

Theory and Practical Experience of How NLP Can Intensify Mindfulness Training



By Karl Nielsen



Mindfulness has grown rapidly over the last 20 years and it has huge benefits in all areas of life: business, psychotherapy, education, health, happiness... If, as a species, we want to survive today's challenges – climate change, nuclear threats, pandemics, economic crises¹ – we need better communication within ourselves and among us. NLP and mindfulness offer us the tools for better communication, within and without. Or, in other words: "The only way out is the way in." While there are already around 5000 trained mindfulness teachers globally, we urgently need more mindfulness in the world – and more mindfulness trainers. That's why we in the Mindfulness Association developed *Institutes for Mindfulness Evolving (In-Me)* – NLP-intensified mindfulness training, and training to become a Mindfulness Teacher, In-Me or a Mindfulness Master Trainer, In-Me.

Big companies like Google, Apple and Nike offer mindfulness training for their employees to reduce stress, anxiety, and

NLP and mindfulness offer us the tools for better communication, within and without.

depression, and to enhance employee well-being and positive mood, emotional intelligence, productivity/workplace performance, resilience and immune functioning, interpersonal relationships, attentional focus and cognitive flexibility.² Google started mindfulness training in 2007 with the Search Inside Yourself (SIY) programme through which they trained 100,000+ people, in 150+ cities, in 50+ countries.

The benefits of mindfulness have been scientifically proven and for more than 20 years, mindfulness has been used in Cognitive Therapy and also in schools. In England, mindfulness has been taught as a subject, similar to mathematics or history, in around 370 schools since 2019.³

The fundamental approaches of NLP and mindfulness fit well together. The typical fundamentals of NLP (NLP axioms)

that work well with mindfulness are:

- 1** Intensify the friendship between the conscious and unconscious. (Milton Erickson)
- 2** Behind every problem there is a resource state. (Gregory Bateson)
- 3** Every problem is an opportunity to grow. (Fritz Perls)
- 4** The meaning of communication is the response you get. (Albert Mehrabian, Paul Watzlawick)
- 5** Each word activates mental pictures. (William James)
- 6** The map is (not) the territory. (Alfred Korzybski, Heinz von Förster)
- 7** Be always open for the unexpected emergence. (Virginia Satir)

In 1990, Jon Kabat-Zinn wrote the fundamental mindfulness training book *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*, about mastering your thoughts and emotions.⁴ According to him, the typical fundamentals of mindfulness that fit well with NLP are:

- 1** Non-judging: "...not getting caught up in your ideas and opinions..."

- 2 Patience: "...things must unfold in their own time"
- 3 Beginner's mind: "The richness of present-moment experience..."
- 4 Trust: "Developing a basic trust in yourself and your feelings..."
- 5 Non-striving: "...paying attention to whatever is happening"
- 6 Acceptance: "...seeing things as they actually are in the present."
- 7 Letting go: "We just watch - resting in awareness itself."

"These include cultivating attitudes of non-harming, generosity, gratitude, forbearance, forgiveness, kindness, compassion, empathic joy, and equanimity."

NLP and mindfulness support people to become masters of their thoughts, emotions, perceptual filters and behaviours. Instead of suffering limiting beliefs, negative emotions, distracted focus and disturbing behaviour, both approaches support to deeply connect people with their true positive potential. The combination of NLP and mindfulness

highly amplifies both approaches. NLP and mindfulness connect the body and soul. Both lead to a deep understanding of who we really are and what our purpose is in life. The integration of NLP and mindfulness intensifies the mindset for health, happiness and success in life. You can use NLP and mindfulness separately but if you combine these approaches, the effects are much stronger and faster.

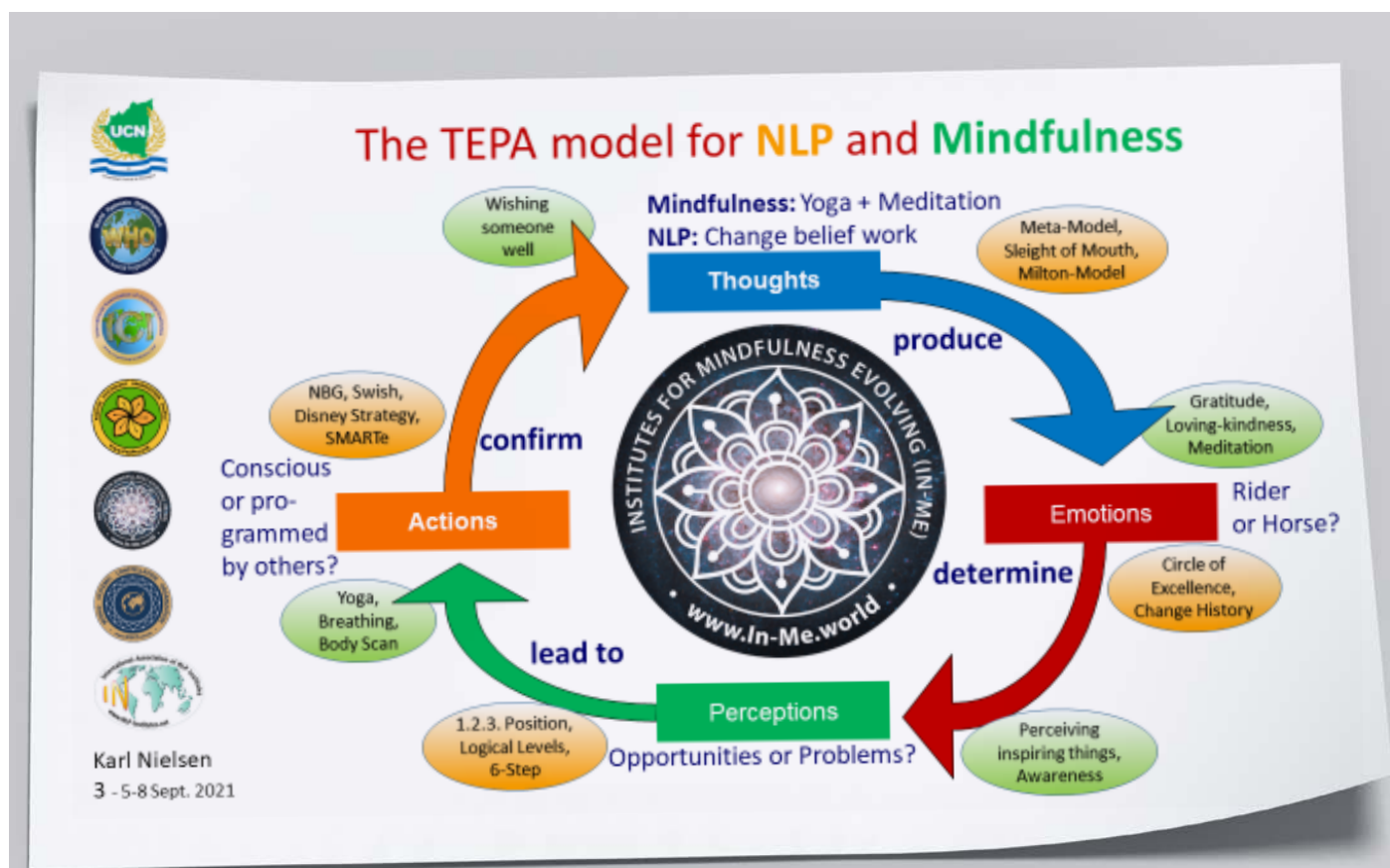
The most famous mindfulness training is the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) by Jon Kabat-Zinn. MBSR uses meditation and

NLP and mindfulness connect the body and soul. Both lead to a deep understanding of who we really are and what our purpose is in life.

yoga for improving health, happiness and success. MBSR training has scientifically proven significant effects on aging, stress, the brain, clinical disorders, eating and obesity, emotions, immune system, mental health, pain, addiction, paediatric health, work health...⁵

Richard Bandler, John Grinder, Judith DeLozier, Leslie Cameron and Robert Dilts brought together the very best of the knowledge and wisdom of famous communication experts like James, Korzybski, Bateson, Perls, Satir and Erickson to create easy-to-follow step-by-step NLP interventions. They made complex procedures and theories easy to understand and easy to use for supporting human growth and improving human communication in the areas of psychotherapy, business and everyday life.

The fundamental ideas of mindfulness fit very well with NLP. They have the power to highly intensify the ethical approach of a huge amount of effective NLP interventions. ■



References

1. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, (2021)
2. Nadler et al., 2020
3. BrightVibes B.V., 2021
4. Kabat-Zinn (1990/2013). *Full Catastrophe Living: How to Cope with Stress, Pain and Illness Using Mindfulness Meditation*, Bantam Books
5. *Mindful Communications & Such*, 2021, American Mindfulness Research Association

Karl Nielsen is an NLP Master Trainer and the co-founder and president of the International Association for NLP. He is also a professor and dean of the psychology faculty at Universidad Central de Nicaragua, a holder of the World Certificate for Psychotherapy, and chair of the German Umbrella Association for Psychotherapy (DVP eV). Find out more about Karl at www.nlp-institutes.net/karl-nielsen and more about the *Institutes for Mindfulness Evolving (In-Me)* at <https://in-me.world> or email him: Mindfulness@NLP-Institutes.net