

Learning to ski through NLP

Frustrated by her lack of progress after years of skiing, **Dr Lisa Silver** tried some modern coaching methods

Einstein is often quoted as saying that 'insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result'. It was this that forced me to look at my skiing.

Anyone who skis year after year with no improvement will know the frustration felt when some pesky child zooms past or, more irritatingly, other skiers languidly shimmy by looking so much better than you do.

Losing confidence

As a family, we ski for two or three weeks a year in La Plagne. The alpine resort is huge and is connected by a 200-person lift called the Vanoise Express with Les Arcs. There is not a slope that we don't know.

However, over the past few years there are steadily more steep and narrow pistes that I will not tackle, preferring to take less challenging routes.

More than 30 years ago, I was taught to ski by the traditional method of trailing behind an instructor trying to emulate his every move. No attempt was made to explain what I should do with my legs or arms, so the ingrained mistakes have been compounded and have prevented any progression.

I wanted personal tuition, no crowds, no gung-ho attitudes — something that would boost my confidence and teach me the techniques that would specifically improve my skiing.

After some time searching the web I found the 'Bobski' site and knew I had discovered an organisation speaking my language. It promised that my skiing would be improved rapidly through 'Olympic-level coaching techniques' and that, even after one week, I would be able to ski better.

I knew that ski-school did not work. I had tried it occasionally over the years and our children

Skiing with Bobski

The cost Bob's time, the hotel and the lift pass came to £500. The only extras were ski hire and flights.

For more information, visit: www.bobski.com

had refused to continue after the first few attempts.

But the Bobski website emphasised the fact that I would have a coach and that he would help me understand how to ski and to then take responsibility for it.

Bob Trueman is an internationally qualified skiing coach. He uses techniques based on neuro-linguistic programming and sports psychology, which are now the fundamentals with all top sportsmen and women.

Unpicking bad habits

The aim is to get you to unpick those habits that have prevented any improvement.

A group of six of us met for the first time at Geneva airport in late October. All we had been asked to do was to be in Geneva by mid-afternoon. I immediately liked this rather adult approach to travel.

The group consisted of a couple in their 50s who had only three weeks of skiing experience, an astro-physicist, a housewife, an optician and me.

One of the real surprises for me was to ski in October. Tignes is an all-year resort where skiing can take place on the glacier. There are plenty of runs so, at this time of the year, the resort is incredibly pleasant due to the lack of crowds.

Bob spent the first evening going through the intricacies of how a ski works, why the boot is placed where it is, what all the various markings were on a ski,



Ski coach Bob Trueman: uses techniques based on neuro-linguistic programming and sports psychology

and the correct way the binding should be tightened.

The purpose of this was to give us more control and a deeper understanding of what we were about to do.

Our apartment looked straight up to the glacier we were going to ski the next day and there was some apprehension as we set off next morning.

The fact that the group had a wide range of skiing experience was not important. The purpose of the week was to take us all back to the very beginning.

We spent a long time visualising what was happening in

our boots, how to use our toes, how to lean in the right way and, probably the most important of all, relaxing.

Visualising the slope

We might spend half an hour going down a slope that might normally have taken a matter of moments but the important thing was to really understand how we should be skiing.

Visualising the slope ahead was something I had never tried before. At one point I sat on a chairlift with a national ski-jumper and he ratified everything we were being taught.

I experienced moments of utter joy when suddenly a move felt completely different to any skiing I had ever done before.

I found that it was virtually impossible to return to skiing as I had previously done. If I lapsed, instantly it felt wrong.

One week is not going to change the habits of a lifetime, but I now know what the fundamentals are and can work on these when we go skiing later on in the season.

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