

CHAPTER 1

Lots of "Times," Some Easy, Some Fun, Some Hard

R. Frank Pucelik

I graduated from high school in San Diego, California in 1963. Went to Community College and after three semesters quit. Not a good idea to quit college in 1965. Received my letter from Uncle Sam a few months later and joined the Navy before my 90 days were up. Did too well on the intelligence tests in boot camp and found myself assigned to Hospital Corpsman School directly from boot camp. Spent a wonderful year working in a military hospital and playing golf in Japan, my first duty station, after my abbreviated military medical school.

The Marine Corps needed medical corpsmen and I was transferred to the Marines in 1966. Went to infantry training back in San Diego where I also went to boot camp and Corps School, then off to the 2nd Battalion 9th Marine Regiment smack in the middle of the jungle in Southeast Asia. Not a fun year: spent 10 months in the jungle (I Corp) with a Marine Platoon and three months at a field medical hospital (A-Med) in Phu Bai, South Vietnam. When I left Vietnam I was stationed at the Naval Hospital in San Diego, California, which was also my home town, for the last seven months of my four-year military obligation. This seven months was a great gift to me. I was at home but not actually out of the military yet. Really needed this "halfway" time to try to get back to being a human. It helped a lot and served as a partial re-entry to human-hood.

So I spent four years doing my duty and then back to the college in San Diego I had quit before joining the military. This time around my attitude and desire were of a different caliber than the first time and I excelled at everything: perfect grades, took part in every activity, and a lot more golf. Married the sweetheart I had met in the military after the war, we gave birth to our son, and I went to work trying to get the war and my childhood out of me. I majored in psychology and political science. Not much progress on the self-healing during the two years I spent in college but learned a lot about several different psychological systems and had a lot of fun. In 1970 I transferred to the University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC) to finish my bachelor's degrees in both psychology and politics.

So, here I was in hippy city, being fresh out of the military, and fresh out of a college dominated by military veteran students. Wow, what a shock. In those days UCSC was really academically difficult to get into and they were not accepting many kids. Only the best could get in. However, the UC system at that time was allowing a number of veterans "special admission" opportunities and so, there I was surrounded by the smartest kids I had ever seen. Most of them were four to six years younger than myself but incredibly well educated. Luckily I was a good talker and a reasonably self-assured character by this time, so I was able to cope and over time "kind of" fit in. Loved the university and was able to immerse myself more deeply in the process of finding out what was wrong with me and working hard to become someone even I could like and respect.

In mid or late 1971, I was doing peer counseling and teaching some younger students how to do Gestalt, which I had studied extensively at college in San Diego. I was also doing a lot of training for other peer counselors to do "talk downs" for students who had taken LSD and were having a "bad trip." For me this was pretty easy stuff. Screaming and relatively violent clients were not much to deal with after being in Southeast Asia. My reputation was "the guy who could handle any counseling drug crisis," and I liked the respect and reputation that went with it.

About this time I met a guy named Richard Bandler who was a lot like me. He didn't seem to care about much and not much could bother him, especially crying, screaming college students. We fit together pretty well and we began doing Gestalt training groups together. We were doing two or three group training sessions a week and making some good pocket change in the process. After a few months of doing these groups together,

Richard invited a new "hotshot" linguistics professor to come visit our groups to see if there were linguistic or other patterns he could observe from our behaviors and/or ideas that could help us be better than we already were. After three or four sessions with John Grinder (the new hotshot linguistics professor) observing our training groups and asking us questions about our language patterns and other patterns he had noticed, we knew we were on to something really special. In my opinion it was during these two or three Gestalt training group sessions that NLP/Meta was born. The excitement I felt during these early times with John and Richard became a driving force that never left me during the following six or so years that we spent together (actually it still hasn't left me and I assume it never will).

For the first several months of our interactions it was just John, Richard, and myself, but we rapidly started adding group members. During John's university classes and during Richard and my Gestalt training classes, we would find people we liked and/or people would come to us and ask to join the "study group" we had formed. So, we were off and running. In my opinion, this group of people were the "first generation" NLP folks. They included Joyce Michaelson, Trevelyan Houck, Marilyn Moskowitz, Jeff Paris, Lisa Chiara, Ilene McCloud, Ken Block, Terry Rooney, Jody Bruce, Bill Polansky, Devra Canter, and one more person who is choosing to stay anonymous. Also, there were a few people during these early years who were on the edge of what we were doing: Terry McClendon (who became much more connected and active later with Robert Dilts), Paul Carter (a close friend of Steven Gilligan and partner for several years), David Wick (head of Youth Services and good friend as well as excellent leader and student of NLP), Gary Merrill (a close friend of Judy DeLozier and was in many groups with the Meta kids), Michael Patton (without whose help and friendship I might not have ever graduated from UCSC – a good counselor and colleague at Youth Services), Peter Gaarn (also a powerful counselor at Youth Services), and Pat LeClair (Head Counselor at Youth Services who constantly supported our "innovative" work with the clients). During the first two years, the group of people named above were the ones primarily involved in the experimenting.

It was during these two years of experimenting that the Meta Model and other foundation models were formalized. We spent a lot of time copying the "great" therapists (sometimes in person, sometimes on video, and sometimes via manuscripts) to learn their language patterns and then formalize their "tricks" so we could use them equally well. We spent an incredible amount of time and energy, during all six years and all three generations, doing Gestalt sessions with each other on every conceivable problem we might have: family reconstructions with each other until everyone's families had been analyzed and reconstructed many times for each of us; psychodrama from every possible perspective; parts parties by the hundreds (each practitioner with each member of the team); and dream therapy with every dream that could possibly have any significance for each of us, by each of us. Then, evaluating the patterns (verbal and non-verbal), refining the patterns as much as possible, then testing for quicker, better results. We kept practicing until we were pretty convinced that this particular technique or process could not be done better or faster.

We observed that the "masters" were often sloppy and inconsistent in their use of change behaviors and, by understanding the patterns they used and using them systematically, we believed we were faster and better than they were. We spent much of our time accumulating their "licks" and testing our competence on each other, with our friends, and with the clients several of us had while working with the Santa Cruz Counseling Center (Youth Services). It seemed obvious that in most cases the "masters" had learned their change patterns over many years of trial and error and actually didn't know what pattern they were observing or what systematic behavior or language they were using to affect the change in the clients. We confirmed this many times when questioning the "masters" themselves. It also seemed that they relied on very few patterns and were not flexible. We now understood very clearly what was happening when a therapist was very effective with one client and completely ineffective with the next. The problems that clients had also had patterns and the "helpers" needed to be effective with the pattern the clients used to create their problem. It seemed to us that the "helpers" could not help the client if the client's problem was not "rooted" in the pattern the "helper" could recognize and work with effectively. Today that sounds ridiculously simple but in 1973 this was quite a revelation for us.

This meant that potentially we could find the patterns of many different great communicators and put them together into a package of skills that one practitioner could learn and use. During these early years we played with the patterns of Carlos Castaneda, Carl Rogers, Virginia Satir, Fritz Perls, Gregory Bateson, John Lilly, and

others. This, of course, allowed us to understand the most common misjudgment made in psychotherapy. We understood that any model provided by a school or style of psychotherapy was destined to fail more often than not. We also understood that it is the client's model, or group of patterns, that is far more important for the therapist to respond to than the "helping" or "healthy" model the therapist brings to the session. Of course, it is therefore necessary for the therapist to adjust the therapy system to fit the client, not the client to fit the therapy. We spent some time taking the "healthy" models from the different systems of psychotherapy and carrying them out to their logical conclusion, as if they were a real or complete personality structure. What great fun it was to be a complete "Gestalt" person, or a total "Transactional Analysis" person, or a "Freudian" person (be careful with this one). This process helped us understand quickly the limits, incompleteness, and contradictions of the "systems" that were often the guiding principles of psychotherapy.

During this time the nature of my relationship with Richard slowly changed. Originally Richard and I were the dynamic duo. By the middle of 1973 (very possibly earlier in Richard's mind), Richard and John had become the dynamic duo and I was (functionally) the "leader of the pack" of students. Some of the later students never quite accepted this role on my part but that was the way it was until the middle of 1976. I now think some of the later troops – like Robert Dilts, Stephen Gilligan, Jim Eicher, possibly Leslie Cameron, Judy DeLozier, David Gordon, and the rest – never knew how the "Meta people" got started. I never thought about it in those days. I never cared. We were having too much fun, learning a lot, and I was starting to feel like a "real" human being.

On one occasion when we were playing with dream therapy models, mixing Gestalt dream work with psychodrama and Virginia's "parts parties," John led me through the painful process of "living out" my recurring Vietnam nightmare. A long and frightening three or so hours, but John and the guys involved stayed with me and it changed me forever. I was finally able to finish some of the worst memories, guilt, and closed-off feelings that were bubbling out of me at the worst moments and in the worst way. Until that session, with John's guidance, I believed that the craziness put in me by the jungle was there to stay. The transformations from that session with John have continued, in a good way, all my life.

The Meta people met John, Richard, and myself one or two times a week for three to five hours and worked without John and Richard two to four more times a week, often for four to six hours at a time (I was part of all of these groups). Several of us also worked together at Youth Services, and had classes and organizational groups together in the university.

It was during '73 and '74 that my emphasis was divided between learning patterns, working with the patterns we were learning at Youth Services in Santa Cruz, organizing experimentation meetings, working with the Meta people honing our skills, trying to finish with the war and the craziness that was the legacy of my childhood, and finishing my degree work at the university. John and Richard, of course, were key to my personal and professional development; John in a more direct manner and Richard as an attentive antagonist.

During late '73 and early '74 several key people joined the process. This was the time when Robert Dilts, Steve Gilligan, Jim Eicher, Leslie Cameron, David Gordon, and Judy DeLozier became involved. During '74 and '75 an incredible amount of our focus was given to the unconscious models, including Milton Erickson and others. We learned and experienced every trance phenomenon we could find or read about. We spend hundreds of hours working with each other and anyone else we could get to let us put them into "trance," most of the time with their permission. We learned the process of "deep trance identification" where you become another person at the most basic level possible.

The idea was to learn from them as fast and as completely as possible. We "became" every person we could think of who had something "magic" to teach us. We had a hard time getting Steven to be Steven during this time and I spent a few strange days the first time Leslie was Virginia. Leslie and I were very close at the time, life partners, working partners, both on the NLP team and at Youth Services. When she became Virginia she was very polite and obviously did not know me. That is a very uncomfortable feeling when someone you know very well does not know who you are. I was very relieved a day later when Leslie was back in Leslie's body.

Our merry band continued experimenting during '75 through '76, copying, experiencing personally, evaluating, testing, practicing, and refining everything we could find that we thought was worth learning. The models and

techniques we were developing were becoming publicly known and people from the other side of the hill (San Jose, San Francisco, Palo Alto, Berkeley, and all points east from Santa Cruz) wanted to study our "discoveries." Most of the Meta people were doing training programs of one kind or another. We had moved into informal teams. Leslie and I worked a lot together and focused on education and family systems. I spent some of my happiest years living with and working with Leslie. She was a great friend, an incredible life partner, a wonderful and fearless learner, and the best trainer I have ever observed (besides myself, of course).

By this time Byron Lewis had moved to Santa Cruz and joined the group. He was and is one of the people in the world that I have the most admiration for. Byron is one of those rare people who does what he says he will do, and always to the best of his ability. Worth his weight in gold. We were friends from the day we met and still are today.

Leslie Cameron, Ken Block, Michael Patton, Peter Gaarn, David Wick, Pat LeClair, and myself all gave a great deal of time and focus to the education system of Santa Cruz County and the problems being experienced by the young people of the greater Santa Cruz region, including the surrounding cities. We worked as a team providing training for the area teachers, working directly with the schools and the agencies responsible for dealing with "troubled youths." We each had clients appointed to us through Youth Services (a department of the Santa Cruz Community Counseling Center). This was the legal entity responsible for providing psychological services to the people in the Santa Cruz region. Pat LeClair was the Supervising Psychologist and David Wick was the Program Director. Both were committed and dedicated to the challenge that confronted the team. The rest of us were the counselors and trainers sent into the field to accomplish the impossible. David Wick has added his unique perspective to this book. You will read what it was like to be involved with us Meta people, and what the reactions were from the schools and the community at large from the work done by the team at Youth Services (see [Chapter 4](#)).

We were excited to be using our skills in the "real" world and with clients that other psychologists had so much trouble working with successfully. This was truly a test of our ideas and skills. We learned, succeeded in our goals, and loved working with "our" kids and "our" schools.

By the middle of '75, many of the original Meta people had graduated from UCSC and moved on to the rest of their lives. We were all doing a lot of training and work in our areas of interest. Steven Gilligan and Paul Carter were entrenched in Ericksonian activities, Leslie and I in family systems and education, and the rest of the troops doing their best to continue their focus areas. Training groups were continuing on a regular basis. The people from "over the hill" were coming to Santa Cruz to learn from us. John and Richard would orchestrate challenging and interesting training groups. They would meet with the Meta kids before the training group started and give us directions on what they wanted us to teach the regular group. When the regular training session started they would give each of the Meta people a few of the group participants (6 to 15) and we would lead them through learning experiences. The fun part of the game, for us Meta kids, was when John or Richard would come to us, during our training process, and observe our work, evaluate our abilities, and change our goals – possibly several times during the evening – and still lead a coherent and valuable training program for the participants from over the hill.

Sometimes they would take us from our group of participants and place us with a different group and tell us to continue with the program that the other trainer was doing before we arrived. Of course, we often didn't know what the other trainer was doing and John or Richard would not tell us. We had to figure out what the other trainer was doing by testing and observing, mostly using non-verbal feedback. Wow, was this challenging sometimes. We understood that two different training programs were taking place at the same time. The program for the Meta kids was at a different level than the program for the participants from over the hill. Of course, they would observe long enough and control enough to make sure that the program for the participants from over the hill would be a high quality and valuable experience.

When the program for the regular participants was finished and they had all left, then the program for the Meta kids would continue in earnest. We would tell what we learned, what had given us the best clues about what the other trainers had done with their groups before we took over, what difficulties we had encountered and how we tried to get past those difficulties, whether successful or not, get feedback from each other and

summaries of the event, and then there would be feedback to each of us from John and Richard. Of course, we had great learning experiences, not always easy and sometimes not fun until later. I am sure you can understand what I mean.

It was about late '76 or perhaps early '77 that my life changed abruptly and completely. Leslie was invited by Richard to join himself, John, Judy, and Eric (my son) to visit Milton Erickson. Of course, she jumped at the chance and I was really happy for her. When she returned from the trip to Arizona my life was suddenly different. When she returned she was indifferent to me and would barely talk or interact with me at all. It was obvious that something had changed and I fought against the obvious conclusion I did not want to believe.

Within a couple weeks, Richard came to me to inform me that I was no longer welcome to be involved with the team or any of the team members in any way, for any reason. I chose to honor his "request" for reasons of my own. That was the day it became obvious that I no longer had my living partner, my working partner, my learning team, my source of income, or my friends (they were all members of the Meta kids). After some time to get used to this situation (actually a few months), during which Paul Carter and Stephen Gilligan gave me a place to live and showed incredible patience and respect, I loaded up all my personal belongings, and of course my dogs, and headed for Nebraska. I spent about eight months being a counselor for farmers and "town folk" (they didn't like psychological people so I had to work through the preachers and the local priests who were glad to have the professional help) in a farming community where I had originally started my life. It was really interesting living in a community of 600 people after spending the last 28 or so years in San Diego and Santa Cruz.

I spent my free time working as a volunteer with the local animal doctor. Did a lot of surgery on different animals, enjoyed seeing all the farms, meeting all those incredible people, and learning as much as I could about animal medicine. The vet and I became fast friends. I learned a lot from him. I loved the place and loved the experience but soon I'd had all I could take (life in that community was a bit slow and a bit too predictable for me), packed up my truck and my dogs, and headed for San Diego. I was back home and starting over again.

While visiting the Institute of Transactional Analysis (TA) in La Jolla, the Gestalt Institute in Pacific Beach, and the Center for the Studies of the Person, also in La Jolla (this was the institute started and run by Carl Rogers), I discovered a great desire from the people in San Diego to learn about NLP, so after a few months I opened the San Diego Meta Institute (SDMI). I found and invited some of the Meta kids who were no longer involved with John and Richard in Santa Cruz to join me in San Diego. To my great surprise and pleasure, several of the early troops joined me and we spent a fun and exciting four or so years living, learning, and teaching NLP to the San Diego psychological and business communities. Marilyn Moskowitz, Jeff Paris, Byron Lewis, and Lisa Chiara from the Santa Cruz Meta kids, and two great students of psychology and NLP, Tim Criswell and Steven Lorei, from the San Diego area joined us to complete the training/learning staff at SDMI.

During this time, Byron and I both earned our PhDs from United States International University's program conducted through the TA Institute in La Jolla. I was a lecturer in the PhD program (teaching NLP to the TA and PhD students at the Institute) and Byron was also working with PhD candidates in the same program. The SDMI was active and provided constant training programs in the many fields we had patterned during the six or so years we had spent in Santa Cruz. We all continued to add applications to our bag of tricks and enjoyed each other's feedback and company.

In 1983 I was invited to move to Oklahoma and become a negotiator for a man who owned and operated oil wells in the central US. His promises made it hard to turn down plus I was offered all necessary financial support for opening a branch of Meta Institute there. I accepted the offer, loaded my truck and dogs again, and headed for Norman, Oklahoma. I gave my "blessing" to the San Diego troops and the leadership of SDMI to Marilyn. They continued the SDMI program for a few years after I left and then closed it down and went on with their own lives. In 1983 in Oklahoma the oil business went belly up (my timing for joining this business was not exactly the best) and by the middle of 1984 my NLP training company (Oklahoma Meta Institute) was supporting the oil and gas people I had joined the year before. They left the oil business, so did I, and Oklahoma Meta Institute continued to do very well. I did a lot of training throughout the Midwest and really got used to the central US culture and liked it.

Good people, very conservative, and very religious, took some getting used to, for sure. I had to learn how to teach NLP with the proper connections to the Bible. Not too difficult for a good Catholic schoolboy like myself (I had gone to a Catholic school in San Diego for the first eight years of my schooling – great education in those days). My short time living and working in Nebraska also helped me get ready for Oklahoma. Met and married a wonderful Oklahoma girl in Norman (yes, got married again). We shared life for several years. She is one of the best people I have been lucky to share time with. We still talk and care for each other today. Worked with a lot of companies and spent a lot of time on the road. I also spent a lot of time with my son, Eric, traveling the professional Motocross circuit. He was, by this time, an accomplished professional racer and I had the desire to spend as much time with him as I could. John Grinder, Judy DeLozier, and I would meet as often as possible at his races and at each other's homes when we could. John was my son's stepdad by this time and Eric often had to put up with having four parents with him. I think he enjoyed us all. I hope so. I considered myself an incredibly lucky man. If I had the opportunity to choose a stepfather for my son, of all the men in the world, I would have chosen John.

During this time I was often asked to teach staff counselors at young people's residential treatment programs for drug addicts and alcoholics. Whenever I was at these programs I always had the feeling that the programs were not effective – and this is stating it very mildly. It always seemed to me that the clients in the programs were simply learning how to successfully lie to the staff. Whenever I got close enough to the kids to get the truth from them, they confirmed my worst fears. These programs were shams at best and mostly more damaging than helpful. I thought a lot about the program structures, the staff, and what the goals of the programs actually were. These programs were designed either to make money (the rich kids' programs) or to create a place to put the kids so they were not on the streets for a while (poor kids' programs) or as a place to hold them until they were old enough to put in prison. That is where most of them were going and it seemed that everybody (i.e., the professionals in the field) knew it but just would not say it out loud.

I could not work with these people and keep my mouth shut. I went to the head of the worst of the poor kids' programs I had seen and gave him a challenge. I told him, "Your program sucks. I can build a real program, if you are interested, but I want complete control for three years." He told me he would think about it. He called me a week later and asked when I was ready to begin. Now I had to put my money where my mouth was. I spent the next three or so years, while running Meta Institute Oklahoma, spending time with my son traveling to his races and creating and running two treatment programs (one for young people and, later, one for adults) in the Oklahoma City area.

I recruited great staff and we created a model using the practices and principles from NLP, conjoint family systems, Gestalt, quality business practices, and the best of the "therapeutic community" systems I had been studying. During the third year of our operation, we (the House of Life) were selected by a research team from the US government (a national program called Youth at Risk) as the best young people's treatment program in America. The success rate of the best programs I had seen before the House was less than 1%, if the people were counting honestly. Most did not count at all and I knew why. We wanted to get to 75% (no one had ever credibly gone above 10%) but in the four years I led the program we never got there. At the end of the fourth year we were just over 60% (using the strictest criteria I had seen in treatment programs). I left the program in Oklahoma in 1988. That program lasted for several years but slowly returned to the state it was in when I found it (270 clients in the previous three years with no evidence of any positive results of any kind for any of the participants) and does not exist today. I still interact with many of the graduates from that program on Facebook. My kids forever.

In 1987, while living in Oklahoma, I was contacted by a friend of mine in California. She told me she had some Russian psychologists visiting her and three of them wanted to meet me because of what I was working on and what I knew about Gestalt, NLP, and drug treatment. She said I was the only person who knew all three of these things at a high level and could she send me the Russians.

I said sure and the next day I met my first Russians at the Oklahoma City airport. They were planning to stay for three days but they stayed for three weeks. We had great fun. I showed them as much as I could and we became friends quickly. They invited me to visit Russia and a few weeks later I found myself getting off a plane

in Moscow. What a shock. I found myself walking into a time warp: I was instantly back in 1935. I loved it. I found a lot of very educated professional psychologists who could not do anything. We fit together perfectly. I didn't know much, compared to them, but had a lot of skills and could do almost everything they wanted to know how to do. It was a trainer's heaven. I found large numbers of highly educated professionals, eager to learn, and ready to try anything. No more intellectual bullshit arguments so common to training programs in the United States. They simply wanted me to show them how to accomplish goals and supervise their attempts to copy what I had demonstrated. Wonderful energy, hungry students, and 11 time zones of need. I traveled back and forth a few times and moved to Moscow completely in late 1989.

I have experienced so many incredible events here. I have been the first American ever to visit many cities all across the Russian world, experienced great chaos, witnessed incredible tragedy, felt grave danger, done lots of "miracles," created hundreds of powerful friendships, helped and trained many thousands of people, helped hundreds of businesses, and been given the gift of an incredible life by the people who live in these 11 time zones. I ran the wild side of the crazy times (the wild 90s) here in Russia, the Ukraine, and the Baltics. I chased the big money deals that were getting people rich quick, like lots of other foreigners. Of course they all failed for some reason or another, but I always kept my hand in the training business as well. Slowly moved away from the NLP world here in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States – called the Soviet Union before the "fall"). I moved steadily towards business consulting, which had been my primary business in Oklahoma before I came to the CIS.

In 2000 I decided to stop doing what I didn't know how to do and concentrate on what I did know how to do. During my travels I had discovered a city that really seemed to fit my heart and my style. Odessa, Ukraine, stole my heart the first day I came to visit and do some training programs. I was living in Moscow at the time and it only took me a couple of months to pick up my stuff, my Russian family (oh ya, got married again to a powerful young Russian woman named Tatiana and received a 6-year-old daughter in the process) and moved to Odessa. Been living here ever since. Took a year out of Russia once to move to Santa Cruz and help my friend John Grinder build his home, and earlier spent a year in San Diego working with my lifelong friend John Remley (seems I like my Johns too). Except for these two years I have been living and working in Russia and the Ukraine (and a few other countries) for the last 23 years.

I am now head of Pucelik Consulting Group (PCG), headquartered in Odessa, Ukraine. We have "branch" offices in Saint Petersburg and Vladivostok. My company is made up of 15 young Ukrainian professionals. They are proud, smart, dedicated to the mission of PCG, and a joy for me to work with these days. They are healing the chaos that is their world today. I am sure this team of young professionals will carry on the mission and objectives we presently work towards when I "hang up my spurs." We provide training and consulting on business issues and NLP all over Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Egypt, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, England, and more. I welcome you to visit our web page at www.frankpucelik.com if you are interested in what we are doing these days. Click on the (en) on the opening page if your Russian is not up to speed. We also sponsor and supervise treatment programs for young drug and alcohol addicts. There are now five programs similar to the program I built in Oklahoma, but better, now operating in Russia and the Ukraine. We don't have the restrictions or the documentation requirements that strangle most programs in the United States. We have three programs near Moscow and two near Odessa. We are in the process of opening three more programs and look forward to the day when there are hundreds of these programs all across the CIS and Europe. I don't hold out much hope for the United States to get a clue.

So, what do I say about the road I traveled to get to where I am now? It was long and often hard. I fought for many years to find a person in my skin who I could respect. I came close, very close, to giving up many times. I somehow found the will to stick with the fight (thank you Eric). I tried everything and studied everything I could find to help me; all the systems I tried were interesting and yet didn't do what needed to be done for me. I always wondered how each claimed to be the "real" one that was sure to help, and never did. I always thought it was my failure, not the system and certainly not the failure of the "peoplehelper" sitting on the other side of the table or pillow or whatever was between us that day. Then came Santa Cruz and the Meta kids. John, Richard, Terry, Marilyn, Joyce, Gary, Ken, Jeff, Lisa, Judy, Paul, Steve, Leslie, Byron, Patrick, Ilene, Michael, Peter, David, Pat, Tim, and Hedges helped me learn a way to build the person I had always wanted to find inside. The war blew out the garbage that had been deeply entrenched from my younger years but left its own

unique mark.

Richard has his own type of special genius, of course. I know how much I owe to this special man. I hope I was somehow a catalyst and a resource for him. However, John has given us all ideas, tools, models, and the integrity to move forward into the "study of excellence." Without John Grinder many thousands, perhaps millions of us (me for sure), would not have accomplished most or perhaps any of the incredible contributions we have all made to the quality of the lives of the millions we have touched.

The "Originals" that Chose Not to Contribute to This Compilation of Chapters

This book would not be complete without mentioning a number of people who contributed substantially to the birth of NLP but who, for one reason or another, could not or chose not to contribute to this collection. I recognize them here.

Trevelyan Houck

Smart, energetic young woman always ready to find needed information and ready to work as "client," "helper," "experimenter." Always helpful and good at bringing people together for fun or work. A great and valuable member of the team. One of the first generation troops.

Terry Rooney

Calm, smart, steady young woman. Great trance subject. We often used her skill to test very deep trance phenomenon. Super counselor, great experimenter, and an important integrator on the team. She was also one of the very early generation of Meta people. Good friend to all.

Ken Block

Ken was very well educated and had lots of ideas about what should or could be done. A natural leader/organizer. When the group got a bit fractured it was usually Ken that would call us together and get things coherent again. Good at being a "devil's advocate" when one was needed, but equally good at being "one of the troops." Ken was incredibly valuable on the team and often a catalyst for important pattern discoveries. He had the ability to be "bull headed" when that was needed, and I assure you it was needed from time to time. Very strong and lovingly patient when needed. Rare qualities in one person. He had them both.

Jeff Paris

Jeff was our resident "devil's advocate". Fought against everything and believed nothing until we could prove its value to him. Great value to the team. Jeff could not hide the fact that behind the mustache was a guy who was really a good guy. He tried to hide but we all knew who was inside the wall. Diligent, excellent communicator, pedantic to the extreme. He was exactly what the team needed. His role and contributions to the overall results of the first four or so years can't be overlooked. We all owe Jeff for the important role he filled.

Lisa Chiara

Lisa was a steady, intelligent influence on the team. She was ready to play and have fun when it was time but would powerfully switch to great experimenter and researcher, when needed. Helped Marilyn keep the "loose cannons" grounded. Lisa was careful and diligent when we were experimenting with a new pattern or technique. She would carefully watch out for the process and the people involved. We relied on her to keep us grounded, focused, and "safe" from our own excesses.

Marilyn Moskowitz

Marilyn was the "rock" (rock in a very good sense) of the team. She was solid, loving, always grounded, and helpful to the troops thousands of times. We all respected her and paid attention to her ideas and instructions. She supported the team members extremely well, picked up the pieces when necessary, and always followed

up on processes to make sure we were alright and supported, if not by her personally, then by someone else, at her suggestion. Careful, strong, solid, and a trance subject to rival even Terry.

Gary Merrill

Gary was a loving, diligent young man. Careful to the extreme, however, ready anytime to practice or try new patterns when we discovered them. Helped Marilyn secure the wild kids like myself, Steven Gilligan, Paul Carter, Terry Rooney (from time to time), Bill Polansky, Joyce Michaelson, and Trevelyan Houck. Later (1974 until 1977) Judy DeLozier, Robert Dilts, and Leslie Cameron helped Gary and Marilyn. This was not easy sometimes but Gary was always up to the task. Gary was dependable, open to learning, gentle when needed, and strong when the time was right. He was a super friend to both myself and Judy and he is still the same wonderful character today. I have been lucky to meet with him a few times lately and found the same guy with a "few" years under his belt and a lot of wisdom to go along with the energy and style that was so important to all of us in the early days of NLP.

Devra Canter

Devra was a talented, honest, hardworking young woman. She was willing to dig deep when necessary and a great counselor. Amazing empathy skills, very easy to care for, and very easy to trust. Great contributions to the team.

Jody Bruce

Jody was a gentle, intelligent, reserved young woman. Quiet in a room full of people who were always ready to talk. We learned that when Jody made the effort to say something to the group or contribute to the discussion, it was a good idea to give her the room and listen carefully. Jody was a sensitive, insightful woman who gave us many clues to subtle observations most or all of us had missed. Another one of our champion trance subjects. John, Richard, Leslie, or I would always look for Jody, Terry, or Marilyn when we wanted to examine a newly discovered trance technique or altered state phenomenon.

Leslie Cameron

Leslie was a major factor on the NLP team even though she joined us after the first three or so years were already done. She was brave, fearless, and a diligent experimenter. She is one of the best psychotherapists I have ever seen work and the best trainer I have ever seen (outside of myself, of course). She had great natural talents in the area of communication and worked in the communication field for several years before joining us in Santa Cruz. When she added the skills of NLP and used her courage to stretch herself way beyond her prior perceived limits, she emerged as a true leader in the field of NLP and proved it for many years.

I was lucky to be her working partner for several years. The projects we worked on, with people like Ken Block, Michael Patton, and David Wick, were extremely successful (as documented by David in his chapter in this book). We achieved goals no one had seen accomplished in Santa Cruz County before.

I believe when we encounter NLP people with an incredibly high level of personal integrity, we should look to Leslie and John and say thanks.

Bill Polansky

Bill was an incredibly smart young man. Always gave the team plenty of interesting material to work with. When we needed a client to work with to examine a particular new skill or pattern, Bill was always ready to step up. He could always be counted on to make things interesting. Bill was with us for a couple of years during the very beginning times. When he moved on, he was missed.

Ilene McCloud

Ilene was one of the very early NLP troops. She was extremely articulate, well educated, and a ferocious debater when appropriate. Often we would attack models, trying to find the weak spots or flaws in them and

When Ilene came after your work (we each had the responsibility to research and present popular or important models to the team) you had better be ready and well prepared. This skill of hers helped create and insure the quality and depth of the material now known as NLP. We relied on her often to lead the processes of discovery and evaluation. She was a great communicator, a great friend, strongly loyal, afraid of nothing, willing to "step up" at the tough times, and invaluable to the early work done by the Meta people. When she left she was also missed.

David Gordon

David was always helpful and respectful of all of us. He was willing to try new patterns or examine the models that were being presented. Good man, good heart. David made many valuable comments and important contributions to the process of discovery that we were all involved in on a day-to-day basis. Gentle but strong. Well educated but never pretentious. Amazing young man we all liked and admired.

Paul Carter

Paul was Steve's partner and was always on the edge of the Meta people. He specialized in Erickson's stuff and he and Steven Gilligan worked together for several years. He participated with the Meta team often but not constantly and could always be counted on to find new ways to get something accomplished. Paul was always positive and helpful. He simply believed that what we wanted to do could be done if we just found the right way to get it done. This was so valuable as a general attitude and Paul had it, always.