

§ 1. If you've ever thought that talking to someone was a waste of breath, you might be comforted to know that in some cases you are right — the words we utter have very little effect on people compared with how we say them and what we are doing when we say them.

§ 2. Recent research has shown that in a presentation before a group of people, 55 per cent of the effect on the audience is determined by the body language of the speaker, 38 per cent by their tone of voice and only 7 per cent by the actual content of what is being said. Body language speaks louder than words.

§ 3. So can performance and communication skills really be improved? It would appear so, according to Neuro-Linguistic Programming, or NLP, which was developed in the 1970s by therapist Richard Bandler and linguistics professor John Grinder. They asked: "What makes the difference between someone who is competent at something and someone who is excellent?" They examined the behaviour of people generally considered to be examples of excellence in their respective fields to identify what they were doing consciously (*осознанно*) and unconsciously. Surprisingly, they discovered patterns of communication which all these high achievers were using to produce **consistently** positive results. They found that they were able to copy these strategies and achieve similar success, so they developed a way of teaching these skills to other people, a method they called Neuro-Linguistic Programming.

§ 4. They have discovered how people achieve mutual understanding, both consciously and unconsciously, by observing the body language and voice patterns of the person they are talking to. If you're dealing with someone who is painfully shy, you're not going to make a good connection by overwhelming them with your cheerfulness. By matching someone's behaviour we can gain their **confidence**, achieve a good relationship and improve the quality of communication — in other words, we can get on someone's wavelength. NLP practitioners claim anyone can learn how to do this, and quite quickly. NLP is all about taking one's unconscious, not very highly developed skills and practising them consciously.

§ 5. Another powerful aspect of NLP is its use of positive thinking. We can become aware of the negative and turn it to the positive. Once it is framed in a positive way as a goal, the brain can begin to cope with it and then apply itself to achieving that outcome. To put it another way, if you don't know where you're going, it makes it harder to get there.

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The therapist and the professor developed NLP when they discovered that

- 1) successful people communicate in similar ways.
- 2) people copy methods of communication.
- 3) competence depends on good communication.