

Hypnosis, NLP, and the Combative Edge

I truly believe that Hypnosis and NLP it is going to be the next "nexus" in combative training. Let me explain

As trainers, we attempt to make the trained response the dominate response. How do we do this, by teaching gross motor skills and utilizing the training techniques of REPETITION. and scenario based training.

As a Certified Hypnotherapist CHT. (My training was through a company called the "Meridian Institute, 180hrs of training, and my Certification is through the "International Medical and Dental Hypnotherapy Association"), at my school I have not only been able to increase retention and usability of specific motor skills through Hypnosis and NLP techniques, but I have been able to decrease the amount of time needed to get the specific motor skill taught to be downloaded into the subconscious mind. What does this mean, when hypnosis is used with physical repetition, the amount of time needed to become unconsciously competent is decreased dramatically !!!! This is a training technique that both amateur and professional athletes have been using for years.

Traditionally, trainers have used lots of repetition to pound a specific motor skill through the conscious/ critical mind, and into the subconscious mind. Through hypnosis, we can take a motor skill program, and directly download it (by-passing the conscious/critical mind) into the subconscious. It must be understood however, that hypnosis is not an alternative to actual physical repetition, but when used in conjunction with repetition, hypnosis can greatly increase motor skill performance and warrior instinct !!!

Here is one way that I use hypnosis to increase motor skill performance:

Step #1:

New motor skill taught and chunked until student is consciously competent

Step #2:

Once student is consciously competent, induction into state of hypnosis where I now download program into subconscious.

Step #3:

Once Motor Skill program has been downloaded into subconscious, student is taken through a guided imagery session, where the motor skill taught is being utilized in a real world scenario.

Step #4:

Student is exited from hypnosis, and motor skill is again physically practiced. From my experience, you can usually see immediate results.

On average, depending upon the motor skill being learned, 6-12 sessions of hypnosis are utilized. A fellow police trainer has found for firearms training, an increase in performance can take place after only ONE session.

I also teach my students, to utilize self-guided imagery session, which only enhances and compounds the specific Motor Skill(s)

The science and art of hypnosis and NLP are two tools that all trainers should be utilizing with students. Like any tool, get professional training and certification first. Do your homework, there are a number of schools out there that advertise that they offer "certified hypnotherapist" and "NLP" training, but really don't, and only want to take your money. My CHT training was over 180hrs.

To my knowledge, there are only two individuals presently using hypnosis and NLP in combatives training, myself and a fellow police trainer by the name of Brian Willis. In fact, the FBI is so impressed with Brian's results, they have sent representatives from Quantico's physical training branch to look into what is being done by us Canadians.

Yes, Gross motor skills are easily learned through repetition, but with the inclusion of hypnosis and NLP, they are learned faster and in combative context. Remember, the subconscious mind cannot tell the difference between fantasy and reality. Through proper and professional guided imagery sessions (hypnosis), I can place my students in "any" combative situation where they are there in mind, body, and spirit. This is very powerful due to the 7 "P" principal of personal safety : "proper pre-planning prevents piss poor performance"

Hypnosis and motor skill performance enhancement is real. Both amateur and professional athletes have been using it for years (I suggest you read a book called " The Mental Edge") Unfortunately, as a professional Hypnotherapist, I must fight the myths surrounding this topic because of what stage hypnotists do. I too was a non-believer until I was exposed to it. I'm a big believer in "don't tell me something is going to work, show me it is going to work" The results that I have seen, as well as other trainers, speak for themselves.

This is not Voodoo or sitting on a mountain to be enlightened. Hypnosis is both a science and art that CAN and WILL give a Combative Edge !!!!!

What is NLP ?, My short definition is:

Neuro: Brain

Linguistic: Language

Programming: Behavior

NLP is often referred to as the "Software for the Brain", NLP is a model for being able to duplicate human excellence and learn new behavior at an accelerated pace (primarily through communication). NLP is first and foremost an attitude, an attitude of curiosity and methodology. In my opinion, NLP is a method for "Modeling" excellence. There are two major areas that NLP is famous for:

- Advanced strategies for communication/influence (this is what I do)
- Fast and effective models for creating behavioral change

What NLP really is, is a completely unique synthesis of cybernetics, neurology, and linguistics that offers a person practical methods for rapid personal improvement. Really, NLP is the science of using your brain, your language and your behavior to get what you want.

I guess the caveat here is to understand that there are many different schools of NLP, just as there are many different schools of psychology. Each has their own take on NLP. There is however cross pollination in all.

What I have taken from my NLP studies is that every brain has the same neurological wiring, but from the moment you are born, you and your environment begin to program it so that it is unique to you alone. There is no other brain in the world like yours. We take in information through our senses, and process this information in a way that is unique to each individual on the planet. In doing so, we create software programs that run on automatic until we learn a new program. Our brain relies on our senses to bring them information. We see, hear, touch, taste, and smell things in the world. Once we do this, these sensory experiences are turned into a picture, a sound, or a feeling on the inside of our minds. I call this the language of the subconscious.

NLP teaches that there are three basic ways that a person (read combative student) will learn. Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic. Although all three may overlap, one will be the "primary" language of the subconscious.

Characteristics Of Visual People:

Visuals understand what you say by what they see. They turn your words into pictures and images. Their minds work like view-masters or movie cameras and are

happiest when you paint pictures for them. Visuals talk about seeing, how things appear, from a point of view.

Characteristics Of Auditory People:

Auditories are sound based people. They listen to how you say things. They get more information from how you say things than by what you show them. The paralinguistic cues (how you say what you say) are more important than your content. Their mind works like a jukebox or tape recorder. It plays back recordings to get an idea of what you are talking about.

Characteristics Of Kinesthetic People:

Kinesthetic people make decisions by how they feel rather than by what they see or hear. Their information comes predominantly from touch, feeling, emotions, gut instinct, hunches, and attitude more than what you say. They have a good kinesthetic memory and need to "feel it" before they trust you.

The language of the subconscious is very important for me to understand, because if I'm teaching a motor skill in a language that is not understood by my student(s) then learning is difficult or does not take place at all. This is where frustration can be seen in the student because in their words, "they just aren't getting it." A good instructor will learn to listen to the student in order to pick up on their language of the subconscious. If a student is painting a picture using visual words, when speaking to that person, the instructor must paint them a picture as well. If the student is talking about how things sound or feel to them, the instructor should be speaking in similar terms. Thus, the listener receives the message that the instructor hears and understands them. This is a major step in increasing the degree of "rapport" and understanding between you the instructor and student. If you treat a visual student like a Kinesthetic, the visual student will have troubles understanding and therefore, frustration builds and learning is stunted. To the subconscious, you are speaking a language that it does not understand..

When teaching combatives in a group context, I always demonstrate the technique (communicate what I am doing) in ways to cover off all three communication styles; visual, auditory, kinesthetic for the above noted reasons. This is something that I have identified that many instructors do not do. Many instructors only teach in their own specific "sub-conscious" language because that is how they learn and understand. These instructors do not know, because of lack of knowledge, that students "may" communicate/understand at a different level than their's. Remember, not everyone learns/communicates the same way. When students break off to practice the skill, I will then adapt the "subconscious language" to meet their individual communication style. This is especially true if a student is having difficulty performing a specific motor skill, and needs help. This is how I primarily use NLP in combatives here at my school, or when I conduct seminars.

Other nuggets I use from NLP include:

Questions are more powerful than affirmations:

People who do affirmations are wasting their time because they are actually setting up internal conflicts that cause them to activate the opposite of what they want.. When people look into a mirror and say "in every day and in every way, I am getting better and better", a part of their mind comes back and says, "bull!" doesn't it? It is just like if I told you that you have a blue shirt on when you actually have a red one on ! I say "nice blue shirt" and you say, "it's not blue, it's red." Then I say, "it's blue", and you say, "no it's red"... we could go on like this forever.... which is exactly what happens for most people when they do affirmations.

Instead of engaging yourself in this confrontative struggle with yourself, you could begin to ask yourself questions instead. Questions will always get you an answer. Questions change what you are focused on. They get you to focus on either what is good about you, your environment or your behavior or what is bad. An affirmation in the form of a question is 300 to 400 times more effective and will literally train your brain to translate the affirmation into your behavior. Remember, the brain learns quickly to move in directions. Questions direct the mind. They divide experiences and lead our attention. Questions demand an answer. This is why I teach in a combative context to ask yourself the question, "am I threatened, or am I challenged" If you find yourself in a threatened mind set and stay there, you are in trouble, hypervigilance will set in. If on the other hand you get challenged, the training and the experience that you have can now deal with the threat at hand. By challenging the brain, even if you do not have the training or experience to deal with the situation at hand, the brain will begin to adapt, overcome, and improvise to get itself out of danger. (please see my posting on the use of FEAR for more details)

NLP also gave me an understanding semantics, and their deeper meaning:

- I never use the word "try" as an instructor. To the subconscious brain, try denoted "failure". But how many times have you heard an instructor say, "just try it again." Instead use "do it again"
- I never use the word "defender" ie attacker/defender. Defending denotes "defensive" mindset. I want "offensive" mind set in my students, so I always substitute defender with "fighter" ie Attacker/Fighter
- I never use wrong or right. ie "that is the wrong way to use that technique." I always use desirable/less desirable. In the street, wrong will denote failure. Everything we do in combatives is desirable. Some techniques are more desirable than others.

Again, there are a number of differing schools when it comes to NLP. Each has their own take on what NLP can do, and where it can be used. I am only using NLP as an

aid to increase motor skill performance through communication/understanding be it visual, auditory, or kinesthetic.

Yes, NLP and hypnotherapy have some commonality, but I do use them quite differently. I use hypnosis for the purpose of:

- Dropping a specific motor skill directly into the subconscious mind, thus decreasing the amount of time needed to learn the motor skill with repetition alone
- Anchoring specific stimulus/response techniques at the subconscious level
- Teaching guided imagery (visualization) using a three step process:
 1. Visualize or imagine the accomplished goal or outcome
 2. Make a movie of how you achieved this goal
 3. Build a contingency plan (plan "B" abort technique should plan "A" fail)

In guided imagery ordinarily, the third step is what people do to program their mind for failure because they imagine everything going wrong, but not what they did to overcome it. Using this method of visualization, you program your mind for how to overcome adversity along the way if you encounter it. When you learn how to run your brain then a world of endless possibility and opportunity becomes available. This is especially important in combatives.

KNOWLEDGE AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF THAT KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Strength and Honor

Darren Laur
Integrated Street Combatives
personalprotection@shaw.ca