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# What's the Difference that Makes the Difference?

(04) What is the difference that makes the difference? What is that special sparkle in the eyes of the one you love, that lets you know that which you value so much? What is that special phone call that someone makes that brightens your day? What makes that statement stand out that affects you deeply? How is it that you know something is right, or that “something just clicks” in a relationship? How is it that some sales people, counselors, therapists, managers, and more continue to get results, time and time again?

The phrase “*the difference that makes the difference*” is part of the “stuff” that NLP was derived from. “In the beginning”... there are many people who were “therapists” who had little effect in assisting their clients in change. However, there were a select few that repeatedly had dramatic change effects with their clients. These included Virginia Satir, Fritz Perls and Milton H. Erickson to name a few. The founders of NLP asked the question “what is the difference in what or how the ineffective and effective people operate?” Or *what is the difference that makes the difference?* They then studied how the effective people operate and created models of their behavior. These “differences” are much of the basics of NLP; the models that we have been learning; the stuff of how to be and act differently to be more effective; to get the results we want.

Going back a bit further, the founders of NLP studied and knew a well known anthropologist by the name of Gregory Bateson. Many of his writings had to do with systems theory, cybernetics, epistemology and learning. In other words, how we learn and how we know what we know. In his book “Steps to an Ecology of Mind”, specifically in a chapter titled “Form, Substance and Difference” Bateson discusses “difference” as: “...a very peculiar and obscure concept...” “...in the world of communication, {changes} are brought about by differences...”, and as that which helps us distinguish a basic unit of information. The words on this page are “difference” in that the black is in contrast to the white paper. There is a difference that makes a difference, which helps to “create” information via our neural pathways.

In reference to everyday life, one might ask: “what is the difference which creates or leads to the effects I want with people?” What is the difference that makes the difference with my family? With my children? With my staff? With prospects or customers? When we offer great, enthusiastic welcoming service; when we smile at a stranger, when we do something for a friend or associate that they don't expect; when you act that certain way with your wife or children that clearly and absolutely communicates the love you have for them—that behavior that is “different” or stands out “makes the difference”. As all things, we must start with ourselves, and ask what needs to be true or congruent in ourselves for us to get the result we want.

When assisting others in change work through NLP and when working with others as a life coach, any and all I do, that we do together has the potential to be the difference that makes the difference. It's the knowing where, when and what to do that makes the difference.

So, there you go. 😊