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Positive Experiences with NLP Part 1 of 6

with **Charlotte Hinksman**, Certified Master Practitioner and Life Coach of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)



alleviating allergy symptoms

Neuro-Linguistic Programming is a therapy which uses the brain's natural processes to make changes in the way we think, feel and behave and includes physical health. This article is the first in a six-month series, where these changes will be considered within six different contexts. This first article will examine NLP change work in the context of health, specifically how it can be useful in alleviating the symptoms of allergies, including asthma.

Case Study: Joy Scott (from Auckland) was diagnosed two years ago as anaphylaxis to salicylates – allergic to anything which had traces of aspirin. This included avoidance of all fruit, including tomatoes, avocados, anything citrus, and all herbs especially pepper, peppermint and ginger. Once she had an anaphylactic shock reaction to peeling a mandarin that she didn't even eat! She could get a severe reaction just by being in an environment where she could smell the hint of spices. This placed many limitations on Joy and her family's enjoyment of life.

What is an allergy?

An allergy is the medical name given to the process which occurs in a human body in reaction to a substance (the allergen) in the environment. The immune system has mistakenly marked out the substance as harmful and dangerous. Once registered, the body produces millions of antibody cells to attack it and protect the body. This is the allergic reaction. The common environmental substances are pollen, venom from insect bites, house dust mites, foods, and some medications such as Ibuprofen and aspirin. Medical names for these reactions are hay fever, hives, eczema and asthma. Common physical symptoms are itching, sneezing and swelling, and in its severity, the body can release a massive amount of histamine causing anaphylactic shock.

Medical treatments are antihistamine medication and extreme reactions such as anaphylactic shock are treated with a self-administered Epinephrine (Epi-pen – a shot of adrenaline) or as a medical emergency. From a medical perspective, it is unclear why some human bodies have this

reaction and some do not. It is attributed to a combination of genetics and environmental factors.

NLP approach

In the NLP model, we remember that every single cell in the human body is controlled by the Central Nervous System (CNS) – your brain and your spinal cord. This is the part of your nervous system that coordinates all activity in the body. There is, at any given moment, a continuous stream of communication and feedback in the CNS between your brain and your body. This means that nothing in your system is “fixed” permanently.

What is termed as an allergy is not a solid thing you have, it is a process that occurs – a stream of communication and feedback between your brain and your body which shows up on the physical level – the symptoms.

This, like any process can be adjusted and changed. Think of the allergic response like having a phobia. Someone phobic of spiders will have an extreme emotional response (fear) whenever they come into contact with one. It is not logical to have that response; it is produced by the nervous system to protect the person from something potentially harmful. It is therefore over-reactive, as if the dial has been turned up to “red alert”, when it could just be set to “be cautious”.

It is the same with allergic reactions. It is not the allergen that's the problem, it is the nervous system's reaction to it. Some people's nervous system just has the dial turned up too high, similar to a phobic response. It could be that they had a stressful or highly emotional experience while the allergen was present, and the CNS mistakenly marked the allergen out as the danger, not the stressful event itself.

Specialised NLP techniques allow us to communicate carefully and directly with the CNS, and train it to have a more appropriate response to the allergen. We can start a new useful process in the body where cells are regulated normally, thus alleviating the physical symptoms.

Research: Asthma and NLP

One of the biggest control studies ever done on asthma was conducted by Hanne Lund. Asthma is the medical name given to the process in the body of inflammation of the lungs, in which the airways are narrowed. Certain allergens and exercise exacerbate the problem. The results of Lund's research were profound. NLP techniques were used to systematically release all major stressful emotions (sadness, fear, anger, guilt), heal the trauma of the event responsible for the origin of the asthma and retrain the nervous system's reaction to specific allergens. The asthma completely stopped in the NLP control group and reversed four years of damage. Normally the lung capacity of adult asthmatics decreases by 50ml a year. This still occurred in the control group. The NLP group increased their lung capacity by an average of 200 ml – reversing four years of damage in just one year.

The implications of this research, as pointed out by Lund, reach far beyond just asthma management. It is highly valuable in the treatment of patients with any disease.

What is possible with NLP?

Joy (our case study) now enjoys being able to eat normally again. After a double session with her practitioner in Christchurch, she experienced an immediate alleviation from her symptoms. Joy was guided through the specific NLP techniques as used in Lund's research. It was discovered that Joy's allergic reaction started when she was first given aspirin when she had surgery for a rare heart condition – a procedure she was awake for. During her session, she was able to release the emotional trauma associated with that event, and to teach her nervous system that aspirin was now safe for her body.

Joy no longer carries her Epi-pen, and is still amazed. She completed her NLP training in February 2010 and has become an avid spokesperson for it!

What can you do?

NLP itself or NLP techniques do not cure allergies. Your body is the place where the healing and the changes occur. The NLP techniques are a vehicle skilfully used to remind your brain and body what it already knows – how to heal itself naturally.

As allergic reactions can be life-threatening, I would advise caution when seeking treatment. Please do not undertake any self-healing techniques without guidance – this could be very dangerous. Seek advice from a health professional and take your medication to your appointment with you. Health, physical or mental, is not a static thing. It is a process that occurs continuously in the brain and the body, coordinated by the CNS. This means good health is something that needs to be practised, not taken for granted or neglected. If the results you are getting are not desirable to you, it is a sign you need to do something different. If they are desirable, keep doing what you're doing!

We know from research that the feeling of happiness is strongly associated with a specific area of the brain – the left prefrontal cortex. This area is associated with planning, goal-setting and achievement. When people feel in control about the direction of their lives and their outcomes, they are happier. I would like to encourage you to know you have control over your body and can teach it to start enjoying the process of better health, now. So take action and seek advice and treatment.

Next month Charlotte will examine NLP and its effectiveness in releasing phobias. ☺

About Charlotte

Charlotte Hinksman is a certified master practitioner and life coach of NLP. She has a private practice in central Wellington. More information can be found at her website: www.charlottehinksman.com or at: www.nzanp.org.nz



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