Imagine that purpose and presence are qualities you can achieve

What if you could choose to be more powerful in ways that make you happier?

Purpose and presence: these are big picture concepts. They feature prominently in religion and philosophy. They also feature in celebrity. The famous often seem blessed with a knowledge of who they are and where they are going. We talk about their charisma and their gifts. We talk about being born lucky.

What if you could be born luckier - starting today? NLP (neurolinguistic programming) is based on the idea that we can learn the attitudes, perceptions and skills that work for other other people. We can set goals, observe, practice, edit and repeat until we get the results we want.

In this workshop, leaders John Dafos and Linda Ferguson will invite you to consider what it means to be driven by a sense of purpose and to be fully present and engaged in the world. You will use experiences you have already had and observations you have already made as the foundation for a deep, strong and enriched experience of yourself as purposeful and present.

There are spiritual, intellectual and emotional reasons to invest in knowing yourself as a person of purpose and presence. It’s also a surprisingly practical way to improve your resilience, results and happiness. People who have a goal big enough to last a lifetime (a purpose) are able to project further into the future, to withstand setbacks and to talk about their lives as coherent and meaningful.

People who understand presence are able to achieve heightened sensory acuity, high performance states and more powerful delivery of language. They know how to pay attention and to gain the attention of others.

agenda

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NLP Canada Training explores how purpose and presence drive choices, relationships, happiness and results.
Calibration
Presence & Purpose
Observe, experience & replicate useful states

1. How do you play?
The coach asks the subject to remember a time s/he experienced a particular state. The coach observes closely. The subject shakes off that state. They repeat the process with a second state. Then the subject chooses one of the two states to enter, and the coach guesses which has been chosen.

2. Learn the states.
Think of someone you believe has a strong sense of purpose. Then remember someone you think is distracted or confused. Repeat. This time think of someone with great presence or charisma. Think of someone inconspicuous.

3. Remember people of influence
Think of a time when someone had a significant impact on you because of the quality of his/her presence. Then think of a time someone influenced you with their sense of purpose.

4. Find your own best examples
Think of a time when you knew what you wanted, a time when you were confident that you were moving in the right direction. Then think of a time when you were completely engaged in your own experience, a time when you experienced heightened awareness.

5. What differences did you notice?
How are presence and purpose similar? How are they different? Consider: what changed in what you noticed? What changed in what you wanted? What changes when you imagine obstacles?

Now think about your response to presence and purpose in other people. How does what you notice help you decide when to pay more attention to the people around you?

Imagine it is 2060
For the final step in today’s exploration of your personal sense of purpose, imagine 50 years have gone by in the blink of an eye.

On the form provided, write a letter to your 2010 self. Tell yourself what you see about your purpose as you look back on the events of your life. Notice anything that adds to or changes your perception of your purpose earlier today.

Then describe yourself from the point of view of your 2060 self - a self that is wiser and kinder and that wants the best for you. Imagine what this wise, kind stranger will see in you as you act and react. How will that stranger see the different threads of your life being pulled into a single purpose.

There is no right answer, and there is no guarantee that there is a single thread that runs through all of your life. However, there is a pretty good chance that any sympathetic observer looking at the whole of your life will see a unity it is hard to see as you live it.

How do you know you have a purpose?
Some people know their lives have purpose and meaning because other people tell them. Some know because they have a voice or a vision that gives them a clear representation of what they want to accomplish. Some people just know.

There is no right way. Whether you just know (because something changes in you when you are working towards your purpose) or you know because your belief system defines your purpose, what you know is useful to you.

If you don’t think you know that you have a purpose, you can still ask yourself to search through your experience and imagine that you find a time when you knew yourself to have a purpose. Then notice as much as possible about how you acted and reacted during that experience.

Let your coach help you map out the elements of your experience when you know you have a purpose. Notice sensory experience, the sound of the voice in your head, your attitudes and your motivation. Then look around and notice how other people act around you and what they say about you when you are acting out your sense of purpose.

Create a state of purpose
In this exercise, you will use some of the qualities you have identified as being part of your personal experience of purpose. List them on the sheet provided. Then work with a coach, as demonstrated. Your coach will anchor each of the elements you have identified and then help you integrate them (put them all together). This will give you a model of how you behave and respond when you have a sense of purpose.

Test the new state by imagining a challenge or obstacle that you are facing now. It doesn’t have to be something huge, just something that will allow you to notice how purpose changes your response to opposition.

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Anchor Resources

Revisit strong memories and write to keep them strong.

1. You encountered someone with great presence.
   In partners, coach each other to recapture an experience when someone made an impact just by the force of their personality or attention. Pick one word that describes the experience. Write a brief description.

2. You were very aware of your body as strong and competent.
   In partners, coach each other to recapture an experience when you were completely present and confident in your body. (Keep it socially acceptable!) Pick one word that describes the experience. Write a brief description.

3. Someone was there for you.
   In partners, coach each other to recapture an experience when having someone be present with you made a positive difference. Pick one word that describes the experience. Write a brief description.

4. You were there for someone else.
   In partners, coach each other to recapture an experience when you helped someone just by being with them and giving them your full attention. Pick one word that describes the experience. Write a brief description.

Open up to this moment and the possibilities it holds

Over-attachment to the way things ought to be often leads to so much stress in our lives. Letting go, paradoxically, allows us to be present with the resources available to us now. Coach a partner through this exercise.

Think of a time when you were caught up with having things happen a certain way, a time when you were clinging to an idea/belief or coercing things towards a strictly defined expectation. At the moment of greatest clinginess, clench both hands tightly. Break state.

Now imagine a time when you were smiling, when your hands and breathing were open and relaxed. Double the feeling of that smiling moment by making that smile not only external, but by imagining you were flashing that smile inwardly. Allow that smile to curve throughout your body. You might even say in a satisfied way: “Aaaaahhhhh.”

Now, imagine going back into the clingy state, and clench your hands again as before, at the moment of greatest clinginess. When this happens, intentionally and with full presence of your body and experience, open both hands completely, while letting out a deep smile that is not only external but is internal as well. Unclench your jaw and the rest of your body as your palms open up. Say, in as satisfied a way possible, “Aaaaahhhhh.”

Finish by thinking of a goal that is in line with your purpose, something you really want but do not know how to get. As you think of the goal, clench your hands tightly, then open them completely, smile and say, “Aaaaahhhhh.”

Give the gift of presence

Some people make us feel better just by being who they are. You can practice being this kind of person. Begin by picking a partner. Given whatever you know or have sensed about this person today, pick a state or experience you would like to share. You might pick a quality like calm or confidence or curiosity or you might pick a memory that you think would be useful to your partner.

Now, without talking about the state, take a few moments to enter it yourself. Go back into an experience when you had the gift you wish to give, and heighten your awareness of being in this state. Anchor the state by holding your non-dominant wrist lightly between the thumb and forefinger of your dominant hand.

Now have a conversation with your partner. Stay in the state you have chosen, and periodically reinforce the state by firing the anchor (touching your wrist). After five minutes, ask your partner what s/he has sensed about your state.

Take a moment to reflect on the experience while your partner develops and anchors a state that will be a gift for you. Repeat the process. Notice how easily we transfer resourceful states when we are in a state of relaxed connection.

develop presence

• scan all the sensations in your body
• learn how your body feels when you are fully engaged & confident
• pay attention to what your senses are telling you: notice what you see, hear and feel
• give labels to things that you want to remember or that seem important
• practice inner quiet; listen to yourself instead of talking to yourself
Experience life as a mountain

Picture the most beautiful mountain you know or know of or can imagine, one whose form speaks personally to you. As you focus on the image or the feeling of the mountain in your mind’s eye, notice its overall shape, the lofty peak, the base rooted in the rock of the earth’s crust, the steep and gently sloping sides. Note as well how massive it is, how unmoving, how beautiful whether seen from afar or up close. You can relax and focus, knowing that whatever you see or don’t see is exactly right for you, precisely yours.

When you feel ready, bring the mountain into your own body so that your body sitting here and the mountain of the mind’s eye become one. Your head becomes the lofty peak; your shoulders and arms the sides of the mountain; your bottom and legs the solid base rooted to your chair. And it’s good to experience in your body the sense of uplift, the elevated quality of the mountain deep in your spine. Invite yourself to become a breathing mountain, unwavering in your stillness, a centred, rooted, unmoving presence.

You may notice the sounds of nature around you as you sit like a majestic mountain. You may be aware of the air as you settle more comfortably in your chair. Through it all, the mountain witnesses everything. I don’t know if you’ve already begun to notice certain sensations in your body, as you sit here breathing with the mountain.

I wonder if you’ve become aware of the sun traveling through the sky, and the play of the light and shadow. Night follows day and day follows night, and the mountain just sits, being present, with presence, simply being itself. It remains still while spring makes way for summer; as fall bows to winter; and as spring is reborn again. It remains as the weather changes moment to moment.

As we sit holding this image in our mind, breathing with this image in our mind, maybe you can embody the same unwavering rootedness in the face of everything that changes in your life over seconds, hours, and years. People can experience constantly the changing nature of mind and body and the outer world with presence and purpose. Isn’t it nice to know that through it all, the mountain remains, calm, present, strong and stable. The weather of our lives is not to be ignored or denied. It is to be encountered, honoured, felt, known for what it is.

Being present with our purpose, we can recognize that we are more interesting and complex than mountains. We are breathing, moving, dancing mountains, filled with so much potential, so much promise, able to learn and grow. We connect and make contact with those around us. We influence and are influenced. We smile.

And as you take one last deep breath with the mountain, you can return here, now, knowing that the power and majesty of the mountain is always with you. In the days and weeks ahead, you can summon this resource through the many paths you will take, living your purpose, living with presence. You can come to the room imagining all the possible ways this experience could be useful to you.

Could you endure and influence with the strength of a mountain?