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24 Questions to ask before booking an NLP course

How to choose the right one for you

by

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Hello

Thank you for downloading this e-book. We hope that the information contained will be extremely useful to you. One of the main reasons for me developing this e-book was to help you choose, from the hundreds (if not thousands) of NLP courses available, the one that is right for you.

This e-book is one of many articles, e-books, audio and visual materials and books you will find on www.thelazarus.com that will help you to improve your results, so that you can have **BETTER RESULTS, FASTER.**

We look forward to hearing your feedback on how you have successfully used this and other materials from www.thelazarus.com.

Yours faithfully

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1 Introduction

Welcome to The Lazarus Consultancy's e-book on *The 24 Questions to ask before booking an NLP course*. As you probably know if you are reading this, we at The Lazarus Consultancy offer a wide range of NLP and NLP-based training courses, and so you may wonder whether we are independent. I, Jeremy Lazarus, have done my best to be as impartial as possible when writing this, and please excuse me if there is any unintentional bias.

This e-book is aimed mainly at people who are deciding on their first NLP course or their first course offering certification if they have attended an introduction course. It is also highly relevant for people who have some experience of NLP trainings.

The purpose of this e-book is to provide information to help you choose the most appropriate NLP training course for you. Much of this e-book consists of answers to some really important questions that are worth addressing before you make your choice. Whilst 24 questions may seem a lot, given that attending an NLP course can be a significant investment of time, money and energy, you will probably find reading this is time well spent. To make it easy for you, the questions are split into two main categories – questions to ask yourself, and questions to ask the Trainer, and the questions are organised in a way that you can easily find answers by clicking on specific questions in the bookmarks. In practice (depending on your own purchasing style and need for detail) it will take you between 15-30 minutes to obtain the answers from the Trainer/training organisation. Some of the questions may be more relevant to you than others.

2 Overview

I am assuming that you are aware of the numerous benefits of doing an NLP course, and so this will not be covered in any detail here. Whilst this e-book is aimed primarily at UK readers, many of the points will be relevant regardless of the location of the reader.

At the time of writing (June 2012), NLP is taught in many countries throughout the world, and

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in most of those (certainly the UK) it is an 'unregulated' profession, in other words there are no legally enforceable standards of training or practice, unlike other professions such as accountancy, law and medicine. There are several bodies which hold themselves out as certifying/accrediting bodies, and which seek to set standards for their members. Examples of such bodies are:

- ABNLP (American Board of NLP)
- ANLP (Association of NLP)
- INLPTA (International NLP Trainers Association)
- ITANLP (International Trainers Academy of NLP)
- SNLP (Society of NLP)

Often, these bodies are run by leading names in the NLP field, and membership is dependent on being trained by a Trainer certified by that specific body. One exception is the ANLP, which seeks to operate with neutrality (it often refers to itself as 'The Switzerland of the NLP community').

Each of the bodies mentioned above will have their own websites, and most will clearly mention the required course content and standards for certification for their courses.

Since around 2004, there has been a move by a handful of UK Universities to have NLP form core components of coaching-related Masters Degrees. This is expanded on in Section 4, question 8.

Section 3 shows the hierarchy of NLP training courses. If you are familiar with NLP and the hierarchy and types of courses, you might want to skip section 3 and go straight to section 4.

Sections 4 and 5 contain the questions to ask yourself and/or the training organisation when choosing an NLP course. For your ease, the questions are listed at the start of the section and can be 'clicked on' in the bookmarks to find the relevant answer.

3 The NLP training course ladder

Before even beginning to choose an NLP course, it is important that you are aware of the different levels of NLP training, and how they fit together. The five main levels are:

- i. Introduction, workshop, seminar (no certification)
- ii. NLP Diploma (certification)
- iii. NLP Practitioner (certification)
- iv. NLP Master Practitioner (certification)
- v. NLP Trainers Training (certification)

To help you to appreciate some of the differences of these levels, it is worth remembering three key benefits of NLP:

- i. Improving communication
- ii. Changing the way people think and behave, and even what they believe
- iii. Replicating excellence (referred to as 'modeling')

3.1 Introductory courses

There is a wide range of introductory NLP courses, workshops and seminars. These typically last a half day or evening, one or two days. Many NLP training companies offer these, and they can be a useful way for Trainers to showcase their skills and for delegates to see and experience the training style of the Trainer.

It is worth being aware that some training companies offer free introductory courses, and then try to up-sell delegates on to longer courses, sometimes with large 'sign up now' discounts and/or by creating a very high-energy environment. If you attend one of these introductory courses, please make sure that if you book onto a subsequent course there and then, you take into account the information in this e-book to make a decision that is right for you.

3.2 NLP Diploma

Diploma courses normally last 30 hours over four days, and students meeting the required standards will receive an NLP Diploma certificate. The course is useful for people who want to gain a solid grounding in improving communication and some of the aspects of changing the way people think and behave. The course is mainly aimed at people who want to use NLP for themselves as opposed to with others.

Some training schools allow Diploma holders to be exempt from certain parts of the Practitioner course.

3.3 NLP Practitioner

There are two main types of Practitioner courses:

- those that last around 50 hours
- those that last around 125 hours

Students meeting the required standards will receive an NLP Practitioner certificate. The 50 hour courses tend to be run by SNLP trainers, (although there may be other NLP training organisations doing this too), and offer a different type of training experience to the 125 hour courses.

The 125 hour courses are either all training room-based (lasting between 15 and 21 days) or part pre-study, part training room (typically being between 7 and 10 days) with the more theoretical and procedural aspects of particular NLP techniques being covered by pre-course study, such as CDs and reading.

The content of both types of 125 hour courses is broadly similar in that they cover most of the Diploma content, plus more techniques for changing behaviours and beliefs plus further language and communication skills. Competent NLP Practitioners have skills to use NLP with others.

Both Diploma and Practitioner courses are entry level, in other words no prior NLP training is required.

3.4 Master Practitioner

Master Practitioner courses build on the content taught at Practitioner level (Practitioner certification is a pre-requisite for Master Practitioner courses) and cover new material regarding communication and language, changing behaviours and beliefs as well as replicating excellence ('modeling'). These courses usually provide deeper levels of personal development and broaden and deepen students' capability to facilitate 'change work' with other people.

Whilst the syllabus of Practitioner courses is relatively similar across the different NLP training, the content of Master Practitioner is more varied. Generally, Master Practitioner courses will build on the Practitioner material and cover more aspects of communication and language, behavior change and modeling.

In terms of hours again there are different standards, the two main types being:

- those that last around 65 hours (9 days)
- those that last around 125 hours

The 125 hour style courses tend to be either:

- face to face, lasting typically 16 to 20 days (normally modular), or
- 12 to 14 days face to face (some courses are modular, some are en bloc) plus 30 to 40 hours of pre-course preparation.

Competent NLP Master Practitioners are able to use NLP with others for a broader range of challenges than Practitioners.

3.5 NLP Trainers Training

NLP Trainers' Training trains Master Practitioners to be able to deliver and certify (where relevant) the four levels of courses referred to above.

Trainers' Training courses will vary in terms of content and duration, usually ranging from 7 days to 19 days.

Generally an effective NLP Trainers' Training course will

- teach students how to run NLP courses and how to teach and certify at NLP Diploma, Practitioner and Master Practitioner level
- teach students excellent presentation skills
- thoroughly test their knowledge of NLP

A thorough evaluation process typically lasts three (or more typically, four) days.

4 Questions to ask yourself

Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- 1) What do I want from the course?
- 2) Do I want to be certified or simply to do a workshop?
- 3) Will I want to use NLP purely for myself, or to use with others (coach, consultant)?
- 4) For Practitioner and Master Practitioner, do I want to study totally face to face, or would I be happy learning some of the information using CDs and other forms of pre-course preparation?
- 5) Do I want to study in more than one block (modular) or en bloc?
- 6) What size study group would I prefer?
- 7) How much am I willing and able to spend?
- 8) Am I interested in my courses being recognised academically?
- 9) Am I willing to pay ongoing certification fees?
- 10) Does the Trainer know enough about me to know whether I am suitable for the course

and that the course is suitable for me?

1. What do I want from the course?

Do you want the NLP course to specialise in a particular area, such as education, work, management, selling, health or sport, or for it be more general or for personal development? (See also 2 and 3 below)

2. Do I want to be certified or simply to do a workshop?

If you want to use NLP professionally, then a Diploma or Practitioner course would probably be most suitable for you (also see 3 below). If you want to use it purely for yourself and your own development, then depending on how far you want to go with your development a workshop, Diploma or Practitioner would be suitable. Generally, the longer the course, the broader and deeper it goes.

3. Will I want to use NLP purely for myself, or to use with others (coach, consultant)?

If you want to coach others, I would suggest that the Practitioner course would be a good starting point. If you want to gain NLP skills purely in the area of management or communication, then the Diploma would probably be a good starting point.

Some NLP courses focus on more the personal development aspects, others also cover more of the work-related uses of NLP.

4. For Practitioner and Master Practitioner, do I want to study totally face to face, or would I be happy learning some of the information using CDs and other forms of pre-course preparation?

This is your personal choice. Here are some things to consider. For each NLP 'technique' or topic, there is some 'theory' or underpinning knowledge that you will need to know so that you can actually use the material, whether you learn this in the training room or from CDs before the course.

Some people prefer the immersion into the training experience, others prefer to learn the

theory in their own time, as often as they prefer to hear it (sometimes several times) when they are in a receptive mood, and have a quick recap in the training room. (Having the CDs can be a useful aide-memoire after the course, whether they are provided as part of the study package or bought separately). The face to face courses last 15-20 days, the pre-study assisted courses tend to last 7-10 days (for Practitioner) and 12-14 days (for Master Practitioner).

5. Do I want to study in more than one block (modular) or en bloc?

Most of the 15 to 20 day courses are done in several modules, typically 4 or 5 blocks of 4 days each month, or between 8 and 10 weekends each month. This obviously takes longer than the en bloc courses, and can allow delegates to practice and have time to assimilate the material and integrate it into their own life.

Of the pre-study Practitioner and Master Practitioner courses, many are done over 7 (Practitioner) or up to 14 (Master Practitioner) consecutive days. This allows people to become certified relatively quickly, and may not allow them time to practice outside the training room or integrate the material into their own life.

Some of the pre-study courses are modular, with between 2 and 4 modules so that delegates can practice outside the training room and have some time to integrate NLP into their life.

6. What size study group would I prefer?

Some NLP courses have a handful of delegates, others can have up to 500. With larger groups there is a wider range of people to interact with, and sometimes more energy, and it can be less easy to interact directly with the Trainer. Smaller groups tend to lead to deeper relationships with delegates and the training team, and it is easier to have questions answered.

7. How much am I willing and able to spend?

As a rough guide, for UK courses for a general audience range from around £400 to £1,000 for Diploma courses, £1,500 to £3,000 for Practitioner and Master Practitioner courses, and £3,000 to £5,000 for Trainers Training.

8. Am I interested in my courses being recognised academically?

There is a move towards UK universities recognizing NLP courses as part of post-graduate Masters Degrees. At the time of writing, University of Derby Corporate has a MA in Applied Coaching, where an NLP Master Practitioner certificate is a pre-requisite, and counts for 60 credits (of the 180 total). NLP Trainers Training can also be worth an additional 30 credits, i.e. 50% of the total credits required.

Some NLP Practitioner, Master Practitioner and Trainers Training courses automatically count for credits, for others additional work may be required. For more information, contact The Performance Solution (+44 (0)1225 867285 or <http://www.theperformancesolution.com/>).

9. Am I willing to pay ongoing certification fees?

Some NLP bodies charge ongoing (annual or bi-annual) certification fees. Others do not, and they will normally charge annual membership fees.

10. Does the Trainer know enough about me to know whether I am suitable for the course and that the course is suitable for me?

For Practitioner, Master Practitioner and Trainers Training (and possibly Diploma), it is good practice for the Trainer to ask questions about potential students, to help ensure that there is a good match between what the delegate wants and the type of training delivered. Some of these questions ideally will relate to the health and well-being (physical and primarily psychological) of the student. For example, if a student needs a course that is more counseling or psychotherapeutically based, or if he/she has certain psychological conditions, it may be outside of the scope of expertise of some Trainers to accept that student onto the course

5 Questions to ask the Trainer

Here are some questions that you might want to ask the Trainer before committing to the course. The first five questions apply only if you are doing a course offering certification.

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- 11) How do you assess students?
- 12) Does everyone always meet the standards?
- 13) If someone doesn't meet the standards, what happens both during and after the course?
- 14) Who signs the certificate – is it just you?
- 15) Which NLP body(ies) are you affiliated to? Who certified you, and who recognises your certificates?
- 16) What forms, if any, will I need to sign before the course?
- 17) Where and when is the course, and what are the timings?
- 18) What is the typical group composition – age, gender, background?
- 19) What is your background, who did you train with and how long have you been training NLP?
- 20) How many qualified NLP assistants are there?
- 21) What is your refund policy?
- 22) What post-course support do you provide?
- 23) Can I speak to previous students? Do you have written testimonials?
- 24) Are there opportunities for me to assist afterwards?

11. How do you assess students?

Each Trainer should be able to tell you the criteria used to assess whether a student meets the standards (see 12 below). As far as possible these should be objective and verifiable. The Trainer will ideally highlight the criteria before or near the start of the course, so that all students know what is expected of them.

12. Does everyone always meet the standards?

I have heard from several people that for some NLP courses everyone meets the standards and gets a certificate (Diploma, Practitioner or Master Practitioner). If a specific course follows this policy, what is the value of the certificate compared to one where the Trainer has specific standards and does not always certify every student?

13. If someone doesn't meet the standards, what happens both during and after the course?

It is perfectly possible that a delegate is not meeting the standards expected. Ideally, the Trainer should provide developmental feedback for all students frequently throughout the course, with particular attention and, if appropriate, additional support for those students who it appears may not meet the standards. If the student has not demonstrated that he/she has met the standards by the end of the course, and still wishes to be certified, then ideally the Trainer will explain what the student needs to do to meet the standards and discuss how best to achieve that.

14. Who signs the certificate – is it just you?

Some NLP boards require two certified Trainers to sign the certificate, others one. Please see question 15 for comments on the Trainer's certification.

15. Which NLP body(ies) are you affiliated to? Who certified you, and who recognises your certificates?

As noted in Section 2 of this document, there are several NLP bodies. It is well worth you finding out which body(ies) the trainer is affiliated to. This links to question 9 above. It is also worth checking that the Trainer is actually certified as an NLP Trainer. It has been known for Master Practitioners to offer Diploma and Practitioner courses – I am not aware of any of the main NLP bodies that would accept such certificates.

If you have any doubt about whether the Trainer is certified, check with the relevant NLP body or ask to see his/her Trainers Training certificate.

16. What forms, if any, will I need to sign before the course?

It is not uncommon for training organisations to ask students to sign some type of Training Agreement before the course, where the student confirms that they are medically well enough to take the course, and that the student takes responsibility for their own well-being on the course. **Always** read thoroughly any paperwork before signing it.

17. Where and when is the course, and what are the timings?

Check the logistics, travel and accommodation arrangements, and timings.

18. What is the typical group composition – age, gender, background?

An important element of the benefits people derive from the training is the other delegates. Information about group composition may help you to decide which course to select.

19. What is your background, who did you train with and how long have you been training NLP?

All Trainers were novices at some point, and getting a 'feel' for the Trainer and his/her background may help you decide whether they are right for you.

20. How many qualified NLP assistants are there?

Most training courses will have qualified assistants (Practitioners, Master Practitioners or Trainers) to, for example, assist delegates during the exercises. Generally, the higher the number of assistants per delegate, the more attention and feedback the delegates receive. As many of the exercises are in pairs or groups of three, having a ratio of around 1:6/1:8 is reasonable, particularly for courses offering certification. If there are significantly fewer assistants, delegates may not be observed as effectively or may not be able to find an available assistant if they have a question during an exercise or process.

21. What is your refund policy?

In the event of a delegate not being satisfied, or wanting to cancel the course, or wanting/needing to leave the course before completion, what is the refund and cancellation policy of the Trainer?

22. What post-course support do you provide?

Will the Trainer (or the training organisation) answer your questions after the course, and if so, how quickly? Do they offer study or practice groups?

23. Can I speak to previous students? Do you have written testimonials?

Most Trainers are very willing to provide this.

24. Are there opportunities for me to assist afterwards?

Trainers often have previous students as assistants for subsequent courses. This helps the student to further deepen their knowledge of the material previously studied.

6 Summary

Whilst there is a fair amount of detail, having read the information above you are now in a far better position to make a more informed choice, and to ask additional questions relevant to you personally. And whilst some people choose to make decisions relatively 'scientifically', you may also want to take into account your own 'gut feel' for what is the right choice for you.

7 Final Comments

I hope you have found this e-book useful and informative. If you have any questions on how to use the content of this e-book, email me personally at jeremy@thelazarus.com. Do also feel free to direct interested friends and colleagues to our site. Have fun on your NLP journey.