

HOW TO MAKE POWERFUL SUGGESTIONS?

Formulating what you say correctly improves the chance of other people following your suggestions

Joost van der Leij

Last month we looked at how to communicate to influence people. Influencing people through language has primarily to do with how to suggest a certain course of action. If you are a manager and you want an employee to do something or change his behaviour for example, then to do this verbally you give him a suggestion. The reason why I speak about suggestions rather than about assignments is that the word suggestion already makes it completely clear that there is no guarantee that the suggestion will be followed up. Nevertheless, formulating what you say correctly improves the chance of other people following your suggestions a lot, and I do mean a lot, more.

The most powerful way to make a suggestion is to command someone. Nevertheless, most people don't like to be commanded. Fortunately, most people only recognize direct commands as commands. As soon as the command becomes, what

we call within Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) "embedded," they fail to recognize that they are being commanded. Well, at least consciously. Because unconsciously the brain still processes the command and hence increases the chance that someone follows

up on the command considerably. In order to create an embedded command it is first of all necessary to make sure that the command is actually an imperative. Only then does the unconscious mind process it as a command. To embed the command all you need to do is to make sure that you put at least one word in front of the command. For example: "when you have read this article, let others know how valuable you found it." Here "let" is a straight command embedded by putting words in front of it. "Let" is also an imperative so this is an excellent example of an embedded command. Please note that embedded commands are no guarantee for success. A lot depends on the social context in which the embedded command is made and what the suggestion is.

The less someone actually needs to do the harder it is to ignore an embedded command. For instance, "thus imagine your dream job now" is a lot harder to ignore than "so work twice as many hours for the same salary." Yet, in both cases it is important to understand that the use of the embedded command has increased the chance of the suggestion working successfully. What is easy to do has become easier and what is hard to do has become less hard. To put it the other way around: without embedded commands in your language you are communicating less effectively than possible. Many managers tend to soften their language by removing commands and rather make requests. This makes for less effective managing. So lead on and use embedded commands wherever you can! **S**

“ Many managers tend to soften their language by removing commands and rather make a request which weakens their managerial stand. ”



Joost van der Leij is a Licensed NLP Master Trainer™ who teaches NLP worldwide as well as in Gurgaon. For a free guide on NLP, see: www.nlpdelhi.org