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NLP and Mastery*

The discipline known as NLP began, before it had a name, with an interdisciplinary community of people: Richard Bandler, John Grinder, Leslie Cameron, Mary Beth Megus, David Gordon, Robert Dilts, and myself, to name but a few. We were motivated by sheer curiosity about how we know, learn, and communicate; how we change, and how we influence the process of change in a well-formed, ecological way. The patterns of NLP were not imparted to us, but unfolded in our learning. Similarly, while the learning community of NLP includes the goal of imparting existing NLP patterns, our higher purpose for coming together is to unfold ourselves into unknown patterns and perspectives through and beyond the technology of NLP. Because we are a multi-cultural group, living in a multi-cultural world, we will bump into the edges of our maps of the world: our current ideas of what learning is; what is possible; what is worth changing; what NLP is; and who we are. This bump is a gift from the universe: a window of opportunity through which we can step in order to experience ourselves, our culture and our world from another perspective. The movement between multiple perspectives is the beginning of wisdom and world community.

In continuing to unfold NLP philosophy, concepts and technology, I would like to talk about mastery, and what is being referred to as the “New Coding” in NLP. I prefer to call this coding an alternative description, another description which is based on different roots. For example, the first description of NLP unfolded out of the disciplines of linguistics, Gestalt Therapy, and systems theory. This yielded the language patterns (the Meta Model) and their connec-

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tion with the deep structure of experience which in turn yielded the idea of representational systems and all the functions of representational systems, including input systems, output systems, strategies and submodalities, and the idea of separating behavior from intent.

The second description, or New Coding, developed from different roots: John Grinder's and my own understanding of NLP, Gregory Bateson's work with information theory and biology, the books of Carlos Castaneda about the Yacqui Way, and our African experience of drumming, dancing, singing and story-telling in the Congo. Integrating information from these areas yielded the ideas of states, unconscious/conscious relationship, perceptual positions, attention and multiple description.