

# The Structure of Personality

Modeling  
“Personality”  
Using NLP and  
Neuro-Semantics

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## Preface 1

- 1 Can we *change* “personality?”
- 1 What *is* this thing that we call “personality” anyway?
- 1 What does the NLP model say regarding “personality?”
- 1 What NLP models and techniques transform personality?
- 1 What Meta-Stating and Neuro-Semantic models expand and extend the art of transforming “personality?”

As a Cognitive-Behavioral psychologist, when I first discovered NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming), I felt immediately excited. And during the past fourteen years, my exploration of the model has not waned or disappointed me. I quickly recognized that its powerful techniques and processes would revolutionize the way we work with people. And so it has.

Further, NLP arose from *modeling* the therapeutic “magic” of three therapeutic experts involved in three very different disciplines, *Virginia Satir* of Family Systems, *Fritz Perls* of Gestalt Therapy, and *Milton H. Erickson* of Ericksonian hypnosis. It was out of modeling those different fields that a Cognitive Behavioral Model arose. This speaks about the precision of the modeling skills of the two co-founders, Dr John Grinder as a linguist and Richard Bandler as a patterning genius.

At its essence, NLP describes *a communication model*—how we use language and how we “make sense” of language. From there, NLP refers to a model of human functioning—how we operate in the world making mental-emotional maps that give us a “program” for navigating life. From there, NLP references an entire meta-domain that examines the *structure* of experiences in general and provides modeling tools for unpacking the strategies, refining those programming strategies, and then replicating exemplars of excellence. And yet, as you will discover in this work, NLP is even more than all of that.

Here we focus on *NLP and Personality*. As such, this work extends the current research and practice of the Cognitive-Behavioral Model. That's because as a meta-domain, NLP cares very little about theory as it focuses primarily on *processes* for change and on those patterns that work to bring about transformation. Given that, NLP studies processes that work in many different fields without a compulsion to create some unified field theory. This makes NLP extremely practical and focused on *solutions* and *results*.

While it cares little about theory, that doesn't prevent many of us in the NLP field from exploring the epistemological foundations of the model. The terms "Neuro-Linguistics" and "Neuro-Semantics" actually originated with Alfred Korzybski (1933/1994) founder of General Semantics. The focus on Meta-Levels and frames originated from anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1972, 1979) who set the foundations also for cybernetics, meta-cognition, and systems theory.

Here we also present more than NLP, we present *Neuro-Semantics*. This represents an extension and expansion of the NLP model using the Meta-Levels model, the Levels of Thought. This refers to the self-reflexivity that drives the Meta-States model. In the past few years, we have discovered that the most powerful NLP patterns operate due to the frame-setting power of state upon state so that "mind" or "consciousness" becomes textured and layered with higher level awarenesses. This, in turn, leads to a richer and more resourceful kind of mindfulness in moving through the world.

### *NLP/NS and "Personality"*

Early in the development of NLP, it became apparent to many that this model of human functioning which involved understanding and exploring the cognitive maps that people develop and use for navigating "reality," had tremendous implications for "personality."

Lewis (1982) describes how he titled his original from his studies under Richard Bandler and John Grinder as "*A Model for a Process*

*Theory of Personality.*” He understood, as many who followed, that when we change someone’s *reference structure* (i.e., one’s “model of the world”) “personality” itself changes. It has to.

In 1988, Wyatt Woodsmall and Tad James wrote the first book on one of the most exciting NLP domains, time-lines. In *Time Line Therapy: The Basis of Personality* they presented NLP patterns regarding how we code and process the concept of “time” and showed how this mapping or programming plays a central role in “personality.” They also identified other key components of personality in addressing the NLP domain of the *Meta-Programs*.

When Dr Bodenhamer and I co-authored our work on Meta-Programs (1997), we sought to extend the perceptual filters by integrating facets of Cognitive Psychology, General Semantics, and Developmental Psychology. *Figuring Out People: Design Engineering Using Meta-Programs* (1997) most essentially addresses *personality*. The research and writing that went into that work renewed in both of us an interest in applying NLP to *personality disorders*. As it did, we began thinking and planning a second volume of *Figuring Out People* with the focus on personality.

In that discussion, we agreed about the value of following up *Figuring Out People* with a more scholarly work, and specifically one that would apply the numerous domains and models within NLP to the more serious problems of “personality disorders.” As a result, while I began writing a text to that end, Bob used his counseling practice to think through and apply the concepts on a daily basis with people suffering from many different kinds of “personality disorders.”

During the next year, as we continued to think about the approach we wanted to take in applying NLP to personality and “personality disorders,” we happened upon many new applications of the Meta-States Model. This led to the introduction of several new sub-models and distinctions in NLP. We have included these in this work as *the Three Meta-Domains Model, Values as a Meta-Level Phenomenon, etc.*

Then the work got bogged down.

And so it stayed until I met two of the most respectable NLP Trainers and Thinkers, Dr Richard Bolstad and Margot Hamblett. Meeting them for the first time at the NLP Health Conference in Denmark in 1999, our common interests in applying NLP to personality quickly became obvious. Richard and Margot, in fact, were at the time writing a series of excellent articles on depression, schizophrenia, and other major personality disorders in the NLP Journal, *Anchor Point*. I asked them to collaborate with us on this project since their writings obviously put them at the cutting edge of NLP in forging new applications and patterns.

Consequently I have collected in this work the differing approaches from Bob and myself and Richard and Margot as we have utilized our knowledge and experience in applying NLP to transforming the structure of personality from limiting patterns to enhancing ones.

The four of us share a belief in the exciting and dynamic nature of NLP as a cognitive model of human functioning. We all appreciate the richness of NLP to provide many ways to map things. We recognize that there's no "one right way" to understand or do things. If a map enables us to navigate a particular territory and achieve certain objectives, then it works for that purpose. And another mapping may also empower us to do the same. We do not see this as a contradiction, but as a complement, especially when dealing with the systemic features of the human mind-body system. It does not mean that someone is right and someone else has to be wrong, but only that we have several choices. If you find differences in our approaches in the following chapters, we have left that intact to illustrate this richness.

Regarding this work, Richard has noted this:

In this work, we likewise approach personality disordering from two different perspectives. In a sense, our (Margot and Richard's) chapters could be likened to Axis I, and Michael and Bob's chapters to Axis II. The interweaving of these two perspectives gives you choices in making sense of the clients you assist.

We have noted in the Table of Contents which chapters belong to whom and yet as you read the text, the difference in style will

make that abundantly clear. Throughout the text we have summarized various domains of NLP and Neuro-Semantics as well as providing additional references. I have also added a final page after the last chapter for recommended books with other NLP and Neuro-Semantic Patterns.

### *Who Should Read this Book?*

I have primarily directed this work toward the mental health worker (social workers, professional licensed counselors, family and marriage counselors, etc.). Yet it is equally directed toward anyone coaching and consulting with people, working with troubled people, and using the latest patterns for re-directing consciousness. In view of that, we highly urge anyone who wants to use these NLP and Neuro-Semantics patterns with skill and expertise to consult professionals who provide qualified training.

*L. Michael Hall  
Colorado, USA  
Spring, 2000*

## 8) The Inter-Personal Context

The inter-personal context that we grow up in also plays a crucial role in how we order and disorder our “personality.” The states of our parents and other significant adults create the first context within which we develop. What characterized these states?

Depression	Negativity
Accusatory (blaming, critical)	Hatefulness
Jealousy	Suspicion
Anger and hostility	Curiosity
Fear/worry	Religiosity
Curiosity & learning	Respect
Disrespect	Frustration
Fatigue and tiredness	Playfulness
Dignity	Care
Sadness (grieving)	

The quality, nature, and kind of states that we grow up in *set the context* for personality development. It offers a map of what one can expect, of possibilities, of taboos, etc. As we explore the inter-personal context within which we made our maps, learned how to cognize (think about) the world, we discover the “personality” styles that our environment predisposes us to.

These contexts also provide us with what we have responded, or reacted, to that has formed and molded our perception. Our perceptions thus come *embedded* in specific contexts. We then store our information as “meaningful configurations” (i.e. beliefs, values, understandings, etc.). From this we then build Meta-States about things—our interpretations and attributions of meanings. We do this to cope, to adapt, to defend ourselves.

Figure 2.3

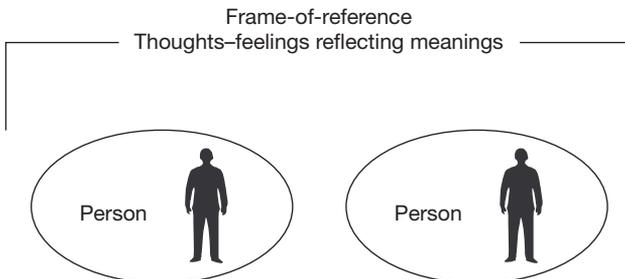
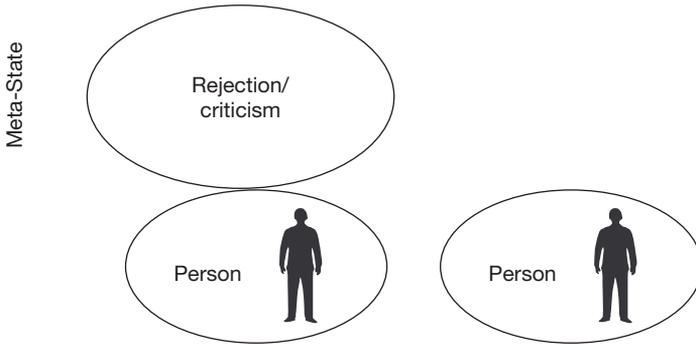


Figure 2.4



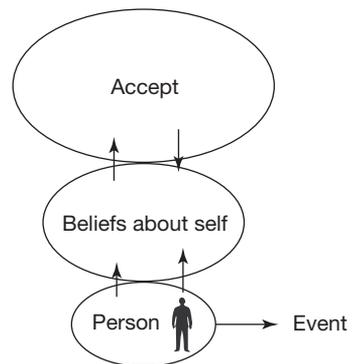
In addition to the emotional and meaning contexts in which we grow up, our parents and others bring other states to bear on our responses. Using the Meta-States model, we refer to this as *inter-personal meta-stating*.

We developed Meta-States, beliefs, responses as we processed information and thereby developed self-concepts, and self-schemas. If our states and Meta-States become characterized by rigid rules ("I must always do a perfect job") so that we feel a constant evaluation, this leads to inflexibility. Eventually over time, our beliefs broaden and become more absolute and extreme.

### 9) Habituation and acceptance of habituation

As we then become used to these states, we come to *accept them* (dysfunctional though they be) as our "reality," fate, and future. Then as we come to accept our dysfunctional beliefs, this sets up an ever larger level frame. The result? We lose our ability to reality-test them!

Figure 2.5



This *acceptance* of our “self” beliefs about our everyday life (a meta Meta-State) then solidifies as our “personality” structure. *Beliefs*, which exist as a Meta-State structure, create our basic orientation to reality. Thus once we have constructed, installed, and accepted various beliefs about our self at a Meta-Level, we use that Meta-Level awareness to perceive and interpret things. Nor will we give up or relinquish these self-constructions (“personality” structures) until we have deframed them and invented new and more adaptive beliefs as our strategies for “being.”

These Meta-Level over-arching beliefs (as our “personality” schemas) become deeply ingrained and entrenched. They form the very framework of our “personality.”

## ***“Personality” as Meta-States***

“*Personality*” then begins as a primary state of thoughts-and-emotions as we experience the sensory based world of events. At this point in our development, we experience very primitive states of pleasure or pain driven by hunger, thirst, wetness, dryness, etc.

From there we develop ideas and concepts. We develop concepts *about* our experiences, “time,” purpose and destiny, people, “human nature,” “self,” etc. The overall configuration of all of these states and Meta-States begins to order our basic *personality*. Adler described the result as our “*life-style*,” i.e. our way of being in the world.

As Meta-Level phenomena, these higher level states give us a sense of stability. Our concepts (especially those concepts of “self”) stabilize us. These frames, beliefs, values, etc. also begin to feel and seem so “real.” Via our state-*about*-state structuring of consciousness, we *set frames of reference* or frames of meaning and then use them as our referencing system. This generates our neuro-semantic structures. It goes beyond the associative meaning of stimulus—response patterning. It goes beyond one event, feeling, or thought associated or linked to another. Now we move up and create another kind of meaning making, *Contextual Meaning or Frame Meaning*.

## Chapter 5

# *The RESOLVE Model and “Personality”*

### *Using NLP for Resolving Problems*

#### *From Personality Understanding to Transformation*

If we construct “personality” through our thinking, feeling, deciding, valuing, believing, etc., and if there is indeed *a structure* to how we “do” personality, then can we *change* our “personality?” Can “personality” be transformed?

Yet bet it can.

How?

One way to assist someone to change successfully involves finding and altering the strategy which the person uses. And sure enough, there is even a “*strategy*” for this, “an organized sequence of internal representations and external actions” that we can perform to assist someone in changing. The RESOLVE Model was developed by Bolstad and Hamblett as a way to summarize many of the NLP presuppositions and processes. From here, we’ll let them describe it in their own words.

#### *The RESOLVE Model*

The RESOLVE model describes a *helping sequence* in terms of a simple seven stage model using the acronym RESOLVE. It takes a truly skillful and knowledgeable Practitioner to actually deliver the personal transformations promised by NLP. Using NLP in a helpful way involves much more than just a set of techniques. We also

have to have a map of the process of change, a map that's meta to the individual change processes that allows us to keep track of the process and where we are at any given time. To that end, we here introduce *the 7 stages of the RESOLVE model*:

- 1) Resourceful state for the Practitioner
- 2) Establish rapport
- 3) Specify outcome
- 4) Open up model of world
- 5) Leading to desired state
- 6) Verify change
- 7) Ecological exit

### *“R”—Resourceful State for the Practitioner*

The first stage in this model aims simply to access a confident and competent state with regard to our abilities to embody the NLP presuppositions and to adopt a clear awareness about our role with a client. What does that involve?

In the 1960s and 1970s, counseling developers Robert Carkhuff and Bernard Berenson published a number of research studies showing that helping interactions tend to influence clients either for better *or* worse. They identified a number of measures of successful human functioning which showed that helpers who function well on these dimensions are able to assist others to function well on these dimensions too.

They discovered that helpers who function poorly on these dimensions actually influence clients to deteriorate in their functioning (Carkhuff and Berenson, 1977, pp. 5, 35). Carkhuff and Berenson likened most psychotherapists to professional lifeguards with extensive training in rowing a boat, throwing a ring buoy, and giving artificial respiration, but without the ability to swim.

“They cannot save another because, given the same circumstances, they could not save themselves.”

Effectively using NLP in consulting with clients means that we congruently use the same processes for accessing resourceful

## Chapter 12

# NLP and NS Patterns for Transforming “Personality”

Throughout the previous chapters we have repeatedly referenced various NLP Patterns and suggested using them in working with clients. We will continue to do that in the following chapters. So, before ending this section of the book and beginning the next section that will address specific *personality disorderings*, we want to present some of the most basic NLP patterns. I say “some” because there are far too many to put into one chapter. Hall and Belnap (1997) collected 77 of the most commonly known and used patterns in their book, *The Sourcebook of Magic*. You can find the NLP patterns in many other sources as well.

Many years ago, psychoanalytic therapist, Dr Stephen M. Johnson took many of the NLP patterns that you will find here and integrated them into his work. *Characterological Transformation: The Hard Work Miracle* (1985) used 6-Step Reframing (pp. 111–115), Resource Accessing (pp. 116ff), Reframing (pp. 110–115), V-K Dissociation (pp. 119ff), etc. *Characterological Transformation* used these very patterns in addressing these stabilized difficulties within the context of the psychoanalytic model.

### *Patterns for Personality*

In detailing specifically *how* “subjective experience” has structure in the previous chapters, we have simultaneously suggested that the particular *states* that we mean and address in psychotherapy operate according to a pattern or strategy. Our mind-body or neuro-linguistic experiences are *ordered, sequenced, and managed* according to a plan of some sort. When we *stop* running a particular plan, we can no longer *do* that experience. It’s not that we don’t have *the skill* to do so, but that we *do not run it*.

Conversely, *healthy personality orderings* also have a structure and form. Richard Bandler and John Grinder initiated NLP upon the basis that “brains go places” and that we can learn to “run our own brains,” and teach them to go in the directions that will enhance our lives. That’s the purpose of all of the following patterns.

You will find the following NLP patterns sequenced and described in terms of *step-by-step instructions*. These operate as the bare bones of the processes and, for the most part, they will get the job done. Of course, knowing the model and developing mastering with these forms enables one to do so with artistry, style, and elegance. And when a person moves to that level, the processes do not seem like “formulas” at all, but rich and meaningful communications between consultant (therapist) and client.

### *Collapsing Anchors Pattern*

A state of consciousness always involves both mind-and-body. When we experience two states that radically differ (relaxing and tensing, feeling afraid and joyful) operating at the same time, they tend to interfere with each other. This pattern accesses both and then fires them off simultaneously to force them into *one neurology*. This typically causes each state to collapse and so disperses neurological energies. This frequently results in confusion, disorientation, interruption, and even some slight amnesia.

This pattern works especially well for changing feelings and behaviors resulting from prior experiences that are now unuseful. It utilizes “unconscious” processes and so does not depend upon a person understanding the process. Use this pattern when you have two states that conflict and sabotage each other, or when you have an unresourceful state (an old anchored experience) that creates serious interference.

#### *The Pattern*

- 1) *Access an unresourceful state.* Invite, elicit, or just catch a person in a negative state and set an anchor for it. To do this with their conscious awareness, invite them to talk about it



Personality is not a 'thing,' it is a process. When we discuss personality, what we are talking about is a system of responding and relating or, more precisely, a set of *behaviors*. This is good news for those who deal with, or suffer with, personality problems. What it means is that personality can be *reordered* and *reprogrammed* in a way that is both beneficial and liberating.

***The Structure of Personality*** begins by exploring how we actively 'pattern' experience. Guiding us through the cognitive system of internal representation, it examines the contexts and environments in which such patterning arises, and the higher levels at which we produce beliefs and values that determine our behaviors. Once it has identified the process of 'producing a personality,' it presents strategies that will alter those behaviors and reprogram personality, targeting each stage of personality production—and in particular, the stage at which the client forms *core beliefs*.

Coaching the reader in a number of effective and specially adapted NLP techniques, ***The Structure of Personality*** includes reordering strategies such as the R.E.S.O.L.V.E. model—that ingeniously sequences a number of key tasks that form an important part of change work, and the Personal Strengths Model—that determines which NLP techniques will be useful for you or for your client. Addressing general and specific behavior problems, such as schizophrenia, paranoia and addiction, it is an essential reference for counselors, therapists and NLP practitioners, presenting effective solutions to personality disorders.

"A bold and courageous step with exciting possibilities. The authors have dismantled the diagnostic nomenclature offering new perspectives for treatment while postulating that personality is not static; not a thing, but an ongoing, evolving process and, if dysfunctional, can be restructured. The book should prove to be a milestone in our pursuit for sanity."

**Rie Anderson, M.A., LMHC, NBCDCH, Clinical Psychotherapist.**

"*The Structure of Personality* is a major step in creating a cognitive map using Neuro-Semantics and Neuro-Linguistic Programming to understand the relationship between a person's thinking and his or her personality development."

**Jim Walsh, M.A., Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Certified School Psychologist, Certified Neuro Semantics and Neuro Linguistics Trainer.**

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**Bobby G. Bodenhamer, D.Min.** has been director and trainer for the NLP Center in Gastonia NC for more than a decade, and is now director of the First Institute of Neuro-Semantics.

**Richard Bolstad, Ph.D.** is an NLP trainer and developer of the Transforming Communication Seminar who lives in New Zealand.

**Margot Hamblett** was also an NLP trainer, co-developer of the Transforming Communication Seminar with Richard, and his life partner, until her recent death.

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