



Legendary Strength Podcast

NLP for Strength Training – Part 1

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Hey, it's Logan Christopher with the [Legendary Strength podcast](#) and in this episode we're going to be doing something a bit different than the interviews and everything else. I'm going to be talking about NLP, neurolinguistic programming, and what this has to do with [strength training](#). Now some people have heard of this and some people have not. The reason I am going to be talking about it in this podcast as well as the next couple is today begins a three-week intensive NLP training that I am going to the Master Practitioner Level. I want to talk a bit about my background in NLP, what I have learned over the couple of years I've been studying it, and then in the following podcast what I'm going to be doing is teaching you some of the things I've learned over this several week course.

Last year when I went through the Practitioner Level, I did essentially the same thing except I was writing articles. I'm very busy on a book that actually is all about mental training. I'm working hard on that to get it ready as soon as possible. It's been a project that's been in the works for a long time. So I'm going to be working on that and don't have time to do all this extra writing but I figured I still want to give you a little taste of what I've been learning and this itself is going to help me to learn and understand the material that much more as well so it will be fun for both of us.

What is neurolinguistic programming? It is sort of a mental science that has been around since about the '70s. It was originally created by John Grinder and Richard Bandler. Here's a good definition: *"NLP is a set of skills and technologies for modeling excellence in the world."* What does that mean?

Modeling. Modeling is a very critical thing you need to learn how to do if you want to be successful in anything. I'm not talking about walking up and down a runway. Modeling is the idea where you have an

example of someone and you model what they do. You do the same things that they do in order to get the same results they're getting. I like to think of myself as somewhat natural at doing this process. I started doing it even before I ever heard the word "*modeling*" to some degree. I can definitely get better. If you think about it in the strength world where you're buying books and you're getting information from these other people, that's what you're actually doing. You're looking at them as some sort of model for you to follow.

There are a couple of things here that are very important. One is what people tell you to do isn't always what they did in order to become successful. If you think about the standard bodybuilding magazine that has the programs of the champions, if you ever went through the phase like I did, you started doing these routines and you just completely thrashed your body. You weren't getting results because you may have been lacking the chemical enhancement that allowed these guys to get the results. That would be one aspect of modeling. Are what people telling you to do actually what they do themselves? There are some good coaches out there and everything who can teach you something that they can't do themselves. I'd say for the most part, in general, if you're going to model someone, they should be able to get the result that you want to do and you have to make sure you're not missing the pieces.

Here is another critical point about that. Those things like the training, the exercise that they do, the form in which they do them are very important things. They're programming how they do that. That is very important. That is the external stuff.

The internal stuff is equally if not more important yet no mind is really paid attention to it. The internal stuff is how they think about approaching their exercise, how their mind works when they're setting up that training plan and how they think day to day about their goals, about their successes, and about their failures. How are they processing this information? That's the critical thing that sort of sets NLP apart from much else out there because NLP actually gives you the tools to figure out not just what people are thinking but how they are thinking it.

We all are individual people. We all have a lot of individual experiences. How we're brought up, also our genetics, and what we're born into, those all play a role into how we actually think. Different people think differently. If you've ever been in a relationship, you know this happens to be true. It's not just men and women but all people certainly think differently. One person may think a lot more in visual images. A very visual person is going to see things. There are people out there that don't think that they have mental images at all. Perhaps you, listening to this, believe that.

Well, I want you to go ahead and imagine the house that you grew up in. In order to actually process that statement, in order to do what I just said there, "*Imagine the house,*" you have to go through a picture in order to be able to get that. You can't really recall the house you lived in by the sound it makes. That would be a component of it but in order to tell me what your living room looks like, you have to "*look*" at your living room and you do this within your mind's eye.

There are other people that are more auditory that can remember those sounds. That's actually my weakest component, my weakest sense. I'm really not an auditory person. Something that I find very interesting was I did not listen to music at all until I think when I was in my teens and I'm wondering is

this because I wasn't an auditory person or did I not develop my auditory skills because I didn't do things like listen to music. So don't ask me to sing. I won't do it. It's not very good. I don't have a very good auditory sense but I am building it up and practicing these different things and the NLP skills.

The other third major category besides what you see and what you hear is what you feel. Now this is a big category. There's a lot that goes into it because this has to do with things like pressure and proprioception, your balance, very important stuff for working out obviously, coordination and all that. It is also lumped in with this term "*kinesthetic*." This classification is your feelings as well because there are internal sensations, internal pressures, an internal sense of balance.

All of these things are very important and different people are going to think at different levels using these different things. There's much more detail that I can go into this so let me go into why this stuff is important. Because when you understand NLP, it's really a science that allows us to run our own brain. In working out, what we're trying to do, especially if you're not just looking to get fit or get in shape but you're trying to achieve these high level strength goals, [bodyweight exercises](#), [kettlebells](#), whatever you happen to want to do, is we're trying to learn to run our own body, to get it to do what we want to do on command basically.

The mind and body are intimately tied together. There is no separation. We like to separate them out. We talk about the mind, we talk about the body, but it really is one and the same. You can't affect one without affecting the other. Thus if you want to get the best results with your body, you must learn how to get the best results with your mind. They really play in hand in hand. That's why there are plenty of studies. Just about anyone will tell you they're likely going to be able to think better and be smarter, more or less, just by working out because of the increased blood flow and oxygen and all the great healthful benefits of working out. Once again, these things play in together.

Why is it important to learn to run your brain? Because this is going to determine the results that you get. This is the determining factor in whether someone gets results or they don't. We're talking about exercise but just about everything works. You can go to Curves and get results. I don't recommend Curves. I think there is much better programming available but people have gotten results with Curves. They have gotten results with Richard Simmons, sweating to the oldies. They've gotten results with kettlebells. They've gotten results with CrossFit. They've gotten results with [strongman](#), with barbell exercise, with bodyweight exercise.

Any exercise system works to some degree. Yes, there are some things that are better than others. There are better programs than others. There are better ways of doing things. Absolutely. I'm not saying there aren't but what is the determining factor in whether someone gets results if everything works to some degree? It's going to be their mind. It's going to be all the different actions that they take which are backed up and run by the mind.

With NLP, this has never really been taken into the strength world like I am taking it. I have gotten phenomenal results. I'll tell you about some of those if you haven't heard already, not just with myself but in teaching other people these things. Something that it is used in to some degree is the area of fat

loss because fat loss is much bigger than strength training. No one really cares that much, the vast majority of people out there don't care about strength but they just want to look better naked.

What stops people from losing weight? Is it lack of willpower? Sure, if you have all the willpower in the world you can easily lose weight but most people aren't there. It's not really the lack of willpower. It's the lack of properly learning how to run their mind because when you learn techniques that NLP teaches, you can do things like erase your desire for food to give you a lot more choice in what you can actually do. You can actually figure out sort of a roadmap, a timeline, a plan to get you to a well-formed outcome that you desire, which would be to lose weight, and actually figure out what are those blocks standing in your way.

This is an example. A while back I had a client where this was actually the case and I've heard that this is the case for a lot of women, that when they suffer through sexual abuse as a child or at some point in their lives, a lot of them will then put on weight afterwards as a form of protection. Extra fat can act as a security buffer in how they feel but also to make it so they're not as attractive to men so they're less likely to feel uncomfortable with sexual advances and all that.

If that is never dealt with, if that sort of issue of a positive intention in the body that's trying to feel safe, trying to make you safe and secure, if you're trying to lose weight when you have this, you're going to feel insecure about it. You're going to sabotage the goal that you are trying to achieve with that. If that is never cleared up, no amount of willpower is really going to get you through that. If it does, you're going to have some other problems most likely happening as a result of that.

You need to figure out what these blocks that you may have are. I'm talking about weight loss but it can be the same thing in strength. If you're listening to this, you're probably really into strength and you probably want to become as strong as you possibly can. You're probably not listening to this if you're just like *"I enjoy fitness."* There is something you want to achieve.

So the question to ask yourself is what is stopping you from achieving that? In many cases, you're actually going to know what's preventing you from having that. There are many cases where you may not know and that's also another place where NLP can shine as well in figuring out what those blocks are that you may be completely unconscious of, you have no clue what they happen to be. It's always fun to find those things out because when you deal with them, some miracle breakthrough-type stuff can really happen.

So let me give you an example of myself when I realized I had—it wasn't a major mental block. It's not like that sexual abuse thing I was just talking about but just a small little mental lock I had and the results I got from this. It's possible if you've been following me for a while that you may have heard me tell this story before. Earlier this year, maybe end of last year, I was working on freestanding handstand pushups and I had never achieved more than one of these at a time. Because it was a hard exercise and building up to it—yes, it's definitely not an easy exercise to do immediately for just about anyone—I had built in this belief that it was a hard exercise.

If you believe something's hard to do, it's going to be hard to do. It's quite simple. It's attributed to Henry Ford. It's been attributed to other people. Whether you believe you can or you believe you can't, you're right. So if you believe that something's hard, you may be able to do it but it's going to be tough to do. If you can change that belief, what would that allow you to do?

In practicing this exercise, and I had a goal to do five reps in a single set staying up in the handstand the entire time, I realized I had this belief that freestanding handstand pushups were hard to do. That was like an epiphany. I realized I have this, I know how to deal with it. I cleared it up and boom! Immediately I hit a double right after that. Then I hit another double. Then I hit a triple. So I immediately tripled what I could do, going from one to three reps, after clearing up a belief that stood in my way. Through a little more training, within about a month and a half, something along that line, I actually broke through my goal and I did six freestanding handstand pushups. I do have [that video available up on YouTube](#) if you want to go check it out.

That was a result of actually eliminating this mental block that I had that was standing in my way of hitting that goal. Now could I have not known NLP, not realized any of this stuff, and just worked through that? Absolutely. That definitely could happen. You don't have to know this stuff. Beliefs do change to some degree all the time. There are all sorts of factors in here. All this stuff is really natural. The thing with NLP, with this mental science, you can learn to have conscious control over different things that affect you in these ways.

So yeah, just through training it, it would have become easier. That's really what training is all about, turning the impossible to something that's possible, turning what's hard into something that is easy. Whether this is doing bodyweight exercise or just handling more weight, it's always really following that process. But often times, we can sort of leap frog that process to make those big gains if you deal with these mental blocks that are standing in the way. Because if you believe something's impossible, you're not going to be able to do it. If you truly believe something's impossible, there's no chance you can do it. But if you believe something's possible, that doesn't mean you can necessarily do it but it's going to open up the possibilities that you can work up to it. You can get there much faster than if you think, *"No, this is never going to happen."* Actually if you believe something's impossible, what are the chances you are going to even try to do it in the first place?

One of the most exciting things that I learned last year when going through the Practitioner course was more about how to use submodalities. Submodalities are the pieces of what go into the senses or the modalities. With seeing, with your visual sense, there are different submodalities like location, size, brightness, the clarity of the picture. Now if you're just looking throughout your eyes right now, those are going to be based on your external environment. The sizes, basically everything you can see, you're associated into the image because you're within your body unless you happen to be doing some weird out of body stuff while listening to this podcast. You're in your body and the brightness is going to be determined by the lights.

If you go back to what we were talking about before and you imagine the house that you grew up in and bring up that mental picture, this is the thing where unless you've learned how to do these things you

may be completely unaware that they are changeable and that these things affect how you feel, your beliefs, and all sorts of different things. So you're looking at the house that you grew up in. how big of a picture is that? Does it seem close or far away? This is going to be very much related to the size issue. How big of a picture as well? Not just its location, its size. How bright is the picture? Is it straightforward? Is it above you? Is it a little below you? Is it a still picture? Is it a moving picture?

All these things are very important in how the picture is going to affect us because when we bring up a memory, for instance imagine a happy memory at that house from your childhood—hopefully you have a few of those—what is the quality of that picture? Is that picture or movie different than just looking at your house? What part of the house are you looking at? That would be part of the content as opposed to the context, which is really what these submodalities are all about.

Here is a very cool thing. We just covered the visual and I'm not going to go into a lot of details but the auditory and the kinesthetics of it are equally if not more important. In really bringing this whole thing together, there is much that we can do to play with this image. What I found was that this is how we store memories. We store all sort of different things within our brain by using our different senses. There can be words involved and that would be our internal dialogue that can go along with this. That can be positive things like *"You can do it!"* if you're trying to lift a weight, or *"This is impossible"* or *"This is really hard,"* those things may be running without our really having a conscious awareness of this.

All these different things, all the different sense, our internal dialogue, all that is going to blend together to create sort of a mental creation within our mind about—let's take this strength specifically—specific exercises. When I was talking about those freestanding handstand pushups before I realized I had this belief, if I thought of that exercise then—I can't really do it now because that was a while ago and I don't remember where it was at that time—my picture was likely smaller, lower, dimmer. It may have been still instead of a moving screen. What I did in order to fix it was to change these qualities of my internal movie about the exercise. What happened when I changed the qualities, the submodalities, of this internal movie? That's what changed the belief as well.

So you can take something that you believe is easy, realize the qualities of that movie, and you can take something that you believe is hard and realize the qualities of that move. They're going to be different. There are going to be certain characteristics that are very important to how you store and process the difference between easy and hard. For different people, it's going to be different things.

I was just showing this recently to a friend at a seminar and she was doing pushups. I think she wanted to be able to do a handstand pushup so I was giving her some progressions along the line. I think we were specifically, after doing a few pushups and helping her out with form on that, we were doing a pike press where you have butt up in the air and you're basically doing a similar range of motion as a handstand pushup but your legs are still on the ground. You're in a steep pike. It's harder than pushup and a great exercise.

She tried doing it and wasn't able to get one rep. She did a pretty solid negative on the way down but couldn't push herself all the way up so there wasn't really much I could offer as far as technique at this point. I asked her what her mental picture was when she did this exercise and if I recall correctly, she

was associated into the picture. It was like doing it in real life so she could see her hands and she could see the ground lowering away but there was a key distinction for her when she started to press back up: the picture got dimmer. It went towards black.

As I was leading her through that, I was aha, that's interesting. Well let's just see what happens if we make it brighter as you push yourself up. Can you take a guess what happened? She changed this mental image and all she had to do was instead of just letting it by default go darker because she had just failed at the exercises—that's how her brain sort of processed it—we made it brighter, just like turning up a dimmer switch, for instance, which you can easily do within your mind. We turned up the brightness as she pushed away from the ground and this was just imagining doing it. We may have done that once. It may have been a couple of times. She then went and tried the exercise and voila, she was able to do it. I think she may have even gotten a couple of reps in trying to do this.

So when you understand that your mind is under your control, that the mind and body are intimately tied together, when you understand these things and you learn processes such as taught in NLP—I really taught this a whole bunch in the Wizards of Strength workshop in my portion, [The Instant Exercise Enhancers](#), because that's what this stuff does, what I'm talking about here—it can instantly allow you to make what is hard easier. It works so often that it's amazing. It really is. It's not foolproof but if you do it right, it pretty much is. It's going to work so many times. It's not going to allow you to set a new max PR every single day in an exercise but it's going to certainly help with what you're doing because we're controlling the mind which controls the body.

There are a lot more details in [this podcast](#) I've really given away. That's kind of one of the biggest things I learned because just tweaking these small things, these mental movies that we have, regarding the exercise and like I said, there is so much more that can be done with weight loss. It can be helpful with muscle gain and any sort of sports performance you have. It works for everything so you've just got to tweak how you're doing it and how you apply it. This is just one example. I like to showcase this one because the results are dramatic. People get immediate results with them, are immediately able to do exercises that they couldn't before, or immediately able to sometimes double or triple what they can do. It just gets results that fast and it's relatively easy to do. You understand how your brain works, you understand the specifics of what's going on, then you can easily change those details in order to get better and better results.

This is one of the main things that I got out of last year. There is so much more. NLP is traditionally used as a more sort of coaching or therapeutic model but my interest is strength so I'm really bringing it into this world to help people out. And no one knows this stuff. Here's a really cool thing. If you apply what I just taught you, no one else is doing that except people who have learned from me, no one on the world. So you can take this, you can use it, and you have something that so few people are doing.

But I'd like to change that and I'm working towards it. I am working hard right now at writing a book that has been in the works for quite some time. It became such a big project that I put it on the sidelines for a while multiple different times because it was so big and so overwhelming I wasn't able to really get a grasp of it. Finally, I decided I got to get this done so I did some things in order to figure out the full

outline because once I have an outline on the project I'm pretty good to go about actually writing it. Writing takes a while but I'm working on it. It's going to be big.

This book, *Mental Muscle*, is going to go into a whole lot more detail than I had time to go into here. It's going to cover this stuff. It's going to cover so many details on why mental training is really the most important thing you can look at if you're trying to achieve things in the gym. Ask any athlete and they'll say the mental aspect is such a huge, huge part of the game, more important than the physical. Strength training is no different and I'm going to prove that to you by looking at so many different studies, showing the different results, so many different stories, some of which I've shared with you here, and then giving you the tools and tactics you need to put all this stuff into use. I talked a little bit about here but there's so much more I can go into detail to help you get the results. With just this one technique that I've shared with you today, you can get phenomenal results. I personally use it all the time but there is a whole lot more you can do.

I'm keeping this podcast a little short. I've got much to do. I've got some writing to get done as well before I head off later today. Like I said, in the next couple of episodes we're going to go into more detail on this stuff. I hope you enjoyed it. If you have specific questions, be sure to ask me. Thank you very much.