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Patrick E Merlevede, M.Sc.

What Does Genetics Have to Tell Us about NLP?

I have been wanting to “revisit” the NLP presuppositions for a few years now. Some extensive reading in genetics research during the last few months has finally triggered my urge to write. And the moment I informed *NLP World* that I wanted to contribute this article, by coincidence(?), a discussion thread started on this very topic in the alt.psychology.nlp newsgroup. So here is “my 2 cents” in this discussion, including a comment on the Internet discussion.

In the past, I have witnessed NLP trainers insist on variations of presuppositions with a vigor that made clear that they had integrated them. Unfortunately, this often allowed no room for doubt by the beginning NLP practitioner. Sometimes the training conditions didn't seem to allow for “sitting around the table to share opinions, without having to change anything,” to paraphrase Gregory Bateson. To what extent do the NLP presuppositions need to be “true” (in the scientific meaning of the word) for NLP to be “valid”?

NLP has some presuppositions around the cluster of “resources” or “possibilities”. Some formulations are:

“People have all the resources necessary to make the changes they want.”

“If it is possible for someone, it's possible for me”.

We either have all the resources we need or we can create them.

This cluster of presuppositions probably came to NLP through the influence of Virginia Satir. Among of her therapeutic beliefs were:

“We have all the resources we need to cope successfully and to grow.”

“Change is possible. Even if external change is limited, internal change is possible.”