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Strategies of social activists: an NLP interpretation**Alice Mills and Jeremy Smith**

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In this paper we analyse three interviews with social activists, using a Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) methodology to discern each respondent's characteristic strategies for social activism via their choice of words and phrase. Our main aim is to determine whether social activists' statements can be analysed in terms of Dilts' studies into the strategies of genius.

Our analysis demonstrates that Dilts' methodology can be successfully applied beyond the fields explored in his Strategies of Genius, to the category of social activists. Each of our respondents repeatedly displayed a distinctively different NLP pattern in their reflections and reports of their activities and those of others. Further research is needed to confirm these findings, but within its limits, our study establishes a new methodology for the linguistic study of social activism.

Strategies of social activists: an NLP interpretation

1. The English language is full of metaphors; it is a challenge to venture a statement in English that does not contain some metaphor, whether it be a fresh-minted simile or a clichéd turn of phrase (like "turn of phrase") or a long-dead metaphor embedded in the etymology of such words as "venture", "statement" and "metaphor". As Lakoff points out in *Metaphors by which we Live*, everyone who speaks in English is unavoidably making use of metaphor at a more or less conscious level. The founders of NeuroLinguistic Programming (NLP), Richard Bandler and John Grinder, argued in a series of books beginning with *The Structure of Magic 1* and 2 that people display preferences for certain ranges of metaphor in their everyday speech, some opting for the visual ("I see", "from my perspective"), some for the auditory ("that rings a bell", "that comes over loud and clear") and some for the kinesthetic ("I feel", "my gut feeling is"). There are other speech patterns drawn from the gustatory ("leaves a nasty taste in my mouth") and olfactory ("I smell a rat"), but these are uncommon as dominant speech patterns. NLP looks, in general, for V (visual), A(uditory) and K(inesthetic) speech patterns, and argues that such unconscious preferences reflect people's actual processing of their experience to create their individual representation of the world, "a map or model which we use to generate our behavior. Our representation of the world determines to a large degree what our experience of the world will be, how we will perceive the world, what choices we will see available to us as we live in the world" (*Structure of Magic 1*: 7). Thus, someone who prefers the visual metaphor is also likely to be processing experience primarily in internal visual images and to respond most readily to visual stimuli ("get the big picture", "from my perspective"); someone who prefers the auditory is likely to privilege internal dialogue and respond more readily to what they hear than to what they see or feel ("something keeps telling me", "I resonate with that idea"); someone who prefers the kinesthetic is likely to privilege their bodily responses and arguments based on the physical ("lay out an argument", "let me walk you through this concept"). Bandler and Grinder further argue that the preferred NLP modality represents the most conscious element in a person's processing of experience, and those less preferred represent the most unconscious.

2. Robert Dilts refined and developed this early NLP model of how human beings process

their experiences in a trio of books, *Strategies of Genius*, in which he analyses the characteristic process of creativity in a range of geniuses, from ancient to near-contemporary times, on the basis of what these people say about themselves, their reflections on how to think and others' observations of what they did to bring a creative project to fruition. While he considers many other aspects of genius strategy, one of his most compelling arguments in this work is that each genius, like every other human being, manifests a repeated pattern of V, K and A in their thinking process, which can be determined both from their use of metaphor and from what they actually do (look, listen, move from place to place). Each genius manifests a different pattern: there is no NLP formula for how to think like a genius via a single V, A and K formula. However, each also manifests an "ability to communicate from one sense to another [which] appears to be a basic property of genius" (*Strategies of Genius 1*, 58). Dilts thus moves beyond the observation that everyone prefers one of these modalities in general, to explore just how a creative process engages several modalities in a characteristic pattern, which for the genius proves extraordinarily productive in terms of new ideas, new inventions or new works of art. Dilts also extends Bandler and Grinder's internalised model of thought processes to include the external world, as he does in his study of Walt Disney, by setting up different rooms for different stages of the creative process and walking between them (K), spending time listening to other people's input (A) and making drawings to represent film sequences (V).

3. In this paper we bring Dilts' modality-based method of investigation to bear on a group of people all of whom would claim to have made some difference in the world as social activists, without being in the genius category. Our methodology is very different from that of any previous social activism research, which has been dominated by quantitative social science research. Researchers who have profitably used qualitative methods in exploring the sociology of social movements include Pharr, Roseneil and Touraine, and as Davis and Suh point out, an interpretive sensibility on the researchers' part increasingly informs a number of important studies in the phenomenology of activism. Within the field of social activism research, however, the methodology of our paper is unprecedented.

4. This study is part of a larger research project which we have undertaken, in which we interviewed eleven social activists, asking them to tell us about their history as social activists, to reflect on how happy they were as social activists and to reflect more generally on the relationship between social activism and happiness. Our subjects all classify themselves as social activists, although one of them has given up activism recently. Our sample was not random, but chosen to give a range of experiences. Some of our activists had only local or Australia-wide experiences, while others had a history of involvement in international activism. Some were sustained by an explicit religious framework, others not so. Some identified themselves with a social movement or political party, others prided themselves on acting as loners. Our respondents were aged from the 30s to the 60s. They were not asked specifically to describe their process of social activism; nevertheless, from most of the interviews a clear NLP pattern can be derived along the lines of Dilts' studies into genius, with a characteristic sequencing of K, A and V. In this paper we limit ourselves to three of these interviews to keep the paper at a reasonable length: it would have taken a much longer analysis to do justice to all eleven, and we hope eventually to publish similar analyses of the remainder of our sample. Ours is a study of individual differences. We are not looking for patterns across subjects but within an individual subject's statements about himself or herself. Adding more interviews would reinforce the applicability of the method but would not establish characteristic V, K and A patterns. Dilts establishes patterns of V, K and A in the individual case of Mozart and it is his methodology that is being adopted here.

5. All of the interviews were conducted by an interviewer unskilled and untrained in NLP methodologies and aware only in the vaguest of terms that linguistic analysis of the interviews was planned. The interviewers were, however, trained in interviewing techniques and all interviews were based on a protocol of questions designed to prompt reflective accounts of the interviewees' life experiences as social activists without imposing a particular construct upon them: what we were undertaking was qualitative research designed specifically to privilege individuals' accounts of their own lives. All of our interviewees were given the option of a pseudonym of their own choosing, and the analysis that follows makes use of these pseudonyms.

6. In this paper we are exploring several aspects of the interviews, applying NLP methodologies to investigate the processes of becoming involved in social activism, of carrying through a social activism project and of reflecting on social activism more generally. Our first aim was to determine whether social activists' statements about

themselves and their causes could be analysed in terms of Dilts' studies of the strategies of genius to provide characteristic patterns of behaviour at the level of the NLP modalities (V, K and A). Could his studies of genius in the arts, philosophy and technology be extended to the field of social activism? Secondly, if a characteristic pattern was evident for each of our respondents, we were interested to discover whether, as NLP would predict, these were different for each. Thirdly, we wished to compare the NLP patterns for each respondent with their stated level of happiness as social activists. Was there a particular sequence that was evidently self-defeating, for instance, and another that was evidently self-affirming? This is a preliminary step, a pilot study, for what we hope will be a much more extended study of happiness and social activism.

7. Key-Huik was one of our more articulate respondents: his interview as transcribed read very much like literary English with each sentence grammatically correct and delivered with few "um", "er" or ungrammatical pauses. It was evident from his interview that his preferred modality was the kinesthetic. When asked to talk about his history as an activist, he says that at the end of his university studies, "Around that time was the tail end (K) of the student movement...it just went from there (K) and since then I guess I have been involved in a range of campaigns primarily as a socialist, which I think is for me fundamental (K) to any form of social change: that it has to challenge the sort of very foundations (K) of all the social problems that we campaign against". He goes on to mention "little spurts (K) of campaigns around French nuclear testing in the mid-90s, the problem of logging that drew a lot of people into (K) campaigns as well, um, er, more specifically as a member of a socialist organisation I was involved in a lot of efforts to try and build up (K) the different branches that I was involved in to tie in (K) all the different campaigns I've been involved in". A metaphor that he repeats is that of "tying in": speaking of selling socialist newspapers, he says, "that's sort of an important feature (K) that's run through (K) all my activism is the need for ongoing analysis and understanding of what is going on in the world today at every juncture (K) and at every turning point (K) in the campaigns and movements and to then tie all that in (K) together with an analysis and perspective (V) of how to confront (K) those challenges brought up (K) by those issues and take that information out there (K) into the campaigns". Key-Huik, then, engages in largely kinesthetic process, with a small amount of olfactory/gustatory engagement (which is the rarest of the modalities), very little in the way of visual engagement and virtually nothing of the auditory. He speaks of his activism in terms of movement; his first impetus is the frustration of a "tail end" where he can find no way to move forward. He understands himself as a builder, an excavator or archaeologist exploring foundations, someone engaged in tying things together.

8. Immediately afterwards, he goes over the same material again. He speaks of going through the "grind of university studies (K) which sort of turns in on itself, after a certain point (K) ... It goes beyond (K) simply ... a sense of individual enlightenment (V) or a sense of self-purpose...you want to understand the world because you went through X and Y experiences (K) and you need to understand the motor forces (K) behind (K) those experiences ... study in and of itself that just reached a bit of a dead-end (K) ... And I did look (V) at doing further studies ... I did just want to get out of there (K) because to me it was just a self-enclosed world of its own (K) that didn't seem to be using that information usefully beyond its own confines (K)". What motivates this social activist, in an NLP context, is overwhelmingly the need for movement instead of stasis. "I had already read a fair bit of Marxist literature by then but wasn't very clear (V) on the actual practical activity side (K) of Marxism; much more on the analysis, and when I came into direct contact (K) with the socialist movement...But as I came into more direct activity and joined and became active, it was just like a breath of fresh air, (O/G) it really was". A little later, he goes over the same process once again: "it suddenly opened (K) a whole new perspective (V) on the world to me; it really did, it was like a breath of fresh air (O/G). Just to see it (V) come into activity (K), talking to fellow activists and having it explained to me the actual connection, (K) that interface (K) between theory and activity and then actually just getting into it and getting the sleeves rolled up and going" (K). Interestingly, the perspective that he speaks of is being "suddenly opened". This is no static perspective (V), which would be a stable element of his process of social activism; rather, what he values is the K "opening" opposite to his favourite K activity of tying together. If everything were successfully tied together in his engagement with social activism, perhaps he would find himself in another dead end, a self-enclosed world of its own where breaths of fresh air are no longer possible.

9. He goes on to expand on the metaphor of Marxism as "key to explaining and understanding the world ... And that key was unlocked to me when I actually became active in the movement and that was the breath of fresh air, that whole moral, historical, I

don't know, that sense of how you can actually - how any of us can actually - get involved and do something to turn ideas into reality (K) ... It just clicked (A) for want of a better way of putting it (he is not at home with the auditory metaphor). But it all just sort of clicked and fell into place (K) ... and you could just see (V) - it made sense to me".

10. After Key-Huik reflects upon his happiness as a social activist, the interviewer asks him to discuss how he remains happy when so many others feel stressed by social injustices. Key-Huik responds: "When you ... approaching (K) these sorts of big problems and big issues of society as a Marxist ... for us it's understanding the world as it is, staring it in the face without any really rose-coloured glasses (V), any spin on it (K) that for us [pause] without putting any spin on it (K) in order for us to feel better (K) about how we look at the world (V)". Key-Huik's language is once again full of metaphors of visual and kinesthetic change, "putting any spin on it", not putting on the rose-coloured glasses. He concludes a long and thoughtful response by commenting on those who don't have "that understanding of the world, that dynamic (K) historical perspective (K) on how the world can and does change, then I think you're more likely to be trapped (K) in this ... and when you then look at (V) your relationship between yourself as an individual and with this big bad world, you're much more likely to be caught up in a static, unchanging understanding (K) or notion of the world around you".

11. There is much more material in this interview that could be scrutinised in a similar way, including Key-Huik's understanding of himself as a drop in an ever-changing ocean and of activists of sometimes taking steps forward and sometimes taking steps backwards. Key-Huik's strategy is one of noticing kinesthetically whether his world is changing/in motion/open or static/constricted/closed, then checking visually, then taking action. It could perhaps be argued that Key-Huik's strong preference for a K process of change derives from Marxist understandings and valuing of social and political change and from social activism's commitment to changing the world. A close scrutiny of our other interviews, however, suggests otherwise; none of our other subjects made use of the same K/V/K sequence when reflecting on their experience as social activists. Rather, Key-Huik has a strategy predicated upon change understood kinaesthetically and himself as an agent of change: such a strategy serves to reinforce his congruity as an activist every time it is employed.

12. Another of our respondents, Andrew, employs a strategy involving a kinesthetic element, but this time predicated mainly on external input rather than himself as an agent of change. He comes over in the interview as something of a lost soul. It is evident from Andrew's interview that his preferred modality, as with Key-Huik, is the kinesthetic. His most frequent phrase is "I feel" or "I felt". He uses such expressions as "stick my head in the sand" and "put an idea in my head", "let me just start rambling" and "not beat about the bush". His second most preferred modality is the visual, including "a vision", "I look back on in retrospect" and "things that we ... would expect to see", while like Key-Huik he uses very few auditory terms to describe himself and his process of social activism.

13. Andrew's interview is very long and disjointed (we have omitted many of his ramblings, that is, his digressions, his ums and ers and repetitions), punctuated by long pauses which do not appear to help his overall coherence. His account of himself as a social activist is nevertheless rich in information from which an NLP model of his typical process can be discerned. He informs the interviewer repeatedly of the pattern which he not only uses to shape the course of his life but also physically acts out, starting with his first day at university. Here he was completely uncertain which subjects to enrol in, "and I was sort of going round (K), asking everybody everything (A) [pause] and I ended up hanging out (K) for quite some time on the table of the Arts Union ... now I basically came along [pause] and basically asked them (A) how do I fill in this form...and ended up sitting down and just talking to them" at which point two Resistance members approached him with a socialist journal and said (AExternal - as distinct from AInternal self-talk) "do you know you can have a look (V)...this sort of jelled in with the idea (K) ...".

14. To extract Andrew's strategy from this hesitant communication, it seems that he relies in this instance on firstly walking around (K), then finding someone to ask (A) so that they can tell him (AE), then they show him (V) and finally it jells (K) and he joins Resistance. The sequence K/A/AE/V/K means that he is operating at start and finish from his favourite modality, but that the intermediate processes are not so likely to be under his conscious control. It seems just coincidental that he happens to wander towards the Arts Union table; had he walked a different way, he might have signed up for quite different subjects and joined a different group altogether. He begins in lostness and uncertainty, and gains resolution when things come together ("jell"). In the strategy's intermediate step he is being

directed by external influences, firstly what people say to him (AE), then what they show him (V) until his K sense tells him that he is no longer lost and confused. In order to make a decision or to make sense of the world, Andrew relies very strongly on input from the external world through a particular sequence of modalities. This is a significantly different process from that of Key-Huik, who is not at all reliant on what he is told or shown and who takes charge in a dynamic way of how he looks at things.

15. Andrew's second account of a decision he made to become involved in social activism involves his decision to become a member of the Democratic Socialist Party. Again he starts with no clear intention of joining this group - in fact he intends to go to a different Australian city until "I was asked, do you want to go to the DSP school? (AE)...I think back in retrospect that I sort of could see (V)" and then his ideas "consolidated (K)" to take this course of action. Again there is a sense of making a decision but the process is fairly haphazard. Someone happens to say something to him to set him in a certain way of thinking, then he "sort of could see" and finally his kinesthetic sense tells him that he is "jelling" or "consolidated" into a certain course of action. From an NLP perspective, this account, like his previous one, can be understood in terms of Andrew's preferred modality. He wanders about, and in this state he can be influenced strongly by what is said to him, then by what he sees, both of which are less conscious modalities, until he finally senses a change within himself kinesthetically towards order and coherence. (This means that Andrew would be particularly vulnerable to leading questions in an interview; in this interview he was, by his own admission, "rambling" but the interviewer was of course careful not to introduce leading questions, and he did not move towards greater coherence).

16. Andrew's third example occurs when he is telling the interviewer about wanting to go "down another track (K)" in his life, and that he "feels" that everything he is doing is irrelevant. Again he is uncertain, even lost, mentally if not physically wandering about in some confusion. Yet "something still calls me to action (AE)", in this instance something said by the historian, Humphrey McQueen, at the Socialist Alliance conference, "but to me that just struck such a chord (AE)" and "that's exactly the same wavelength as I'm on (either A or V)... how sad it is to look at people the way they are (V), you feel that people are so messed around (K)". This run through of Andrew's strategy vividly demonstrates his lostness at the start and the influence of what he hears, but this time what he sees does not lead to consolidation or jelling. Rather, his kinesthetic sense of confusion and lostness is reinforced. Relying on AE/V does not guarantee Andrew the sense of consolidation that he values from his social activism; in contrast, Key-Huik's kinesthetic and visual strategy, internally played through, keeps reinforcing both the coherence of his world view and the happiness that he receives from social activism.

17. Towards the end of his interview, Andrew speaks of his misery about other people's casual cruelty towards him when he is selling socialist newspapers and more generally towards strangers in public places such as the bus. He tells the interviewer how he "feels (K)" about the issue, "squaring up (K) that confidence in people and the totally vicious and brutal things people will say, that you hear people say (AE), like I mean ... refugees should be shot ... you'd see (V) much less of that it in progressive activist, you know, you'd see none of that (V) ... I like the strong friendships [that he enjoys with others in the movement] just [pause] having those sorts of boundaries [pause] collapse (K)". Once more he starts in kinesthetic mode, trying to "square up" his beliefs with what he hears and clearly failing. He is also very vulnerable to what he hears on the street or in the bus, and has no way of dealing with it directly. Instead he shifts to quite a different context for his consoling (V) evidence. The fact that his socialist friends behave differently has no power to integrate, consolidate or square up his understanding of human nature in general; because he is suffering from what Bandler and Grinder term incongruity (*Structure of Magic 2* : 31) as his input modalities, the auditory and visual, remain in conflict. At the mercy of what he happens to hear and be shown, Andrew has no internal strategy to resolve such incongruity. This is in contrast to our next respondent, Janet, who is able to come gracefully to terms with disappointments in her town planning activist campaigns. The most curious phrase he uses in this section of the interview is his comment that close friendship to him means a "collapse" of "boundaries", terminology which has analogies with his earlier "jell" and "consolidate". But a collapse of boundaries is not the most useful of outcomes for Andrew, because again and again, according to his account of his life, he finds himself in situations where he badly needs boundaries: which subjects should he enrol in at university, for instance, or how to process the distressing things he hears on the streets. A strategy that culminates in a collapse of boundaries is very likely to render him vulnerable all over again.

18. Andrew tells a second story of "what made me become a socialist" about the occasion when he was singing at a folk club and someone said to him (AE), "Would you like to meet Brian [a folk singer whom Andrew greatly admired]". Brian and Andrew had a long conversation and it turned out that Brian "had previously been Trotskyist ... then what he said was (AE) ... if you look at what these mass demonstrations in Eastern Europe want (V)" - again Andrew is being shown what to look at - "and that put an idea in my head (K)". Once again the process begins quite haphazardly with meeting a folk singer who happens to be a Trotskyist, who then proceeds to tell and show. This is in NLP terms potentially how Andrew is likely to make every important decision in his life. It is tempting to attribute the confused, meandering progress of Andrew's interview to the lack of show and tell leading questions on the part of the interviewer, who thus refuses to initiate Andrew's habitual process. Andrew's process begins to operate whenever he happens to meet someone who gives him strong verbal directives (Shoot the refugees! Enrol in these subjects! Read this!) and he then sees something confirmatory, leading to a collapse of boundaries that renders him vulnerable to the next onset of confusion; for Andrew, being lost is all too similar to being found.

19. Janet, on the other hand, displays both fluency and succinctness in her account of her history and family heritage of social activism. She begins with an account of discovering how good she is at public speaking, after her father "told her about his father ... I'd spoken to the public lecture theatre ... and one person said to me that ... it was the best speech he'd heard. So, and that gave me encouragement, you know, um, that I could get it across and have everybody in the palm of your hand really. And that is a seductive thing I suppose. You see you know that you could influence people ... You see a tear in the eye or people laugh". This account can be analysed in NLP terms, as a very different sequence from that of the previous respondent, Andrew. Janet's experience begins with what she is told (AE), leading to her speaking (A) and being validated by what she hears (AE), then with a kinesthetic response of knowing that she could "get it across" and "have everybody in the palm of your hand (K)", and that is confirmed by what she "sees". All these experiences are congruent and reinforce an AE/A/AE/K/V sequence.

20. She talks about another specific experience some twenty years later when a cousin told her about the Women's Electoral Lobby and asked for some support in interviewing politicians. Janet "asked a question and really floored the candidate". This is an AE/A/AE/K sequence.

21. Her most recent example of public involvement comes with her objection to a building proposal. "People asked me, would I write an objection, and I did. (AE) ... and people were telling us all the time, we didn't want the shops and why (AE) and writing against it and going to the meeting with the advisory panel ... That was a good feeling, (K) that you were trusted and recognised, I suppose ... and you were recognised and there would just be the smile when you passed (V)". This provides, in a much longer time frame, the same sequence of hearing encouragement, then (not elaborated upon in the interview) the experience of speaking before the panel, then hearing positive feedback which is confirmed by what she sees. When Janet reflects upon community support, she does it in these terms: "The community was supportive. They'd say, just tell me what you want to do ... just tell us what, what we'll say". (AE) After she presents her request, for people to write their objections to the building proposal, "Each person would come from a different angle (K) ... I mean they came to it from ... you saw that everybody's point of view was very valid (V)".

22. Perhaps her most interesting reflections come at the point in the interview when she speaks of a time when the environmentalists lost their case. "And to me that is rewarding, that you have done everything you can, and then you let it go (K). And we all let it go (K). Sometimes I had to realise, I mean, I've been a sort of activist in my thinking that I could carry something through with others (K) or make a difference. But sometimes there's a limit and you can't ... sometimes things turn out the way you want them without you having to jump up and down (K)... And it's shown me what's valuable. Like, you don't know white unless you've seen black (V)". This is directly comparable to Andrew's sad and angry response to the rude folk on the bus or on the street. Andrew's strategy leaves him vulnerable to his feelings (K) for a long time afterwards. Janet's reinforcing strategies leave her in calm and happiness, able to integrate failure into an overall strategy of success. Whatever the outcome of an individual fight, Janet can still find affirmation in kinesthetic and visual terms.

23. She goes on to run through her pattern one more time. First "we had the call (AE)"; then she thought of town planners being "so impressed (V) ... because of the arguments

and we have really put in such a lot, such a lot of re-vegetation, and it's not even what you see here (V)". She sums up by saying "it is so good to know, to know and to feel, what we loved about living here", and as the NLP analysis shows, she knows and feels and loves by way of all three major modalities reinforcing one another.

24. Now Janet has decided not to take an active part in local social activism. She describes a current environmental issue that she has heard of (AE), "but I'm pleased ... that other people are carrying the flag and that I am playing my part but further away (K). I see myself (V) as having a different role. I see my example (V) as having been important and I am happy about that". She runs through her pattern one more time as the interview draws to a close, when she speaks of a conversation in which she learned that a mutual acquaintance was unhappy. What Janet heard (AE) prompted her to compare her happiness with his: "And he, he worked very hard and was a tower of strength (K), especially in all the practical matters, but he wasn't being rewarded as I have. I was interested that David said he was feeling down (K) ... I wanted my children to see their mother (V) not just as a housewife, I suppose".

25. Janet explicitly states in this interview that her own perspective on her behaviour is informed by Jungian theory, in particular the Jungian theory of personality types, and she mentions her conscious attempts to develop the more hidden and unconscious sides of her personality. She speaks with pride of what she has achieved with these efforts, moving from shyness to a position of influence, power and respect in her community. From an NLP perspective, what is evident is the strong reinforcement that her social activism strategy has always provided for her, whether or not an individual issue was successfully fought for. What matters to Janet, from an NLP perspective, is the delightful reassurance and approbation given to her each time she operates as an activist, in what she hears from others and the audible effects of what she says (A), then in the pleasurable feelings she experiences (V) and finally in what she sees ((V).

26. There are several conclusions that can be drawn from this analysis. The first is to do with the applicability of NLP methodology, which can apply with equal cogency to such material as eye-witness reports and diaries (as in Dilts' study) and semi-structured interview, as in our study. In the interviews we have analysed for this paper, the strategies enlisted by respondents are revealed over and over again, in the minute particulars of a specific situation and in broad overviews. This amply illustrates NLP's power to elicit patterns of behaviour in a field of social science inquiry just as much as in Dilts' fields of the arts and technological invention.

27. Secondly, it is apparent within the range of our sample that NLP modality-based strategies among social activists are individual, even when different respondents are loyal to the same party's platform. To confirm this finding, we would need to deliver the results of many more interviews, a project beyond the scope of this paper, though we already have plenty of material from the other interviews undertaken with the remainder of our sample. We would also need to obtain and analyse interviews by subjects who are less reflective than our respondents and determine whether social activists in this category also have very different activist strategies as NLP would predict. Nonetheless, the points of difference among the three respondents considered here do provide preliminary encouragement for such a finding.

28. Another way in which we hope to extend our research is by exploring the thought patterns of social activists who are in Dilts' genius category, that is, who have been extraordinarily influential in their field over an extended period. In this way we hope to extend Dilts' own studies in *Strategies of Genius* (though there are specific issues that would need resolving in terms of professional speech-writing: how far would our more exalted sample actually be speaking their own words?). There is scope here for a comparative study between genius and non-genius, a project from which Dilts holds back in his book: what, if any, is the relationship between strategies of genius in the field of social activism and the level of success achieved by the non-genius in this field. Is it really in the elegance of these strategies that genius lies, or, as Dilts suggests in *Strategies of Genius*, might it be that geniuses display a particular tendency to associate across modalities? We hope to test these hypotheses in the next part of our research.

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Jeremy and Alice are collaborating on a long-term study of happiness.

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