

Create and support Social Change with NLP – and touch the world with love and grace

Judith Lowe

Some of my NLP pals....

Well, my friend Glenda works with schools, especially with black and ethnic minority children, in setting up after-school clubs and projects. She wants to help the young people grow up to express themselves, develop their potential, be more confident and whole. She inspires a lot of people to join her.

John volunteers in his beautiful 12th century church. He values inclusion and is helping to restore and redesign the church space to accommodate the members of his parish community who use wheelchairs. He's also a skilled woodcarver and contributes to the symbolic and aesthetic aspects of the building – the spirit of place.

Liz is currently studying for an MSc in Responsibility and Business Practice – exploring social, environmental and ethical issues in business. She's passionate about building mutually beneficial relationships between business and more disadvantaged communities. She pioneers and sponsors schemes and partnerships to bring people together in new ways.

Among his many interests and passions, Simon loves adventure, fun and animals. He has volunteered in a zoo and even organised a 350 mile cycle ride to sponsor work with endangered species – gorillas are a strong favourite. He has also had a great time teaching, for free, NLP to children with disabilities in a school in India.

I could go on....

So many people I've met in my twenty years of working with NLP are passionate, involved and caring. I know a lot of visionaries – maybe NLP attracts a certain kind of person? Someone willing to connect to others, see new possibilities and take action? Also willing to experience confusion, discomfort and move, with a deep intention, into the unknown...?

Whales!..... save US!!! (on a T shirt)

Its hard to save the world – its so big. And somehow as a species we don't seem quite equipped for the job. We have a notorious and well-documented tendency to think in somewhat short-term, linear and, dare I say, selfish ways. And even our attempts to save and heal can often worsen problems over time. We look around and see, everywhere injustice, unequal distribution of resources. We're polluting the earth and seas, oh yes, we've 'paved paradise and put up a parking lot' alright.

Some of us can see it, some not, some of us just getting through the day.

What one person calls "The Healthy Forests' Act" another jokes "No Tree Left Behind!" And maybe I just look out on my parched fields and think 'How the hell will we eat this year? Tomorrow? Today?'

Neva is a community activist in Texas who triggered her whole network and beyond to care for the traumatised, displaced evacuees from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. We did some 'modelling-lite' together around her visions, values, plans and actions. She says 'You can't lend a helping hand with both hands covering your ass.'

And then, don't mention it of course, there's the war.

"We have flown the air like birds and swam the sea like fishes but we have yet to learn the simple act of walking the earth like brothers." Martin Luther King.

We so want to.... But.

Wisdom... and ecology of mind?

Something's missing in the way we see things, know things even, and we can't quite put our fingers on it. Where are our new descriptions of learning and change – co-learning and co-evolution – of living systems, communication and inter-relatedness?

In our 'quest for grace' we need to somehow integrate our 'quantum field' knowledge, our 'embodied mind' research, our wondrous cheeky peeking into the brain and into the cosmos – the patterns that connect.

"A human being is a part of the whole called by us 'universe'... a part limited in time and space. He experiences his thoughts as separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty." Albert Einstein

Business... not as usual

And many of us want to make a difference, to align our work and lives with these strange new thoughts in mind.

Daddy, when I am at one with all living things can I still be horrible about George Bush?

A tricky one, daughter.

See the T shirt once worn by Susan Sarandon, Gloria Steinem et al for further guidance.

NLP and all that jazz

Its nice to remind ourselves that NLP is not just for phobias and sales. We have the really powerful and success-focussed models for all levels and aspects of project management. We are too, I believe, in the process of collectively further defining what non-pathological, i.e. generative and systemic change and transformation could be.

What really are the key skills and tools for a shared and thriving human future?

And what are the prerequisites for us, wonderful deluded creatures, to more fully realise our collective responsibilities and get our asses into gear?

From the 'core' to the 'field' ... through 'awakening'...

There's lots of 'nuts and bolts' stuff about getting social change projects off the ground ... and then keeping them going of course, despite changes and setbacks in people and circumstances. You need key maps and models to guide and inspire you. You need to know what actions to take and where and when.

It's nice to be at your best, congruent, resilient, open, aware and awake. It's good to know how to truly bring out the best in others, genuinely collaborate, attract support, connect to the larger system - and to use what we know about healthy team and group dynamics. It's good to ask great questions, take many perspectives, get the right balance of task and relationship, have fun together, achieve things, make a difference.

NLP offers us so much - and at every level of human experience and knowledge and ability – practical and visionary, loving and real.

'They were nothing more than people, by themselves. Even paired, any pairing, they would have been nothing more than people by themselves. But all together, they have become the heart and muscles and mind of something perilous and new, something strange and growing and great.

Together, all together, they are the instruments of change.' Keri Hulme

'Passion in Action – Creating Effective Social Change with NLP' with Judith DeLozier and Judith Lowe 15-17 September '06. Bursary places available – more details on website www.ppdlearning.co.uk Tel 0870 77 44 321

References and Further Reading

Encyclopedia of Systemic NLP and NLP New Coding Robert Dilts, Judith DeLozier

From Coach to Awakener Robert Dilts

Strategies of Genius Vol 2 Robert Dilts

Whispering in the Wind John Grinder, Carmen Bostic St. Clair

Steps to an Ecology of Mind Gregory Bateson

Don't Think of an Elephant George Lakoff

The Bone People Keri Hulme

This article also appears in **ReSource** magazine July 2006