

Matrix

POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE NEURO COACH

Tuula Masalin, BMPF7013

Why I chose to do the NLP Practitioner course

I did my first NLP Practitioner course in 2008 and by 2018 I had attended 12 NLP courses overall (4 times more NLP Practitioner) with different trainers. In this matrix “course” refers to the 2008 NLP Practitioner course unless otherwise specified. Initially, I chose the course for personal reasons, however, after completing 5 or 6 NLP courses my motivation for continuing had also become about improving my professional skills. It was no longer just for personal reasons.

In 2007, I was working in customer service on weekdays and in a restaurant on weekends. I felt that my work was meaningless, and at that time, I was also anxious and angry quite often. I was wondering what I was going to do with the rest of my life when I remembered NLP which I had gotten familiar with years earlier when I was in an amateur theatre group and our theatre director brought it to our rehearsals. I remembered NLP was something which had opened my mind to new perspectives and had made me feel centred and hopeful. The reason I chose the NLP Practitioner course I did was that the theatre director recommended the NLP trainer she had studied with because in her words, he was “logical and sensible”.

I had always blamed external factors, such as my work or customers or my boyfriend for my misery. Right from the first weekend of my NLP studies I realized that I could influence my own thoughts, feelings, experiences, and my whole life. That was the insight that inspired my passion for NLP and during that first weekend, I decided to become an NLP trainer.

Goals and outcomes

Relevance to my learning and development

The relevance of my first NLP Practitioner course to my learning and development was significant. I still didn't understand the path I had chosen when I took the first course. It led me to study NLP year after year, as well as other related subjects such as relaxation, hypnosis, coaching, social panorama, enneagram, restorative mediation and so on. My journey in all these areas continues. The NLP Practitioner course was also a turning point

in the journey I called, “Being responsible for my own life and well-being”. The journey had started years earlier when at the age of 25, I tattooed a symbol on my neck that signifies peace and security. Finding peace and security had been my unconscious goal ever since. Now when I think back in time, I realize that attending an NLP course and other studies, have been steps toward that goal. I finally achieved my goal 15 years after getting that tattoo and that’s the greatest evidence that the course was very relevant to me.

The most significant things that I learned in the NLP Practitioner course were about beliefs, how words affect me and other people, and that I can look at situations from at least 3 different perspectives. These increased my self-awareness and opened my view of the world.

I certainly learned a lot about how different people think, learn and process information, and what motivates them, but it was more theoretical, and it wasn’t until years later that I was able to apply the skills I had learned.

On the other hand, during my first NLP course I still had such a rigid mindset that I missed a lot of things, including ethics, although the trainer talked about it on several occasions. Even though I did not understand the code of ethics and did not consider it in my personal life, I intuitively acted on it when I was guiding my friends through NLP practices.

During my NLP Practitioner training and for many years after it, I was so excited about NLP that I pushed it on everyone. The reason I acted the way I did was because I didn’t know what boundaries meant, and I didn’t learn them until years later.

The fact that I did not recognize my own and others’ boundaries caused me to not respect the worldview of others. I was so excited that I pushed NLP on my loved ones, which made them withdraw, and resulted in me feeling frustrated and angry. I really became aware that the way I was talking about NLP was not productive when even in one job interview, I was asked if NLP is a religion. I have calmed down since then and while I’m still passionate about NLP, I no longer force it on everyone.

Relevance to my work and clients

This course was also the initial impetus for my work as an entrepreneur, NLP Trainer, coach, and lecturer, which I do today. During my first NLP Practitioner course I worked in a restaurant and kitchen, and I didn’t really know how to put what I have learned into

practice in my work. Two and a half years later I graduated as an NLP Trainer, and I started to do NLP coaching part-time as an entrepreneur.

The most concrete change my clients might have experienced during these years is the way I massaged them as I am also a certified masseuse. Before I studied NLP, I was doing massage on autopilot mode, and I was using too much force. The way I massaged clients reflected my way of interacting without respecting the boundaries of others and listening to the other person. When I started to study NLP, I realized that every customer and their body were unique and needed to be touched differently. Over the years, I've found that the more I have learned to interact with respecting another person's worldview, listening, and asking, the gentler and more sensitive my touch is when I massage my clients. I just recently received feedback that I am perceived as a pleasant masseuse because the client feels that their experience is important to me. So, my experience is that the NLP Practitioner course and where it led me, has been a life-changing experience even though the change took several years.

[My goals and expectations for the course](#)

My expectations for the course were vague and I hoped I would learn something that made me feel better and I got far more than I could even have imagined. Before the NLP studies I felt powerless and frustrated and I was behaving like a persecutor and a victim in my social relationships. I had struggled with not knowing how to get rid of my negative feelings and move towards feeling safe and at peace. The course was the beginning of my own journey of self-development and self-awareness. I also became aware that one of my core values was self-development along with security, freedom, honesty, and trust. Only years later did I become aware that connection was also a very important value to me, and it has driven me to study more in order to experience deeper connections with other people.

I did not have conscious goals at the beginning of my NLP studies but during our first training weekend our task was to come up with a 5-year plan. My goals were to: Achieve my goal weight, live healthy and take care of myself, write a book, live in a house by the lake, get a meaningful job that matches my values and understand and accept people's different views and thoughts.

Despite this 5-year plan and several interventions over the years, I am still overweight, and my lifestyle could be healthier. I also haven't written a book and don't live by the lake right now. Over the years, the goals related to my work and social interactions have been achieved. In addition, I didn't realize at the beginning of my NLP Practitioner training that, my decision to graduate as an NLP Trainer was my goal and I achieved it 2,5 years later.

I did not and have never had any detailed criteria for my goals. I do not even use the word 'goal' when I speak. The more I think about it, I find that my goals are based on my core values of connection, self-development, freedom, and security. I think I just have an urgent need to live up to my values. My way of doing and achieving things that are important to me is to get excited and convinced about something and make a decision based on that feeling. Alternatively, I talk about the thing I want and how I feel about it. Then I talk, think, and feel more about it and make choices and actions in the direction of the desired outcome.

How I was assessed

On the last weekend of the 2008 NLP Practitioner training, I received feedback from two peer students when we did an exercise together in a group of three using the skills we had learned during the training in a variety of ways. I was assessed to be a peaceful and intensive listener, I gave space and enough time, my coaching was accurate and thorough, and I took the process forward with determination. The things that I needed to develop in my coaching were to maintain rapport and stay connected with the client all the time, and during a long period of silence to check how the client was feeling about the process.

How I knew it was a success

I knew my first NLP training was a success for me because I learned to understand that I could influence my own life. The course was also important to me, and my mental well-being and it fuelled my interest in the subject and ignited my desire to learn more about NLP, human thinking, behaviour, motivation, beliefs and so on. Furthermore, I knew it was successful for me based more on how I felt than anything else and of course the results I can see now, 14 years later.

Training methods used

The teaching methods and resources used in the NLP Practitioner training were written material, drawing, and writing on a flipchart, giving examples, and telling stories, showing demos, and practicing in pairs and small groups. Further resources available were 3 assistant trainers in addition to the head trainer. There may have been other resources available that I did not pay attention to or that I was not aware of.

My learning styles

Personally, I learned best by listening and writing word for word what the trainer said, watching how the trainer guided the NLP practice demonstration and mimicking his way of coaching. I also learned from conversations we had in study groups and during the breaks. I continued to practice outside of training by asking my friends if they would allow me to practice coaching and guide them through different NLP exercises, and it made my guidance smoother and more confident.

Schedule of NLP Practitioner

The first NLP Practitioner training began in January 2008 and ended in June 2008. During that time, we had 7 contact training weekends and, to my recollection, had 16 study days and 132 hours.

Supervision and time management

I contacted my supervisor, Denis Coleman, on the 1st of May via e-mail and we agreed to have our first meeting on Zoom on the 5th of May. In the Zoom, meeting Denis helped me to clarify what I needed to do and in what order. It was a relief that Denis trusted my ability to schedule my own studies and didn't put any pressure on me. We agreed on an approximate date for when he would need to see a first draft of my matrix. He suggested that I record the coaching session after submitting the matrix but that I wouldn't need to send it to him. After doing those I could concentrate the remainder of my time on the 4500-word assignment.

I was wondering if I should do my coaching session recording in Finnish or in English as I had never coached in English before. I had been told it is possible to do it in my own language, but the transcription needed to be in English. Denis and I agreed I would do my coaching recording in English as Denis does not speak Finnish.

I sent my matrix to Denis for the first time on May 20th and I sent the second version on the 30th of May and in the last e-mail I also asked for some advice related to the assignment. Both times I received feedback on how I could do better, and Denis advised that me I did not need to send the third version of the matrix, the coaching recording nor the transcription to him. He recommended that it was more important to use tutoring time for the assignment. He also advised me to focus on writing the assignment.

On Monday, 6th of June, I asked for some advice on how to structure my assignment. During the week I asked more questions about structuring my assignment. On Thursday, 16th of May I informed Denis that I would send the first draft of my assignment to him on the following Monday, 20th of June.

On Monday, 20th of June I sent the first draft of my assignment to Denis, and he sent me feedback the same evening. I was going to send my second draft to him on Thursday, 23rd of June but Denis let me know that was too late as couldn't guarantee that he would be able to send me feedback in time for my 24th of June submission deadline to the University.

I sent my second draft to him on Wednesday, 22nd of June and Denis gave me feedback the same evening with recommendations for improvement and wished me luck for my submission.

I was happy with our supervision relationship, and I was nice to have met him in our meeting on Zoom. The 2 things I still remember Denis saying to me and were comforting to me were that, "He is straight as a bull," which was a relief to me as I find it laborious to try to read between lines. The second thing was that, "There are no stupid questions," as after this I did not need to feel any doubt about whether I can or cannot ask Denis about whatever is bothering me related to my portfolio and assignment.

After that first meeting I found it easier to ask questions by e-mail as I could read the answer several times and I also had time to think about what to ask. For me, it was hard to do what Denis had advised me to do and focus only on one model. This was because I

was so attached to my own way of thinking, I couldn't have done what he suggested as I did not have the experience or a clear picture of what I was supposed to do when writing the assignment. Overall, I am very happy to have Denis as my supervisor.