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2016 “Neurons” Meta Reflections – #43  
September 12, 2016  
*Reflections about NLP #8*

## STEVE AND CONNAIRE ANDREAS’ CONTRIBUTIONS TO NLP

With seven posts on the primary *contributors to the development of NLP* which Bandler, Grinder, and Pucelik relied on, yet another source is one that I cannot overlook— Steve and Connaire Andreas. In fact, in my opinion, it was the early contributions of Connaire and Steve Andreas that significantly helped to put NLP on the map. That’s because it was their seminar books of Bandler and Grinder that primarily got the word out. And that’s because of a singular fact— *you could read those books!* Does that imply you can’t read *The Structure of Magic*? Yes, those are not very readable books. If NLP was dependent on those books communicating NLP, it would have had an early death!

It was the later books, and especially the four “seminar books” from the Andreas’ that began spreading the word about Neuro-Linguistic Programming. The first NLP book that I bought and read (well, actually “devoured”!) was *Frogs Into Princes* (1979), then *Trance-formations: Neuro-Linguistic Programming and the Structure of Hypnosis* (1981)— a big seller, selling 350,000 in the first few years! No other NLP book until Robbins sold those kinds of numbers. Then, *Reframing: NLP and the Transformation of Meaning* (1982), and then *Using Your Brain — For a Change* (1985).

These books came from the actual trainings and workshops that Richard and John were doing, and mostly recorded what Richard was doing. Similar to what Robert Dilts had been doing since 1975, they began doing—sequencing, systematizing, and organizing the NLP materials. They were also business savvy and then created the first NLP Training Center that lasted more than a year or two. Decades later, “NLP Comprehensive” of Boulder Colorado became the stable, ongoing Training Center— where they brought Richard in to NLP Comprehensive repeatedly over the years to introduce their work and whatever they were newly working on and later John (which then triggers Bandler’s lawsuit against the field of NLP in the United States, but that’s another story.)

After the seminar books (1979- 1982), they began writing their own books and developing new patterns. First *Change Your Mind and Keep the Change* (1987) and then *Heart of the Mind: Engaging Your Inner Power to Change* (1989). In *Change Your Mind* Richard Bandler wrote this:

“Steve and Connirae are among the few who have gone on to use NLP modeling techniques to *develop useful new patterns*, and this is evident in ... Chapter 8, ‘A Strategy for Responding to Criticism...’ (1987, p. v, italics added)

Now what makes the Andreas especially fascinating to the history of NLP and those who contributed to its development is Steve’s history prior to NLP. Before NLP, he had a different

name, he was *John O. Stevens*— a key thinker and developer in Gestalt Therapy and he was a well-known, even famous, Gestalt Therapist! Further, John O. Stevens had also published several books about Gestalt Therapy. Before NLP even began, he edited and published *Awareness: Exploring, Experimenting, Experiencing* (1971). Then, in the same year that the first book on NLP was published, he published *Gestalt Is* (1975). Further, he did this via the Gestalt Publishing Company, *Real People Press*, which his mother, Barry Stevens had created years earlier.

So the Gestalt history of NLP with Fritz Perls goes back through the relationships he had with Barry Stevens, *Real People Press*, and John O. Stevens who became Steve Andreas. For example, Barry Stevens' book, *Don't Push the River* (1970) tells the story of her life with Fritz and their time together when he moved from Esalen to Canada to establish a Gestalt Kibbutz there. During that time Fritz, as his self-proclaimed title, "a dirty old man" (mentioned in his auto-biography, *In and Out of the Garbage Can*) had numerous relationships.

Interesting enough, when NLP began Fritz Perls was already dead. Yet before that, when Steve Andreas came into NLP in 1977, he brought in his personal acquaintance with Fritz Perls— something that neither Bandler, Grinder, or Pucelik had. By contrast, Steve learned Gestalt Therapy directly *from* Fritz Perls.

"He learned Gestalt Therapy from Fritz Perls, and combined Gestalt with teaching psychology and social science at Diablo Valley College, California, for seven years. Out of this came his book of Gestalt awareness experiments, *Awareness: Exploring, Experimenting, Experiencing* (1970)." (*Transforming Your Self: Becoming Who You Want to Be*, 2002, p. 274)

Yet there's more historical connections. Steve received his Master's degree in Psychology at Brandeis University in 1961 where he had studied with none other than Abraham Maslow himself. So if there was anyone who was *the direct link* between the Human Potential Movement and NLP, it was Steve Andreas. Then after studying with Maslow, he studied with Carl Rogers! Some years ago I asked Steve about his relationship to Esalen *after* he learned NLP. He said he did return to Esalen and presented classes on Gestalt, but not on NLP. [As an aside, several of the early developers did speak at Esalen and presented NLP, James Eicher did in 1978 (*Origins*, p. 119) as did Robert Dilts and Terry McClendon.]