we have changed all the names, and in some cases the gender, and removed any indication of workplace location. They know who they are and we value their contribution to this book. Thank you. We are continually grateful that our clients are willing to share their journeys with us, and through their openness and active participation allow us to keep growing ourselves. It is a privilege and a pleasure to share with you all.

In Chapter 2 we focus on self-empowerment, discussing the importance of the mind-body link. We look at our 'internal dialogue' that is used to affect our attitude and our behaviour and consequently our results. We look at how we all create internal representations of reality and how that determines how we feel and act in response. We describe some powerful tools which enable us to look at our own internal linguistics and explore some practical steps on how to change how we feel internally, thus taking the first step towards outward change.

Chapter 3 looks at how we empower ourselves to others. Building on Chapter 2, it looks at how our own awareness can be enhanced so that we can adapt our internal representations to give a more positive image of any given situation. We explore well-known concepts such as body language and building rapport, to a level we had never encountered in healthcare practitioner training before. We look briefly at examples of advanced use of language, and at body language cues

that can literally transform how we interact with both patients and colleagues, thus revolutionising our practice.

In Chapter 4 we begin to look at how to take this new knowledge and move forward with it in the direction we want to travel. We look at a tool to help assess whether or not all aspects of our lives are in balance, an essential skill if we are to remain productive and effective in our careers. We reinforce the need to take care of 'self' in order to continue caring for others.

Chapter 5 begins to explore how this new increased self-awareness links to our depth of knowledge about our own departments or organisations. The chapter explores the issue of personal and corporate values, and introduces a tool to assess how well we 'fit' and consequently how we can contribute even more effectively at work by adapting what we do to correspond to the mission and values in the workplace.

In Chapter 6 we introduce an incredibly powerful tool that has numerous applications. One of its common uses is within conflict resolution, but it can also be used to look at new directions, strategy building, decision making, enabling two teams to work together more effectively, or exploring personal reactions to particular issues from different perspectives. Once you have mastered this tool you will find that it can be easily adapted so that it can be introduced seamlessly into meetings without colleagues realising you are using a tool at all.

In Chapter 7 we begin to bring together what you have learned so far and help you set goals to ensure you start to realise your dreams. With clear goals and with a real focus it is much more likely that you will begin to achieve something spectacular. In order to achieve what you dream of you need to know where you want to move to, and you need to know what you must do to achieve that outcome. This tool is an excellent way to commit yourself to making the changes required so that you get the results you want.

Chapter 8 follows up the writing of goals with a set of tools forming a self-management tool kit. This chapter is jam-packed with practical tools to empower and enthuse you to make sure that you pursue your dreams. After implementing these techniques you will have no excuse for not making your dreams come true! The concept of 'time lines' will enable you to determine when exactly you will achieve your desired outcomes. We will show you how to make your goals so compelling that you will be keen to finish the book so you can get on with making things happen!

Chapter 9 recognises the reality of busy lives and looks at ways to ensure you retain your initial enthusiasm and keep your momentum going, while you also care for yourself effectively. It is unlikely you will need to refer back to this chapter very often as you are going to be striving ahead to reach your goals; it might then be more useful to share with colleagues who have only just begun their journeys.

In Chapter 10 we conclude by briefly drawing all your learning together and by emphasising just how far you have already come by having finished the book. We will give you some tips on finding a coach, in particular how to ensure that a coach is credible and suitably qualified. We will reinforce how you are central to this whole process and especially central to its success. You can achieve anything you put your mind to, if you know what it is you wish to achieve and if you believe in yourself. The fact you are reading this is a phenomenal starting point. We believe you can achieve more than you ever dreamed possible. We believe you are aspiring leaders in your field who really make a difference in healthcare and who could do even more. If you have any doubts, find a coach and work through those doubts. Nothing and no one can hold you back from achieving your dreams, except you. If you feel blocked, if you don't believe in your own ability to achieve your dreams, you need to find a way to change, and there are ways to change.

We are really excited about sharing this material with you because each one of us has experienced for ourselves the power of the tools we describe. We have all started on a journey to greater self-awareness that has hugely transformed who we are and what we can achieve. We know this is possible for you as well and we look forward to hearing from you about how this book has literally changed the way you think and the way you work, through changing the way you feel, the way you behave and the results you get for you and your patients. Allow yourself to get excited. Allow yourself to dream. You have already begun the most exciting journey there is. Enjoy the ride.

In order to offer you additional support, we have also set up a website [www.wiley.com/go/nlphealthcare](http://www.wiley.com/go/nlphealthcare) where you will find copies of many of the tools from within this book to enable you to use them over and over again. For access to this website you will require the unique code indicated on the site. You can also contact us through the website or directly if you want additional individual support on your own journey, and we would love to hear from you regarding your experience of using these tools in practice; and share your successes and dreams. Our contact details are on pp. ix, x and xi. We look forward to hearing from you.

## So what is NLP?

It is difficult to say categorically what NLP is. There are numerous definitions available, each offering a slightly different perspective and focus, and view of exactly what it can achieve. If we break NLP into its three main components we can see that 'neuro' relates to neurology. Neurology in medical terminology is the study of the nervous system and its diseases. In NLP it is the study of the mind and brain and in particular how we think about things and how we process information. We experience life through our five senses and internally we process

that information and behave accordingly. This places NLP at the core of who we are; it is about what we think inside, how we interpret our reality. NLP will probably challenge your view of the world and open new doors to allow you to see other points of view and to explore other perspectives. NLP will also enable you to see how closely the mind and body work together, and how by changing one you can create a huge impact on the other.

'Linguistic' is all about language skills. In NLP terms this is how we use language to communicate and how other people's use of language affects us. It includes how we use language to structure our thoughts and to communicate those thoughts to others. In NLP what you say is important, and how you say it and what you mean by it is even more important.

'Programming' refers to how we plan how to react (not always consciously) to achieve specific goals. It is how we organise and store our ideas (and our actions). This is probably the most controversial aspect of NLP as some people feel it implies some form of manipulation. Once you get to understand the philosophy behind NLP you will see just how far from the truth this is. NLP is about respecting each individual's values and beliefs and working with those values to achieve great results, whilst considering the impact of any changes on other people. If you doubt whether you are naturally programmed in any way, consider what happens when you hear a fire alarm, when you hear a resuscitation bleep go off or when you hear someone say something to you which generates a particular response in you. Many of our behaviours are learned and we are programmed throughout life to react to certain stimuli in a certain way. NLP allows us to identify some of that programming which is unhelpful, which has happened subconsciously, and decide on whether or not it is a behavioural programme we wish to maintain. NLP also allows us to programme new behaviours to get the results we want; it establishes choice within our own programming and gives us control.

To bring this together then, NLP is the study and practice of how we think, how we use language to communicate, and how we develop ways to react to external and internal stimuli, thus generating behaviours which determine our actions. It gives a depth of understanding about ourselves that allows us to strive towards and achieve excellence in practice; this is essential when we use any element of leadership skills, and when looking at how to be more effective. As if that were not enough, NLP not only changes the way we think, talk and act, thus enabling us to transform ourselves into being truly expert professional practitioners, it also impacts on our self image so that we learn to love, respect and care for ourselves, so allowing us to live life to the full.

Some of the published definitions include:

- NLP is the art and science of personal excellence (O'Connor and Seymour, 1990).

- NLP is the study of what works in thinking, language and behaviour. It is a way of coding and reproducing excellence that enables you to consistently achieve the results that you want both for yourself, for your business and for your life (Knight, 2002).
- NLP is the influence of language on our mind and subsequent behaviour (O'Connor, 2001).

NLP started in the 1970s when two academics in California, John Grinder and Richard Bandler, began to work together looking at the effectiveness of three highly regarded therapists. They spent hours watching and modelling the successful practice of the three therapists and identified some common patterns, from which they developed a model, or set of tools, which could be used to enhance communication, to accelerate learning and personal understanding, and to effect real and lasting change.

Over time the tools of NLP have been further refined and developed, and they continue to evolve so that they can be applied across many contexts. Talk to anyone who has been coached or trained using NLP techniques, and you will hear of excellence and powerful personal transformation. We describe some of those tools in this book to bring NLP into healthcare practice, alongside other coaching techniques which we have personally used and approved in practice.

## **Why is NLP and coaching relevant to healthcare today?**

Within healthcare we are living in a world of constant change. We are no longer secure in our once familiar environments and instead face constant uncertainty. The healthcare environment is rapidly progressing and becoming more and more complex. Roles are extending and new roles are being developed. We are being constantly challenged to remain up to date and to develop new skills and competences. The rate of change is also increasing, making it more and more difficult to keep up.

Healthcare practitioners therefore need new skills to cope in this new world. Their initial training, supplemented by traditional forms of CPD is no longer enough. They need to be able to have a central core of calm and control in order to be able to practise effectively. They need to be able to take care of themselves, so that they in turn can care for others.

As healthcare practitioners you need to be able to respond to change and yet also have the expertise to retain what works well. You need advanced communication skills in order to ensure that your patients are comfortable and informed within a potentially chaotic healthcare environment and to encourage patients

to become active care partners instead of passive recipients of care. You also need to be able to communicate at an advanced level with other healthcare practitioners who are facing different, yet equally disturbing changes, and who might also feel insecure and threatened. And, finally, you need to be able to communicate internally with yourselves to make sense of your values, beliefs, feelings and reactions, to truly reflect on your practice. In the midst of any such radical and fast-paced change there will be differences of opinion. Future expert practitioners, using tools like those we present here, will be able to appreciate others' points of view and to discuss and negotiate so that practice is continually developed, thereby reducing potential conflict or unnecessary stress.

Why is NLP and coaching so relevant to healthcare? We would go further and say it is essential. Without it healthcare practitioners may struggle to cope with the pace and scope of change in the future. With NLP you will have the ability, not only to cope with the changes, but also to actively influence and direct those changes. You will enjoy and be passionate about your practice as you fulfil and live out your values, enacting your beliefs about making a real difference for your patients. You will thrive on the challenges, and you will work together with other colleagues to make improvements. You will build up and leave behind you a legacy of expert practice for others to follow.

You might be wondering where coaching fits in relation to other initiatives, for example, mentoring, clinical supervision, preceptorship and even appraisal and development planning. In brief, mentoring is likely to be a longer-term relationship and is usually done by a more experienced practitioner from the same field of practice, for example, for someone needing support early on in any aspect of career change. Clinical supervision is a varied term adopted by some professions. Again it can be undertaken by a more senior or experienced practitioner in the same field who helps to problem solve and to increase understanding of particular issues, or it can be very close to coaching, in which someone gets alongside a practitioner for a period of time and helps them to truly reflect on their own practice. Preceptorship tends to be a more formalised approach to assist and support someone who is changing roles. Alternatively, when employees enter clinical practice, preceptorship can be a time to offer guidance before expecting them to work completely autonomously. It is our belief that coaching sits comfortably alongside these other practices. Coaching is effective in its own right as a form of personal and professional development and in addition it will allow individuals to be effective in each of the other related areas, for example to prepare fully for appraisal and development planning and to know how to get the most out of a mentoring or supervisory relationship.

There is much to be said for considering using an external coach who is separate from any organisational obligation, so that you can discuss fully and openly any aspect of your practice. Indeed for the foreseeable future it is likely that

there will not be sufficient numbers of trained coaches dedicated to the healthcare sector. Having said that, the tools can be used 'by self for self' and can also be used in a peer coaching relationship where two professionals decide to support each other by using the tools together. Each individual would just have to assess any potential conflict of interest, or ethical issues that might arise as a result of sharing at such depth. Over time peers might wish to seek external coaching to gain full benefit from the complete range of tools and techniques available. A unique aspect of some of the tools outlined in this book is that they can be used 'content free' so that case details do not have to be disclosed, which opens up the scope for who they can be undertaken with.

## What can NLP offer?

NLP is valuable in so many contexts. It is effective for both personal and professional development. We outline here just some of the most important benefits for healthcare practitioners:

- By using NLP you will learn to communicate more effectively. Within healthcare the skill of effective communication is vital. What impact does your comment have on a patient when you say, 'Oh yes you have osteoporosis, this is where the bones crumble,' or when you say to someone, 'It is very easy to get depressed in this situation'. We need to seriously start to question the terminology we use which might generate negative internal representations in our patients, a process which might have an undesirable impact on their potential health and/or recovery. This is in addition to all the communication which occurs between colleagues and teams which can often be combative and excessively competitive, rather than empowering and encouraging, not to mention our own internal communication, which often works to restrict and criticise us, instead of being used to encourage and build us up.
- In terms of CPD, NLP could be the most effective personal and professional development you have ever undertaken. If you determine effectiveness by its ability to impact on your practice and its ability to improve the services you offer, NLP will do both of those things, naturally and easily, without you even really focusing on that as an outcome.
- NLP will blow your map of the world. You will change the way you think and you will know and respect yourself in a new and exciting way. If you remain unsure about this, you would gain hugely from finding yourself a reputable coach who can work through some of the more personal aspects of your development, which may be holding you back in your professional practice. Some of these things might include your own self-esteem, your confidence,

and your belief in your ability to be an expert practitioner or leader in your field. Once you have sorted these issues out, you will feel and behave like a new person.

- Finally, NLP is at the very heart of leadership excellence. NLP enables you not only to understand yourself fully, but also to understand your colleagues and staff so that you can enable them to work to their strengths and acknowledge safely the areas that still require development.

Some of the key guiding principles of NLP include:

- People respond to their own experience, not to reality itself. If you can enhance their experience by encouraging and nurturing them, you could change a person's reality and transform them into a motivated, confident practitioner who works hard and effectively in the team.
- People make the best choice they can at the time. If you take this on board as a guiding principle, there is no blame in making mistakes, and you can generate a genuine learning culture where individuals can grow and develop.
- Every behaviour has a positive intention. By looking at what that positive intention is in any given situation you can look at a difficult context in a completely different way.
- The meaning of any communication is the response you get. By taking full responsibility for the effectiveness of your own communication you will transform the communication in your team by ensuring that what others heard and understood is actually what you meant to say.
- We have, or can obtain, all the resources we need to do the job expertly. Exploring with staff what skills and abilities they have, and then helping them to fill any gaps, will hugely release staff to work better and even more effectively, whilst also showing they are valued and trusted to keep developing.

You can see how this impacts not only on leadership but also on management. If you are still unsure what the difference between the two is, leadership sets the direction that people choose to follow, and management steers the team in that direction, making sure the team keep on track. Put another way:

*'In a changing environment, a manager will work to understand the individuals in his or her team, adapting to their needs and helping them to cope with change. Like a shepherd, the manager's goal is to get the team to achieve the objective. A leader is more interested in the goal itself and providing a vision of that goal that is inspiring. A leader requires followers to commit to the cause, to choose to follow and to work out for themselves what makes that goal worth achieving.'*

*Freeth (2002)*

NLP can make you an even better leader, whether or not you are in a formal leadership role, by helping you to generate your vision, explore your values and ensure the two are congruent.

Just in case you are not already convinced of the potential value of NLP to you as a healthcare practitioner, there is also a whole range of advantages to you personally from using NLP techniques. We have already mentioned confidence and self-esteem, within CPD, but we cannot over-emphasise the potential value in transforming you through enhancing your belief in yourself. When real change work is undertaken using NLP, people talk of being a 'new person' and of 'starting life over'. We often think it is impossible to change some of those features of personality which appear to be so ingrained that we assume they are just part of us. From personal experience we, as authors of this book, can all give testimony to the fact that even those deep and longstanding aspects of us which we did not like can be lost easily and quickly, with the right person guiding us through the techniques.

Can you see how, by achieving these outcomes, you will be happier and less stressed? And if you recall the strong mind-body link we referred to earlier, you can see how this can make you physically healthier too.

You might read this and think we are either over-stating the potential of NLP or talking about just a few people who experience such radical and life-changing results. It is your choice whether you believe us or not. The only essential ingredient for success is a desire to change, a desire to have more and to achieve more. But don't just take our word for it. Take the opportunity presented in this book and experience those changes for yourself; then share it with others. There may be some people who cannot go through this journey alone and that is fine. We would urge you to find someone to walk the journey with you; find a coach so you don't miss out. This is literally an opportunity to turn your life round; don't let it pass you by.

## **Making it happen**

So, as you are reading on we assume you are excited by the possibilities outlined above and you are willing to take that first step. So how can you make this happen for you? It is essential to remember it can only happen from within. One important concept within NLP is that of 'cause and effect'. Effect is where you blame external things or people for the situation you are in: where work is dreadful because of a bullying boss or because you are not allowed to develop. You are not comfortable in a team because of a particular personality who is unfriendly towards you. Can you perhaps recognise some of these patterns in yourself and your own vocabulary? Are you ever tempted to blame 'them' (whoever they might be) for

problems in your life or your workplace? You need to get yourself to be 'at cause'. Cause is where you take responsibility for your own reaction to those external stimuli. You do not condone bullying or harassing behaviour, nor do you allow it to affect you. You try to understand the difficult personality and see the positive intentions of any actions and recognise that the person is doing the best they can with the resources they have. You decide what impact you will allow their behaviour to have on you.

For some people just reading that paragraph will be a huge challenge and if that is the case for you, we suggest that you find a coach to explore the issues it raised in you as you read it.

We believe that by ordinary healthcare practitioners, you and us, taking this seriously and making small changes initially within ourselves, by showing what a difference can be made and enthusing and inspiring others to follow suit, we will transform the environments we work in.

There is a real temptation to think that we are too small, or not powerful enough to make significant changes. Yet it is these very beliefs which hold us back and stop us achieving the changes which will create the future we desire.

We are a small group of healthcare practitioners who have discovered something which can radically change healthcare practice. By reading this book, you become a part of that group. We, both you and us as authors, then are charged with the role of implementing that change in practice. We hope you will come on board and start to make changes at whatever level you are at which will transform healthcare practice both for the practitioners and even more importantly for the patients.

You have already started your journey by reading this far. Keep dreaming your dreams, keep believing in yourself, make the changes you want to make, and watch the positive results unfold around you. You are unique in the set of skills and talents you have. You are powerful beyond your wildest dreams and you can make a difference here and now. Be bold, be strong, and step out to be the expert practitioner you want to be, and enjoy every minute of it.

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