About 4th Generation NLP – Emergent, Clean Facilitation

By Steven Saunders

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The thoughts and views expressed in this article are those of the author. To find out the potentially different views of people referenced, go directly to them or their books.

Background

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) was first created from empirical experiments based upon observations of human behaviour – the behaviour of the world’s leading therapists in the early 1970’s that led to the results their clients achieved [1]. What was really learned is represented by the extract at the beginning of “The Structure of Magic” [1] from John Fowles’ “The Magus” about the prince and the magician: there are only magicians and each one wields their own particular magic – especially practitioners of NLP and healers or therapists or doctors.

A key model that was derived was how people structure their reality through their senses – it is called "submodalities" – literally the details (sub) of the sensory modes (sight, sound, feeling, etc). Every aspect of a person’s behaviour, beliefs and psyche are represented by these submodalities. Every single word has a specific location, space and set of attributes. For example, consider my name – Steven. We each probably know more than one Steven and have a picture of each one, associated feelings, and maybe even a concept of “what a Steven is like”. So, we have expectations (prejudices) that govern our experience of “reality”. The submodalities of an experience are represented both within the body/brain and projected outside.

Manipulating these submodalities is the essence of the first three generations of NLP. The first generation was characterised by developing the skill of consciously modelling submodalities and employing distraction and hypnosis to effect change by moving or altering submodalities. The second generation [2] developed unconscious modelling, flow, perceptual positions and more direct access to the unconscious through processes called “edits”. The third generation [3] was concerned with two aspects: 1) body modelling - creating somatic awareness and flexibility, and bringing NLP close to the Feldenkrais method, and 2) group (swarm) intelligence, using the “as within, so without; as without, so within” principle.

The roots of 4th Generation NLP

While NLP was being developed over the last 30 years, there have been many parallel and spin-off developments in the art of psychotherapy. The two of note are the RAPSI of Eileen Watkin Seymour [7] and the work of David Grove (Metaphor Modelling, Inner Child, Clean Space, Clean Language, Intergenerational Healing and Emergence) [8]. RAPSI proposes that there is a deeper structure to reality – that everything is made of light, and that non-light is caused by the traumas of life. The recovery and release of the light frees a person from issues and helps them move into a state of “Authentic Excellence”. RAPSI is a complete psychotherapy in its own right. As a simplified description, it is rather like a far more comprehensive equivalent of Bay’s work where the journey uses the client’s own metaphors (whereas Bays uses metaphors from her own archetypal journey).

David Grove’s work was based upon the question of “where do people go when they dissociate”. He discovered the answer and the metaphysical structures that keep the dissociated life force safe until it is recovered through “emergent facilitation”. In the early days this was Metaphor Therapy for Inner Child Recovery, and some of it became the Clean Language and Symbolic Modelling more
widely known today. His latest work, employing emergence, contributes a large part of the 4th Generation.

**A 4th Generation Model**

Emergence appears to be a pattern that underlies most behaviour. The pattern comprises seven stages:

- a zeroth or seventh stage that is like a pause – a preparation (like an in-breath before speaking)
- a first stage that can be described as "ordinary" – it is what one already knows – typically self-referenced
- a second stage that reinforces from another point of view – often other-referenced
- a third stage that provides a philosophical or contextual view
- a fourth stage - the "wobble" - where doubt is expressed as to the original thought, maybe going back to the roots – where the strength of another world view starts to overcome the initial world view (see diagram below).
- a fifth stage which literally deconstructs or destroys or counters the original view
- a sixth stage where a new thought form is expressed

This pattern is fractal to the processes and patterns of working. The stages underpin a question, an answer, a set of questions, a therapy session, a day's personal journey and a whole week retreat. At each level, the form remains the same in essence, but perhaps with different contextual labels.

This pattern can be fitted to even larger thought patterns: to explain the whole of Spiral Dynamics more comprehensively than published in [9], and indeed to go beyond the Buddhist 18 levels of transpersonal consciousness – to a complete set of 30.

In terms of human psychological structures, we find that a submodality is held in a location and space. Surrounding a submodality’s space are six psychological spaces (worlds) and six time steps of creation. The outermost space contains the source of creation of the submodality. Each of these worlds is "strangely-scaled" – the space is not to a "real scale". We call this whole set of worlds a "cosmology". Before (outside of) the creation of this cosmology lies a real-scaled memory world of life before – life before a trauma or a defining moment in life. Within the set of worlds also lies the polar opposite of the operating belief or behaviour or identity – we suppose that the act of creation always produces the opposite pairs of dualities.

So, the 4th Generation equivalent of submodalities is layered structures that hold the submodalities in place.

**Comparisons**

A full set of six of the above stages of questions or patterns of questions evokes the deep issues and inner child work, falling absolutely into the realm of psychotherapy. In terms of separating coaching or normal NLP from NL Psychotherapy, limiting questions to patterns of three keeps the client safely in their present reality and enables profound coaching results. Going to stage 4 and beyond is where inner children and traumatic memories can be found, the handling of which requires the skill and insight of the well trained therapist. So we have a clear boundary in this 4th Generation, in terms of separating the level, the effect and the danger of the work.
Where 1-3G NLP would address the translation or change of the submodality, in this work we literally deconstruct and reconstruct the structures that hold submodalities in place. This obviates the need to work with the submodalities themselves. Instead, there are question patterns that literally deconstruct the spaces and time spaces, and then re-create new reality structures. The benefit of the structural approach is that whole systems of issues can be addressed in one process, rather than one problem at a time.

More Models

Combining both David and Eileen's work with some of the metaphors of Quantum Physics (below), we have a whole that explains a wide range of phenomena and that provides the basis for explaining six generations of NLP. The physics concepts we use are: a) Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle in relation to the "measurement" process – the facilitator has to affect the client, and questions only measure what they are designed to measure, given their delivery and form; b) a model of the structure of space-time that uses real and imaginary components (a 12-dimensional space-time universe); c) action at a distance: when a photon is split into two parts, travelling in different directions, whatever happens to one part affects the other, despite their separation in physical space-time.

Consider a "pristine person", with no dissociations. Start with the premise that his awareness is like the electron cloud of an atom in relation to its nucleus (body) – all around. Sometimes he is focussed on something or moving awareness smoothly or in more than one place at once – all is possible. If he happens to experience a shock, wherever his awareness was at that point in time, is where that aspect of his life force stays until recovered. Gradually, through life, people fragment and lose parts of their life force. However, just like a light-particle (photon) that gets split into two, the parts of a specific fragmentation "know" about each other. A specific signal (gesture, word(s), feeling) becomes the trigger or gateway to finding and recovering lost life force – the specific signal is the precise environmental condition of the trauma. In the case of a child that dissociated when their mother threatened to leave unless their behaviour improved, "shall I stay or shall I go" became the signature for being a victim of emotional blackmail. 30 years later, the signal still triggered reactions until the work was done to recover the lost child life force.

Imagine a universe of 6 complex dimensions (6 real, 6 imaginary and a 13th dimension of unity/source that serves as the place of creation). Imagine that time is not linear but that past, present and future are actually different dimensions, each with both real and imaginary components.

This is more than just a mathematical convenience for quantum physicists, this is our reality and why babies and young children can seem so baffled by human adults – the universe is mostly perceived back-to-front. Only when you perceive something in both the real and imaginary simultaneously in 1:1 scale do you see it as it really is!

Imagine that chaos theory applies perfectly to predict human behaviour – change the strange attractors and the behaviour changes as a consequence.

The Presuppositions of 4G NLP

Many of the NLP Presuppositions remain unchanged by the 4th Generation. However, some are changed, with dramatic effects.

1. There can be universal truths, which transcend individual subjective experience.
2. There is a structure to the structure of reality, based upon the patterns of emergence.
3. Choice is an illusion. The environment plus your system constrains your behaviour. You will continue to behave as you always have until the structure of your reality has changed, then your behaviour will deterministically follow the consequences of the new structure in relation to your environment.
4. You do not have all the resources you want, but your system does contain all the resources you need. The resources may, however, be separated from your consciousness by the structure of your structure of reality.

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5. From the practitioner's perspective, the completed end result of a 4G facilitation with respect to an issue is that the client is in right relationship to their starting conditions (problem/outcome/goal). The client will be in a true 1:1 scale – the issue or goal will be “in proportion” and no longer a problem or concern. The client will be fully in their body and perceiving the world in true 1:1 scale.

   a. This is an objective-subjective completion criterion, independent of the client. Clients might not complete to this level of result, and that is their choice – they may well be very happy with intermediate states or states different to their starting condition, but still with their old system intact.

   b. The client will literally be fully "in their body" having just experience an "in-body-ness" in relation to their starting issue/goal. Example submodalities of the condition include a 1:1 scale drawing of a scene from when they were 5 years old where they can see their hands and feel them, looking out of their own eyes now. The client literally feels at one with their inner/outer child that was created at that moment all those years before. The child has grown up.

   c. This criterion is also that for “enlightenment”, which might be better labelled “complete embodiment of spirit”.

   d. Being in 1:1 scale with regard to life, self and other enables another illusion of choice – that of "real choice". This is though, the acceptance of karmic responsibility to willingly be as others require you so to do – to start being like the “highly evolved beings” of Neale Donald Walshe’s “Conversations with God” series of books [10].

The Key Differences

The key differences between traditional NLP and the 4G are:

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<td>Only questions (asked from the whole body), Self-reframing</td>
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<td>Positive Intention</td>
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Conclusions

As behaviours, feelings, thoughts, beliefs and words or sounds are actually the gateways to wholeness, when in 1-3G NLP a person destroys/changes/merges/splits such gateways (all for very positive, helpful reasons), he make it harder to become whole again – he is adding more layers and/or distorting the information that provides routes to the roots.

The 4G no longer needs to use submodalities and no longer requires submodality modelling to facilitate change. There are no longer change processes, no longer hypnotic inductions, no longer distraction of the conscious mind – the whole being is engaged with self transformation. Instead of “change being done to clients”, there are simply questions and natural processes that flow to result in greater wholeness of being. The reality intrusion caused by reframing, change processes and suggestion can be a thing of the past, and we can truly experience that a client’s whole system does indeed have all the resources needed – although their dominant consciousness might not! 😊

Learning how to navigate the deeper structure that holds submodalities in place, how to facilitate the recovery of life force and how to work cleanly with the client’s system for short-term and long-term personal growth is the art and science of 4th Generation NLP.

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And so, the 4th Generation of NLP is CLEAN.

As Robert Dilts and John Grinder have defined the first three generations of NLP [3] and indicated that the 4th Generation would include quantum physics and spirituality, and as we found this out in hindsight, I believe this is a genuine start to creating a worldwide accepted 4th Generation of NLP.

A peek into the Future Present

5th Generation of NLP is indeed more soul-level, because truth questions, asked from the soul, enact the change, whereas in 4th Generation, questions have to be asked from the whole body to work. The presuppositions change again: now, everyone is perfect and it is always someone else’s fault that you are the way you are – and, the universe is very, very funny, with most people perceiving reality back-to-front, inside-out or upside-down. This equates to Gurdjieff’s 5th Way – the way of the Master, or “the path of blame” [11], and represents the knowledge of a laughing Buddha.

The 6th Generation is “being-ness” – people heal just in the presence of a person practicing 6G – whatever the practitioner is doing is just an illusion to distract from the osmotic healing.

And that is indeed my point – NLP is the art and science of manipulating reality, and that is all – no one “generation” is better or worse than any other; they are merely different ways of manipulating reality, each more appropriate for different levels of client consciousness, and gradually tending towards more harmless interaction – in other words a more Buddhist way, so let’s have a little less false ego about standing on the shoulders of giants and a little more realisation that geniuses are still few and far between – but there are now plenty of magicians who can improve on the tricks of those who have gone before!

About the Creator of 4G NLP

Steven Saunders has a degree in mathematics and physics, where he specialised in relativity and quantum physics. He spent 20 years in engineering research, developing learning machines employing pattern recognition and developing systems involving neural networks. Increasingly, he became more interested in his teams and how people work, so he moved into researching psychology and NLP in particular. Already a natural innovator, he specialises in innovation and research. Steven is the creator of 4th Generation NLP, owing great debts of gratitude to the giants on whose shoulders he stands. He practices a Natural Philosophy for Life, primarily with groups of 7 people doing 7-day personal journeys that bring enlightenment, inner and outer peace, complete self-acceptance and alignment with cosmic cycles – and fulfilment.

References

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7. E. Watkin Seymour, “The Missing Peace”
8. For David Grove’s work visit www.cleanlanguage.co.uk or www.davidgrove.com
10. N.D. Walshe, “Conversations with God”, Vols 1-3

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