

# Coaching for business

## success using NLP

By Bev James

**L**ife progression is about more than waiting for fate to play its hand – it is about creating your own chances. One of the aspects of NLP that first appealed to me was its use as a powerful tool for personal change and development. This article tells the story of how NLP enabled my own progression as a business owner – and shares my personal top three NLP tools for working with entrepreneurs.

As an entrepreneur's coach and MD of The Coaching Academy, I have seen how incredibly powerful NLP becomes on a professional level when combined with, and underpinned by, the principles and structure of the coaching process.

### From delegate to MD in 1000 days

The Coaching Academy (TCA) is the largest coach training provider for professional coaches in the UK. In 2005 I attended one of their training courses to support a friend. I was curious, but had no burning desire to train as a coach – as I was already an NLP Master Practitioner, to be honest, I thought I already was one! Once there however, I was so impressed by the trainers' passion for coaching that I was hooked. Having found out that there was more to coaching than I had previously realised, by lunchtime I knew that gaining a professional coaching qualification was something that I wanted to do.

I remember standing at the front of their empty training room and imagining I was a trainer for TCA. Deep in thought, I stood by the projector and looked around as if the room was full of delegates and I was taking the session. I was jolted back to reality when a fellow delegate asked me what on earth I

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was doing. I said “I am going to be a trainer for The Coaching Academy and I am going to be standing right here.” She laughed and suggested that I had better sit down before the real trainer came in.

Within 6 months I had completed my Coaching Academy training, set up a successful coaching business and had paying clients.

### Keep on asking questions – you can never know too much

The power of coaching lies in the questions. Asking the right question at the right time unlocks jewels of self-awareness and future potential – and that is where NLP becomes so powerful. As a tool on its own, NLP it is extremely powerful – but within a coaching framework it becomes a force for directive change and a tool that enables people to make immense progress very fast.

Even after qualifying as a coach, I was still hungry to learn more and I was so impressed by what I had experienced with TCA, I offered to help out for free as a tutor assistant at future events, supporting the trainers and delegates.

Then on one Sunday after a TCA event, I had the opportunity to speak with Jonathan Jay, the former owner. I told him how the Academy had inspired me and gave me the belief and training to launch my own business. I also told him (rather

cheekily) of my goal to become a TCA trainer.

Jonathan witnessed my genuine passion for and belief in coaching and TCA and he asked if I would like to present the closing session at the next event: ‘Turning your Passion into your Profession’.

With my heart in my mouth and my kneecaps jumping I said a very confident ‘yes’, trying to ignore the butterflies that appeared in my stomach.

The truth was, I had delivered small-scale training programmes and was fairly experienced and confident in front of groups of 30 or so, but at that time I had a limiting belief about standing in front of 100-plus people, which was the size the group was likely to be.

The week leading up to the event was interesting to say the least as I battled with and defeated my own limiting beliefs. It is often said that your first coaching client will probably be yourself! I wasn't my first client but I was perhaps my most challenging one.

The great day came and I stood proudly at the front of the room. I was a Coaching Academy trainer. I really enjoyed delivering the session. I was so full of excitement about my own coaching journey that I could sense some of that energy was being projected onto the delegates in my sessions.



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### Not everything we do needs to have a price attached to it. Sometimes the greater value lies in the knowledge learned and the experience gained.

Over time, I became more and more involved in TCA and as a trainer I developed to present part of the Small Business diploma in addition to courses on NLP and the coaching certificate weekend courses.

1,000 days on from being on the initial course with my friend, I became the Managing Director. Fortunately for me, the team I had been supporting some years earlier, was delighted to now be supporting me.

I'm pleased to say that as a result of a lot of hard work from the team, TCA has gone from strength to strength and continues to grow its reputation as the largest coach training provider in the world.

In addition to that immense business project I've also been fortunate enough to partner with BBC TV's favourite ‘Dragon’ James Caan to set up The Entrepreneurs' Business Academy (EBA), an organisation which draws upon James' vast business experience to offer a range of programmes specifically aimed at small business owners.

### Bev's three favourite NLP techniques for working with Entrepreneurs:

### THE DISNEY STRATEGY

Walt Disney was famously one of the most commercially successful dreamers and innovators in the world. Robert Dilts adapted his approach as a three stage NLP technique, incorporating the Dreamer, Realist and Critic stages of thinking. These are invaluable for helping entrepreneurs go through a creative process to develop and evaluate each new business concept.

The process works best as an ongoing cycle of development that is repeated until each idea has been fully evaluated and you have formulated a solid plan.

My approach to learning how to be a coach and envisaging my future within the corporation was the Disney Strategy in action. I use the approach so naturally that I am barely aware that I am using it. Many would-be entrepreneurs who are energised by new ideas benefit from the rigour of this approach.

### CHUNKING

Chunking works well on its own or as a part of the Critic stage of the Disney Strategy. Many business people speak globally in Big Picture language, whereas others focus on the detail of the specifics. Being stuck in either mode will limit overall progress. Most of the entrepreneurs I coach communicate in big picture generalisations, so helping them to

communicate their goals in smaller chunks makes huge projects become achievable – one planned step at a time.

Chunking is integral to the approach of TCA. The goal of becoming a coach is broken down into affordable modules that are designed to help people to make progress in a supportive environment

### PERCEPTUAL POSITIONS

Being able to see things from another person's view point is an essential leadership skill. I have coached many entrepreneurs who are driven, fast paced, determined and have laser-sharp focus. Working with personality styles different to their own can propose a challenge – for them and for the other person. Adopting the other person's perspective can help leaders to appreciate other people's points of view and to modify their approach accordingly.

So in true coaching style, permit me to finish by asking YOU some questions...

1. In what way(s) are you currently using your NLP skills to good effect?
2. How can you build on this?
3. What are you doing as part of your continual professional development?
4. How can you make your next 1000 days your best yet? ■

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