

Chapter 1

Where Are You Right Now?

In This Chapter

- ▶ Figuring out what you want from NLP
 - ▶ Discovering the power of your thoughts
 - ▶ Keeping track of the gems you uncover
 - ▶ Making a personal commitment to your learning
 - ▶ Having fun on the journey
-

Are you at a set of crossroads in your journey through life? Questioning where you are and what you want to do next? ‘Shall I go this way or that?’, you may be asking yourself when faced with choices. Or, ‘I’m sure it doesn’t have to be this hard’, when you’re getting overwhelmed. Whether you’re facing choosing a job, tackling a project, or committing to a relationship, you’re not quite sure what you should do for the best when such opportunities present themselves. You may have picked up *Neuro-linguistic Programming Workbook For Dummies* because you want to do things differently or improve a situation in your life. Perhaps things are a bit flat at the moment and you want more ZING, or your life is manic and you want time to ‘smell the flowers’. Or, you’re simply curious about this NLP word, wanting to know what NLP can offer you and how it can help you to interact with other people – if so, that’s just great.

In this first chapter, we take time to help you get firmly grounded in NLP. You begin by taking stock and getting yourself in the right state of mind to ask what it is you want from this workbook. A basic assumption of NLP is that ‘the map is not the territory’ – you find out more about basic assumptions (we actually call them ‘NLP presuppositions’) in Chapter 2. You may currently have a ‘map’ – an idea of what you want, or of how life is, yet as you travel the road you find the ‘territory’ isn’t as you expected. ‘Stuff happens’, as the saying goes. Your world view changes as you journey along.

As you get drawn into NLP, you find yourself taking your learning further – into more and more areas of your personal life and the world of work. You discover how to create your own ‘maps’ of what you want, rather than navigating with an outdated map or using someone else’s.

Curiosity is a great starting point. Clear out any loose thinking about NLP. Come with an open mind and make it your intent to start paying attention to what you want to attract into your life. We promise that you’ll be exploring this in more detail very soon.

Explaining the Basics of NLP

Einstein said that there are two ways to live: you can live as if nothing is a miracle or you can live as if everything is a miracle. Really it’s up to you. The thoughts you have determine the results that you get in your life. Have you ever stopped to consider the quality of your

thinking? NLP can be the starting point to get you thinking in a new way and get you curious about the power of your own thought process. After you know how you think, you can translate that into chosen actions with the help of the NLP tools we share with you in this book.

At first, the concept of NLP can be hard to get a grip on – like grappling with jelly. NLP is defined as ‘the study of your subjective experience’; it’s about how you communicate with others and with yourself. In NLP the more you pay attention to *how you think* as well as what you think about, the more you will achieve the results that you want.



NLP is based on the idea that you experience the world through your senses and translate sensory information into thought processes, both conscious and unconscious. Thought processes activate the neurological system (hence the *neuro* part of NLP) that affects physiology, emotions, and behaviour.

The *linguistic* aspect of NLP refers to the way your language helps you to make sense of the world, capture and conceptualise your experience, and communicate that experience to others. Body language is important here as well as the spoken word. The *programming* part addresses how you code or mentally represent your experience. Your personal programming consists of your internal processes and strategies (thinking patterns) that you use to make decisions, solve problems, learn, evaluate, and get results.

Lining Up at the Starting Block

NLP offers tools and models to help you solve problems in different ways. For example, take the ‘logical levels of change’ model from Robert Dilts that we explore in Chapter 11, which breaks down your experience into manageable parts, from looking at the environment in which you operate through to your overall sense of purpose as you go about your daily business.

You also have the classic linguistic models that the co-creators of NLP came up with in the early days: the Milton model, derived from studying Milton Erickson at work, and the Meta model, which enables you to gain greater clarity by going beyond language and digging deeper into the meaning underlying words. We show you how to filter your thinking according to your deepest values and beliefs without even consciously knowing that you do it. NLP is like opening a huge window onto your thought processes, so you have a huge treat in store.

You may already have a few ideas of what you want to get out of *Neuro-linguistic Programming Workbook For Dummies* – using NLP to be a more effective teacher, presenter, coach, parent, or business person?

Perhaps you’re looking for the latest thinking. As you read and work through this workbook, you’re likely to find more territory than you anticipated, discovering new ways of applying NLP that you hadn’t even thought about – until today.



Worksheet 1-1 is a simple exercise in placing your feet on the NLP starting block and being poised to get the most out of this workbook. That means starting with what NLP calls your ‘desired state’. Get your running shoes on and begin right now.



NLP talks about present state and desired state. The clearest way to describe these places is as a journey. Your present state is where you are now, today. Your desired state is where you’d like to get to; your goal or outcome for the future.

In Worksheet 1-1, we invite you to look at your present state as you begin to play with the ideas in this book. One of the purposes of the exercise is to make you stop and think about what you want to gain from reading this book, because as you do so you set yourself off on a proactive route, being curious (which is a great state to be in for learning) and taking responsibility for your learning. Consider whether you're simply interested in NLP as part of an academic lesson, or if you have something specific happening in your life where you want help. Are you struggling with career choices, your health, your relationships, or do you feel that life could be more fun or more rewarding?

By making some preliminary notes, you place a marker that you can revisit in the months to come to observe your progress.

Worksheet 1-1
My NLP Starting Block

What is your main reason for buying *Neuro-linguistic Programming Workbook For Dummies*?
And what do you want to gain from this workbook?

Is there something very specific that you want to get from this workbook – either for yourself or for others? For example, has a particular event triggered change for you recently that's made you question what's important for you in a particular aspect of your life?

Are you facing a particular challenge right now? For example, in finding a job, completing a project, or in feeling your most confident and healthy? Have you had a setback? Are you running out of time, money, or energy for the things you want to get done?

If this book proves to be exceptionally helpful for you, what would you really like to be different for you (perhaps in terms of quality of life or achieving better results in a specific field)?

What is the one area of your life where you would like to apply NLP to yourself? For example, in coaching, training, managing others, personal development, in making changes in your career or your personal life?



Worksheet 1-1 is followed up in Chapter 18 where you're asked to assess how confident you are with NLP, after having worked through the book.

Beginning with Your Intent

In NLP you hear a lot of talk about setting intents and the reason for this is that when you set your intent, this is where you place your focus. Perhaps you meet someone and set your intent to have a long-term friendship with her. That dictates how you think about that person and behave towards her. By contrast, if you decide immediately that you'd be happy never to see her again, that intent affects how you relate to her from day one.

An intent isn't as specific as a goal, but about how you are; a way of being that informs your action. When we run training or coaching sessions and set our intents, they're usually fairly broad concepts such as, 'We're going to share knowledge', 'We'll listen supportively and challenge appropriately', or 'We'll be open to whatever comes up for our clients.' You can often summarise intent in one or two words such as, 'Be present', 'Share', 'Listen'.



'Do you think you're really up to this job, or would you prefer to shift down a grade and reduce the pressure on yourself?' Maddy was having a tough time at work and felt pressurised to the point of physical exhaustion. She'd taken a new job as a client services director in a financial institution and her first annual pay review had come at a time when the business was going through a lean time; business leaders were pushing ahead to take operations abroad and cutting down on the cost of staff to compete more strongly. Maddy's boss was suggesting that she might like to take a less stressful job at a lower salary even though she had met her performance targets. That same year, Maddy's mother had been taken seriously ill. Maddy was taking the train home to support her father on alternate weekends in the west of the country. To cap it all, she returned late one Sunday to discover that her boyfriend had been seeing another woman while she was away. He announced that he wanted to get out of their five-year relationship, sell their flat, and split their belongings. She found herself crying on the tube to work and ready to throw in her job. Maddy became interested in NLP after a girlfriend invited her to come along to an NLP seminar on relationships where Maddy learnt that she could manage her emotions, even when under stress. That seminar led to others, to more reading and listening to CDs, which in turn gave her the encouragement to make significant changes in her job and home life.

When Maddy went on her first personal development workshop, her aim was to reduce stress in her life, to live and work with less hassle, and to rediscover her natural ability to enjoy life once more. Worksheet 1-2 shows her personal intent for her NLP learning plus one word that reminds her of what she wants.

Worksheet 1-2		Maddy's Setting Personal Intent	
My intent is:		Achieving a calm sense of focus	
The word summarising my intent is:		Perspective	

In Worksheet 1-3, write down a statement of your intent for your learning through this book and then summarise it in one word that applies to you.

Worksheet 1-3	My Setting Personal Intent Worksheet
My intent is to:	
The word that summarises my intent is:	



Intents are a powerful way to focus your attention and quieten your mind. Write your 'one word' in colour on a card or piece of paper where you can see and refer to it easily. Try writing your one word on the front page of your diary, office wall, computer, fridge door, or your bathroom mirror.

Taking Responsibility for Your Learning

Not everyone learns in the same way. Some people love to have to have theory, others need to try out a new idea; some need to be sure the idea is practical and useful, and others need a chance to think it through. You'll learn about NLP in different ways that work for you and this book is part of that journey. One of the key concepts of NLP is to be flexible in your behaviour, so think about your learning in this way and be willing to experiment with new ways of learning.

You can develop your NLP expertise in various ways by:

- ✓ Diving straight in, and doing the exercises in this workbook.
- ✓ Finding opportunities to practise your skills, and applying them to everyday situations.
- ✓ Studying around the subject and researching NLP's underlying theories.
- ✓ Allowing time to regularly step back and reflect on any areas where NLP tools and exercises can make a difference for you and for others.
- ✓ Checking out how and with whom you learn best. Do you, for example, learn best with a buddy, or by taking yourself off to a quiet place to learn?
- ✓ Choosing for yourself your own method of learning, supported by this workbook.



At the age of 14, Clare found school life boring and dull. Feeling restricted by the demands of the curriculum, she played truant, finding it much more satisfying to meet up with friends in a local café rather than to go to lessons that she couldn't understand, and be criticised for her pierced earrings and messy school uniform. For Clare the lessons were pointless and all the fun of being at school had gone out of the window. She left school at the earliest opportunity and took a job as a trainee hairdresser where she became a firm favourite with the customers. Ten years later, when she decided to live and work abroad, Clare enrolled in Portuguese language classes. She had a sense of purpose – being highly motivated to learn so that when in Portugal she would be able to speak to the locals in their own language. Clare went about finding the best way of learning the language quickly and easily. She looked up the names of everyday objects in her home, at work, and in the car, and placed colourful labels on the objects so as to remember the equivalent Portuguese words. She also bought children's books written in the language and listened to foreign pop songs and radio programmes on her iPod. Clare found that one of her clients was Portuguese and when she went to her client's house to cut her hair and that of her circle of friends, Clare got

them to chat to her in Portuguese. She realised that she could learn quickly when she wanted to. For Clare it was all about finding the style of learning that suited her best, together with taking ownership of her learning – no one else could do it for her.



You learn at your best when you're motivated for your own reasons rather than when someone tells you to. So if someone has given you this workbook, or told you to work through it, find your own reason why this workbook will be helpful for you. Put yourself first, and connect with your own sense of purpose.



In Worksheet 1-4, you use three examples from different times through your life when you had a great time learning something new. Go back to those experiences, capturing what worked best for you.

Worksheet 1-4	My Learning at My Best
As a child, I learnt to:	
I did this by:	
As a teenager, I learnt to:	
I did this by:	
As an adult, I learnt to:	
I did this by:	



When you do the exercises in this workbook with an open mind and a willing heart, you're the person who benefits most.

Noting the Nuggets as You Go

While reading a book, you may come upon a word or phrase on the page that makes you stop and think – you go: 'Aha, that's good, I must remember that.' We hope that you find many such nuggets in this NLP workbook. Feel free to track your journey through this book by making notes on the pages using coloured pens and sticky gold stars – anything that catches your eye. Photocopy exercises, stick them on your wall, cut them out – whatever works for you. After all, you can always buy another copy if you want to keep the book 'clean'! Get into the mindset that this is *your* NLP journey and you can travel it in any which way you choose.



What we like to do is to keep our own special notebooks and diaries for jotting down our thoughts and ideas relating to NLP. Try carrying a small notebook around with you when you're on the move – one that fits inside a pocket or a bag and that can be kept handy on your beside table – for recording the real gems from this workbook that catch your attention. When writing down your nuggets make a note of your intent at the very beginning, then capture landmarks as you go – rather like a map in *Treasure Island*; you may like to draw your own NLP work map seeing how key themes join up for you.

Having Fun Is a Must

This is the only time we say ‘must’. Fun is one of our core values and we’d like to share that with you, and Dummies books make learning fun. When we set out to write the first *Neuro-linguistic Programming For Dummies* book, we agreed the writing process must be fun. We were delighted when readers wrote in to tell us that our fun-loving attitude came through in the stories and ideas we shared. Similarly, in this workbook the process of sharing and learning together through writing about NLP in practice has been fun. Humour may not come through so loudly in the written word as it would if we were to meet and laugh in person, but rest assured that an essential ingredient of NLP training is to have fun.

Do whatever you need to make your own learning fun. Take the workbook to the beach or to the zoo. Dance around the kitchen, draw silly faces, and play with bendy toys. Make yourself a chocolate milkshake, a smoothie, or have a glass of your favourite tippie as you do the exercises. Look out for humour even in serious situations – yes, if you look, you can always see the bright side of life.

So, with mind and body fully present and correct, you’re all set to take NLP action.

