

## Essential NLP - Practical Tools for a Great Life

### Podcast 9 - NLP Submodalities

Hi, and welcome to Essential NLP Podcast number 9. Thanks again for tuning in and listening to this. It's been amazing the response across the world to these podcasts, consistently in the top 5 business podcasts on iTunes, absolutely amazing, thanks so much and keep on spreading the word.

So let's carry on from where we left off last time. Well so far we've been exploring the Presuppositions of NLP and we did the first three or four; and there are eleven but I am going to actually take a break from Presuppositions because I want to give you some other things to think about otherwise it just becomes a bit like a boring lesson and we certainly don't want that on this podcast, we've had enough of that in the rest of our schooling lives!

So we're going to dip into something I find absolutely fascinating about NLP and the technical term, as it often is in NLP, is Submodalities. Let's explain it, as it's very simple and really amazing stuff. It is fundamentally at looking at the way the brain files things. If we consider the brain a little bit like a filing system and a memory storage machine, which to some extent it is, then where information is filed seems to have significance as to how the brain tends to it, a bit like if we have a file that's marked 'urgent' or 'bills to pay' we may pay more attention to it than another one that says pensions, for instance.

So, let's begin. First of all, we need to discover a little bit about the filing system of the brain. Before we even delve into what Submodalities are let's look at something else, which is how the brain processes information. It predominantly processes information through the core senses that we have - sight, hearing, smell, taste and so on - and it seems like, in western culture at least, three of these senses tend to be predominant. So that's the sense of seeing – our visual sense, the sense of hearing – our auditory sense, and the sense of sensation which is technically called kinaesthetic.

Now the kinaesthetic sense means the things we experience directly, so not emotions but things like touches, heat and so on. This kinaesthetic sense, this feeling sense is probably the least used in western culture. We as a culture are relatively out of touch with our experiences of sensations, not everyone but a lot of people.

It was interesting when I trained as an osteopath, as an osteopath you have to feel and derive information using your fingers, recognising movement and tension and so on and so forth. And what was intriguing was how when you started as an osteopathic student you have such a small experience and small knowledge base to work from and at the end of four years of experiencing and feeling peoples bodies, and training yourself in that, you have a much greater developed sense that was far above. Most people walking around the street just don't have an experience of what it feels like to perceive sensations.

So these are the three main systems that we use to process information. We can process information from the outside world so direct experience we have in what's going on but we can also process information from our memories, from our thoughts, from our guesses and although these provide information from internal experience,

from inside our brain we perceive them as equally real. In NLP these systems, the auditory, kinaesthetic and visual system, are called Representational Systems suggesting that what we're doing is representing a version of reality. Sometimes it's a genuine experience of reality from outside as I said and sometimes it's a generated experience from inside.

Even with the direct experience from outside we can perceive it in very different ways. So for instance sometimes a tickle can be fun, sometimes it can be annoying, so we can have a different experience of the same sensations.

Now there's lots of things we could say about Representational Systems and they'll be another podcast on it a bit later on as it is very important to NLP. But very briefly something we touched on, I think, in the very first podcast when we asked people to talk about their postcodes or their zip codes, remember we said we saw their eyes moving around. Quite often if you say to someone 'What did you have for dinner yesterday?' you'll see their eyes tracking up, usually to the top left. Why do they do that? Well, it seems there is some linkage between which Representational System people are accessing, so for instance if somebody's remembering a picture it seems like for many people they seem to look in a certain direction. We can see Representational Systems all the time when people answer questions with a pause and gazing off in the distance in some particular direction. This is a sign they're accessing some kind of information in a particular system.

So now we've got the very basics of what a Representational System is which is how we perceive information we can start to look at Submodalities. Submodalities are really fascinating. Let's say somebody is picturing something in their mind, they have an image in their mind of it, there are some questions we can ask and this comes from a brilliant NLP guy called Todd Epstein who unfortunately is no longer with us. Todd said, well if we describe that picture not in terms of its content and what the picture is of but in terms of what the picture looks like, what qualities does that picture have? So classically that will be, is it near? Is it far away? Is it coloured or is it black and white? Is it moving or still? Is it this big or this big?

So what I'd like to do is play around with this. I'd like you to think about a food you love, your favourite dish or favourite fruit or whatever it may be and just in your mind think about that and as you do notice what it is you're aware of. Now for many people they will see it, they will hear the sound of that food cooking, some people might have a sensation of eating it, and because this podcast is going out to everyone we're just going to do it in one Representational System to start with and that's the visual one. As you notice this image you have in your mind of this food that you're very fond of just notice the qualities that it has. So let's have a look. Is it colour, or is it black and white? Is it near to you or is it far away? Is it more towards your face or to your left or right? Is it above or below your eye line? Is it moving or is it still? How big is it? As you start to pick up these qualities, or technically these Submodalities, of the image, just notice them.

The interesting thing is when we compare something we don't like, so a food you really don't like at all. As you think about that food notice where the image of that food is. Is it near? Is it far away? What position is it in? Is it black or white or coloured? Large or small? As you start to compare these pictures, you'll see there are some key differences between the food that you like and the food that you don't like.

The next step then is to take the food that you really do like and just temporarily, just for a few moments, just to experience this, to take that food and reproduce all those qualities and Submodalities of the food that you don't like. If the food you didn't like was over to the left, and the food you did like was more in front of you you'd shift the food, if the food you didn't like was black and white and the food you did like was coloured you'd shift the food that is in front of you and coloured to the left and make it black and white. So you reproduce all the qualities of the Submodalities and a fascinating thing happens as you do that.

Just check it out, pretty much universally you'll find that when you shift the Submodalities it changes how you feel about that thing. That's because you change the filing system, you put that image of the food you liked into the file, the position and the colour that represents that filing system of foods you don't like and as a result your brain responds to this new ordering, this new filing, by going 'ok, I don't like that food'. Isn't that fascinating?

So obviously bring the food you like back to where you want it. Now if you have kids who aren't eating a particular food, vegetables, for instance, you can use your understanding of how the brain works to help them to feel better about the food. So just say they don't like peas but they really like ice cream, when you discover the difference between how they code and how they see ice cream and how they see peas by shifting the peas to be more like ice cream you will find they feel better about peas. It's really that simple.

I'm going to finish this very brief introduction to Submodalities, we will be covering this more as it's just a fascinating way of thinking about things.

I'd like to tell you a story about when I was producing a newspaper. The newspaper was just finished and I put it to bed and ready to print the next day, and in those days we didn't back up computers. And just as I saved it for the final time, the whole thing crashed and I couldn't restart the computer. I needed to restart the computer because it has the newspaper on it and it had to go to print the next day. I knew I had the option of struggling to try and fix the computer all night but I was really tired having worked hard on the newspaper and I really needed some sleep so I decided what I would do is go to sleep and sort it out in the morning. But of course, I knew I wouldn't be able to get to sleep because I'd be thinking about this disaster that had occurred and trying to work out solutions. I knew it would play on my mind so I used a process called 'Submodality Switch' which is just what we've just done with the food, the peas and the ice cream. What I did was use the idea, the very powerful idea of ambivalence. I thought to myself 'currently I'm really concerned about that computer and that newspaper. In order to sleep I need to feel ok about it, I need to not care and I need to have ambivalence'. I thought about the computer and I noticed the Submodalities. And sure enough, which is often the case when you're worried about something, or something has got your attention, it's in your face, you actually put this image in front of you, right near your eyes, to keep an eye on it. It was big, bright and right in front of me and then I thought about something that I felt ambivalent about, something I didn't care much about. I looked up and there was a shelf of books and I don't alphabetise my book collection so I didn't really care which order things were in so I looked at a book and I thought I don't really care that that book is there, I don't care if it's in that place or another place, it's fine for me. I looked at these Submodalities the quality of that image in my mind and I found it was over

there at a distance, it was blurry vague, slightly dull and wasn't colourful, and it was difficult to see. I took this image of the computer that was bothering me and just slid it over to where that book was on the shelf in my mind. As I did that I suddenly found that the computer didn't bother me and had no significance for me, I was able to just have peace with the situation as it was. Now, of course, in the morning I'd need to do some work on it but the important thing was to be able to change how I felt about that situation that I couldn't change right now.

I'd like you to think about where you can use a similar technique for yourself and where would you like to feel differently about something? We'll be doing some specific exercises on things like people at work, customers, bosses and so on; people that you have to hang around but actually you find yourself getting in the wrong state. We're going to do some of that in a future podcast but I'd like you just to start by thinking what could I use this for, this really simple brilliant understanding of how the brain works, checking in with myself as to how does it look and what do I already know about that I feel differently about? So if I feel stressed about something what makes me calm and what is the difference between the two images?

Now in this podcast we've also just focused on images, we're going to be looking at how you change the Submodalities of sounds, how do you change the Submodalities of kinaesthetic experiences, we'll be covering that as well. This is just a real beginning introduction to these things.

Once again if you want transcripts of this, we have transcripts, send me an email [phil@philparker.org](mailto:phil@philparker.org) or go to my site [www.lifyoulovenow.com](http://www.lifyoulovenow.com) where you can sign up to get extra information and videos on all these tools and find out about the courses we run and all the other brilliant resources that are there to support you using these amazing skills, practically and easily in your life.

So until then, have a great week!

Phil



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