

# First Steps to Influence the NLP Way...

## Using filters to influence results

By Payal Gandhi Hoon



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**H**ave you ever wondered what keeps you going to the same store, hair stylist, doctor, to a healer, a friend or a relative, time after time? This thought occurred to me about the times we live in, where attention spans are shorter and transactional usually, it is as good as a miracle to have someone eating out of your hands every now and then...

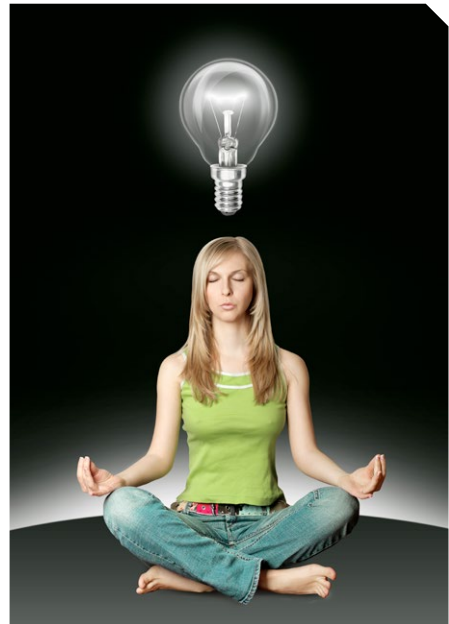
Mostly people would be tempted to give the doctored response of it boiling down to 'Human Connect'. The answer is a resounding Yes and then the next question is: In what way? The response is someone who goes the extra mile for you or makes you feel special! Now here's a bone of contention to chew on, when you know time is money and petrol is premium; wouldn't you rather order something from a restaurant right below your nose than drive all the way to that quaint small time food place that makes you feel Oh, so special! So at dawn, it's all a matter of convenience.

### So what does it take to influence?

What it takes is to have an awareness of the way we perceive and experience the world to be through certain filters in our thinking and communication. NLP is a study of what works and about the way people get consistently good or bad results in their lives. It helps re-engineer our thoughts and behaviours that are not getting the results we want. One key differentiating factor is the way in which you filter information.

Yoga is one way to look at Leadership. As the forgotten art of yoga is making a resurgence, people are picking up the threads. Some with apprehension and others with excitement go about attending the first few sessions. Post which in a typical manner, some people begin to skip classes, while others persevere. What probably remains constant is the yoga instructor.

I soon became curious about what it takes for a Leader to communicate in a manner that influences people to achieve their goals. In this case, it is about the yoga instructor motivating people to get to their fitness outcome. Some yoga instructors go through the motions of daily routine and have packed classes, one after the other. While there are others who influence!



### “What does it take for a Leader to communicate in a manner that influences people to achieve their goals?”

In NLP terms the influence is based on filters the leaders use in their thinking and behaviour.

- A leader knows his mind and has a strategy. He uses a collaborative approach for decision-making. But when the yoga instructor seeks advice about which routine to follow at the start of the day, it's to tune into the state mostly everyone is in, like what would they want to do: traditional or power yoga? And based on the input he takes you through the experience he has designed while incorporating what you want. This approach is based on being **referenced internally**, i.e. tapping into your own feelings to know and do what you think is right.

Whilst the other approach would be to seek approval, before guiding each posture, about what to do next? This is **externally referenced**

where others' verdicts are the measure of success of an activity.

- While leading the regime, the yoga teacher uses a tone of being deep-rooted, calm and serene in his poise, his words, the pace and his demeanour in a consistent way. And so do the people practicing yoga. It is important for leaders to pace or **match** their audience to lead, and also connect.

There could be another approach of starting on a low key then heightening the experience through much talk and movement, while the audience is silently and in almost a meditative manner going through the regime. The effect might lead to the mind being occupied with thinking rather than doing. This amounts to a **mismatch** of the state of mind.

- The language that the yoga teacher uses to guide is a revelation in the fitness results. He just says a subtle 'keep going', when all you want to do is give up to the excruciating pain. This is a leader's way of getting the person to **focus on the outcome**.

And the other approach is when he says 'This is so easy...you can't even do this, ok then let it be, do only as much as you can do'. It almost makes the person feel under duress to perform an activity and an unhealthy sense of comparison and being self-sufficient certainly moves him **away from achieving his goals**.

- When the intensity of yoga poses increases, the instructor maintains certain continuity and moves on to the next count. There is no time to think, but just to do it! Being and moving from one moment to the other. He practices and influences people to be **in the present**.

The other approach is to refer to the **past** when the yogic posture was done so well, or the future. If this is how the performance is now, then what about the **future**?

- There is no sign of approval or disapproval or words to judge the way yoga is being done. Just being sensitive and guiding in a gentle way if and when required towards what needs to be done. This is an observer's way or **dissociated** way of leading the person to their outcome.

The other approach is to share feedback with emotions by exhibiting maybe in words or even body language – a grimace, or a chuckle. This might not be the best approach for a leader to get **associated** with emotions as it obstructs in achieving the outcome.

People form their own experiences based on what they want to see, based on the filters they use. It will be useful to observe what filters you as a leader use with people around you. Are you getting the results that you want? ■

“ One key differentiating factor is the way in which you filter information ”

#### REFERENCE

Sue Knight, *NLP at Work*.

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