

The best of the best in the self-improvement industry

**What I learned from 10 years and 45000\$
invested in the field of self-improvement and
spiritual development**

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INTRODUCTION

My name is Alexander Nadeau. During the last few months, I have gone through my note books and got to reflect on all that I have learned during my 10 years in the self-improvement business. I got to figure out exactly what it cost me during those 10 years... roughly 45 000\$! Now, judging from the

questions I was asked by friends, colleagues and clients, I figured that there was a need for guidance in the self-improvement field. So I decided to write this text to help you save time, money and unnecessary suffering.

After reading this book, my hope is that you will have what is necessary to make much better decisions about where to put your time and energy in your own self-improvement. I also aim at cutting your learning curve in half, which should be really easy... especially if you are new to all of this.

Now, just so you know my background, I come from a small village where self-improvement doesn't really exist as a concept and where any kind of change in someone's life is not supported. It's more a "follow the tribe" mentality. Before my career as a trainer, I did paving. I would put bricks in people's driveways 6 days a week, being exhausted on Sundays and just sleeping or watching tv.

In spite of being discouraged by my parents, I managed to travel the world to learn from the best trainers I could find and then became a trainer myself. Now, I do what I love, which is researching and consulting with artists, entrepreneurs, trainers and innovators in the field of self-improvement. I am now paid to do that and I work less than 6 days a week now.

As for the trainings I've had and the methods I've tried, I'll just list everything I've done. Then I'll tell you what worked for me and what method is best used for different types of goals and situations...

Here is what I have been trained in:

- NLP (certified practitioner, master-practitioner and trainer level)
- Hypnosis (certified hypnotherapist)
- Reiki practitioner (certified level II)
- DNA reprogramming through kinesiology
- Energy medicine (Donna Eden style, taught by John Latourette)
- Emotional freedom techniques (EFT)
- Remote viewing (medical intuition)
- Pranic healing (energy healing)
- Shamanism (in Egypt)
- Meditation (at least 15 different types)
- Design human engineering (certified by Dr. Richard Bandler)
- Neuro-hypnotic repatterning (certified by Dr. Richard Bandler)
- Win Wenger's techniques
- Certified personal trainer (bodybuilding, certified by André Bégin and Weider)
- Speed reading
- Manifestation (John Latourette style)
- Silva method
- Energy regeneration (another form of energy healing)
- Riggio model (a model created by Robert Johanssen)
- Peak states training level 1...

Wow! I never realised how many trainings I had taken before writing this! Now I know why it cost me 45 000\$. ;))

I have also tried other approaches that I wasn't trained in. Here is a sample:

- Rebirth
- Psychics
- 12 chakra fusion
- EMF energy rebalancing
- Merkaba meditation
- Entity removal
- Power prayer
- Holographic repatterning
- Rolfing
- Kinesiology
- Neuro-associative conditioning
- Psych-k
- Regression
- Brandon Ray's "The journey"
- 15-minute miracle
- Tony Robbins's "Personal power II"...

Now, before I consider myself completely crazy, let me tell you how it all came about. I became interested in self-improvement for 2 reasons. First, I felt bad most of the time. Second, I had dreams I wanted to realise with no clue as to how to achieve them and knowing I would not learn how to make them real in school

I started reading books like crazy (about 50-60 books a year). Then, after reading about 200 books, I realised that my life was exactly the same... oops! You mean that just dumping a lot of information in my brain doesn't work? Well it didn't work for me. I was really fascinated and inspired when reading, but it was not enough to actually trigger changes in my life except some temporary changes.

Then I took my first NLP training. Not the best one ever, but at least, it made me aware of Richard Bandler (co-creator of NLP). I then decided to go and learn from him. Now we're talking! I actually got tremendous changes in my life and in my NLP skill levels. It made me aware that not all NLP trainers were created equal.

Then it made me really curious and I went and tried a lot of stuff to explore all of the other methods that people sold as "effective". Unfortunately, 9 out of 10 methods didn't produce any measurable results, so I got bored with people saying that it worked unconsciously or on a level that is not perceptible by "normal" people. Well, that would be fine if after a while, I would have noticed the results, but since I didn't perceive any results and my friends didn't notice any results either, I decided that there was no point in paying for something that nobody could perceive (I felt kind of stupid actually when I stuck with methods where nobody could perceive the results!)

Now I telling you all of this because I decided that all this experience could actually be useful for a lot of people. If I could share my experience with people, they could start with the best methods according to their goals right away, instead of wasting a lot of time in just trying everything. Also, as a trainer, I became really adept at teaching people how to shop for different methods and trainers (I know what is

going on backstage, so to speak). I want to share with you my tricks to differentiate the skilled professionals from the less skilled ones (I'm being kind in my choice of words here; I could have said incompetent or non-integreous instead).

My friends and clients gave me a lot of positive feedback, saying that they saved a lot of time and money now that they know what to look for and how to know right away if a trainer or practitioner is skilled or not. They say that they do a lot less and they get a lot more improvements in their lives when they use the information presented in this book to make choices.

In the next few pages, I am going to write about what really worked for me and explain to you the expectations you can have from different methods. I will also tell you about the limits of each method. Unfortunately, a lot of people get so enthusiastic about their method of choice that they almost sell it as a magical pill that will resolve everything, creating false expectations and disappointment for a lot of people around them. My hope is that you grow in discernment while reading this so that you can get right to your goals.

May you have a much easier and faster ride in improving your life! Enjoy the read!

Alexander Nadeau
Trainer, consultant and author

How to use this book

This book is a map for the methods that I have personally tried and experienced. It is by no means a complete reference for everything there is in the self-improvement field. It is as complete as I could make it right now and I will definitely add more through time as I do experiments.

To use this book efficiently, simply click on the chapter title that interests you. If you are new to self-improvement, I suggest that you read the whole book so that you can get a head start and avoid a couple of traps in the field.

Chapter 1: **Self-improvement**. You will learn how to navigate the whole self-improvement field. You will be introduced to some easy ways to save a lot of time and money, as it can be quite expensive if you remember the title of the book.

Chapter 2: **Emotional change**. You will get the best methods I have found to resolve emotional issues,

eliminate fears and deal with emotions such as anger, sadness, etc. Some methods are really effective. Find the benefits and limits of different approaches.

Chapter 3: **Education and accelerated learning.** This is one of the really interesting part of self-improvement that a lot of people don't know about. Yes, you can learn a lot faster and yes you can help your children have a better future and it's often easier than most people think. This is essential reading if you want to accelerate your development.

Chapter 4: **NLP.** Probably the most complete model I've come across so far. It helps in relationships, communication, business, learning, arts, teaching. What can I say, it changed my life.

Chapter 5: **Peak states of consciousness.** One of the most promising and fascinating field of study in self-improvement.

Chapter 6: **How to shop and buy in the self-improvement field.** I will describe how I go about selecting and buying CDs, DVDs, therapists, coaches and trainings. I will give in depth strategies to make sure you know what to buy and what to avoid before ever opening your wallet. I'll also give you several questions you can ask before buying a live training, as those are the most expensive self-improvement resources and usually the best if you choose well.

Moving forward

Special thanks: All the people who influenced me in my evolution.

Resources section: Some free resources I really recommend.

About the author

Chapter 1: Self-improvement

What is this thing that people call self-improvement? Is there any definition that experts agree upon? I haven't found any...yet. So instead of trying to find a philosophical definition, I will describe to you what I consider to be essential elements in the betterment of someone's life. All the elements that I will describe here were put in this chapter because they have actually created a measurable or noticeable improvement in my life or in my quality of life. I have tested all these elements with at least 200 people.

Since my number one criteria is measurable or noticeable results, you can probably guess that I will not talk about philosophies, intellectual theories, belief systems, religions and/or truths. I will describe processes, methods and phenomenon that we can readily perceive or train ourselves to perceive. All intellectual musings are left to the theoreticians to keep this book concise and useful for anybody who is not in the field of self-improvement.

So, what are the elements I consider essential to improve our quality of life? I found only a small number that actually had an impact on me. So if a system or a method of self-improvement doesn't

include at least one of those elements, you should take your time before investing yourself in that system, because it could be a waste of time! Let's get to those elements right away!

State of consciousness

The state of consciousness that we are in at any given moment in time will have a profound effect in how we experience our lives. Different states of consciousness have different sets of perceptions, capabilities and feelings inside of them.

Notice how it is to experience life through a state of fear... our breathing is shallow, we have tunnel vision and thoughts about bad things that could happen to us. We are usually more withdrawn and interacting a lot less with others...

Now, remember how it is to experience life through a state of joy and appreciation... our breathing is much more fluid, we feel an opening and lightness in the heart and more vibrant energy. Everything can seem more beautiful and everyday details can make us feel good for no reasons. We have the tendency to interact a lot more with others and even attract a lot more people to us. People feel good in our presence.

And that is really different from a state of flow... where everything seems effortless and smooth. In that state we stop thinking. We are fully involved in what we are doing and lose track of time. Even the activities that usually seem to require a lot of effort now seem to require very little energy and very little effort.

Those states really make the same experience seem totally different, even if it's the exact same situation with the exact same people and events happening. In fact, most people I have met in the self-improvement movement just want to change how they feel. If you ask them why they do self-improvement and then when they give you an answer you ask them: "Why do you want that?" repeatedly, they will probably end up describing the state of consciousness that they are trying to experience for themselves.

Different states bring different capabilities. Being able to change states voluntarily is worth millions to me as I now know how to put myself in a state that is optimal for writing (as I am doing right now) and then, I can change my state to one more suited to play guitar. The state I use for playing music is really different from the state I use for writing. Just knowing that has made a huge difference in my life. I put myself in a state suited for the activity and it made my life so much easier and simpler.

I consider the ability to change states of consciousness voluntarily to be the single most important skill to have in self-improvement. It's one of those elements that affect everything. It's the backbone of what I teach to any new client as it is usually the fastest way to progress towards their goals.

Effective methods for changing states of consciousness voluntarily include NLP, the Riggio model, the peak state model (Grant McFetheridge) and some of Win Wenger's methods. A combination of all of these methods (what I usually use) is even more effective. I'll write more about each one of them in later chapters and/or in the resources section. There are other methods to change states of consciousness, but those are the ones that make it possible to do really precise work and to be able to do it by ourselves.

I would like to point out the notion of peak states of consciousness. Those states can be so profound that a person can feel like living on earth is like being in heaven, even though nothing changed in reality, just their state. Being able to access peak states is really an extension of the ability to access more "common states". I consider the ability to access peak states to be extremely valuable as it has changed a lot of people's lives for the better. This will be addressed further in a later chapter.

Perceptions and awareness

Another area that is often critical in getting results with self-improvement is becoming more aware of different nuances of your experience. You have to be aware of a particular phenomenon before you can learn to interact with it. That is why the best methods of self-improvement I know of include in their design a development of perception.

This makes it possible for us to actually know if what we are doing works or not. We can actually measure our progress and know if we are going in the right direction according to our goals.

The opposite of that would be a therapist, coach or trainer who tells you that you have changed unconsciously and does not teach you how to be aware of it. If I don't perceive the change, what's the point? Even if they don't do it on purpose, it tends to create a dependency as we have to blindly trust what they say if we have no way to measure or perceive their work. I don't know about you, but that doesn't appeal to me.

By developing your awareness and perceptions, you get to be responsible for your life as you can know for yourself if a method works or not. You can also measure your progress right away. Some people in NLP call that creating a feedback loop. A feedback loop makes it possible to improve without always needing outside assistance. We could call it self-evolution and that is why I put it as the second most important element in self-improvement.

I cannot tell you how much my life improved when I stopped being dependent on other people to tell me if what I was doing was working or not and always waiting for the "expert" to tell me what to do next. And I'm not talking about the confidence that comes with being able to rely on your self more and more.

You can refine your visual, auditory and kinesthetic (body feelings, emotions, relationship to gravity, etc.) to a point where most people would call it extra-sensory perceptions. Being able to differentiate different non-verbal communications, hearing what is not working in a car, feeling your body with really precise awareness are all useful skills to develop and I made the list short! You can even develop your senses of smell and of taste.

Many of the things that were out of my range not so long ago became accessible as soon as I refined my perceptions. For me it was improvising with my guitar, cooking, communicating in a really effective and respectful way, knowing what to eat and what not to eat and making decisions in my life. All of those things and a lot more became much easier with my learned perceptions.

So, refining your perceptions is always a good investment of time and energy. I didn't put money in the last sentence as it is possible to refine perceptions for free once we know how. There are resources on the internet for that, Win Wenger being one of them

Skills

This has to be the single most important distinction I have ever made in the self-improvement field in terms of saving time and money. I talk about that distinction in the chapter about books, but I had to put it in here because it is too good (really, it's important!).

This distinction is about information versus skills. One of the things that took me a while to figure out is that information doesn't necessarily translate into a change in my life. Filling my head for years with information didn't do one bit of good. It did inspire me and made me aware that some things were possible, but after that happens, it's time to move on to another step instead of just putting more information in.

Then, one really helpful trainer taught me about the difference between information (or philosophy or theories) and skills. Information is when you "know" a lot or "understand" a lot about a subject without necessarily being able to apply it in the real world. Skill is when you can actually produce a result in the "real world" and you can do it with a great consistency.

I am sure you know a lot of people who "know" everything about nutrition and dieting, yet they still can't lose the weight they have been trying to lose for the past 20 years. Lots of information, lack of skills (I know this issue is more complex than that, but I'm making a point. Same thing with people who have read all the books on how to be a millionaire and lecture you about it, but they are still struggling to make ends meet. I could go on and on like that with any area of expertise).

Now, my father did not read any book on motors and electricity, yet he can fix just about anything you give him, even a tv. And he can do it reliably. That is a skill and it's easy to test. Either the machine

works or it doesn't. Same thing for musicians. I know a lot of musicians who know all the theory, but cannot compose a song that you'd want to hear in its entirety! I'm not saying that information is wrong; I'm just saying that most people put way too much time and energy on information and not enough on skills.

The other thing that is useful to know is that whenever you develop a skill and you test it out in the real world, you will spontaneously get the understandings you would get from reading a book or having someone explain you the theory behind a method. I remember when I took my first 2 voice training sessions. In those 2 sessions, I "really" understood what a friend had tried to explain to me a year before that and what I read in five different books. Sure, I "knew" the material, but I was not able to use that information when I sang until someone gave me the experiences necessary to integrate that knowledge into my body.

Now, I read a lot less than I did just a couple of years ago. I focus on skills and experience and sometimes a 2-day training can go a long way compared to reading 5-10 books on a given subject. I still read a bit and I describe ways to read more efficiently in chapter 2.

I also want to bring something to your awareness about the distinction of information versus skills. If you are accumulating information about a particular domain of experience, it's probably because you want to **experience** something. Whether it's the freedom of being financially secure, the ecstasy of expressing yourself through music or anything else that you are looking for.

From my experience, having a lot of information never gave me the experience I was looking for... only the actual experience did. I know it sounds obvious, but I see a lot of people behave like more information will magically give them the experience they are looking for. The only way to get an experience is to get it! If you want to play music, **play music!** Get guidance to acquire the skills necessary to be able to play and improvise and feel the music flow through you. Information and theory will never give you that. Once you are skilled, new information will be easy to apply right away, because you will have the background skills necessary to know what to do with the new information.

I repeat this distinction in the next chapter as I know some people will not read the entire book and I actually like to repeat it anyway, because this distinction is so important. A lot of my clients and students tell me they saved a lot of time and money after learning about what you just read. They made much better decisions and it showed in their speed of progress towards their goals. They started buying trainings only from trainers who focused on skills instead of speakers who teach "principles" (of success, of health, of abundance, etc.).

Beliefs

I will not spend a lot of time on that subject, because there are countless of books on that topic and you have probably read a lot of that already. Basically, beliefs are what you consider to be true or false and

what you consider possible and impossible for yourself and others. Those beliefs will determine what you actually attempt and how you will behave in different contexts.

Beliefs are important because they will determine what you try. If you believe something is really impossible for you, you will probably not even try. So changing beliefs might be the only thing needed to get access to the experience you are seeking.

Having said that, I consider the impact of beliefs to be overrated in the self-improvement field. They have a lot of influence in our lives, but they only constitute one element of our experience of life. Limiting your approach to just changing beliefs could rob you of actually getting what you want for your life. A combination of all the elements listed in this chapter is recommended to get the best results possible. What I mean by that is that it is not enough to just change a couple of beliefs and expect to become rich or financially secure overnight (even though a lot of authors and public speakers sell it like that).

It also takes changes in the way you perceive money, changes in your decision-making process, changes in your behaviours and daily habits. Of course, if you have all those skills already, then a simple belief change might do the trick, but it's not a common one.

Emotional changes

I have a whole chapter on that subject, so I will be brief. Most of the people I know have at least one or more emotional patterns that limit them or make them suffer on a frequent basis. Addressing that aspect with an effective method can be a really quick way of improving your quality of life. You can learn more about that subject in chapter 3.

Transformational experiences

Some experiences are so profound and so intense that they change people's lives forever. It changes their beliefs, perceptions, states of consciousness and dysfunction quite spontaneously. This element is particularly important to me as it is a double-edged sword. It can be used to transform people's lives and/or it can be used to create the guru effect.

A really skilled coach, change agent or trainer can design experiences that will really change people's life experience on many levels. I know because I lived several experiences like that. It is the type of experience where you cannot go back to your old experience of reality. I had a couple of intense experiences in Egypt when I did the shamanic training. My experience of life has never been the same.

The other side of transformational experiences is when a facilitator doesn't tell you how they did it or

have you believe that it comes from them and that they have a special talent or gift. That's the way they create a strong dependency. Having people believe that you are responsible for all the great things that happens in their life is not something that I encourage. Then they have to go back to you again and again to get those kinds of experiences. Sure, it's an effective way to make money, but is it ethical?

I won't list the names of people who do that, but I will tell you this... if their students believe that this person is a god and that they can never be like them, it's not a good sign. If they have to always ask this person for advice before making a decision... that seems like dependency. If they can't tell what happens in seminars or private sessions with this "special" person, meaning it is secret, not a good sign again. Also, if this "special person" claims to be a genius or special or better than others, I would reconsider spending time with them (this type of person usually gets called a "megalomaniac").

As for the great trainers, they usually give you step by step processes to achieve the kind of results that they achieve. They have nothing to hide and usually encourage their students to take full responsibility for their lives. With them, you get the feeling that you can accomplish what they accomplish, because they tell you how. Of course, you need to develop your skills to the same level and that takes time and practice, but you know you can do it if you want to. If you go back to them, it's to learn something new or to improve an existing skill. You go to them to improve faster, not because you need them.

What's great is that those trainers (or facilitators) will have no problem in referring past students you can talk to if in doubt and the students will probably be able to tell you details about the methods the trainer uses.

To recap, transformational experiences are a must when you really want to change your life, just make sure you do it with the right people. With a skilled facilitator, you are in for rapid progress and noticeable changes in your quality of life.

I think you already have some changes in your perception of self-improvement...

Chapter 2: Emotional work and therapy

A lot of people have emotional issues that bother them or that makes them suffer repeatedly in a given

situation, be it meeting people of the opposite sex, being with their family, being angry most of the time, asking for what they want, talking in front of a group or being totally frightened by something that is really not dangerous.

I consider this chapter useful as we all heard of people spending years in therapy without improvement with some even getting worse. Having tried a lot of approaches myself, I can understand why some people get worse using some therapeutic approaches.

Now, I will mostly talk about the methods that worked best for me (and my colleagues and clients) and how I measured the results. I will also point out the limitations of each method and what to expect from each one.

EFT

Let's start with the easiest method to learn and to use. It's called EFT. EFT stands for "emotional freedom techniques". This method is particularly useful in taking the emotional charge out of memories and events that happened in our lives. It works really well with any type of emotional distress, whether it's fear (and phobias), anger, anxiety, sadness, frustration, etc. When I say it works really well, I mean that some emotional problems can be resolved in minutes using EFT, especially for really simple issues like specific fears or really specific memories that still bother a person.

It uses a sequence where the client lightly taps acupuncture points while focusing on the emotional issue. I know it sounds weird and I really thought it was bullshit when I heard of it. As usual, I tried it, just in case. It was the easiest and most effective method I had ever tried, especially for emotional reactions.

Now, how do I know it works? It so happens that I used to be a therapist and when I learned EFT, I started using it almost exclusively with clients. I did that for a 6 month period.

The way I measured it was to use a scale where the client would tell me about a situation where they have intense emotional reactions and I would ask them to rate the intensity of the emotion on a scale going from 0 to 10. 10 was the most intense they ever felt that particular emotion in their life and 0 was when the situation or memory did not bring any emotional reaction.

I know this is not totally scientific, but I also used my observation skills to monitor their breathing patterns, posture, muscular tension in the face and shoulders to monitor the changes. I would also test their reaction in reality if the particular situation was readily available, which was about half of the time. The tests were specific to the problem too.

Let's say the client had an intense fear of speaking in front of a group, I would arrange for them to come at a training I was giving. I would have the client come up and ask him to speak in front of the group. Their breathing would stop and they would panic and they usually were not able to speak much. Sometimes they would rate their distress a 15 on a scale of 10!

So we would do the EFT sequence a couple of times and test the changes after every round of application. It was wonderful to see the changes in their breathing. First, they started to breathe again! That's useful! Then their breathing would deepen and we (the participants and I) could see the colors

come back to their face. We could also see their shoulder relax and their posture become “normal” again. That’s pretty amazing! This is not exclusive to EFT, any method that really works will create noticeable changes in someone’s physiology.

The longest it took me to get to a 0 with a client in the context of public speaking was about 15 minutes. Not 3 hours, not 3 months... 15 minutes or less! Then I would have them talk to the group and they could actually speak like they normally do with friends and family. They were able to talk about a subject in front of the whole group and their physiology would remain pretty relaxed throughout. Now that’s impressive even after having done it for years!

“But what if the fear comes back?” you ask. Good question, as it happens with a certain number of people. It’s not a problem, because now the client knows how to do the technique by heart since we did it multiple times, so he can do it himself if the fear comes back. That’s what I love about EFT. It’s so easy to teach!

Also, if the fear comes back, it’s usually a lot weaker, like a 3 on the scale of 10. So even if the person doesn’t resolve it, it’s still a lot easier to speak in front of a group with a little bit of fear than with the full intensity. And resolving a fear with an intensity of 3 is really easy and fast with EFT. We’re talking minutes. I have never seen a fear come back more than 3 times in my entire career, unless there is something unusual going on with the client, like other issues that were tied to the fear and the fear won’t resolve until the other issues are resolved too.

So working on a fear a couple of times for minutes at a time is really a small price to pay to be free of the fear for life (yes, the results are lasting). And a lot of fears just get resolved the first time and never come back. About half of the clients have their fear gone in a single session.

Having said all that, EFT is not perfect (my experience is that there is not a perfect method or magic pill). It doesn’t work all the time for everybody, but it would be beyond the scope of this book to explain all the exceptions and how to deal with them. EFT works about 60% of the time in untrained hands and around 80% of the time in skilled hands or even more if someone is really skilled and combines EFT with other methods.

Limits of EFT

In this book, I want to give you as complete a review as possible of the different subjects I’m presenting. I want to tell you where a method is useful and where a method might be lacking.

So the strength of EFT is to take the emotional charge out really fast, especially with emotions attached to specific contexts. It can deal really quickly with specific traumas and memories and also with emotional reactions associated with really specific situations.

What it doesn’t do really well is resolve really complex issues or global issues such as identity issues, values conflicts, complex belief systems and depression (it does work with depression, but not as well as with specific emotions). I would use EFT for depression combined with other methods, but not by itself even if practitioners of EFT have had successes with depression.

The other limit that I will mention here applies to any method that resolves emotional issues. And I’m

happy to talk about it as it will allow me to dispel a myth or a belief that a lot of people have in the self-improvement movement, especially in the more metaphysical methods (read manifestation methods and manifestation proponents, a lot of them being best selling authors).

There is a sneaky belief that if we resolve our emotional issues about a specific subject, let's say money for example, we will magically experience an improvement in that area of our lives. In other words, if we change how we feel about money, then we will experience a change in our financial situation (I know it's the same example, I just want to make sure you get it since a lot of people have trouble with their financial situation).

That has been true for some people and it is wonderful when it happens. It's just not like that for the majority of people. The reason for this is simple. If you take someone with no financial skills and you resolve all their emotional issues and painful memories around money, they will feel better about money. Then again, they will not have any financial skills. They still don't know how to manage their money. They still don't have a plan to change their financial situation.

The same applies to playing guitar or doing sports. If you don't already have a certain level of skills in a chosen area, resolving the emotional issues will not turn you into a guitar god or a high caliber athlete! It will probably help you learn faster and actually practice your skills, but resolving issues doesn't give you new skills, it just makes the skills already acquired available to the person. When a client already has a lot of talent or skills in an area and his emotional issues are resolved, they can become extraordinary!

By the way, this is not a criticism of EFT. Gary Craig, the creator of EFT, is well aware of that limitation and teaches other methods to combine with EFT to achieve certain goals or create specific changes in someone's life.

This applies to any method that deals with emotional reactions. If you want to improve your performance in a certain area of your life, you will usually need to combine a method to improve your skills with another one to deal with limiting emotions. Knowing that saves time. I usually advise people to go and work at improving their skills first and if they notice that they feel bad when using them (anxious, stressed, frustrated, etc.), then they use a method to resolve the emotions. Often times, therapy is really not necessary as it was all about skills to begin with.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

The developers of NLP created different models that can be applied to many different areas of expertise, ranging from sports to therapy. Since I will present NLP in more details in a later chapter, I will only discuss the models that apply to therapy or emotional work.

Re-imprinting

A model created by Robert Dilts and is based on the research of Timothy Leary. It uses different NLP techniques to create global changes in someone's experience of life by changing their imprint experiences. Imprint experiences are those experiences that were usually intense (wether positive or negative) and that created different sets of beliefs or perceptions about ourselves and the world. Since

our beliefs tend to direct our behaviours, it is wonderful to be able to work effectively at this level.

If you have a pattern that seems to control many aspects of your life, this would be a method of choice for you.

I have done several re-imprinting sessions and I have to say that it is really useful when simpler methods don't seem to work. I even have some clients who went into states of well-being (peak states) that they never had before in their lives... at least as far as they could remember. This is incredible and exciting to me! What is even more interesting to me is that those clients can access that new state easily in most situations. So even if they don't spend all of their day in that state, it's there for them if they want it.

A typical re-imprinting session usually takes between 30 minutes and 2 hours. There you have it! The descriptions will be shorter as you now know how I measure changes from the EFT text. As another test, I also have the client talk about what was the issue and notice how they talk about it after the session and especially how their non-verbal behaviour (physiology) changed when they talk about the exact same thing. The true test comes in follow-up conversations when they had time to go back to their lives and notice the changes. That's the real test.

Timeline therapy

Made popular by Tad James, this NLP model uses how people sort time in their mind. This is really important as the "timeline" (mental construct that influences how people perceive time) seems to shape peoples filters and personality. Any problems related to time like living in the past, being late all the time, having problems planning, never achieving goals and anything else in that vein will respond really well to timeline therapy.

It also works well for traumas or repeated traumas. Working with the timeline can go as far as changing personality (depends on our definition of personality) as it works with a really fundamental block of our experience as a human being. Changing how we sort time can have far ranging effects.

I cannot give a time frame for timeline therapy as I tackle more than one issue during a session, but I can tell you it is really effective and does create profound changes when it works.

Fast phobia cure

As the name implies, this process is used to treat phobias and is quite effective. It was developed by Richard Bandler and takes only a couple of minutes in the hands of a skilled practitioner. It's a nice alternative to EFT, but I have to say that EFT is a lot easier to learn. I like to use them in combination, especially with the timeline work (yep, you can combine approaches and get even better results!).

With this particular process, I resolved fears of public speaking in as little as 2 minutes... all tested in reality on the spot and then a couple of weeks later when possible. I have to say that I'm impressed in that the process seems to take most of the fears away and seems to be lasting. If there is a little bit of fear left, we can always use good old EFT to finish the job or re-apply the fast phobia cure.

NLP strategies

I decided to put that subject matter in this chapter, even though it could be put in several chapters and I will definitely talk about it more in the chapters to come. Basically, skilled NLP practitioners can develop strategies to achieve specific goals effectively and elegantly.

I know that Steve and Connirae Andreas developed several strategies (processes) described in detail in their book “Heart of the mind”. There is one to resolve grief, one to respond better to criticism, one to eat better, etc. This book is great for getting precise strategies for different goals.

NLP strategies are not always focused on emotional work, but there are several strategies that were developed specifically for therapy through the years and they work really well in the hands of a skilled practitioner. How to find a skilled practitioner will be described in chapter 8.

That’s it for this chapter! I could probably go on forever on the subject of therapy, but I wrote down the best of the best in my experience. I am sure that I will add more on my website as I get questions from readers about different methods. I just want to keep it short and easy to read. Even though the methods presented are the best in my opinion, they do not work all the time for everybody and I can’t guarantee that they will work for you.

I will put reviews of different methods on my website as time goes by.

Now let’s go to the next chapter that dives into education and accelerated learning.

Chapter 3: Education and accelerated learning

I think this chapter is important for all the parents and teachers. It is also important in self-improvement as accelerated learning can make your journey easier and more enjoyable.

First, I think we need to redefine education, especially for our children. Having them memorise a bunch of information doesn't necessarily prepare them to live their life or be happy, healthy and successful or anything else that we could wish for our children. Where I live, the educational system has more and more problems and can't even resolve them.

To me, education revolves around a couple of distinctions and if you read the chapter on self-improvement, you can probably guess how I would define a healthy educational system. To me, a healthy educational system would teach effective learning strategies first, before teaching anything else (does that make sense? Teach them to learn before teaching something else). Then it would teach students how to feel good, think for themselves, refine their perceptions and give them new experiences. It would also teach them about emotional well-being, relationships and health.

Before you object that it's too much and teachers are already overloaded, I will point out that the education can be done by parents and elders too. Also, with effective learning and teaching strategies, it takes much less time to get students to the same level of competency.

To give you an example, I had a coaching client 3 months ago. He was 8 years old and about to fail his school year. His mother wanted him to go to a private school, but he did not have the grades to enter. His worst problem was spelling. So I started chatting with him and getting his side of the story. Then I helped him change some beliefs and taught him how to do it himself. Then I taught him the good old NLP spelling strategy. It took 10 minutes to teach him the spelling strategy.

He could spell words he had just learned forwards and backwards using this strategy. After testing him with several words, I taught the process to his mother so they could practice together. I asked her to do a few practices for about 5 minutes each so that it became his natural way to learn the correct spelling of new words. Then I sent them home...

A month later I get feedback that he is doing great with his spelling and that his spelling test contained very few mistakes. Also, the teacher reported that his attitude was much better (we worked on that in the belief change part of the session). The most surprising thing was yet to come. His mother told me that HE asked to see me again for his math. HE wanted to get better. Nobody pushed him.

So he came back, we played a little table tennis and then I spent about half an hour to teach him a strategy to do multiplications and a strategy for divisions. Then I taught his mother how to help him if he had any problem later on. Then I sent them home.

I didn't hear from them for several months until I received an email 2-3 weeks ago saying that he was accepted by the private school...

That gives me hope. I wrote that to show you that it doesn't take forever to teach effective learning methods. 10 minutes for the spelling strategy. 30 minutes for 2 different strategies for doing math (I had to invent those, as I didn't know any from traditional resources). Any teacher could do that with the whole class. Then, when the student's learn better, they don't need to be taught the same material over and over again.

Now, I don't expect the educational system to change overnight, but I still have hope because I know parents can learn to do those things I did with my young client. I know that a lot of parents want to do just that, they were just lacking the skills necessary to do it. I will give several resources for educating children and yourself. Then you can start to play...

The best methods I have tried so far...

Win Wenger's methods

The first resource I want to mention is Win Wenger. This man created more process for education than anybody I have ever met. He created processes to improve intelligence, creativity, problem solving, artistic skills and learning speed and quality. You can already tell that I like what he does!

I put his methods equal to NLP in terms of importance for education. It suits children and adults perfectly. They are easy to learn and to use and most of the processes are offered free on the internet.

The thing I like the most about his methods is that they can be practiced alone without any special help. His methods help refine perceptions and they help someone build distinctions really fast that would usually take a lot of time to get through traditional methods. People practicing these methods become far more aware of themselves and of their surroundings, which help in any type of endeavour. His methods contain at least 3 (sometimes more) of the essential elements that I described in chapter. That's pretty rare in any model, except for NLP, Mythoself, Riggio model and the peak states model.

He also teaches ways to test the methods in reality, which is a big plus in self-improvement as I described earlier. So, Win Wenger is definitely recommended for educating yourself or your children in how to learn better!

NLP

I will briefly talk about using NLP applied to education as I will describe NLP more in depth in the next chapter. For education, NLP is really useful for putting someone in an optimal state for learning. You probably remember that in the first chapter, I wrote that the state of consciousness is the most

important element in self-improvement. Well I believe the same thing in education.

With NLP, it is usually really easy to teach someone to enter a state of relaxation and focused attention. All the children with ADD (attention deficit disorder) that I worked with didn't have ADD with me, as I would put them in a really focused state first. Imagine if all the teachers knew how to do that! It would not make everything perfect, but it would improve the teacher's and the children's quality of life children easier.

Then we can use NLP to teach effective learning strategies, spelling strategies, math strategies, memory strategies, etc. One of the thing I noticed when I was in school is that I had to be a natural in the subject taught to have good grades as the teacher would usually use repetition of the material to make us understand. If his teaching style did not fit my learning style, I would have trouble getting what he taught. Now, if my teachers taught us effective strategies to learn what they were teaching and then taught us the subject, that would have been easier for most students.

And it's possible to do that with a whole group. That's what I do with adults and students who come to my trainings (most skilled NLP trainers know how to do that). Once they know how to learn according to what is taught, it goes really smoothly. I could go on and on about NLP, but you get an idea of what it could do. I will really go in depth about NLP in the next chapter.

Speed reading

Speed reading should be taught after students are proficient reading at a normal rate. I don't know what grade that would be, but it would make a huge difference in their life. I know several methods of speed reading where the person doing it gets as much comprehension and recall as he would get reading at his normal rate. Imagine cutting the time it takes to study for an exam. Imagine combining speed reading with effective memory strategies. That would make student more interested in studying. Also, once they succeed, they like how they feel about themselves and get more motivated. Maybe we would have less drop outs if learning became easier for the students

Mind maps

Learning how to do mind maps is really useful, as it teaches people how to organise their knowledge in their mind. It makes the comprehension of a subject much easier, as a mind map is a way to visually see all the connections between the elements of a subject.

When doing a mind map, we can also pinpoint really fast where we need more information on a subject. After doing mind maps for a while, your brain starts to make connections faster and organise subjects more efficiently without physically doing the mind map. It becomes a natural skill that your brain uses to organise new learnings. Any book or website that teaches how to do mind maps is good enough as it is a really simple skill. I don't have one to recommend in particular as I learned to do mind maps during a live training. I will probably describe how to do it on my website, just look for it.

Real world skills

I would love to see the educational system put more real world skills into their program. I don't know how it is in other countries, but where I live, the emphasis is on memorizing a lot of data and

remembering it correctly for the exam. So if you happen to have a naturally effective memory strategy, you will be fine for most subjects or at least get good grades from the theory part of the program.

The problem is, we need more than a good memory as we go through life. I really wasn't prepared when I decided to be on my own. I lacked social skills, financial skills, planning skills, problem solving skills, emotional skills, etc. I didn't know what I wanted to be when I grew up and I was already grown up. If I was the only one in that situation, I wouldn't even mention it, but I see more people like that than the opposite.

What if the school programs included programs to develop social skills? How about some financial skills? I remember one of my friends telling me that he spent 3 years studying marketing in college. When he started his business with a friend, he realised he didn't know how to apply his knowledge to the real world. He didn't know how to attract new clients. He had to hope. And he's a smart guy, he got good grades!

He didn't know how because he was lacking in practical skills. Sure he had all the theory and knowledge about marketing but he told me it was only good at getting a job because of his diploma. It wasn't good enough for him to generate his own income creating his own business. 3 years is a long time to get to that! What if he had met people who had succeeded in the real world of business? What if they had to build a marketing campaign and the one bringing the most revenues gets the best grade? I'm just thinking on paper!

Do you think that the people teaching marketing at his school have really succeeded in the business world? Usually it's not the case. They needed an income and had the required diplomas to teach. That means that the people teaching are the ones who failed at the subject they are teaching. I can tell you that those who succeed in business rarely teach in schools, because they make a lot more money in their business than they would make teaching. It should be them teaching though. Then, people in business school would have more probability of succeeding with their businesses.

I know I was ranting a bit, but I was really sad for my friend. He spent all this time and money to learn how to do marketing and he got his diploma! Yet, he couldn't make his business project a reality. That's what this book is all about. Helping you avoid those little time and energy (and money) wasters. Then, you can really get what you want and live it! It's really possible; you just need the right skills for your goals.

On a brighter note, I helped my friend and gave him resources to learn marketing and he is doing better. He started his company and is actually launching it. He is not rich, but he is making progress and I'm happy for him. His business will be viable pretty soon and he will live only on the income that he is generating for himself.

You now have an idea of my idealistic vision of education. I don't think it will happen like that, but if you have children, I encourage you to use the resources at the end of the book and teach them to your children. It will make their early life and adult life much easier. This is my conclusion. My hope is that parents will take a bit of their time to educate themselves so they can educate their children.

Since most processes described in this book take less than half an hour to learn, most people cannot use the time excuse. Even teachers could look up websites containing some of the methods presented and

use the really simple ones the next day! The accelerated learning field has progressed tremendously in the last few decades. It is now much easier to apply the discoveries made within the field!

Take time to explore, you will be grateful you did! All of those free processes on the internet! Then if you really want to do more, there are really fine trainers out there that can help you. I will talk about my favourite trainers in the next few chapters.

Thanks for having taken the time to read about that subject matter! It is really close to my heart.

Chapter 4: Neuro-Linguistic programming

I'm particularly happy to write about NLP. Why? Because it saved my life! No, I was not terminally ill. I was really bored with my life, unhappy and aching with every muscle of my body (as a result of doing paving 50-60 hours a week). Then I had the good fortune of seeing Anthony Robbins on television. It did not change my life, but it made me aware of NLP. Then I read a lot of books before finally taking my first training.

It was good, but not as much as I expected from reading the books. At that training I met a guy who had tapes of Richard Bandler (co-creator of NLP) and he lent them to me. I was amazed! Not only was Bandler entertaining (more than a lot of comedians I know), but he also made me aware of a lot of distinctions that my NLP trainers seemed unaware of. Naturally, I decided to go meet him in person.

I wasn't disappointed. My first training with him was beyond my expectations. It turned out he had improved since giving the training on the tapes I had borrowed from my friend. I remember how NLP made so much more sense and how much my skills improved in the 3 days I spent with Richard. The 21-day NLP training I did before that seemed even worse in comparison. Learning had never been as

fun and easy and surprising. Then I thought: "I want to be able to do that!" So I went and trained with Richard until I became an NLP trainer.

During that time, I also had the pleasure of meeting Micheal Breen, whom I consider to be the best trainer I have met so far (that's quite a compliment) and John Latourette, who is probably the best trainer of unusual and rare skills that I have ever met. I have trained with both of them and I am still grateful that I met John and Micheal in some of Richard's training. I guess really skilled trainers hang out together...

I will tell you a bit of what learning NLP has done for me and then move on to give you some definitions. First, NLP made me aware of other human beings. What!?! It's true! I was so much in my head and worrying about unimportant stuff that I wasn't really paying attention to the people around me. It was a big change to finally be aware of the people around me and to be able to communicate with them.

I learn much faster than before. I can master a skillset about 5-10 times faster than it would have taken me a couple of years ago. That's really fast! My perceptions improved tremendously, especially since taking trainings with Richard Bandler and using some of Win Wenger processes (the combination thing again). No wonder my guitar playing is so much better, I can hear the notes! My perception of body language and non-verbal communication is really acute too. A lot less words are needed now (except when I'm writing, we don't see, hear or feel each other). My sports skills improved really fast too because I am now much more aware of my body.

Usually, I can pinpoint exactly what to do or say with a client (or friend) to help them get the change they are looking for. And I mean, it seems really easy for me to do that most of the time, but it's not a talent. I just learned the skills and practiced a hell of a lot!

Another really interesting phenomenon is that whenever I would take a training with a really skilled trainer, my income would improve in the months following the training, especially after training with John Latourette. Of course, I would practice and develop the skills I was taught, otherwise, nothing would have happened... I could say a lot more, but it would take too many pages to describe to you in details what I got from NLP and what my clients got from NLP. For now I will just define NLP for you, so you can get an idea of what it is...

Definition and explanations

NLP is a methodology that makes it possible to do modeling. Modeling is when an NLP practitioner finds someone who can do something well or even do something extraordinary and figure out how this person is doing it from the inside out (in terms of actions, mental strategies, states of consciousness, etc). Then, that NLP practitioner can take what he learned from his model and make a model that is both easy to teach and easy to learn, making that extraordinary skill available to anybody who wants it. Now that's exciting!

By the way, it's not magic even if it looks like it at first. It still takes practice on the part of the person learning the new model. The difference is they don't have to do the trials and errors that the model did to get that good. A skilled NLP practitioner will be able to uncover the state of consciousness, the

perceptions, distinctions and skills necessary to perform in a way that is similar to the person being modeled. Since all those distinctions are now available from the modeling work, it is much easier and faster to develop a high degree of competency with the chosen skill set...

That's what NLP offers! I don't know if you can see the possibilities, but I can from having done it several times and it's astounding!

By the way, NLP is not a form of therapy. I know a lot of people think that, because it has been used extensively for therapy, but therapy is just one field where there was extensive modeling done by the creators of NLP. They have all moved on to other applications, but a lot of NLP practitioners seem to limit themselves to doing therapy with it. Other models were built for sports, teaching, learning, business, arts and the list goes on and on.

To my knowledge, the NLP creators were the first to really create a model that would allow us to learn from the internal processes of somebody else. Subjective experience became something that we could now study with a lot more precision. There is also the study of language and how it is processed by people. After learning that, we really have a hard time speaking the way we used to, because now we are so aware of the effect we have on people and let me tell you, the effect is not always desirable.

The NLP skillset is really complete and covers most of the elements that I described as essential in the chapter on self-improvement. That being said, I have to make something clear. Not all NLP practitioners are created equal. I remember Richard Bandler saying that NLP doesn't do anything by itself, it's just a model. It takes a human being to apply the model. That human being can be skilled and integrous or unskilled and/or non-integrous.

So as good as the NLP model is, use what you learned in this book to choose a trainer or a practitioner if you ever want to explore that methodology. Chapter 7 will teach you ways to figure out who is skilled and who is not as skilled. To me, that's an essential distinction to make, not only in the NLP field, but in any field (medicine, business, law, etc.) Just because someone is a doctor doesn't mean that he is a GOOD doctor. The same applies to anybody in any area of expertise.

Uses of NLP

NLP can be used in a lot of different ways. The most important uses I found for NLP are as follows:

- Modeling a skillset and teach it in an effective manner (this skill is not mastered by a lot of people, even in the NLP field).
- Optimising a model or process (making it more effective in a measurable way).
- Improving communication skills.
- "Read" people better (how to pinpoint exactly what to do to really help someone else).
- Learning faster. Effective learning strategies.
- Teaching better (which can be measured by standard tests).
- Changing beliefs.

- Changing states of consciousness.
- Creating lasting changes in habits and behaviours.
- Knowing who to hire and who not to hire for a specific job or business venture.
- Relaxing really fast.
- Facilitating physical healing.
- Resolving allergies.
- Emotional healing.
- Goal getting.
- Sports improvement.
- Creativity enhancement.
- Sales improvement.
- More voluntary access to peak performance states (sports and artistic performance come to mind).

Here I wrote everything that came to mind that I had actually experienced or that I had successfully done with clients, friends or family members. Now you can understand why I could go from paving to doing what I love, which is researching and transmitting what works best in the self-improvement field. Some people make claims about NLP that I have not experienced myself or done with anybody, so I can't comment. But the list I have here is already pretty extensive!

So, yes, I whole heartedly recommend NLP to all the coaches, consultants, teachers and probably as a really helpful skillset to have for anybody on the self-improvement path. Learning it would be best, as you become your own master; getting help from a skilled practitioner would come in second if you just want a change without actually investing your time in learning it. As with other systems or processes, your goals and ideals should determine what you choose and how deep you involve yourself in learning something...

As an aside, I suggest learning with the creators of NLP and/or someone who has kept current with the updates to the models. I say that because, unfortunately, some people got their training 10, 15 even 20 years ago, so what they teach is pretty out dated. Also, they trained with the same trainers over and over, so their perception of NLP is usually limited. I would rather train with people who trained with Richard Bandler, John Grinder, Micheal Breen, Joseph Riggio (Mythoself), John Latourette (Energy work), etc. Not that a trainer has to have trained with all of them, but the more variety of trainers they had, the better. Then, they will be able to give you a more complete and far-reaching training.

Also, learning all of NLP is not necessarily required. Know what you want first and find someone who uses NLP to get results in the area you want (let's say education) and save yourself the time it would take to do all the certifications in NLP. Sometimes, a 2-day training is all you need if the only thing you want is to learn much faster (in fact, one day could be enough for that).

3D mind

This process was created by Tom Vizzini and Kim McFarland. It is derived from their NLP skills and research. This process is really simple and easy to learn and can help people change their state of consciousness really fast. As a therapeutic process, it shines with its simplicity. Some people resolved life-long problems really fast (usually 10-30 minutes) and never got those problems back (as of today). It is definitely worth learning. It's also fun to do with children and really gentle as a process.

I also like the 3D mind as a tool to explore and create new states of consciousness... again a gentle way to experience feelings and perceptions we never had before.

Riggio model

Was created by Robert Johanssen and modeled after Joseph Riggio, creator of the Mythoself model. I particularly like Robert's model as it is really useful to do change work with people. The model uses precise questions that create changes in people's experience of the world. To me, this model is part of a new generation of NLP where people can change in a more global fashion.

It moves beyond mental strategies straight to ways of experiencing in the world. I use this model a lot and combined with NLP and peak states work, we can accomplish incredible things that were impossible just a couple of years ago (as far as I can tell... I have not tried every method that exists in the world, so that affirmation could be inaccurate).

Mythoself

This model was created by Joseph Riggio based on the work of Royce Fraser. This model is really interesting as it proposes to help people live from "who they are at their best". Not their role, not their job description or even self-image, but who they are. It is a way of being that can be the basis for making decisions and acting in the world. That can be life altering, to say the least!

What impressed me the most about this model is its orientation towards the positive or "excitatory" as Joseph would call it. What that means is that instead of focusing on problems and trying to resolve them, people focus on where they want to go and move in that direction only noticing what works and making it better.

Now that is really different from most self-improvement methods where there is a lot of emphasis on what doesn't work (the problems). Even NLP practitioners do that a lot. The problem with being problem oriented is that we can always find new problems! The more we look for problems, the more we find them. The same is true in the other direction. The more we look for what works, the more we find it and the more we live it.

Just that little nuance can change people's lives. When a person starts looking for what works and focuses on how to make it work better, a lot of problems simply disappear! People seem to improve their life much faster when they start from what works. They feel much better too! It's worth taking a training with someone who knows how to transfer that nuance just for that effect alone!

Joseph Riggio also created applications of this model for peak performance and business applications as he has been a business consultant for a long time now.

That model could probably be called the next generation of NLP (to me anyway). I would say it changes the way you experience the world around you in a really beneficial manner. It is really worth trying.

As an aside, I never personally trained with Joseph, but I had some personal email exchanges with him and what I learned through is input was beneficial enough for me to recommend him, since I got those benefits without personally meeting him.

All in all, lots of great things are happening in the field of NLP and as long as you know what you are looking for, you can probably find it there.

If you can't find it in NLP, a really skilled NLP trainer will probably be able to create a model or a method to help you get what you want. There are specialists in education, others in sports, others in relationship building, others in public speaking and others in arts (music, drawing, dancing, etc). As long as you know what you want, you can find someone who is already skilled at transferring those skills.

A bit on the limitations

Even though NLP is wonderful, I want to tell you about what I consider some of the drawbacks of NLP. The first is that it is a complex model. There is so much to learn that it can seem like an enormous task at first. That's why I keep mentioning that you should know what you want before embarking on a training. If you do it just out of curiosity you might end up taking a lot of trainings.

Now, even if I say that, I still consider that it was worth every minute and every penny for me. I just want to give you as realistic a point of view as I can.

The second thing was that through NLP, I had become a human analyser and it prevented me from enjoying myself. It made me disassociated spending my time in my head analysing language patterns and people's non-verbal behaviour. That changed only when I trained with Robert Johanssen.

Now I can enjoy talking to someone without filtering through the NLP model. I was literally filtering reality and my interactions through the NLP model and that's not what I had signed up for or more accurately, I did not know I would get that as a side effect. Bear in mind that this is just my experience and it can be different for everyone, but I have seen enough people experience what I just described to mention it.

That realisation made it so I decided to teach differently and create my own model where people can be more associated in their body, not less. Still, I used my NLP skills to do that, so the model is still useful for me, just not in the traditional way it is taught in most training center.

Third, some people tried to make NLP academic (I won't mention any names) and unfortunately, some of the trainings I went to were really intellectual in their approach. The participants could explain a lot but could not produce any extraordinary results, which is weird coming from people who had been trained in a "model of excellence" (that is often how NLP is described). They could not do any modeling except for having a lot of strategies written on a sheet of paper. It was disappointing to see people who had supposedly modeled comedians who had a hard time making 2 or 3 people laugh even once. In fact, it was a bit sad to witness that. Bottom line, trainings oriented towards intellectual knowledge is to be avoided.

Fourth, the opposite of overly intellectual is the hypnotic "unconscious installation" type of training. Some really popular trainers use that approach and I got a lot out of it but also saw a significant drawback (to me) with that method. The drawback is that I wanted to be able to do what those trainers did and even after doing the trainer's training, I had no clue as to how they were doing what they were doing. Sure I had some tricks and skills, but I could not duplicate their results. Not even remotely.

That sent me on a mission and I spent 3 years listening to tapes and videos of live trainings to figure out what they were doing that they were not teaching (at least explicitly). I don't claim that I found everything they were doing, but the results I got with groups became closer to the changes I saw in his groups. Still, some of my participants had the same complaints as some of their participants. They said it was wonderful and they experienced changes, but could not reproduce the results on their own.

That bugged me. My goal was for them to be able get results similar to mine. That's when I looked for a different way of teaching. I wanted people to get changes AND be consciously able to use the skills later. It took me a couple of years more and meeting 2 other trainers (Micheal Breen & John Latourette) to have more of the kind of results I wanted. Also, it took a lot of testing of different approaches that came to mind when going towards my goal of teaching both with explicit conscious teaching and unconscious installation skills. Now this is not perfect, but I am much more satisfied with the results of my clients now that they get changes AND can consciously use a lot more of the skills I teach them.

Bottom line is if you want to consciously understand what to do, unconscious installation type trainings are not the place to go, as the use of hypnotic metaphor as a primary approach can make it hard to remember anything. On the other hand, if you want changes without learning all the details behind the approach, then it is great and wonderful to spontaneously change and move towards your goals with more ease.

Fifth, the certification process doesn't have the same standards depending on the trainers. Some people do a couple of days of training and become practitioners of NLP (I personally know a woman who got a practitioner certification in 3 days!). Then, a bit more training and they become certified master-practitioners. Add another 6-7 days and they are certified trainers. I would not put my brain in the hands of some of these trainers. Some of the master-practitioners I met would at best be considered practitioners by my standards. Of course, my standards are just higher than most trainers.

Also, the certification process often involves no testing at all. As long as the person was there, they get their certification. Even when there is testing I have yet to see anyone flunk their test even if most people in the training would agree that some people truly lacked in skills and could not demonstrate most of the ones considered as practitioner skills.

I know it would be bad for business to refuse a certification to someone who has done the whole training and paid for it (especially when an unhappy customer means losing thousands of dollars), but what troubles me is that some of these incompetent people will open an office as a coach or therapist using their certification as “proof” of their skills and credibility... and some clients will go there even if I would never send anyone there.

This last comment is not about NLP itself, but more about how certifications are conducted. The only exception to that seems to be how certification is conducted in the Mythoself trainings. I have not done the trainings myself, but I have read the requirements to be certified and it involves a lot of supervised practice and people doing the Mythoself facilitators training are not guaranteed a certification just for attending the training. I appreciate that kind of integrity. Those who want their certification will have to work for it and prove their skills over and over again.

Just know that doing a week or two of NLP trainings does not make you a professional and it does not make anyone else a professional in the field, unless someone is already successful in their field and just adds NLP in his practice or business.

I hope this gave you a better idea of what you can get out of NLP and also what to watch for if you ever want to hire an NLP practitioner. You want the ones who have an impressive track record with clients, not just a certification. I explain how to shop for coaches and trainers in chapter 7.

I just wanted to present a more complete view of NLP. It sure made an enormous difference in my life and I would learn it all over again if I had to. It has definitely given me access to skills and abilities that are priceless to me. Great stuff! It is second on my list of the best in self-improvement, especially the modeling part.

Let's move to chapter 5 on peak states of consciousness!

Chapter 5: Peak states of consciousness

There is a new field that looks really promising. It's the field of peak states of consciousness. A peak state is like a peak experience, the difference being that this person has the peak experience on a continuous (or regular) basis. Maybe you had moments in your life where you felt incredible states of well-being, love, flow, creativity, deep peace, stillness, shamanic awareness, incredible beauty, wonderment, silence, etc. Maybe you had that experience for seconds, hours or even weeks... and then it faded. Well I always thought that these experiences were temporary by design. But after meeting Grant McFetheridge, my beliefs changed...

I met Grant about 3 years ago when he told me he had figured out (with his team) how to make a peak state permanent (or, if you want more precision, some people have been living in their peak state on a continuous basis for several months or years. After a couple of years, we call it permanent). It just becomes their normal way of being and by contrast, they consider their "old" way of being as quite unhealthy. I met some of these people and I have to say that their body and skin looks different in a subtle way. It also feels different to hang out with them. It usually feels better to be in their presence (just like being in the presence of an "enlightened master", but with varieties of enlightenment depending on the person).

Since it is a new field, the results are not yet where I would want them to be, but progress is being made and a percentage of people are getting into peak states and making them stable (meaning they spend a lot of time in that state). I think this is exciting as those people don't have to use any rituals to maintain their state. No meditation, no prayer, no technique. When they have it, they have it. And if they ever lose it, it is usually easier to get it back than it was the first time.

The other interesting work that Grant brought is to define the characteristics of different states. He can describe about 20 different states, maybe a bit more today. It turns out I had experienced a couple of them during my life. What's important about that is that different states contain different abilities and the only way to use them is to know that the states have those abilities and then to have someone skilled teach us how to use those abilities. By skills and abilities, I mean the ability to do things that most people would consider impossible.

The other thing I realised is that most people who claim they are "enlightened" usually have one of the peak states described in Grant's model. Now from my perspective, there is not a peak state that has more truth than another. They are just different peak states with different perceptions, capabilities and feelings. Some people will be attracted to one more than another. I really recommend that you read Grant's website to familiarise yourself with this field. It is worth reading just to know that it exists.

I also appreciate that Grant has standards for certifying people in the peak states work and students have to demonstrate certain skills before they can be certified. I really appreciate that.

I am currently working at using a combination of NLP, the Riggio model, the peak states model, shamanism and my countless hours of experimenting with myself and willing subjects to help people access peak states and although it is usually easy for me to bring someone into a peak state, it is a challenge to make it permanent (it usually lasts a couple of days up to a month or two). At the very least, my clients know how it feels to be in a particular peak state and what it does to them. Also, they can usually access it in a couple of seconds or minutes if they want to. So it's not permanent, but really accessible. That's where I'm at right now with my research.

As for the limits of peak states, there are a couple. First, a peak state is a state. It is usually a much better state than what you usually experience, but it doesn't necessarily make your life perfect. The field of peak states doesn't offer a magic pill. Even with a peak state, you might not improve your health, your relationships or your financial situation (although it spontaneously happens for a certain percentage of people).

Also, a peak state does not necessarily give you new skills. If you struggle with money, you might still struggle with money in the peak state, you will just feel better or not even care about it. So a peak state might not change your life conditions, just how you feel about those conditions. If you want to change your life conditions, you will probably need to learn new skills in the area you want to improve.

The other issue with peak states is that some of them are really radical. It's not a big problem, because most people never get to them. With improper preparation, those states can be really hard to adapt to or even make the person dysfunctional for a while. Most skilled practitioner working in the peak states field are aware of those states and know in advance how to avoid them or how to prepare someone for such a state. Skilled practitioners in the field of peak states can usually give you the state of your choice, so this issue is not a big one. I just want to mention it so that you know there is a probability of falling into a really radical state if you do peak states work.

I am really excited by all the possibilities inherent in this new field and from the news I get, it is getting easier to do this kind of work and will probably be more accessible in the near future. I think you are getting in touch with the leading edge of self-improvement.

Now, a model that would combine peak states with other skills improvement models would be dynamite! People would get improvements in their state of consciousness and the real world skills they would get would improve their life conditions too. I know I have been taking that direction in the trainings I give as I think this is what will give the best leverage for people to actually get an extraordinary life of their own.

To conclude, I'd like again to thank Grant for his tireless research and to his team for all their efforts in making that work known. To all the readers, please make sure you know more about that topic as it could really change your life.

Chapter 6: How to shop and buy in the self-improvement field.

Here is the chapter that puts it all together for you. I will explain how I shop and choose books, cds, videos, coaches and trainers. With the tips and tricks presented here, you should be able to save a lot of money and disappointment while really improving your life when you do invest in yourself.

It took me many years to learn what you get just from reading this ebook. All the gains I made in the self-improvement field I could have made for about 12 000-15 000\$ instead of 45 000\$. That's about a third of what it cost me.

Now let's move on to my decision making process. I will describe what to look for and what to avoid in each section.

Buying books

Usually people read self-improvement books because they think they will gain something from reading. I see stressed people reading books on stress management and then still being stressed. I see some of my acquaintances having relationship problems reading books on relationships just to forget everything they read in the books when they are with their significant others (especially when having arguments).

As you can see, if you want some big changes in your life, I suggest a skilled coach, facilitator or therapist (more on how to find one later in the chapter). A book can give you motivation and ideas, but rarely will you get life changes from a book with a few exceptions.

If you already have some skills in an area and you want to go further, then reading a book can give you what you want. When looking to buy a book, make sure you look for books that **describe processes and exercises** to get the skills you want. Skip over the books that explain the "why" behind a phenomenon or skill unless you want that information. Be clear with your goals. Know precisely what you want out of a book and read only those parts of the book that gives you what you want.

Choose books that explain the skills with analogies and stories instead of books that rely solely on intellectual explanations. Also, remember the limits of a book. If you buy 5 books on a given skill and spend 30 hours reading them, you might as well take a 2 day training on the subject. Your time will be better invested. Also, you have to practice the processes in the books if you want the skills. Otherwise, it's just mental stimulation and you end up with no improvements in your life. If you get no improvement, what's the point in investing all this time in reading?

The only other type of book I encourage people reading are the books filled with metaphors written by

a skilled writer or NLP trainer. These books have a tendency to create changes in people's lives, especially in their perceptions and reactions in day-to-day reality.

Again, this applies solely for self-improvement. If you read for pleasure or read self-improvement books as a hobby, just ignore my recommendations. On a personal note, after being a book junky, I have to admit that I get a lot more pleasure now interacting with the world instead of reading about it...

The other thing I forgot to mention is that authors don't have the truth. Just because it is printed and the book sold 5 million copies doesn't mean that everything in the book is true or even useful, it just means that it sold well (hence the comment "bestseller" on the cover). I have seen too many people citing a book to make a point without having much experience in the subject matter.

Make sure you test the book's teachings in reality before adopting a specific belief or value system. Not doing so could lead to disappointment and some undesirable problems. When you test it, it will either work for you or it won't. If it works, it's great, keep using the skill. If it doesn't, don't force yourself to do what the book says, try something else... you are unique you know! Something else might suit your personal style better.

Also I know that some well-known writers are not writing their own books. The publishing company pays a ghost writer a flat fee and this ghost writer writes the whole book. They put the name of the well-known author on the book (his name sells books basically) and this author gets royalty checks for a book he has never written! At first, I was disgusted when I learned about that practice. I guess it's not about helping people but making as much money as possible...

Anyway, if you think an author is a genius after reading their book, they might not be the real genius. Like one of my friends say: "There are a lot of business men disguised as altruistic helpers."

There you have it! I don't read much anymore except to learn new processes in self-improvement, so I don't have a lot more to say about books.

Buying CDs

I noticed 4 kinds of CDs on the market in self-improvement. One that really bores me, 2 that I find useful and one that I really appreciate because I work as a trainer and consultant myself. I'll start with the kind I avoid. It's the kind that most public speakers put out, especially famous ones. Those CDs are full of information that is usually the same you read in their books. They are motivational at best and describe "principles" or "laws" of success in the subject that interests you.

I have yet to see a lot of people whose lives have been changed by this kind of CD set. Whenever I

listen to those, I get temporarily motivated and I have a lot of knowledge that I “want” to apply. Then I don’t because I don’t know how and lack the proper distinctions (nuances) to make it work in my day to day life (or I just forget to use it). Then I feel bad and look for another audio program to improve my life. Sounds familiar? That’s how it was for me a couple of years ago.

Now I avoid those even though they are really inspirational. I found something better than inspirational along the way.

Bear in mind that this only my opinion and the experience of my colleagues and clients. You can believe otherwise if that kind of CD worked for you and you really got results. You should definitely do what works for you.

The second kind of CD is the kind that has you go through a process in a proactive way. Win Wenger has those audio programs where he gives you instruction and where you do the process as if he was sitting next to you. You just follow instructions. John Latourette has cds that teach the Silva method where again, you are guided through the exercises.

Same with a lot of NLP CDs. Same with the Monroe Institute CDs. Any CD that leads you through exercises (or meditations) fit in that category. I think they are valuable as they provide you with a way to acquire a skill at your own pace for a really reasonable price (compared to trainings and personal coaching). They also give you an experience that you probably could not have from a book.

The third kind of CD is the one that I will call experiential. This is where you are passive and where you are indirectly lead through an experience. Where you had to actively participate with the second kind of CD, with this kind of CD you just listen without having to actively participate. In this category, you find all the hypnotic CDs, be it the old traditional way of doing hypnosis up to hypno-peripheral processing or the paraliminal tapes of Paul Scheele. You also have the CDs that use binaural beats to induce a state and you can even add the shamanic CDs that use drumming.

All those CDs are designed to give you a specific kind of experience, an altered state of consciousness or a specific change in your life. Although they are not a magic pill, they can help you in making a change you want to make in your life. They can also give you very interesting experiences (altered states) for a measly 20-25\$. It’s a lot cheaper than getting drunk as you pay for the CD only once!

It’s a good way to explore a new approach to determine if you want to invest more of your time and resources in that approach. It’s also a good way to get to know potential trainers you are considering for future trainings or workshops. Do you like what they do? How they communicate? Do you like their vibe? Do you like their way of communicating? Do you like their style?

The fourth kind of cd that I really appreciate is a cd or cd set of a live training by a skilled trainer. I did not say a public speaker, but a trainer. This is useful when you already have some background skills in

the subject being presented so you can learn new things without going to the live training. I did that a lot when learning NLP. If you are a professional in the field, it is a great way to get new distinctions (nuances) and skills without travelling around the world. I also like that there is the non-verbal qualities of the trainer on the CD. Voice tone, tempo and pauses are all there for us to perceive. For anybody wanting to model great communicators and/or storytellers, this is a bargain.

As a trainer/coach, I love to listen to live trainings on CDs as I can do it while driving and notice how that particular trainer transfers his skills. How does he start the training? How does he get our attention? How does he use language? What sets him apart? And a ton of other questions can be answered just by listening to a live training on CD.

So, to summarize, make sure you will get an experience or a new skill from the CD or CD set before buying it. I would avoid buying CDs from a public speaker as it usually stays at the level of information and rarely gets to the level of skills. Since you will invest time in listening to the CD (even if it's in your car), you might as well get improvements in your life from all that listening.

Also, make sure you do the exercises! It's fine to listen the CDs in the car to familiarise yourself with them, but if you never get to actually doing the exercises, nothing will happen (you might get changes in beliefs or perceptions though). Also, make sure the recordings you listen to while driving are not hypnotic in nature. Some of them really alter your state deeply and can be dangerous while driving!

Videos and DVDs

I know I repeat the same criterias for a lot of the products, but that is how I really got results in my life with self-improvement. For videos, again, I stay away from the inspirational type of product, unless I would want to learn how to inspire people... then I would watch those. I look for videos that will show me how to do something that want to be able to do and that I can't do yet. Motivation is easy once you know how to do it with yourself, you don't need to depend on professional motivators. Personally, I don't want to depend on an outside source to have the necessary motivation to take action.

I consider inspirational videos useful for beginners who have never read a self-improvement book in their life or don't want to read books. A video might be enough to get them to want to improve their lives. As far as you are concerned, I assume that you have read your share of books and know by heart the principles presented by most motivational speakers. If you know them by heart and your life is the same, then I guess it's time for another approach since this one did not work.

To me, videos are the closest we can get to an actual training, especially if you watch it with one or more person and you do the exercises together as if you were actually doing the training. You can get a lot of skills and changes in your life in a lot less time than it would take you to actually read books on the subject.

I also love videos, because you get to see how the “expert” does it. You can hear him, see him, see how he moves, whether he’s teaching guitar or bodybuilding or NLP. Then you can rewind and watch again. You can even watch in slow motion if you want that kind of detail. That’s something you cannot do even in live trainings. To me, the ideal way of acquiring a skill has always been to learn directly with a skilled person and have videos of that person performing so I could get more details as my skills improved.

There are 2 types of videos that I find very useful. The ones where you are shown a process step by step. Recipe videos, guitar videos, yoga videos, dance videos and the speed reading videos fall into that category. You usually have the person teaching the process and you can learn it quite easily. The video is usually professionally produced with different camera angles.

The other type of video that I find really useful is the live training type. Here you can see a live training in part or in whole and see the trainer demonstrate what he teaches. It is really useful to see them in action because sometimes we learned a process from a book and when we see the author actually doing it, we notice that we misunderstood the process. Now we know how to make the process work. To me a video is so much richer than a book because we can actually see and hear the person perform.

Examples of this type of videos are the EFT videos, a lot of NLP videos, sales training videos, hypnosis videos, etc. You see the training as if you were there minus the possibility of asking questions and being worked with by a skilled trainer or assistant (both really valuable in my opinion).

The only detail you have to be aware of is that most trainers who sell live training videos are not movie producers, so the image and sound quality can be average or even so-so. You might have just one camera angle. Basically, they do not sell their image, they sell skills and they usually don’t have the same budget a well-known public speaker would have. They just film as is with a small camera and sell it as is without any special effects.

For me, that is not a problem. I am more interested in a guy who invests his time and money on improving his skills and doing research than on a guy who invests in his image. I want to pay for skills, not for the production of the video. In my experience, the best trainers I met are not that well-known, but they have made such discoveries and can do things so incredible that I don’t mind watching a poor quality video of them teaching. When I want incredible sounds and pictures, I just go rent a movie...

I just wanted to warn you about that because some people are surprised at the quality of videos when they buy it from someone other than well-known speakers. Just expect it and if it is better than you imagined, great!

Another resource that I want to mention in this section is TV. If you know some accelerated learning

techniques, it can be really useful to watch interviews or footage of people doing what you want to be able to do. If you are into music, sports, cooking, painting and a lot of other things, you can get a lot of free information. I love to watch guitar players on TV. I usually learn new tricks that I can play right away or after a little bit of practice. I can even use my VCR and watch it again to get more out of that performance.

All in all, the video format is probably the most useful tool in self-improvement with the exception of one-on-one interactions and live trainings. It is also a great way to test different trainers for a low price compared to actually taking a live training. If you like the style of the trainer and you consider what he taught in the video to be valuable, then you will probably be satisfied with his live trainings.

Now, let's move to what I consider to be the most valuable part of this book, which is how to differentiate skilled facilitators/trainers from less skilled facilitators/trainers.

Therapists/coaches/trainers

For this section, I will list all the criterias that I look for in each specialist. I will also list the signs that let me know when to avoid a specific kind of person. A skilled professional might not meet all the criterias that I write in this book. Your job is to find a professional that meets as many criterias as possible. The ones who meet all the criterias listed in this section are a rare occurrence. If you find one, just appreciate it!

I will also list questions that you can ask each professional to determine their level of skill and the kind of results you can expect with them. The questions will help you to check against some criterias that would not be easy to check if you were just to chat aimlessly with them.

Therapists: what to look for.

When I say therapists, I mean a person who can help you resolve an emotional pattern that keeps coming back in your life, whether it is a fear, a phobia, worries, anger, insomnia or any of the problems that we consider suited for therapy. Now, let's move to what I consider important in a therapist.

- 1- You should feel at ease with the therapist.

This one might seem obvious, but it is often overlooked. A skilled therapist should be able to put you at ease. It's one of the skills that the really good ones have no matter what your age and cultural background is. It makes everything easier.

- 2- During the first session or phone call, the therapist should be able to tell you how long it will take for a specific issue (in time or number of session).

This one is really important to me as I am sure you know someone who has spent years in therapy. This is particularly the case with non-directive approaches. Those approaches can make you waste a lot of time and money. I would also add talk therapies, insight therapies and group therapies to the list (with some exceptions). Talking about problems and all the possible ramifications we can find has rarely resolved any problems.

Your therapist should be able to tell how much time it will take to resolve a specific issue. For example, I know it takes one or two 20-minute sessions for a simple fear or phobia. I know it usually takes me 1 or 2 sessions to help a person change a “bad” habit. I know it takes me about 30 minutes to teach someone an effective learning process to acquire new skills. I know it takes me about 10-20 minutes to change a limiting belief and after the first belief change, the other ones take less time. If he/she has precise skills, they can tell you that and they can also tell you when it will take longer if you want to acquire a more complex set of skills (like getting all the skills necessary to successfully start your own business. That takes more than 30 minutes! A lot more!).

Basically, you should at least have an idea of what to expect. If the therapist is skilled in working with your particular issue, they will be able to give you a range of time for that issue, from the minimum time usually required to the longest it took them to help someone with that kind of issue. They can even usually tell you what kind of factors are involved when it takes longer. Just that kind of specificity will give you a good indication that you are talking to a skilled therapist, because the unskilled ones don't have the confidence or consistency in results to give you those kind of details.

- 3- A skilled therapist should be able to tell you his percentage of success with different issues. He should also tell you if he never worked with the kind of issue you have or if he has a low rate of success for your particular issue.

I definitely look for honesty in a therapist, because I would want them to be honest with what they see in my particular situation. I would also like to have an idea of what to expect with them for my particular situation.

For example, I have a success rate of over 90% with simple fears and phobias, whether they are fears of dogs, fear of flying, fear of public speaking or any kind of fear you can imagine. I know because I would test my work by having the client pet a dog, speak in front of a group (or any test appropriate for the fear) and see if they had any reactions whatsoever to the same trigger. I would also do a follow up after a few months to verify if the change worked long-term.

Personally, I would not want to pay a therapist who has never done follow-up sessions or calls with clients. He wouldn't even know if his methods work in the long run. If I am to pay with my money, I want someone who is thorough and actually verified that he had lasting results.

4- He should be able to tell you how he tests for results.

When talking with you about your issue, the therapist should tell you how he tests to determine if the issue is resolved or not and you should consider that the tests make sense. I am always suspicious when a therapist does not want to tell me how he knows his methods work. If I was a client, I would want to be able to measure the results myself.

5- Preferably, the therapist will be more interested in your well-being than he is in your problems.

This one is probably the most important criteria I can give you. Unfortunately, most therapists are trained in detecting what is wrong with people and what doesn't work. So they know a lot about how people make themselves feel bad and how they can make their lives a living hell, but most of them don't know how people go into states of well-being, peace, performance, etc.

For myself, I would choose a therapist who talks a lot about improving my quality of life and my states of consciousness resolving problems only if that is necessary (clients can often resolve issues by themselves as a side effect of improving their state of consciousness).

To make that point really clear, the more a therapist focuses a client on his problems, the more the client amplifies his problems. I know they mean well when they do that, but it often times make a client worse than before.

So, the therapist should focus on improving the client's well-being and quality of life and should spend a lot of time on that while working with "problems" only if necessary (it is necessary sometimes to focus temporarily on a problem but 10 sessions in a row on the same problem is a bit overkill in my opinion).

6- You should perceive the therapist as someone who feels better than you.

Now, I'm not saying that therapists should be perfect, but I am saying that they should be in a better state of well-being than you are. This is one of my criteria when buying services from anyone in the self-improvement field. They have to have better results than me in the field they work in.

If I want to be more muscular, I'll train with someone who is more muscular than me. If I want to make more money, I will get coaching from someone who makes at least 2 or 3 times the income I am currently making. If I want to learn guitar, I'll seek someone who plays better than me. That might seem obvious, but that little principle is often forgotten when a person is in distress.

So, to go back to the therapist, I would be looking for someone who seems to feel like I want to feel. Someone who exudes a sense of well-being or peace or calmness or wholeness. I say that because a therapist can be skilled and get results, but they won't be able to help you after a certain point, unless they have been there themselves. If they know the way, it's easier for them to show you the way and guide you there.

I am sad to report that a lot of therapists feel bad a lot of the time. In my point of view, those people are not ready to work as therapists. I have met a lot of them in trainings and surprisingly they did not become therapist because they wanted to do this career, but because they thought something was wrong with them. It's not the kind of person I would want to hang out with, let alone put my head and heart into their hands for a couple of hours.

Fortunately, there are also therapists who feel better and better as time goes by, thereby being their own proof of the effectiveness of the methods they use. You can feel it when you talk with them. It just feels good to be with them, because they feel good. This is the kind of person I would want to have as a therapist if I needed one for any reason (remembering that they have to be skilled also). You just have better probabilities of getting what you want from someone who has already been there. It is not a guarantee, but your chances are better.

A note on those criterias (standards)

This is not a bullet proof system, but using those guidelines will definitely help you find someone who will help you really improve your life and resolve what you want to resolve. The more of those criterias a therapist can meet the better. If you can find one that meets all those criterias you have the jackpot and should expect measurable results in a short period of time.

The next section deals with the signs that let you know when to avoid a therapist...

Therapists: what to avoid.

Basically, if you understand what you just read, you know what to avoid because it is the exact opposite of the criterias I just wrote. I will still describe what to avoid in case it helps you make a better decision when in doubt.

- 1- If you feel bad with the therapist, whether you talk on the phone or in person, go with another therapist. It might just be a personality mismatch or something else, I just know that the probabilities of success are lessened if you feel uneasy with the therapist. So even if the therapist was heartily recommended by someone you trust, trust yourself first and choose a therapist that you can honestly talk to.

- 2- I believe one should avoid therapists or methods that are vague in their results or therapists that tell you they have no idea how long it could take for your particular issue. When they say: “It could be a couple of sessions or 2 years...” find someone who can tell you a range of sessions that is realistic based on their past experiences with similar issues.

As a side note, some methods are really non-linear by design and the practitioner really can't predict if it will resolve your particular issue. I would say rebirth, holothropic breathing, free association (as in psychoanalysis, not recommended if you want specific results), arts as a form of therapy, bodywork, some types of basic energy work that was learned in a day, etc. I recommend those only if you want to explore new experiences instead of resolving a specific issue. I'm not saying those methods are wrong or bad, they sure can bring great benefits, they are just not well suited if you want a specific result in the shortest amount of time possible.

Some people will argue that they resolved a lot of issues through these methods and I agree. I am just saying that if you have a specific phobia or anger towards one person, it will take less time and money to actually resolve it with specific methods than if you use a non-linear method. Especially now that there are tools like EFT, NLP, EMDR and the like, therapeutic progress can happen much faster. If you want to go with energy work, make sure the person you hire has had measurable results with a lot of clients.

- 3- If you don't see any progress in your well-being or in the issue presented after 3-4 sessions, please change therapists. With the new technologies (and when I say new, I mean 5, 10, 20, 30 years old) that are available, there is no reason to stick to a method that doesn't seem to work for you. So many people succeeded at resolving what you want to resolve, look for the methods they used to succeed.

- 4- I noticed it is better to avoid talk therapies. If you realise that the basic method of the therapist is to have you talk about your problem and how you feel about it, please change therapists. Digging deeper and deeper into your past and talking about it rarely resolves the issue. I know it can provide relief to confide something for the first time and I encourage that, but if this is the only method used, the relief is usually temporary and the resolution is incomplete. Since I

would want a more complete resolution of an issue, I would choose someone who does more than “talk therapy”.

- 5- I have also observed that “insight therapy” is rather limited in its results. Insight therapy is based on the premise that if you understand the “root cause” of a problem, it will resolve itself. Although it worked for some people, the probabilities of success are not that good.

I can't count the number of people I have seen in my trainings who told me everything about their problem including where it came from (you guessed it, their childhood) and after months or even years of therapy, they still had the same exact problem. They understood it completely and were full of insights, but they still had the same problem and still suffered a lot.

- 6- One thing that most people don't know and I consider it another great distinction to have is that there is a difference between managing a problem and resolving a problem. I would personally avoid the former and go for the latter.

Let's say I have a fear of flying, I can learn management techniques like changing my breathing, using a pill or alcohol to fall asleep (a lot of people do that), but then, I still have to do my technique every time and that is the flaw of management techniques. You have to use will power every time you are in that situation. If you don't, you panic. If there is no alcohol or pill, you have to suffer all the way.

Compare that to a method that actually resolves the fear of flying and then you just sit on a plane feeling good and enjoying the experience without actually trying. You don't even have to think about it because the change is done, the problem is resolved. Especially now that fears can be resolved really fast, it would be a bit stupid to keep on suffering when we don't have to.

Now the same applies to performance jitters (athletes, stage performers, students, public speakers, etc.). Most people have rituals to deal with their jitters and the ritual can be quite fast or take a long time. Also, they usually still feel the jitters during the performance to a lesser extent. There is a well-known singer where I come from who vomits in the bathroom before almost every show she gives.

What if they didn't have jitters anymore? A lot of people don't have jitters and they perform beautifully. We can change that instead of having to deal with it every time. The same applies to stress or anger. The list goes on and on. What if the guy doesn't succeed at managing his anger one day and beats his wife or kids? I would personally not be willing to take that risk.

The bottom line is this: I would avoid management techniques and look for therapists or coaches who

actually resolved a particular issue with a lot of people (meaning they have a good track record and did follow-up with the clients).

- 7- Probably the most important thing to notice is if the therapist looks unhappy, unhealthy or just exudes plain bad feelings. How can someone like that help you become really happy or help you improve your well-being in a measurable way?

It's not that they cannot help you, but you probably have better chances of success with a therapist who walks his talk. Someone who is an example of the method they use. I am not saying that they should be perfect. They should at least not have the issue that you have and if possible seem to feel better than you all-around. It is easy to see by the way. Happy people look better (not talking about aesthetics here) and you are drawn to them. Their body looks different. It is usually glowing. Their breathing is more profound and rhythmic. You just sense that they feel better than most people you meet. If you feel better than the therapist, you should seek someone else...

The only exception I would have for this rule of thumb is if the therapist had an incredible track record with a variety of issues or with the issue that you want to work with. Then I would put that criteria aside and go see him even if he doesn't look well himself, especially if he satisfies all of the other criterias I mentioned earlier.

That concludes the section on how to choose therapists. I know that you will find some of the ideas here to be quite obvious and you might have found some nuances that are new to you. I also know that some people will find these ideas totally new and those people probably would have wasted a lot of time and money in therapy if they ever needed it. I also know that some people will be shocked and will find my standards too high. Well, that's where the quality is.

I am happy for you because if you apply what you just learned here when choosing a new therapist, you will probably start resolving your issues and start improving your well-being in a measurable way. I think it's great that you can finally experience that!

It's now time to move on to the topic of coaches. Most of the reasoning applied to therapists can be applied to coaches although you will need a different angle because coaches usually have a different aim in their work. The next section should be shorter to minimize the repetition, unless I consider a distinction to be particularly important.

Coaches: how to shop for the best coach available

Coaching has a different aim than therapy. Where in therapy you usually want to resolve problems, in coaching the aim is usually to improve some skill, make a goal real, perform better or reorient your career (developing the skills necessary for the new career). As you can see, the angle of perception is really proactive as they help us getting something we want instead of helping us getting rid of what we don't want.

In this section, I will give you an idea of the preparation you need to do before you hire a coach if you want to get the most out of your coaching experience.

Preparation

- 1- Get clear on what you want and clarify your expectations.
 - a. Getting clear on what you want. Do you want to start a new business? Sell better? Make memorable presentations in front of groups? Change careers?
 - b. Knowing the intention behind the goal. Why do you want that? What do you think it will give you? Are you sure you will get that if you get your goal?
 - c. How will you know that you have your goal, that it is complete? What will you see hear and feel that let's you know you have succeeded?
 - d. How much time, energy and money are you willing to invest in that particular goal?

The only exception to that preparation is if you really don't know what you want. Then the goal for the coaching you get would be to clarify what you want. For everyone else, this little preparation helps you determine what kind of coach to hire depending on their skills and speciality.

Also, I consider it really important to find the real goal behind the goal. The stated goal is usually a means to get to the real goal. Most of the clients I had told me what they wanted... and after a bit of questioning, they realise that they took the long road to actually get something that was already accessible to them.

For example, some people hate their jobs and hire me to help them perform better so they will make more money. When I ask them what they will do once they have enough money, they tell me that they will quit their job and that they will be able to do what they love with their free time. Invariably I ask them what they would do in their free time (what they love to do) and most of the time it's something they could do right away in their free time or even better, something they could make a living from.

But their plan was to spend 15-25 years doing a stressful job that they hate so that eventually maybe

someday they could have the free time to do what they love. Do you know anyone like that?

So what they really want is not to perform better at their current job, this is only a means to an end... the end being spending most of their time doing what they love. Do you think it would be useful for them to become conscious of their real goal? To know that there are other means to actually experience what they want to experience?

I noticed that most people who think like that never get around to doing what they want to do. They just never seem to have enough money to feel secure enough to actually move on and do what they love. As a strategy, it's not the best choice.

Clarifying your goals and your real intentions behind the goal will help you in getting the experiences you want faster. Usually, you will realise that there are simpler means to get the real intentions you are after once you question yourself a bit.

Determining how much you are willing to invest of yourself for that goal can help you determine if you still want that goal. A lot of people don't realise the actual efforts necessary to achieve certain goals and they tend to have unrealistic expectations. Once they actually know what they have to do to achieve their goal, they might decide it is not worth the effort or decide to keep their goal and just change their expectations to make them more realistic.

This preparation you just read about will usually save you most if not all of your first session with the coach as usually the coaches spend the first session on clarifying goals. With the preparation done, the coach can only spend his time verifying your goals and expectations and proceed with the coaching without you paying for the preparation because you did it beforehand.

Coaches: what to look for.

When I say coach, I also mean mentor and consultant, whether it is in business or in any area of endeavour. Anybody who offers to help you with improving any area of your life fits into the "coach" category. In this section, I will put the "what to avoid" information inside the explanations of each criterias that I look for in a coach. Without further introduction, let me show you how I would shop for a coach.

- 1- The coach has a track record of successes, especially with people who had goals similar to yours.

This one is really important! That's why I put it first. If I wanted to lose body fat, I would want to be coached by someone who has a lot of clients who succeeded at doing that. I would also want to ask him

the percentage of clients who actually succeeded with his coaching program. I would also want to talk to them, but I will come back to that later.

Same goes with building muscle or playing guitar or starting a business. I would want to see pictures of more muscular clients, hear their students playing guitar or talk to new, happy and successful business owners.

If it was a marketing coach, I would want to know how many of his clients actually increased their revenues, which is what marketing is for.

If I wanted guidance on how to reorient my career, I would want to know how many clients of the coach I am interviewing feel like they are satisfied with their new chosen career. How many at least improved their satisfaction with where they are heading...

A really skilled coach should be able to give you proof of his clients successes and you should be able to talk to them if they don't mind. Depending on the area of coaching, you should be able to see or hear them perform. Now, while seeing the client perform, you can ask yourself if that is the kind of result that you want. Also, when talking to some clients of the coach and hearing about the kind of experiences they had, you can notice if that is the kind of experience that you would like to have or if you would like something different.

Of course, the thing to avoid would be a coach who has no track record or one who is not able or willing to give you any information on their clients' results. Also, if they have only 1 or 2 success stories to tell you, that's no good. They should have so many success stories that you have to stop them because you've had enough! Make sure that all their stories are verifiable though...

Anytime you speak to a potential coach for you, ask for numbers and specific successes. Don't settle for general sales pitch. If they can't answer your request for specific proof, move on, you have saved yourself time and money...

2- The coach has succeeded in the area you want to succeed in.

It seems obvious, but it's worth repeating. A poor coach doesn't make a good business coach, unless you want very little income. Same thing with a fat person being a coach on how to reach your ideal weight.

The coach should be more successful than you in your chosen area, period.

The only reason I would accept bypassing this criteria would be if he had a more than excellent track record with his clients. If a “weight coach” was overweight or even obese, but had most of his clients reach and maintain their “ideal” weight for a long period of time (say at least 1-2 years), then I would not mind them being fat, because my chances of success would be pretty high.

I say that because a lot of retired athletes, businessman, and musicians don’t perform as they used to, but they have lots of clients who succeed on a consistent basis. As for them, they don’t want to be in the spotlight anymore or generate millions every year, they have what they want and they just focus on something else like family for example. They still know the ins and outs of a particular expertise and they can save you years of trial and errors.

3- On the first session with the coach, you should make progress or learn something new...

It can be any kind of progress. It can be that you are now more realistic about your project. It might be that your goals are much clearer. It might be that you have new perceptions, beliefs or even a new state of consciousness.

You might even have new skills that you can practice by yourself. All of that is great!

Now, if you don’t perceive any changes or progress in your first session or if you feel you haven’t learned anything new, you should consider whether or not you should continue with this coach. There are plenty of coaches who can give you that in the first session so there is no reason to settle for less.

As an aside, I met a voice coach and in my first session, I gained about 50% in my power and projection, if not more. In the second session, I was able to sustain my notes for longer without as much effort and my voice was more whole (if it means anything to you). Now that was impressive to me. It cost me 80\$ per session. Not very expensive for someone like me who talks in front of groups regularly. If I had not seen any progress with that first coach in the first session or two, I would have looked for someone else right away.

Have high standards, it’s your life after all...

4- The coach should know effective methods to help you move into optimal states of consciousness for your specific goals.

Do you remember when I wrote in the first chapter that the state of consciousness is the most important

element in self-improvement? Well, I consider that a skilled coach should absolutely have skills to help you get optimal states suited for your goals and projects. That way, you have much better chances to succeed in your endeavours.

Just ask the coach if they can do that. Ask them how they do it. If they have no clue of what you are talking about, move to another one.

5- A great coach usually transfers skills during the coaching process.

A lot of coaches actually don't have much skill and are just motivational coaches who ask you what you want, ask you to write it down and just call them regularly so you have to be accountable to someone. Well, a friend could do that for free...

A good coach will usually teach you things you really don't know about and help you get measurable skills that you can use in your day to day life. You can even ask the coach what you will be able to do that you are not able to do after you work with him. If he is skilled, he should be able to give you really precise answers and how you will be able to measure your skills in the real world. If he can just say that you will perform better, that's pretty vague... you could be performing only 1% better after 10 sessions and he could tell you that you got what he promised...

When they can describe you some of the skills you will have in sensory details (what you will see, hear and feel when you have the skills and how you will know you have it), then you have more chances of improving your life with his services.

6- The coach is working for you.

The coach should be all about your goals and helping you find goals that really suit who you are. If you feel that the coach is trying to push his beliefs on you or if he seems to be putting his own goals before yours when working with you, change coaches. You are the one paying and it's your life. The coach should not tell you what to believe or what to choose.

They can however point to you what you need to get your goal, but that's different. Also, they should have more than one approach to help you get your goal. If they have only one method and that method doesn't suit you and they can't adjust to working with you, change coaches.

7- A realistic plan and timetable.

A skilled coach cannot totally predict the time it will take to help you, but he should be able to give you a certain amount of time or number of sessions that it will take to help you. He should also be able to explain his projections based on previous experience. Also, he should give you realistic expectations about the time it takes to achieve your goals in the first session you get with him. That can prevent a lot of disappointment. Please avoid the “magic pill” mentality of some coaches.

Remember that even with the best methodologies in the world, it will still take some time to create a new business...

Also, be realistic with yourself about the time it can take to get your goals. A skilled coach can surely help you get into a new state of consciousness really fast or even teach you an accelerated learning method in an hour or two, but starting a new business requires a lot more than one or two skills. Please be aware of your goals and what they imply in terms of involvement.

In conclusion

Coaches are there to help you move forward and you should set pretty high standards when choosing them. Go ahead and ask them lots of questions about their results and achievement and the results of their clients. I once asked a public speaker how much he made for every speaking engagement and how many he did per month. When he told me, I was then willing to listen to his advice because he had a thriving business. On the other hand, I met a lot of coaches who “looked” successful, but when questioned enough revealed that they were just getting by. Of course, I didn’t listen to their advice.

Ok let’s move on to my favourite topic: trainers and trainings! Having been to a lot of trainings and having spent a lot of time with some trainers helping putting on their training, I can tell you a lot of the ins and outs of this particular branch of self-improvement. May this help you get a lot more progress when you do choose to take trainings.

Trainers, teachers, public speakers, spiritual masters...

Introduction

My favourite subject! After all the trainings I have attended, all the trainings I have organised for other trainers and all of the trainings that I have given myself, I know what happens behind the scenes. I am happy to finally share that information at large.

Before I do, let me say that I consider live trainings to be the most effective self-improvement tool as long as you choose the right one for you (the one that really changes your life). Trainings provide a direct experience with the trainer with direct feedback on how you are doing with your learning. That cannot be obtained through a book, a CD or a DVD (you can't get feedback on your learning from a DVD). The only thing that can come close to a live training is face to face coaching with a skilled coach. But even then, you don't get to practice exercises with a variety of people like you do in a live training.

Based on my experience, a good 1 or 2 day training teaching specific skills will give you results much faster than reading several books on the topic or even listening to CDs about those skills. If someone spends 15 hours reading books and listening to CDs about communication skills, they will "understand" some things about communication.

Now compare that to someone who spent 15 hours in a training practicing communication skills and becoming more and more perceptive in their interactions with others. This person does different real-world exercises and gets more "understandings" that comes from actual experience and feedback from the participants and the trainer. This person also has some changes in behaviours and perceptions and this alone will likely change the quality of life this person. Who do you think got the most out of the 15 hours invested?

The bottom line is that I have seen people get results so fast during a training that they felt really bad about having spent months or years reading on a subject before deciding to actually try it out. While the reading brought intellectual stimulation, the subject studied was still abstract to them and they could not connect it to their day to day life. After a small training, all the books they had read started to make sense and could be easily applicable in their lives. That's the benefit of a live training. Real experience with real applications in our day to day lives...

What to do before you even start looking for a training

In terms of efficiency, I would suggest that you really define what you want for yourself and what you are looking for in terms of experience. Let's say you want to improve your life, what is it that you want to improve? Your business skills? Your state of consciousness? Your relationships? Your whole life? (yes, it is possible...)

If you don't know, then what you probably want is to know what you want... and there are trainings for that as well.

Now that you know what you want, what kind of training do you want? Do you want a training that

will just give you an experience you never had before? Do you want skills? Do you want changes in your way of being? Do you want all of that at once? (this could take longer).

A skilled trainer should be able to design trainings that give you the experience you want to have really fast. A day or two is not uncommon. By experience I mean a specific state of consciousness. It's more an exploration than a training. People usually do that to try new things without having to spend too much time or money.

The same goes for a specific process or technique. I know a lot of techniques that can be taught in one day or less when you have a skilled trainer. Techniques like EFT, speed reading, accelerated learning processes, self-hypnosis, etc. After that you have the know-how and it's up to you to use it or not, but the only thing left to do is to practice... or play with the process as I like to call it.

To learn more complete skill-sets or models usually takes several days and practice on your part. In that category, you can put any trainings that would make you a professional in a chosen area or that involves multiple skills (more than 2 or 3 skills). Any NLP training will last more than 2-3 days unless it is an introductory training or unless the training is focused on a really specific application of NLP (selling or curing phobias for example).

That's where it is really useful to know if you are looking only for an experience or a specific skill or process. A 12-day NLP training might be overkill if you only want to be able to go into a peaceful state...

After you have clarified what you want, you have a head start in deciding what kind of training to take. The only thing left for you to do is to find a trainer that will actually give you the results you are seeking... which could be tricky.

This is where the next section of the book comes in handy! I will describe exactly what I look for when searching for a trainer and how I verify the skills of a trainer. Think of the next section as a checklist to go through when talking to the people selling a training.

Let's go to the next section and go through the process that helped me choose trainings that I never regretted in the last five years. Most of these trainings gave me results and changes that made it so I had received more than the time and money I had invested in them. And that includes improvements in the financial aspect of my life. I cannot say that about my first years of taking trainings. Four times out of five, I felt I had wasted my time and money, but it was also my fault, because I would take any training that came my way. Let's make sure you have a different experience...

How to shop for trainings and trainers

So you know what you want and you are ready to take a training. Then, you realise that there are a lot of trainers out there and you don't have any way to know which ones are skilled and which ones are just good at selling themselves.

I will list several criterias to check against when talking to a potential trainer or their assistant to make sure you are making the right decision. Here we go!

1- You enjoy communicating with the trainer or their assistant.

That should be obvious! A trainer is supposed to be skilled at communicating with people, it is their job. They should be able to determine your needs fairly easily and you should have a great time communicating with them. They should be able to tell you exactly what training to take based on the results you want to get.

The same goes for their assistant. If they are skilled trainers, then they should be able to train their assistant really well. You should feel that the assistant is skilled and communicates really well. If you have a lot of misunderstandings and feel that the process of communicating with the trainer is laborious, you should go somewhere else, because they will most likely not communicate better in the training.

2- The trainer has proof that his trainings work.

A trainer should be able to give you proof that his method works. Not only that, he should have an overabundance of proof. I say that because some unskilled trainers make people believe they are good at what they do by telling some of their success stories, but they always tell the same 3-4 stories because they only had 3-4 successes.

If they are really good, they should have dozens or hundreds of success stories (depending on the kind of training they do) and they should even be able to tell how many students actually got the results intended and how many did not. Obviously, that implies follow-ups after the training or testing the skills of people during the training, which takes more work. But then, if the trainer never tested his students and never did any follow-ups, how does he know that his teaching method works? How can he claim with confidence that we will get results if he never checked to see if his past students got results

in their day to day lives (which is where we want the results, isn't it?)

Again, a lot of trainers (except the really good ones) will only remember the people who succeeded with their teaching. The really good ones notice who has trouble with their training method and find ways to improve their teachings or at least refuse certain types of people to their trainings if they don't want to change their method. I call that integrity. Those are the ones I look for.

Also, if they are as good as they say, they will have a lot of past students to refer to you so you can email them or call them and ask about what they actually got from the training. You will never get that from unskilled trainers.

3- The trainer is specific about what you will get in the training.

A skilled trainer is usually able to tell you what you will learn and be able to do after the training, unless the training is more of the exploration type. He will also be able to tell you how you will know that you have the skills and describe what you will see, hear, feel that will let you know you have really acquired the skills taught. It can even be written in his advertising.

The opposite of that is when trainers (public speakers, spiritual teachers, etc.) sell something like "change your life in 3 days". Already, my bullshit detector turns on when I read statements like that. If they said changes would occur in 6 months or a year, that would be more believable.

Others sell perfect health without ever defining what that means. Others sell how to develop a millionaire attitude in 2-3 days. They teach "principles" that millionaires live by. I don't know about you, but I don't want the principles, I want the skills that made it possible for them to become millionaire and I know those skills were not acquired in 2-3 days.

Basically, when a trainer sells something vague like health, a mindset or a "life change" without giving any specifics, I just move on to something else.

4- A skilled trainer will give you more skills than information.

Again that ties in to the last point. When trainers teach skills, they have no problem describing what they are and what they can be used for. A skill is easily measurable and testable.

They know that the skills you acquire will have more chance of changing your life than just filling your head and notebook with information. They always have lots of exercises in their trainings. People do a lot of “hands-on”.

You can always ask a trainer how many practical exercises you will do in a day. More than 3 and you are in good hands if the other criterias mentioned here are met. I like it when as a participant I get to do 4-6 exercises in the course of a day of training unless they are really complex and take more than 30 minutes to complete.

The trainer should easily be able to tell you if you will do practical exercises or not and how many on average (there can be unexpected schedule changes or they could be starting a new training, but they can talk about their past trainings to give you an idea).

5- Skilled trainers usually have really skilled students.

Basically, I consider there are 2 kinds of trainers (public speakers, spiritual teachers). It's not completely true and there are exceptions, but it will make this point easier to teach if I stick to 2 kinds. Some trainers are really impressive and fascinating, but their students are not able to reproduce their results or even half of their results. The students are really impressed by the trainer and are more followers than skilled practitioners.

Then there are trainers with students who can get similar results albeit less elegantly (that comes with practice and feedback). Usually, the students of this kind of trainer are impressive in what they can do and they are considered equals and unique. They are not the trainer, but their contribution is acknowledged and they make progress in their skills with everyday of training that passes.

As you probably know, I like the second type of trainer better. Personally, I love to be impressed by someone's students, because that means they do a hell of a job as a trainer. The more students become examples of excellence, the more chances you have of getting the results you want from their trainer. Of course, it is never 100% and some students don't get it. Students are also responsible for their learning and practice, but a skilled trainer can detect those students and have a chat with them about it. Again, it just improves the probabilities of the students becoming skilled.

6- Skilled trainers usually have a lot of repeat business.

When a trainer is really skilled he will likely have people who take several trainings with him because they are satisfied with the results they got with him. When students get measurable results, they usually

tend to continue with the same trainer unless they already got what they wanted on the first training (like speed reading for example).

Here I'm not talking about the "guru" effect. The students are not making the trainer into a god, they just choose to continue training with the trainer because every time they do, their lives improve.

You usually don't see that with unskilled trainers. They might have one or two fans, but they rarely have several students taking the same training or new ones with them, unless they offer it at really discounted prices (like 50\$ for 3 days). Unskilled trainers usually have to work a lot at selling themselves because they don't have a lot of repeat business, so they look worn out and a bit depressed (yes, I have seen a lot of those... the ones who have a kind of "forced" enthusiasm).

To summarize, repeat business is always a good sign.

I could go on forever on that subject, but if you use those standards when searching for trainings, you should find much better trainings than if you just buy the first one that you find. The more of these standards you can find in a trainer, the better he should be at giving you the results you are seeking.

Those standards don't necessarily apply to introductory evenings or trainings, but those events are usually cheap and you can check out the trainer's skills.

Also, we are talking about human beings and it is not all black or white. The standards I wrote are guidelines and not guarantees. The more you grow in discernment, the more you will improve your decision-making process.

A word about students and word of mouth...

I have a warning to make about enthusiastic fans of a trainer. I often hear people telling me about how they loved a training or about how a wonderful it was. Well, what does that mean?

Well that is exactly what I asked them and the answer really surprised me...

Some told me that they absolutely loved the trainer and that he was a wonderful human being (it usually means that he is in a peak state of consciousness in my language). They did not mention anything about how their life changed or about what they learned.

Others told me that they laughed a lot. Well, it's great, but it's a lot cheaper to rent the DVD of a comedian if I want to laugh.

Others told me that they had made the decision at the training to change their life for real. When I hear that, I usually check back with them a month later and they basically tell me that they went back to their “old” way of living.

Still others tell me that they experienced things that they never experienced before (be it new perceptions or a new state of consciousness). When I ask them if they can return back to it now that the training is over, some say they can and some say they can't.

All of this to say that different people have different standards and when they say that a training was wonderful, it might not mean what you imagine when you hear those words.

Whenever you are getting sold by someone else's enthusiasm, wait before making any decisions and ask those questions:

- What do you mean when you say that the training was wonderful (or incredible or life changing, etc.)? This lets you know about their standards for deciding that a training or trainer is wonderful. It may or may not match your standards. (Now you know if it matches your standards and can make an informed decision.)
- What changed specifically in your life after the training? Here you get more precise feedback. You can then decide if you want that kind of change yourself.
- What can you do after that training that you could not do before? This question helps you determine if the training was skills oriented. You can also determine if you have those skills and if you want those skills or not.
- Wait a month or two and ask: “What is left of the training in your day to day life?” That helps you know if the results of the changes they got are long-term or if it was just temporary excitement.

The only other thing I want to add about that subject is what I would call the “fake” enthusiasm. It is not as frequent but it exists. I will describe several examples so you have better chances of detecting it.

Some organisations put pressure on their members to recruit new people. They basically train their students to sell the trainings by “sharing their life altering experiences”. I know it sounds like religion, but it does exist in some self-improvement circles.

Usually, the students are instructed not to describe what happens during the training. That should be your clue. If the person is totally closed about describing what happens in the trainings or describing some exercises they did, I would suggest you stay away from them even if it's not a cult and just a selling strategy.

Another example is a training I know that usually gives a transformational experience to his participants. Then, if they want to take the advanced training, they are told that they can go further and learn to become leaders. The thing that bothers me is that they are basically taught how to sell the basic training to other people in order to learn how to be leaders.

That is smart on the trainer's part as they have a sales force working for them, but I find that approach to be less than honest, because when the students talk about the training, they really do it to sell it, not because they genuinely changed, but because it is part of their training to do that. They also do follow-up with the people who have not registered for the training. Usually, people who do genuine word of mouth do not do that.

Another one that really surprised me was really deceptive. That is when I realised that some people are really in self-improvement for the money and nothing else. One well-known trainer gives his students a number (just like foods have in the grocery store) and when his students invite other people to their free training, they seem particularly enthusiastic. They describe how wonderful it is and how it changed their life and they are willing to send emails and call a lot of people. Basically, they really work at it.

That kept me wondering. Then someone told me what was going on. Basically, there is a free training so it is really easy to convince people to come. Then, at the training, the trainer teaches good stuff, make people feel things and spend a lot of time doing sales pitch to sell "paying" trainings.

And since there are 1000-2000 participants and the trainer says that they have only 50 places left and since they are really good at selling, people end up running to the back of the room to make sure they don't miss that wonderful opportunity to buy a training from them. They range in price, but are usually in the thousands and they even make package deals, so you buy multiple trainings at once and get a discount.

Now, to go back to the point I'm making, the people who talk enthusiastically about the training and invite you for free as their guest have a hidden motivation to do so. Whenever you buy a training or CD set or book from that organisation, they get a commission. Of course, they usually don't tell that to their "friends" when they talk about the "wonderful" training they attended and sometimes they forget to mention that there will be a lot of sales pitch and that the trainers are damn good at selling too!

I believe that makes the word of mouth a bit tainted when it's motivated by money don't you think?

Also, I spoke with a person who worked for this organisation and he said he quit because their way of working did not match his value system. He also told me that this company had a lot of turn-over, meaning a lot of people who bought trainings from them cancelled a couple of days later when they had time to rest and think about it by themselves without any influence from the really skilled salespeople there.

To me, that says a lot about the organisation. Skilled and honest trainers have a very low turn-over rate. Sure, a participant can realise that the training is not for them and they are reimbursed and go home. Everybody is happy and life goes on. But when there is a big turn-over, it is not a good sign.

Anyway, just to say that whenever somebody seems too enthusiastic and really works at convincing you, please be careful. Some organisations train their students to be really good at striking emotional cords in their family members, friends and acquaintances.

Now, some people are genuinely enthusiastic because they really changed their lives and feel so much better (especially if they are in a peak state). If you are in doubt, just ask them what is their intention in telling you about their experience. Ask them why it is so important to them.

Ask them the questions I wrote in that section when talking to them. Ask for specific answers about what happens in the training and what changed in their life. If they freely answer, you probably have a great opportunity ahead of you. Of course, they can't teach you everything they learned in that training as they are probably not skilled enough to do that, but they surely describe what they personally experienced.

If they seem elusive in their answer or if they seem more interested in getting you there than in answering your specific questions, just notice it. If you do go to the training, just notice if it seems to be a selling platform or real training. If you feel uncomfortable at the training or with the trainer and what he does, just leave. There is no law against that! Trust yourself!

In conclusion

I know there seems to be a lot of information and questions to ask and all that, but this is just temporary. After a while, you will be able to pinpoint the skilled professionals from the less skilled ones. You will also be able to recognise genuine word of mouth from money-driven testimonials.

Even if you don't use what you have learned, just reading it is enough to change most people's way of making decisions in the self-improvement field. Read some parts in a couple of months and see how much you grew in discernment...

Moving forward

I don't like conclusions, especially for this book as it is just the beginning. You will keep on learning and evolving and so will I. I truly love the field of self-improvement and I hope that the standards in the field will keep on improving and that customers will be more discerning.

“So what's next?” you might ask.

Well, writing this book was wonderful for me as it brought an unexpected benefit. It made me review everything I had done and made me aware of everything that worked for me and everything that didn't. It also made me aware of the elements that improved my life the most.

That brought me to a place where I tested new things with my students and made me want to build a new model that includes all the necessary elements that I wrote about in chapter 1. I am currently working on a way of teaching people how to go into peak states of consciousness and how to use them to improve their lives. I also teach now how to make more holistic changes in that the participants at my trainings learn how to use all the elements mentioned in chapter 1 at the same time to create more elegant and long term changes in their lives (and their clients' lives if they work professionally in the field).

It has been deeply rewarding. I appreciate the courage of my students who accepted that I change the plan for the training that they bought so we could explore this new evolving model or system. I announced the change of plans for the training on the first morning of the training and they all accepted the change (they didn't have to).

My purpose is simple; I want to be able to help people make overall changes in their personal reality,

which usually involves a change in states of consciousness, perceptions, beliefs, skills and physiology. It turns out that it works really well and even though it is not perfect, the results impress me (and I am really hard to impress). It seems the changes those students experience are more complete (holistic) and lasting.

We had a lot of success in voluntarily going into different peak states and even stabilising them for certain contexts. Most of the participants tell me they learn much faster than they did before the training and that they made a lot of progress in several areas of their day to day lives (this is what counts for me).

I taught them to use the skills that involve different peak states like having really refined perceptions, becoming really creative, going with the flow, getting intuitive information, making goals easier to achieve, connecting with who they are (not the self image, but what seems to be their unique “self”) and learning really fast.

I also taught a lot of skills in the model, because to me they are necessary. If the people happen to have a truly difficult experience in their life or a truly ambitious goal, I know they will make it because of the skills they are acquiring. I could not limit myself to just teaching one technique or giving people a peak experience (like walking on fire), because I know that they need something when they get back to their “real” life (meaning not a seminar environment).

To do this, we do a lot of practice combined with accelerated learning methods. The new skills need to be in the muscle memory to be useful; otherwise people will not use them if they have to think about it all the time. We want the skills to come up whenever they are necessary. We want them to be second nature.

All of this requires time and practice and I went against the popular current and refrained from saying things like “change your life in 3 days”. Any model or system worth learning will take more time than that especially if it covers more than one element described in chapter 1. I want skills and results long term. So this is what I presented to my students stating that it was still in development and that I was not selling a magic pill or an overnight change in their whole life. This new system is just starting...

I named the system “Integral Restructuration”. I chose that name because it really feels we are restructuring our whole personal experience of the world.

There were so many unusual experiences (desirable ones) that I can’t wait to teach it again! I want to see how much everything will have progressed by then.

All in all, I’m really happy to have started this book 7 months ago, because it prompted me to change my plans for the training I was about to give. This book was the trigger and that change in my life is

more than welcomed. Everything I did in the last 10 years is coming together in an unexpected way and I hope it will continue that way.

I wish you the best in your adventure!

I will be riding the wave and if you want to join, you are more than welcome.

My best to you!

Alexandre Nadeau

Note: you may give this ebook freely to your friends and acquaintances. May this book find the computer of those who need it... ☺

Special thanks!

To my significant other Nancy for her patience... not when I wrote this book, but when I invested so much in self-improvement. We are both happy that it is all coming together now.

To my parents who helped me more than they will ever realise.

To all the teachers and trainers that influenced me (directly and indirectly) and helped me become who I am now. In chronological order: my parents, my grand-parents, Michel Champagne, André Bégin, Richard Bandler, John Lavalley, Win Wenger, Micheal Breen, Chris Mulzer, John Latourette, Robert Johanssen, Grant McFetridge, Jocelyn Blouin, Peter Ragnar, Joseph Riggio, Lynette Hunter and Tal Laks. I am forever grateful for your contributions to my life.

To all the clients, students and friends who helped me understand better and who challenged me so I had to develop new skills that were not in the books I read or trainings I had taken. You really pushed me out of the limitations of “what I knew”.

Last but not least, special thanks to Diane Desjardins who translated this book in French so I could focus my time and energy on other matters. It really saved me a lot of time and freed me to improve the system I am working on. All that time was precious so thank you...

Resources

Here I will give only the resources that are free on the internet. I will not write in here the websites that are mostly to sell products and trainings. A Google search can give you that with the references and names in the book.

Websites:

www.peakstates.com : this website is really full of material on peak states of consciousness. A must read, especially the section titled “Understanding peak states of consciousness”.

www.winwenger.com : there are a lot of free processes to help you learn faster and better. Probably the website I used the most in my life.

www.emofree.com : gives a free manual that teaches EFT. There are also numerous articles on how to use EFT better and how it was used by different professionals.

www.altfeld.com : a great NLP resource primarily because there are IRC chats (transcripts) that Jonathan Altfeld conducted with some great NLP trainers. It can be technical and complicated for beginners though, just so you know.

www.deep-trance.com : a great website to get more explanations about NLP and some reviews of NLP trainings given by well-known NLP trainers.

www.mythogenicself.com : a website for Joseph Riggio’s Mythoself model. If you go into the “articles & mythomedia” section, you get articles and responses written by Joseph Riggio explaining what he does.

www.alexandrenadeau.com : there is also my website that will contain an ever-growing base of information around self-improvement and reviews of trainings and methods. Information about my discoveries or tests will be there as time goes by...

About the author

Alexandre Nadeau is a researcher and trainer who spent the last ten years exploring every method he could find in the field of self-improvement and spiritual awareness.

He is dedicated to bringing a combination of the best self-improvement methods he has experienced and tested with his clients. He is well-known for getting seemingly miraculous results with clients that did not get results otherwise.

He gives trainings in the most advanced methods he has learned and developed through the years. As a trainer, he is known for making accessible previously complex models or methods to any individual interested in improving their quality of life in a way that is usually lasting and pleasurable.

He is currently doing a lot of research and testing with peak states of consciousness and their many uses in the fields of accelerated learning, personal transformation, performance enhancement, healing, heightened perceptions and artistic ability.

He has worked with athletes, an Olympic coach, an Olympic athlete, actors, singers, business people, children and everything in between.

He has trained professional public speakers, trainers and business consultants.

His base of knowledge and skills is ever-growing and any update will be added to his website as time permits.

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