Neuro-Linguistic Programming is a self development system that focuses on understanding and improving subjective experience. NLP practitioners hold that the key to improving ourselves lies within our own minds. Learning how to control our mind will open the doors to greater happiness and effectiveness in life. Much like the instruction manual of an electronic device will teach you how to utilize all the features, NLP can act as an instruction manual for the mind. By studying examples of excellence and building models from these examples, there is an opportunity for anybody to learn how to do anything.

One of the main uses of Neuro-Linguistic Programming is centered on communication. Some of the earliest models developed within NLP were based on super effective psychotherapists. By observing and breaking down what these psychotherapists were doing in their sessions with clients various models for effective communication were developed.

One of the earliest uses of NLP was in building rapport with patients, customers, and other people we interact with on a daily basis. The developers of NLP noticed early on that specific behaviors and questions broke rapport with their clients. Building rapport is vital in any endeavor that requires communication or a transaction of any kind. Rapport is what builds trust between two people and allows for smooth communication. Initial forays into rapport building discovered that people in deep rapport mirror each other’s bodies, gestures, voice qualities, tempo, breathing, and more. Learning how to adopt these different skills is one of the most direct ways that NLP can help you influence others.

However, mirroring is general knowledge among the sales and business communities nowadays. Sometimes mirroring a person will result in a positive outcome but if they notice what you’re doing it quite often will completely backfire. Luckily, there are other ways to influence people other than mirroring their gestures or voice inflection.

One model that NLP has developed is known as the meta model. The meta model is a set of tools that help you identify how and where information is lost in communication. The way we think about the world and the way we communicate about the world are vastly different. Because of this difference, much of what we try to communicate is not smoothly translated. Learning about the meta model will help you ask specific questions that will give you more information about how your client or customer views the world. When you can better understand where they are coming from you will be able to establish rapport with them much more effectively. Essentially, this model is built around the idea of using very precise and specific language.

Another NLP model that deals with communication is the Milton model. It is almost like the opposite of the meta model. The Milton model is built around the idea that using deliberately vague and general language will allow your client or customer to open up about their thoughts more easily. By using the Milton model you are avoiding using overly specific language that may not relate to the way your customer or client sees the world. By being artfully vague you don’t remove possibilities of expression or thought.
Neuro-Linguistic Programming is an incredibly broad and diverse discipline. It has successfully been used to treat phobias, high stress, helped people learn new skills, and communicate more effectively. By understanding the intricacies of our own minds a little more fully we unlock a whole level of possibility that most never realize. Using NLP to influence others by establishing and building rapport is only one possibility of this incredibly powerful and diverse discipline.