

# Magic in Practice

## Introducing medical NLP: the Art and Science of Language in Healing and Health

Garner Thomson with Dr Khalid Khan

Hammersmith Press, London, UK, 2008

ISBN 978-1-905140-19-0

Garner Thomson is an NLP Master Practitioner and trainer, specialising in medical neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) and hypnotherapy, while Dr Khan is a primary care physician and registered pharmacist who also practises acupuncture, Chinese medicine and NLP.

This is not a light read; the text is aimed squarely at the medical establishment, and uses a thoroughly scientific approach with extensive referencing to explain the purpose and practice of NLP in medicine. With the gap between patient and health provider widening, the authors offer solutions aimed at creating a more positive and holistic relationship between doctor and patient. The authors state that their purpose is to unravel those qualities that make up a “positive relationship” between doctor and patient and to share with those in the health profession some of the techniques and principles that help to facilitate the healing process.

The first part of the book explains the rationale for using NLP in the modern medical practice, how neurolinguistics are used in the consultation process, and how to decode the patient’s inner experience, for instance by using acuity and by eliciting submodalities and strategies. The second part of the book introduces various patterns and processes including the well-formed outcome, the use of anchoring, reframing, and dissociation, ending with a chapter on the use of trance, timelines and future pacing. Importantly, it contains some good insights into the use of NLP in specific health conditions and uses case studies to illustrate these.

It is possible that GPs, who can be limited to a seven minute slot, could find many of these techniques difficult to apply, and therefore may be turned off the whole NLP idea, even though much of this could be useful to them, for instance the use of rapport, sensory predicates and entering the patient’s world.

Perhaps for this reason, the book would have benefitted from being produced in two parts, one presenting basic coaching techniques as an introduction to the processes of NLP in relation to health, which can be used in any one-to-one situation, and the second part moving on to introduce the more complex NLP techniques that require a longer consultation time.

To get the most out of this book, the reader would benefit from being already trained to NLP practitioner level, as there are some very powerful processes such as time line work and reimplanting described here. I would perhaps like to have seen more emphasis on the presuppositions of NLP, which, although they underpin the text, are not spelled out as being the bedrock upon which NLP is based. However, it contains a wealth of information and this is a great handbook for any health practitioner (whether GP, Nutritional Therapist or any other), who knows the basics of NLP, and who wants to take their knowledge further.

The book is introduced by Richard Bandler, which in itself is a good recommendation, and he calls it “an elegant and wonderful book”. It’s definitely one for my library shelf, and is an ideal complement to the NLP Master Practitioner course.

Reviewed by Beatrice Cutler