

# Art of NLP for Teaching and Learning

[← Book Review: 'Sleights of Mind' by Stephen Macknik & Susana Martinez-Conde with Sandra Blakeslee](#)   [Coasting School to Outstanding School](#)   [⇒](#)

## Lessons for Life from 'Sleights of Mind'

Posted on [November 9, 2011](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

As promised, here's the follow-up post to my 'Sleights of Mind' review, focusing on the ideas in the Epilogue – 'Lessons for Life: Bringing the Magic Home'.

1. *Multitasking is a myth – it's just not possible to do two or more activities at once properly. For best performance, do one thing at a time.*



I completely agree with this; no, I don't always apply it (as I write my [Twitter feed](#) is open elsewhere on my screen) yet I do aspire to it. And it's not a male/female 'women can multitask and men can't' thing – I'm not sure women are any better at avoiding serial thinking. Although they might be better at holding several ideas in mind at once.

2. *Memory is fallible – keep records of important information and conversations immediately after they happen.*

Agreed. Close the loop and complete a task as soon as possible and, if soon is likely to be later (you've just finished a meeting and now have to teach, so cannot follow-up on meeting action points until after the session) then write it down, update your iPad or phone – capture it somehow, and then it's easier to live in the now.

3. *When you make a mistake, set it aside and keep moving forward – a magician's audience will hardly ever notice.*

Yes. When speaking publicly, teaching, or doing anything mistakes can hold you back if you dwell on them – yet who knows you made an error? And, even if anyone does notice, they'll want you to keep moving and be successful, and you'll want to keep moving forward too.

4. *Salespeople and 'psychics' will read your mind and tell you what you want to hear.*

Well ... yes they will. Where I disagree with this is the suggestion that salespeople are not being honest if they change tack if the focus of your interest changes. If, for example, you start by being interested in the design of a car, and then switch to being interested in safety and so the nature of the sales pitch switches too – that's not dishonest, that's giving relevant information. A car can be well designed *and* safe. Of course, if the sales pitch departs from truth, then that's unethical and not on. Playing to people's interests is okay.

'Psychics' – well, that's another matter for another day.

5. *Disarm with charm – use humour and empathy to lower people's guards.*

Humour is often a great way of – well, if not getting people to lower their guard, then at least to gain rapport. In terms of learning, get people to lower their 'can't do this' guard with humour. Learning can be fun ... arguably teaching is most effective when fun. I have my 'serious' side, and that provides some contrast with the fun bits in my workshops and professional development events.

6. *If you have something to hide, your voice, gaze, or posture will give it away when you think about it.*

You will give off tell-tale signs. Whether they get picked up is another matter. Be sure that a skilled NLP practitioner will receive those signals. Eric Robbie, who was there right at the start of the development of NLP, can read amazing amounts of detail by tracking eye movements, skin tone, and more.

7. *Attention enhances one small part of the world, while suppressing everything else.*

Sometimes expressed in NLP as 'what we pay attention to we get more of'. And we do. The classic exercise for this is to get someone to count all the blue objects in a room – and then ask them how many red objects they saw. What we pay attention to matters. As a teacher, what you invite your learners to pay attention to is vital. When you give feedback, do you focus on what went right, or what went wrong?

'Sleights of Mind' by Stephen Macknik & Susana Martinez-Conde with Sandra Blakeslee is available from [Amazon.co.uk](#) - [Kindle edition](#) out now, [paperback](#) on 2 February 2012.

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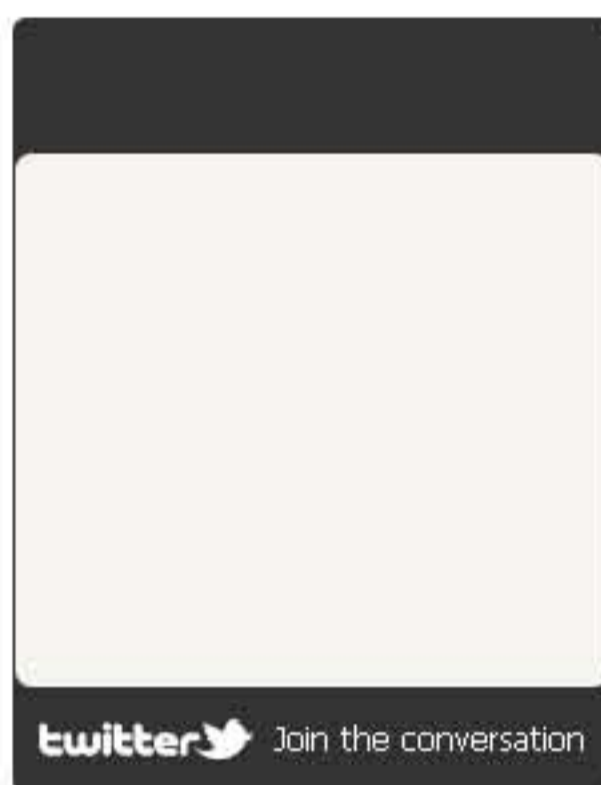
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