A perceptive communicator is intuitive and insightful in the way they communicate. They pick up on cues from their conversational partners and adapt their communication style to fit their context. As a perceptive communicator, you can make sure that you get your message across accurately and sensitively. You can code your message in language that appeals to your listener. You can also prevent and de-escalate conflicts. There are potential career benefits to becoming a perceptive communicator, too. For example, numerous studies show that people who have advanced level communication skills are promoted more quickly and often than their peers.

So how do you boost your skills in this area? First, you need to understand how communication works. After all, human interaction is a complex process. It involves your brain *encoding* and *decoding* information in a variety of ways. Your senses, your mind and your verbal skills are all used when you are communicating.

Savvy leaders realise that their perceptions of the world can never accurately match reality. Instead of seeing the real world you are looking at a map created by your neurology. The contents of that map are influenced by your experiences, personal history and beliefs. These filter your processing of the world and help you create an internal representation (or map) of what is real for you. This is important when you're attempting to understand others. It is also important when asking others to understand you.

Wyatt Woodsmall (in Dimmick, 1995:22) lists some principles which underpin the NLP model of communication.

1. Communication is based on perception
2. Perceptions are organised and structured within a brief period of time
3. People use patterns to organise their perceptions
4. People have a need to be consistent
5. People are more easily influenced by others they perceive as similar to themselves
6. People are more influenced by people they like
7. People are influenced by the way a message is structured and delivered
8. People use information other than facts in making decisions
9. People make decisions by emotions (unconscious mind) and validate them with logic (conscious mind)
10. People more easily retain information which is anchored