



HOW TO

EARN A LIVING

WITH

NLP





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Dear colleague and friend,

This list of practical guidelines is directed to NLP practitioners, therapists, coaches and consultants, who wish to start a private practice and work full-time in our field. Being a private practitioner is an exciting and interesting profession. If your passion is helping people, you've done the right career choice. I've been a full time therapist for 26 years straight, and I'm loving every minute of it.

My main purpose here is to contradict the naysayers, that say it's impossible to work full time as a private practitioner. While they're sitting on the sidelines, pretending to know better and looking for excuses, you can be out there, excelling. I speak only out of experience. Working for yourself, while earning a full time living with NLP, is not complicated: make a decision, take consistent action, learn and adapt and keep moving forward. What you'll find next is a thorough list of advice and suggested guidelines, some of what I gave my students when I was running certification programs. Read it through, mark the ones that speak to you and then go ahead, implement and execute.

I root for you and your success.

Best of luck,

Shlomo Vaknin, C.Ht
Master Trainer of NLP

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Guidelines

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into smaller manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one." -Mark Twain

What business are you stepping into? Therapy? Personal coaching? Corporate management coaching? Counseling? Get a clear image in your mind. How is it going to look like, sound like and feel like, when you reach your desired outcome? What will you see, hear and feel, as you step into your private practice every morning? Make the image bigger and brighter and richer in tone and color, and place it on your mental screen, right in front of you, somewhere above eye level.

Now consider your current reality. How is it right now, in comparison with your desired outcome image? How does it look like, sound like and feel like, right in this moment?

Starting and running a private practice is not a problem to be solved. There really aren't any guaranteed formulas for success. Keep reminding this idea to yourself as you take little steps on your journey toward lucrative self-employment. **It's an adventure.** It's a dynamic learning process. The experience is, quite honestly, simply awesome when you realize you're getting well-paid for doing something you are passionate about. It feels, then, less like work and more like following a calling.

Your first priority is to become congruent. In other words, to be single minded about who you are and what you value most, and eliminate the gap between knowing and doing. You become congruent by continuously seeking self knowledge. You enhance your self knowledge by periodically monitoring and analyzing your own behavior, and the verbal and non-verbal cues you observe in other people as they react to you, inside and outside the session room.

It is NOT easy to start any kind of business, let alone a private practice. There are no secrets or magical formulas that will drive a swarm of clients to your new business on its opening day. You might see some benefits right from the start, or it may take a few months. For the next 365 mornings, install this thought in your mind, as soon as you wake up: "it's time to hustle, I'm ready."

Keep track of your negative self-talk. "I don't know where to begin so I'm stuck", "I have big dreams but little ambition", "nobody needs my services", "I do not have the funds to begin", "I procrastinate", "I have low self-esteem", "my family doesn't approve", "I have a 9 to midnight low paying job", "I doubt myself", "I'm on disability", "I don't own a car", "I'm in serious debt", "my mother in law lives with us" and so on and so on. Add the word "but" to the end of each excuse and declare how you plan to overcome it.

Although it's difficult in the beginning, and may remain difficult for a long while, there's a silver lining here. Being self-employed is far more creative (and feels substantially better) than the typical rat-race, grinding your teeth, keeping your head low, working 9 to 5, while boosting someone else's profitability. **In order to reap the rewards you simply have to keep showing up** and work through the challenges.

Your practice is a reflection of your identity and your passions, as well as the unique expertise you have to offer the marketplace. You passed your chosen training programs, you've mastered your craft, you literally have within reach all the advanced communication tools, all the specialized knowledge, all the exclusive access to inner resources, and still you're worried you'd be struggling to make ends meet?! Make a list of all your worries and concerns and tackle them one by one.

Building a successful private practice is like running a marathon. If your heart and soul are truly connected with your outcome, it gives you energy to train every day, to run an extra mile, to move past random obstacles, to overcome pain and adversity and then you reach the finish line and celebrate your success. A day later you go back out there to run again.

You're venturing out on your own, and **you're fully responsible for the results** you get. You're about to make all the decisions, you will do most of the work, you will work through and solve the numerous inevitable problems, you will also take the heat when things go wrong, and you will definitely bask in the glory when things go right.

It will be exciting and scary, but remember this principle and follow it religiously: **just keep on moving**. Do not freeze and continually see any NLP tool you're aware of, to eliminate self-doubt, fear and lethargy.

Still, you remain flexible. You keep your focus on your well-formed outcomes, you take disciplined action, you evaluate the results and you change your actions accordingly.

Prepare yourself. This journey is highly rewarding, but rough and may not fit every person. There are many emotional ups and downs, and whatever pink glasses you put on as you take your first steps on this rocky road, they'll fall off pretty quickly. Many new practitioners jump head first without careful planning, and a hefty percentage of them either go out of business within the first year or bankrupt. Planning is not the same as reading business books or watching lectures about marketing systems. There are plenty of good ideas out there, but their worth is zero without thoughtful and persistent day-by-day implementation.

Your primary objective is to become the kind of person who is able to achieve success as a private practitioner, and then relentlessly follow a strategic well thought out action plan.

Life is chaotic to all of us, and no man (or woman) is excluded from this burden. Sometimes you find happiness, and sometimes sorrows, and most of the time - challenges! That's nature. That's reality. **Instead of wishing for less challenges, go for the home run.** Tame the dragons within and jump head first into the unknown. Yes, it's easy to say and extremely difficult to pull off. No, it's not a reason to stay stuck in mediocrity.

Follow your passion, BUT... delegate the rest. That's where many new entrepreneurs get it wrong. They believe that all they have to do is what they are most passionate about, and success will follow, even though they're ignoring the other essential cogs in the system. Yes, go ahead and become completely absorbed in your passion - help people and often! But delegate the other essentials (administration, customer service, accounting, correspondences, legal matters, finances, etc.) to competent experts.

Do not attempt to go 'solo'. Being a private practitioner does not mean you're completely alone in your enterprise. What is now known as a 'Solopreneur' is, in reality, a myth. You will not succeed without the support of more than a few competent individuals. Forget about 'bootstrapping' and 'self made' wonder stories. Their purpose is to sell you something; all you have to notice is how it's a marketing scheme. If you look close enough, you'll notice that behind every authentic success story there's a very long line of hard working helpers. The two most essential helpers you will need right from the start, involved in every move and decision you make, are a business attorney and a state licensed accountant.

What are your personal reasons for starting a new business? Be honest. Are you trying to prove yourself to someone else, or to the person you were in the past? Are you jobless or in debt, and you think this could be a quick scheme to riches? Do you have other personal problems, and you believe that you can find relief by focusing on other people's needs? Do you feel it's the right time for you to start a new venture? What makes you so sure of it?

Did you come up with the idea to start a business or it started someone else's encouragement? The source of your newly found motivation to become completely independent is important. If you recognize that it has originated externally, from outside of your mental sphere, you might lose traction as you run into the plenty of inevitable challenges in business. **Figure out your own personal reasons**, so that you can rely on that inner vision to guide you through anxiety, stress and other emotional storms.

Are you committed to spending as much time and effort as it takes to make your business successful? **Are you able to afford spending 45-60 hours per week, focused entirely on work?** How will you communicate this commitment to family and friends?

How will you finance your business? Do you have enough money to get started? Are you willing to invest your own money as well as ask others to invest in your business venture? **Consider the exact amounts you'd be able to spend without risking bankruptcy** or sabotaging your relationship with your spouse and children.

Even if you are the sole owner of the enterprise, the people who care about you are always a part of your invaluable support team. Did you share your business aspirations with trustworthy relatives or friends? What did they say about it? Who among them is most suitable to be **your unofficial therapist**, when times are tough and you can use a friendly, nonjudgmental and compassionate talk?

Just because you're the boss doesn't mean you don't have anyone to answer to. **You will have many more bosses than you ever did as an employee** - your clients, whether private or corporate. Your attorney and your accountant, whose jobs are to prevent you taking unnecessary risks. Your family, who wants you to succeed and provide for them and at the same time want you available and approachable. It's up to you to stay tuned into the concerns and requirements of each boss and figure out how to juggle your many roles if you want to continue to be retained. How will you handle each?

If you're in North America, you will need to be able to comfortably spend up to \$35,000 on your private practice, during its first year in business. It includes office space rent, electricity, cleaning and management fees, stationeries and supplies, legal and accounting services, extra furniture, and more surprises you can never expect ahead of time. Having this amount available to you, wether in cash or as a potential loan, can help you focus on the long term outcomes of your business and not on the lack of earnings in the beginning. It takes time to build a solid foundation, and you'd better **keep existential anxieties about money out of your way** for as long as humanly possible.

What will your start-up costs be? Research the office rental prices in the area of your business, consider the prices of office furniture, supplies, parking, water and electricity bills, cleaning services, etc. You can consider yourself lucky if you break even at the end of your first year in business. Are you ready to get comfortable with NOT receiving a regular paycheck, ever again?

Sometimes the road will be easy, and sometimes hard to navigate. **Prepare yourself for the emotional ups and downs of a new start-up.** It may take 3 to 5 years before your private practice 'settles' and is infused with repeating and referred clients. Until that golden moment arrives, however, you will need to keep on showing up even when times are tough.

You read about all those kids who jump head first into business and sell their start up for many (many!) millions of dollars. Or you see a news story on TV about a stay at home mom of 6, who opened a restaurant and now she has a successful franchise in 20 states... Do you imagine your new business becoming an instant success? Describe that image if you do.

What you don't hear or see often enough are the kids who go bankrupt and the wannabe chefs that can't pay their mortgage and lose their house when very few patrons visit their new restaurant. Unless you are lucky or backed by venture capital, you are not going to get rich quickly. It takes 3 to 5 years to build a profitable, long-standing and viable private practice. In your 1st year in business, you might make less than 80 percent of your most recent salary. Can you afford it without counting on instant success?

By years 3 to 5, your bottom line (profits) can begin to grow substantially. How will you handle this probable long period of time, from now to then, emotionally?

Imagine: it's the 1st year anniversary of your new private practice. Take a good look around. What's the **worst case scenario?**

Imagine: it's the 1st year anniversary of your new private practice. Take a good look around. What's the **best case scenario**?

Are you willing to be flexible enough, to switch directions mid-course in order to meet changing market demands? The way you set up your practice in the beginning is bound to morph many times during your, hopefully, long and prosperous career. Whether it's four months, three years or two decades down the road, planning, evaluations and re-adjustments are always required. You have to put it in stone: **change is a crucial requirement for survival.** It will take place whether you agree with the process, and adapt, or not. It's true in the wild savanna and it's just as true in your business. Are you prepared to bounce back and learn from failures or temporary setbacks?

Are you optimistic, persistent, and passionate about your future work as a full time NLP practitioner? **Write the associations that come to your mind when you think about your future.** Get a clear understanding of both the positive and negative associations, that your mind comes up with, so you'll know what inner struggles are awaiting you.

Align yourself with the best version of your personality (the collective parts that support your desired outcomes). Every person is unique, and we each have our own individual strengths and weaknesses. What you have learned so far in life is important, no matter how hard or easy that lesson was, or its context. What are your 5 strongest personal skills? (math, negotiation, empathy, etc.) In which ways can these skills be useful in your new business? What may be considered as the greatest accomplishment in your life, so far?

What's guiding you? What are your personal goals for the next 5 to 10 years? What are your short term outcomes for your new business? (establish a legal entity, find an office, etc.) What are your long term outcomes for the business? (automate marketing, hire staff, become a known leader in NLP, etc.) How do your business aspirations fit in with your personal goals for the next 5 to 10 years?

Evaluate your self, as objectively as you can, against the following **traits of the successful NLP practitioner**: Self-confident, driven and determined, follows a clear positive vision for life and business, flexible and adaptable, able to make fast and smart decisions, outcomes oriented, multitasker and highly creative. What examples from your past and present can you give, that demonstrate you do share these traits?

To maximize your chances to succeed, **analyze your strengths and weaknesses** as well as your personal characteristics. To be in business, long-term, you need determination, persistence, creativity, flexibility, and a willingness to climb on a steep learning curve. How do you plan to further develop and strengthen these characteristics? Create a self-therapy plan and list all the tools you know, that can help you realizing it. It's a never ending journey of self-discovery, gradual corrections and celebration of achievements.

I would like to suggest a radical new frame of mind: **leave your self-esteem out of your business future plans.** "If only I was more confident...", "I need to believe in myself before I am allowed to succeed" - rubbish! History is filled with extraordinary successful people, whose low self-esteem didn't ruin their chances. Take a look at Albert Einstein and Mariah Carey, as two examples, and Google others. Your self-esteem will naturally grow as a result of your consistent disciplined action, but you have no reason to use it as an excuse for not doing the required work. If you call yourself a professional, then you do what real professionals do, and you perform your best regardless of your low self-esteem or negative internal voice.

You become a successful private practitioner using the same strategy a musical prodigy employs to be invited to play in Carnegie Hall. Practice! Practice! And?! Practice! The more private interventions you take, the more group sessions you lead, the more keynote speeches you give, the more coaching phone calls you make - the more you practice your actual work, the nearer you get to be invited to your (metaphorical) "Carnegie Hall".

Practice means failing a lot and often. Let this concept sink in, and remind yourself daily that failure is the only way to get better. I would even suggest here another radical idea: don't sugarcoat your failures. Failure does mean feedback, as the popular NLP presupposition goes, but - objectively speaking - a failure is in fact a failure and it still stings and hurts. Acknowledge each failure, stare it right in the face, feel the burn and start collecting them enthusiastically. Remind yourself, that one day you have a rich collection of a thousand failures, and each has contributed to creating a highly successful business.

During this upcoming year (and perhaps even longer) you will most likely spend 60 to 80 hours per week getting your business up and running. Moreover, **your work hours are likely to get even longer as you gain traction.** Beyond paid sessions with clients, you will be marketing your services, running your business, shuffling paperwork, solving problems, and developing new products and services. How will you remind yourself to stay realistic and down to earth? How are you going to avoid spreading too thin, quitting a project half way through or wasting too much energy and time on minor details?

Always have someone you are accountable to.

Accountability helps you stay on track, focus, keep your stride, overcome obstacles, get encouragement and support to build your business. If your spouse believes in your venture idea, ask him/her to be your accountability partner. If not, ask a close friend and schedule a weekly or monthly meeting to discuss your progress:

How much should you charge for your services? I currently ask for \$175 per session, and that's because the demand for a 1 on 1 appointment is quite high in recent years and I choose to spend less time in the office and more time with my new grandkids. It's common practice to charge \$50-\$85 per session when you're just starting out.

Set fixed prices for your services and adjust them once or twice per year, if needed. Better if you do not negotiate your fees, and always state them clearly, assertively and without an apologetic tone. **Charge the highest realistic session fees you can**, based on your area and clientele.

If anyone asks you why your fees are high, or how come you charge more than someone else's, simply reply, "**you get what you pay for, do you not?**", and then nod your head and smile.

People will be eager to argue with you and try get a better deal. That's natural and should be expected. Treat these moments wisely. You don't want to come across as needy or desperate for clients (even if deep inside you might be so). **You are a therapist, a counselor or a coach, definitely not a sleekly salesman or a saleswoman.**

“What if it doesn’t work?”, you might be asked by a qualified prospect. Your response may be, “and how might we find that out?”, and keep a gentle eye contact (smile, don’t move or talk for a few seconds and focus on the space between that person’s eyes). In most cases, their reply will be, “we have to try”, to which you will nod, open your calendar and ask them whether they wish to come on Tuesday at 10am or Thursday at 5pm.

ABC. Always Be Closing. Even though it's a famous sales mantra, the idea here is that you want to keep the direct interaction with prospective clients to the minimum. You cut short the preliminary conversations. The talking should be done in a session, not over the phone, at the grocery shop or during a business conference. **"Let's talk about it in our session"** is a phrase I recited thousands of times in plenty of occasions. If they need to be persuaded to invest in a session, then they're not ready for a change in their future.

Beware of the "energy piranhas". You will recognize these confused individuals, if you pay attention, as they roam around and attempt to manipulate you into telling them everything you know. They usually say things like "Yes, but how exactly do you..." or "it's impossible, how can you even...". They will never be your clients, their sole purpose is to figure out if they can take your place in your successful career. If you fall in their trap, it will end with you being exhausted and out of balance, so beware.

Random strangers will routinely attempt to squeeze a free session out of you, in the most awkward and inappropriate times or places. They will often “challenge” you to prove your worth, make grand promises to fill your schedule with rich clients (or their entire extended family) and even follow you around asking the same questions over and over again. You can disarm them by simply saying, “before I am allowed to talk to you any further we have to sign a confidentiality agreement, so here’s my card, you can call my secretary tomorrow and schedule our session. Have a nice day!”, and turn around.

Some people aren't ready yet to change their habits or self sabotaging beliefs. Their secondary gains have a high value that justifies the incongruity. When you recognize this lack in willingness, it is best if you say, "when the time comes for you to make it happen, I'll be there for you, right in that moment."

Be careful not to excuse yourself when talking about your fees. You might have this common knee-jerk reaction many new practitioners experience, and say that you have to charge more because you offer a guarantee. That's a mental trap you don't really want prospective clients to be mangled in. You see, if you have to charge more in order to offer a 100% guarantee, it means that there are many instances in which your intervention doesn't succeed, and so the ones that do have to cost more, in order for you to stay in business.

Never take normal lunch breaks. Most employees take their mandatory break somewhere between 12pm and 3pm. A good amount of my paying clients prefer to come to their sessions on their lunch breaks. Since you are, in fact, your own boss, you can schedule your lunch to any hour you wish. You only need to ask yourself if it's more important to you to get that discounted business lunch in the nearby diner, or take in a couple of clients and go home earlier. That "sacrifice" is just another real life reason to keep your fees high and never negotiate them.

How will customers pay you— ahead of the session, at the end of the session or - as common with corporate clients - every 30 days, 60 days, 90 days, or on some other basis? You should figure it out in advance, and set it as an office rule. Sure, make adjustments periodically and be flexible in special cases, but keep it crystal clear to prospects ahead of payment time so that (again) you will not have to bargain or negotiate your prices, ever.

How many new clients, per quarter, do you need to serve to break even? One corporate client? 25 private clients, who each refers 2 new clients this year? 50 regular participants in weekly group sessions? 250 attendees in a weekend seminar? 10,000 readers who buy your latest book?

You are not selling fresh produce in the open market! Try not to get tempted to compete by offering discounts, gifts, vouchers, affiliate programs or Black Friday deals. Keep your reputation high and exclusive. An hour of your undivided attention and qualified skillful intervention is not the same as a pack of potatoes or a Thai massage.

The other side of charging the highest possible fees and never working for free is your guarantee. You make and keep a trustworthy brand name for yourself by offering a **100% guarantee for your services**. It attracts people to your practice, and it encourages your clients to be more cooperative and congruent, which in turn makes it more likely that the session will be successful.

NLP is known as a **one-stop therapy** methodology. That's your most attractive selling proposition and the main reason clients will be drawn to your practice. It's also the common sense reason for not offering a "free initial consultation".

Each session must begin with establishing a single well-formed outcome, that is stated in the positive and is realistically achievable within the timeframe of that session. Go through the well-defined outcome pattern and **agree with your client on the expected results.** This becomes the outline of the session, as well as a self-fulfilling prophecy which can be used to further guide and direct the client's mind via the Milton model techniques. You can download and use our well-defined outcome (updated link in the Resources & Downloads section at the end of this book).

Do you plan to waste your money on advertising?

In some municipalities you are not even allowed to advertise therapeutic services, but even if there's no limitation, it's not a useful strategy because the return on investment is very poor or nonexistent. The mental frame you want to create for your private practice, in your potential clients' minds, is that of a specialized, highly in demand, and effective therapy.

How to attract new clients? The dual, simultaneous and continuous, strategies I implement in my own private practice, are networking and pro-bono.

There's a crucial difference between pro-bono and the marketing scheme known as "free consultation": the **pro-bono sessions are reserved to people who are in dire need for your help, but can't afford it.** Pro-bono is your continuous unbiased and generous contribution to your local community. Such important work is highly beneficial for establishing a reliable and trustworthy reputation for yourself, for getting the attention of influencers in your community, for getting profitable pre-sold referrals and of course - it's good for your soul.

If you want to stay in business for a long time, do not give your time for free to individuals who can afford your fees. **“Free initial consultation” is not a valuable strategy.** It’s a popular marketing ‘advice’, and yet a really bad one! Clients will come to you only because they have good reasons to believe you have the skills to help them get results fast, and they’re willing to exchange value (cash) for that service. It is definitely in your best interest to not let random bored freebies seeking strangers to waste your precious time. Falling to the trap, that free sessions may lead to good business, will cost you, in the long run, a whole lot more than you can currently imagine.

Here's the right way to work for free: Volunteer a lot. **The universe has a weird way of reciprocity when you give unconditionally.** For some odd reason, every time I went out of my comfort zone to help others who can't afford my fees, I received multiple benefits. A new corporate client hires me because he heard good things about me the last time his company donated money to the women shelter I volunteered at. Or the head psychologist of the police department, who sent me a request for a proposal to train their officers, and later on I discovered that she was referred to me by her cousin, who was teaching in a southeastern school for delinquent youth, where I taught the kids to focus and channel their uncontrollable anger to positive outcomes.

Starting 35 years ago, **20% of my weekly schedule is devoted to pro-bono work.** The Pareto principle works for me very well, on a daily basis. More than half of my regular (paying) clients are referred, in many different ways, by sources related to my pro-bono projects. I never ever had to advertise, print flyers, pay for media exposure or do any kind of promotion. I was never on social media and I still don't have a website for my practice. There's no need for any marketing scheme or plans.

There's no reason to add more digital waste to the over-crowded online space. I stay as far away as humanly possible from Facebook, Twitter and like minded 'services'. These are not only time-wasters, but life-suckers. They thrive on your insecurities, and their bottom line is directly connected to your fleeting attention span. If you want to remain congruent, keep your focus and attention out of the digital world and deeper within objective - analog - reality.

Networking is simple: you initiate contact and build **win-win business relationships** with other professionals in your area, who may profit by referring clients to your practice. If you want to stand out of the crowd, craft a personal message to each new contact, print in on high quality stationery paper, stuff it nicely in a big envelope and send it via snail mail instead of email. In my first year in business, I've mailed 1,255 letters using this exact process. The ROI (return on investment) was phenomenal. If I was starting out today, at a time when everyone has email accounts (and therefore high intolerance to unsolicited spam) - I'd send the real letters, because the impact is even more powerful. When was the last time you received a personal letter by mail, that wasn't a bill or a flyer?

Take dentists for example. If a patient is overtly anxious, the dentist will have a hard time doing his work and may have to give up without getting paid. They lose time and money because of anxiety ridden patients. NLP can save their bottom line. You can offer them your services as a drop by therapist, when they know ahead of time that their patient will be 'problematic'. Later on, each professional on your list of happy dentists will be an attendant in your specialized seminar on anxiety management for dentists.

My first office was in West Hollywood. In that area, it's very likely, that if you ask a young person what they do for a living, they'll reply, "I'm an actor/actress", and most will work in part time jobs until they get their big break. What's common to every single one of them is performance anxiety, most evident when they get a chance to prove themselves in an important audition. My practice was filled to the brims with wannabe future celebs, and some actually made it to star on TV shows and in movies. **I didn't get these many new clients by advertising or offering free sessions.** All I did was to send a simple and short letter to every booking agent and talent manager in California, the professionals who make a profit when their signed client gets a part in a production. Briefly I described how I can help the young and promising talent to be in top shape for the audition, and that it's a guaranteed service. I had to hire a receptionist to handle the amount of phone calls and my schedule was overbooked for months ahead.

Who are your potential clients? What do you already know about them (common challenges, lifestyle, gender and age range, income level)?

What do your potential clients both need and want? Use the 2nd perceptual position and imagine yourself as a new client. What bothers you the most? What's your 'itch'? What's most important to you? In which areas of your life do you feel the need to improve? What kind of guidance and learning styles are more attractive to you? How will you know, that the therapist or coach you chose, is right for you?

You will need to incorporate. Establish an LLC. If you're a sole-proprietor, you and the business are one, as far as the law and tax authorities are concerned. A Limited Liability Corporation is a legal entity, that exists in separation from its owners. You want that separation, it's an essential layer of protection for your personal finances and assets (even if you do not have assets yet). Your personal and your practice's financial management must go on separate routes. There are also many benefit to an LLC, which your accountant can explain to you in details.

Don't pretend to be a master of all trades. Leave the numbers to the experts who deal with them all day long. **You will need a (really) good accountant.** Interview at least a few, and ask around for recommendations. A good accountant will guide you to make the smart decisions about your private and business financials. They will also attempt to prevent you from taking unnecessary risks and lower the amount of tax you're paying, among plenty of other benefits. Your sister in law and her local college bookkeeping evening course? It will cost you more than the fees you supposedly save, and I write it out of personal experience only. So keep business and family separated and get a really good professional, who gets paid to save you a whole lot more in return.

You will need an insurance policy that covers general liability, professional liability, fire and hazards (if you rent an office) and workers' compensation (if you hire a staff). The cost of a solid insurance policy is minimal, compared to the consequences of not having one. Whether you like this idea or not, in real life you sometimes give service to people who look for any excuse to file a law suit to try and make a quick buck. Don't be naive. Protect yourself and your business.

You will need a lawyer. As you gain traction and make a name for yourself, there will be people out there who will try to sabotage your success or con you in various ways. It happens in the NLP world as well, and it has happened to me more than a few times in my long career. Several years ago, a relatively obscured NLP trainer (one of those who sell programs by making magical claims without any base in reality) sent me an email with a demand to receive a free copy of each one of my books, because he thinks (in other words, has a paranoid fantasy) that I use his materials - and / or, that I use his copyrighted "manner of expression"... I also couldn't understand how the last one is possible, but I refused by politely replying that I produce and write my own materials from real life experience as a therapist, and that he may go to the nearest library to read any of my books free of charge. I received a threatening email next, and have forwarded it to my lawyer. The end of this silly interaction was his 'donation' of \$6500 in legal fees to my business lawyer. This is bound to happen to you as well, so get a good lawyer and agree with him or her on a retainer, so they'll be on call right when you need them.

Sign a **confidentiality agreement** with each and every new client. It will give them a sense of confidence and may shorten the session time they need to open up to you and trust you. Ask your lawyer to provide you with a short and simple confidentiality agreement, which declares that you will never (as you should never even think to!) share any details about the client or the session with anyone else, at any point in time.

Consult your attorney about the legal requirements for confidentiality and the exceptions, as the local law in your country or state may include different details. Where I practice, confidentiality between therapist and client is voided (and the therapist must involve the authorities) **in cases of child abuse or a high risk for suicide** (which affects in drastic ways not only the suicidal person, but their family and innocent bystanders, potentially even children, that unwillingly become witnesses to the act). Again, your attorney should be the source for the valid information that will protect you legally.

What benefits will you offer to your future clients?
When you make a list of your services, **consider the problems you will be solving for your future clients**, instead of the categories everyone else is using. "One hour consultation: \$85" - compare that to "One session to overcome any fear or phobia: \$85".

Design your office like a minimalist. Keep the amount of distractions in your session room to the minimum possible. You want your client to be attuned to and entirely focused on your instructions, and not distracted by your trophies, pile of papers, or the random memorabilia you have collected over the years.

You might think, that if you offer one-session therapy, how can success be sustained? How will you get repeated clients? It's quite simple: **satisfied clients return, quite often, and they bring with them new clients.** You help a client to get over his fear of flying in one session, and he books another session because he is also fed up with his nail biting obsession. Then, he sends his wife, so that you can explain to her how to communicate better so her husband will 'read her mind' as she wishes... You might laugh, but this is a regular cycle in my practice for many years. More than 75% of my clients referred other clients to my practice. Every new referred client also referred other clients. If you're good and you do your best every time, you will never have enough blocks in your schedule to fulfill the demand.

What do you want to be known for? How do you want to be talked (or gossiped) about, personally and through the means of your private practice? In which field of business do you want to reach a status of an accomplished expert?

Starting a business is very demanding and includes long working hours, financial investments, and, of course, no regular paycheck. It is not something to go into lightly. If your only attitude is to "Try It Out," it's bound to fail. Write, in your own words, a new promise and explain it to yourself: "**I'm not going to 'try'**, I'm going to DO whatever it takes and keep going even when the going gets tough"... because it definitely will.

There will be more.

On my last note here, what can I wish you?

May the best of your past be the worst of your future, and may God bless you, and your loved ones, with a lifetime of health and prosperity and fulfillment and happiness. Now close the book and **go do your important work.**

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Take care and thank you for reading.