

NLP Discovery Bulletin

June 2007

Welcome to the NLP Discovery Bulletin – a regular bulletin of tips, ideas, information and anecdotes from the NLP Discovery team.

1 To sign or not to sign.....

A colleague of mine was studying British Sign Language and had been regularly attending classes for two years. He had successfully taken Stage 1 exams and was working towards Stage 2. Signing was, for him, a break from work, an opportunity to communicate with deaf people more effectively, fun, relaxing and something completely different that he really enjoyed.

On receiving the result of his Stage 2 exam, he learned that he had not achieved the standard – he had 'failed'. This result so totally discouraged him that he has not signed since.

2 Handling 'failure'

In NLP there is a pre-supposition that *there is no failure, only feedback*. When we experience results that are not what we had hoped for, the way that we handle these is governed by the choices we make.

In the case of my signing colleague, he chose to let his 'failure' of a twenty minute exam over-ride the two years he had enjoyed signing and communicating with people using British Sign Language. The value he placed on what he perceived as 'failure' overshadowed any further communication and obliterated the two successful years he had used British Sign Language as a means of communication.

Thomas Edison is frequently associated with the ability to learn from 'failure'. Whilst some people saw his continued attempts to invent a light bulb as 'failures', Edison regarded each attempt as yet another way of learning how not to make a light bulb, until he eventually achieved success.

We always have a choice in how we act or react when we do not achieve the results we want. Why choose to be dragged down and waylaid by the undesirable results when you can choose to learn something positive from the experience, take stock and move forward?

3 Tip of the month

People who worry about 'failure' tend to focus on the past and on problems. If there are events that you have labelled as 'failures' you may find it helpful to re-label these as feedback experiences.

Ask yourself:

- What I have I learned from this experience?
- What feedback have I received?
- What did I achieve as part of this experience?
- How *have I used* these lessons to move forward or *how can I use* these lessons to move forward?
- What next?!

It is said that every landing you walk away from is a successful landing. As we apply this frame to our thinking, it can loosen up a mentality of seeing things in black and white or as a pass or failure. As we look at what we can achieve, what we learn and how feedback enables us to move forward in a multitude of situations, so we can learn from undesirable results and move towards success in the future.

4 Quotations to consider and reflect on

"If things go wrong, don't go with them."
Roger Babson (1875 – 1967)

"Nothing fails like success because we don't learn from it. We learn only from failure."
Kenneth Boulding (1879 – 1963)

"One who fears failure limits his activities. Failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently."
Henry Ford (1863 – 1947)

"The only shame in slipping up is giving up!"
Dennis Gaskill