

Essential NLP - Practical Tools for a Great Life

Podcast 8 - NLP Presuppositions 3

Hi, and a very warm from me, Phil Parker, your host of Essential NLP skills and this is podcast number 8. Once again I'd like to thank so many people round the world for downloading this and listening to it. Please get in touch with me by email phil@philparker.org and let me know what other topics we could cover on this. I've been really interested to have your feedback it's really inspiring to hear what people have said so far and what they have recommended and thanks for telling all your friends, it's just amazing!

So we'll continue where we left off. We looked at Presuppositions, we were on the second one in the last podcast. Remember, NLP Presuppositions are the fundamental of how NLP sees the world but remember they're not true, they're an approximation to truth, they're the best kind of model we have. We say 'What if these things were true?', they're not true, but if they were how would that change and enhance our way of seeing the world?

So today we move onto a very powerful one, which is very close to my heart, which is number 3. The statement of number 3 is '*behind every behaviour is a positive intention*'. So what does this mean? Well what it means is behind every behaviour that everyone does there is some really good reason for it.

Now, let's get some clarity around that. It's a good reason for them, it may not necessarily be a good reason for anybody else, or for you for example. So positive intention means the intention behind the behaviour, the reason they're doing it is positive in some way, possibly for you, certainly it will be for them.

Let's look at some examples, so when somebody is angry we might recognise their positive intention is to right some injustice they feel has been done to them, to make sure everybody knows something is wrong or possibly a cry for help, that would be the positive intention. Now we don't know exactly what the positive intention is of one behaviour always means one positive intention, it doesn't always work that way, we need to work out what is the positive intention between either other people's behaviours or possibly our own behaviours.

If we look at really extreme cases, so let's say suicide, can we see a positive intention in suicide? If you talk to people who have attempted suicide, obviously unsuccessfully otherwise you wouldn't be able to talk to them, they say that 'I got to such a point where I just couldn't see that I was going to get any peace in the world and I thought if I did kill myself I would finally get peace', or possibly they might say, 'I was such a burden on everybody and thought that if I killed myself I would release that burden'. Now, as Richard Bandler has very nicely quoted, "suicide is a permanent solution for a temporary problem", suicide is not a great idea but we can understand and we can see that even in that extreme case there is a positive intention.

What we would then do is start to look at if there is a way to get that positive intention in a slightly more constructive way? The answer is almost invariably 'Yes, there is'. When we work with something called Conflict Resolution, Parts or Core Transformations, these are NLP processes that we'll be looking at later; you'll find

there's some brilliantly elegant ways of helping people make fantastic change in these kind of things using the deep skills of NLP.

It's probably worth digressing very slightly to explain what Parts are at this point. Parts are when you feel like you're being pulled in two different directions. The classic example is you know when you go to the supermarket and you get a supermarket trolley and one wheel is wonky, three wheels are all heading in the way you want to go and the other one is heading in a different direction. The trolley becomes completely impossible to control.

This is like parts, when your energy is diverted, so although your intention is, for instance, to stay on a diet, every time you go near the fridge you find yourself wanting to open the door and eat some food. This would be a good description of Parts; part of you wants to stay on the diet, part of you wants to eat. This is just a very, very brief overview of Parts which we will cover in much more depth later on.

Let's look at some other examples, what if somebody is a drug addict, a substance misuser, and then what is the positive intention behind that? Have a think about that, what could possibly be driving someone to do that?

Well if you've ever talked to people who've been in that position you'll find that mainly they've got used to it and it's normal for them, it may dull the pain of the world, it may give them some joy where there is none, it may fill a hole that they feel they had. There will always be some good reason which you can see the logic behind why they're doing it; you may not necessarily agree it's the best way to achieve that result and that outcome, but you can recognise why they're motivated to do that, it's not stupid, it's not illogical. It has a certain logic to it.

What we would look at then once we've uncovered what is the positive intention, what is the reason behind this, is to look at what other ways could there be of achieving this goal?

So we looked at a couple of extreme examples, if we just looked at business, in business there is constant conflict between departments, between managers and workforce, between customers and sometimes customer service, so finding a way to resolve conflict is a really valuable skill. And this Presupposition, this idea that everything people are doing is there for a good reason, removes the whole idea that people are stupid, wrong or difficult and instead there's a reason behind it. When someone is irate, in customer services for example, and they're shouting down the phone, if we take the position they're wrong and start to fight with them we just escalate the conflict. Instead if we can take a step back and think there's probably a good reason for them doing this. I may not agree with the reason but there's probably some good intention behind this, to make themselves heard, get their point across and to express how annoyed they are possibly. If we can take that bigger position it allows us a lot more freedom and flexibility to deal with that situation in less of an immediate reaction kind of style and one in which we are more thoughtful and diffuse the situation.

This particular Presupposition is also incredibly powerful when we look at health. And as you probably remember the mind-body connection is one of my specialities. The techniques that involve using this Presupposition, such as Parts or Conflict Resolution, are incredibly powerful at helping people reinterpret, listen and

communicate with these symptoms that they have. If we move from the idea of a symptom as being a problem and a difficulty, and consider that maybe it has a positive intention, a good reason for being there then we can start to work with it, to consider it as a communication from the body and if the body is communicating in this way is there a way to work through that channel of communication that's clearly open and start to understand what the message is?

My experience is you can make amazing change by starting to consider symptoms as something that is trying to tell you something. Sometimes it's trying to tell you to go to the doctor or go to ER/Emergency and sometimes it's telling you something very different. It could be to eat better, to exercise more, and to be nicer to yourself. Again there's no prescription that this particular symptom means this, it's much more what does this particular symptom actually mean for you and NLP has some brilliant techniques to help you to understand and to get clarity about that communication from your nervous system and from your body and to act on it.

So what I suggest you do today is just start from the very compassionate and interesting perspective that when somebody does something that would normally trigger you to have a conflictual response with them, to make them wrong and tell them off, just step back for a second and think 'Ok, (not is there a positive intention behind this) but what is the positive intention behind this? Come from the Presupposition, the position that you already know there must be a positive intention and see what a difference that makes.

You'll find if you use this somewhere where you have been stuck in conflict if you could allow yourself to be big enough to take this idea on so much of the trouble the angst and difficulty of that conflict will just fade away as a result of you shifting your position. By shifting your way of thinking, naturally because conflict only occurs naturally in some kind of relationship with somebody else, by shifting your line in the sand and how you see things you naturally change the whole dynamic of that relationship.

The final point on conflict, interestingly you can also be in conflict with yourself where you feel like one part of you is pulling one way and one part is pulling the other way. How often do we hear people say this? 'I'm pulled in two different directions', 'part of me wants to eat cake, part of me wants to do this'. This is the starting point that will allow you to see that actually when there is a positive intention behind either of these conflictual ways of thinking it allows us to start to recognise that we're not nearly in so much trouble as we thought we were. We can bring a compassionate beginning to resolve this conflict which is a process we'll cover in much more depth later on. But just as a starting point if you find yourself pulled in two different ways just consider the position of 'I bet this part of me that wants to eat chocolate cake has a positive intention and this part of me that wants to stay on a diet and exercise really well has a positive intention' and by doing that and reducing that level of conflict that level of stuckness you'll find things start to shift.

So that's our Presupposition for this podcast. We'll be covering some more in the next podcast and some other really interesting stuff. If you want some more information about this stuff and some bonus content I'm providing at the moment please go to the website www.philparkertraining.com/podcast and there you'll find how you can get some extra content especially designed for this podcast.

I really look forward to seeing you on the next one. Have a great week.

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