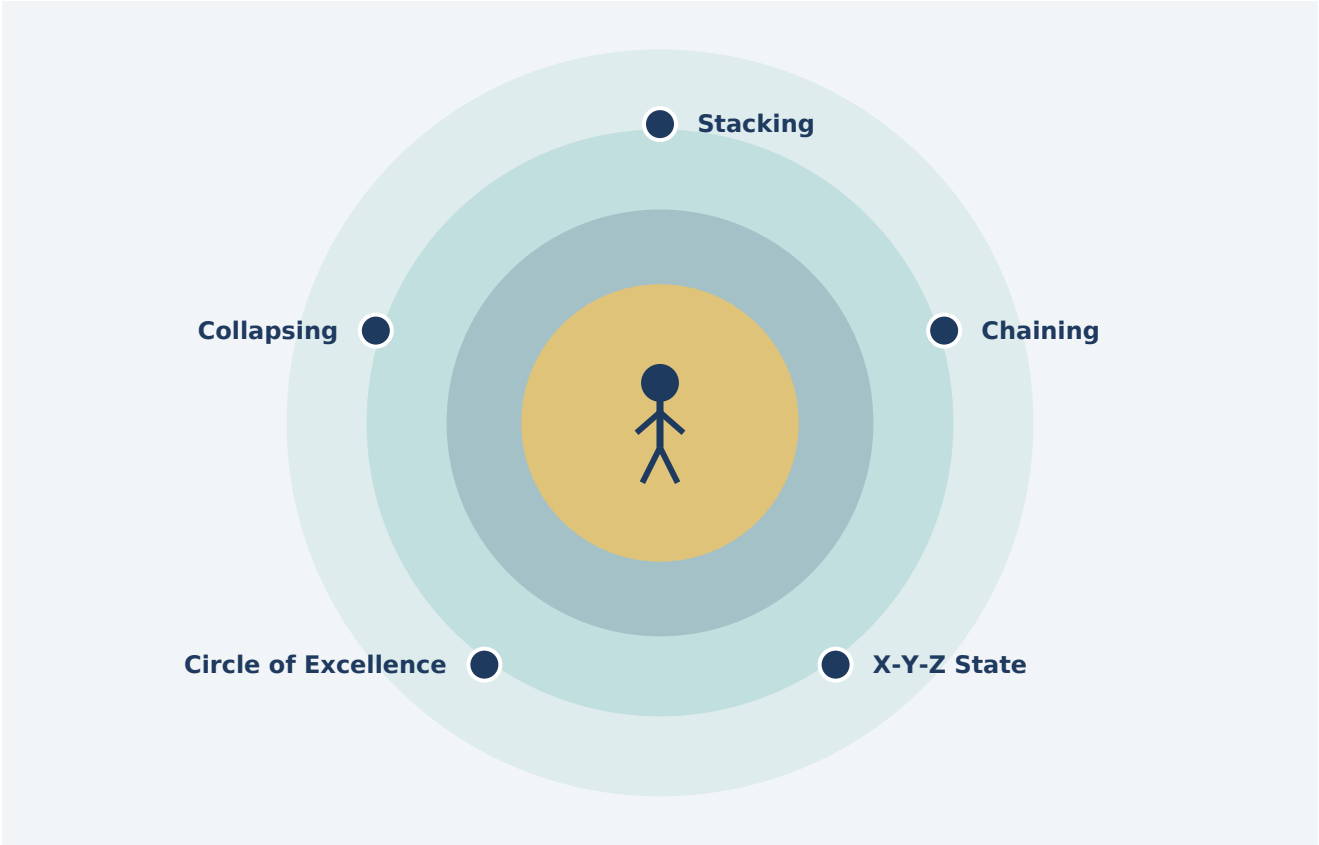
NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING · VISUAL SUMMARY

Advanced Anchoring & Resource States

Stacking · Collapsing · Circle of Excellence · X-Y-Z State
plus Chaining, Sliding, Spatial Anchors and Future Pacing



A practitioner's field guide — how each technique works, step-by-step procedures, diagrams, troubleshooting and a practice plan.

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SECTION 01

Anchoring Refresher

An anchor is any stimulus that has become linked to an internal state, so that experiencing the stimulus brings the state back — automatically and usually outside conscious awareness.

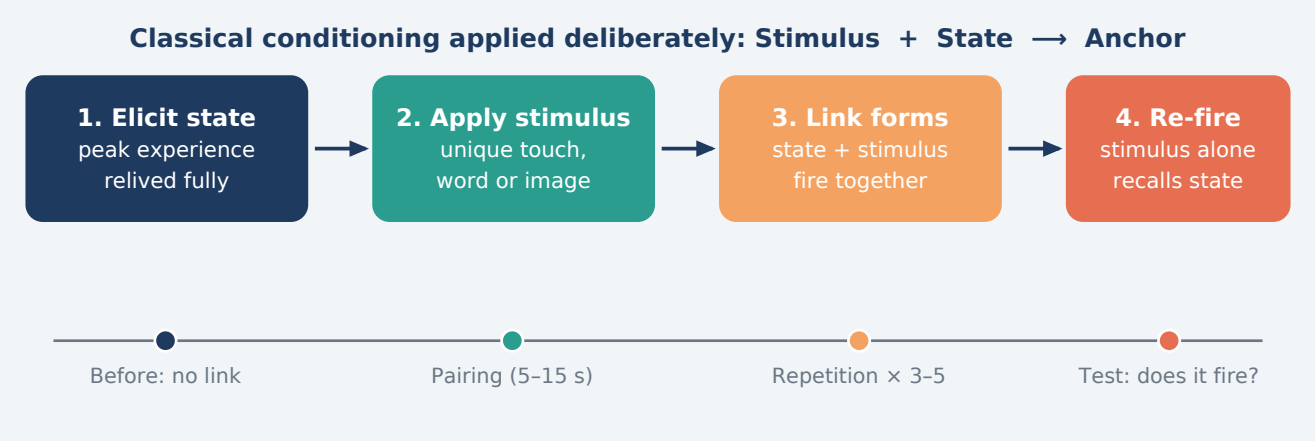


Figure 1 — How an anchor forms

Anchoring is NLP's practical use of **stimulus–response conditioning**. Anchors form naturally all the time: a song that takes you back to a summer, the smell of a hospital corridor, a parent's particular tone of voice. Advanced anchoring is about creating these links **on purpose**, combining them, and dismantling unhelpful ones.

Anchor types by sensory channel

Channel	Examples of triggers	Strengths	Watch out for
Kinesthetic (touch)	Knuckle press, ear-lobe squeeze, fist, thumb–finger circle	Precise, discreet, easy to replicate	Pressure and location must match exactly
Visual	Colour, symbol, a mental image, a hand gesture	Portable, can be imagined anywhere	Can blur with everyday sights
Auditory	Key word, phrase, tone of voice, a song	Self-talk anchors work silently	Tone must be consistent; common words are 'contaminated'
Spatial	A spot on the floor, a chair, a stage position	Used by trainers and in Circle of Excellence	Location-specific unless imagined
Olfactory / gustatory	Scent, taste	Very strong emotional recall	Hard to deploy on demand

Key principle

The best anchors combine channels — e.g. a touch + a word + an image. Multi-sensory anchors fire more reliably than single-channel ones.

SECTION 02

The Five Keys to a Strong Anchor

Every advanced technique in this guide rests on these fundamentals. Most anchors that 'don't work' fail on one of these five.

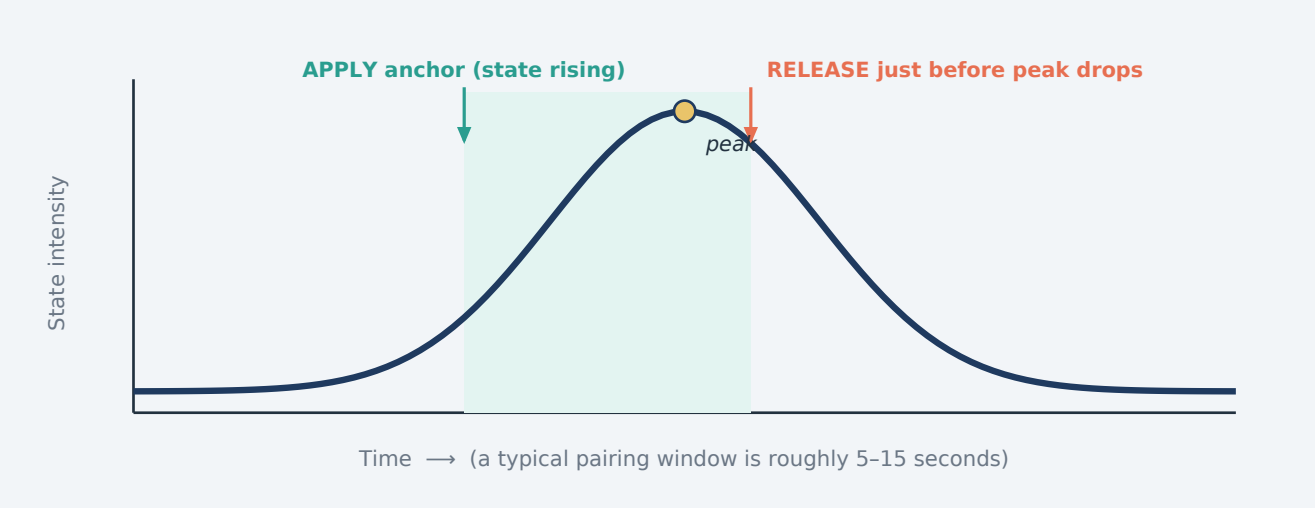


Figure 2 — Timing: apply the anchor as the state rises, release before it fades

Key	What it means	Practical test
1. Intensity	The state must be strong and fully associated — seen through your own eyes, felt in the body.	Self-rating of 7/10 or above before anchoring
2. Timing	Apply as the state builds and hold through the peak; release before it declines.	Anchor held roughly 5–15 seconds
3. Uniqueness	The trigger must be distinctive, not something that happens by accident in daily life.	Would you do this gesture/word casually? If yes, change it
4. Replicability	You must be able to reproduce the exact trigger — same place, same pressure, same tone.	Fire it five times identically
5. Repetition / purity	Repeat with fresh examples of the same state; keep it 'clean' of other states.	3–5 pairings; break state between each

Breaking state

Between each pairing, deliberately interrupt the state: ask an unrelated question ("What's your phone number backwards?"), stand up, look around. This prevents one pairing from bleeding into the next and lets you test cleanly.

SECTION 03

Resource States

A resource state is any internal state — emotional, physical or mental — that helps you respond more effectively in a given context.

Think of resource states as items in a personal library. Advanced anchoring is the skill of **retrieving** the right items, **combining** them and making them **available** exactly where they are needed. A useful library contains states across several families:

Family	Example states	Typical use contexts
Confidence	Certainty, self-belief, 'I can do this', pride	Presentations, interviews, negotiations
Calm	Relaxation, groundedness, patience, peace	Conflict, stress, exam nerves, sleep
Energy	Motivation, enthusiasm, excitement, drive	Starting tasks, sport, sales calls
Focus	Concentration, clarity, flow, absorption	Deep work, study, performance
Connection	Warmth, being loved, compassion, rapport	Relationships, coaching, parenting
Openness	Curiosity, playfulness, wonder, creativity	Learning, brainstorming, new situations
Resilience	Determination, courage, persistence	Setbacks, difficult conversations

Associated vs dissociated

ASSOCIATED
Seeing through your own eyes, hearing what you heard, feeling the feelings in your body. **Use for anchoring resource states** — this produces the intensity you need.

DISSOCIATED
Watching yourself from the outside, like a film. Feelings are muted. **Use when reviewing difficult memories** and in the meta-position.

Exercise — build your library

List three specific memories for each of five families. For each memory note what you saw, heard and felt. These become raw material for stacking, Circle of Excellence and X-Y-Z work.

SECTION 04

Accessing & Calibrating States

You cannot anchor a state you have not accessed — and you cannot be sure it was accessed without calibration.

Four ways to access a state

Route	Prompt / language	Best when
Remembered	"Recall a specific time when you felt totally confident… go back there now, see what you saw…"	The person has clear reference experiences
Imagined	"Imagine what it would be like to feel completely calm, even here…"	No clear memory exists
Modelled	"Think of someone who embodies this. Step into their body — how do they stand, breathe?"	The state is new to the person
Current	Notice and anchor a state as it occurs naturally (laughter, excitement)	Self-anchoring in real life

Calibration cues — what to watch for

Signal	Low / unwanted state	High resourceful state
Breathing	Shallow, high in chest, held	Fuller, slower, lower in belly
Skin colour	Pale or blotchy	Warmer, more even colour
Facial muscles	Tight jaw, furrowed brow	Softened, symmetrical, often a slight smile
Posture	Collapsed or rigid	Upright, balanced, open
Voice	Thin, quick or flat	Resonant, steady, more expressive
Eyes	Darting or defocused downward	Steady; pupils may dilate in strong positive states

Elicitation language tips

Use present tense ("you're there now"), slow your voice, and match the state you are eliciting — speak confidently when eliciting confidence, softly when eliciting calm. Ask for a **specific** instance, not a general one. Check: "On a scale of 0–10, how strong is it now?"

SECTION 05

Stacking Anchors — Concept

Stacking places several resource states — or several instances of the same state — onto a single anchor, creating one trigger with combined power.

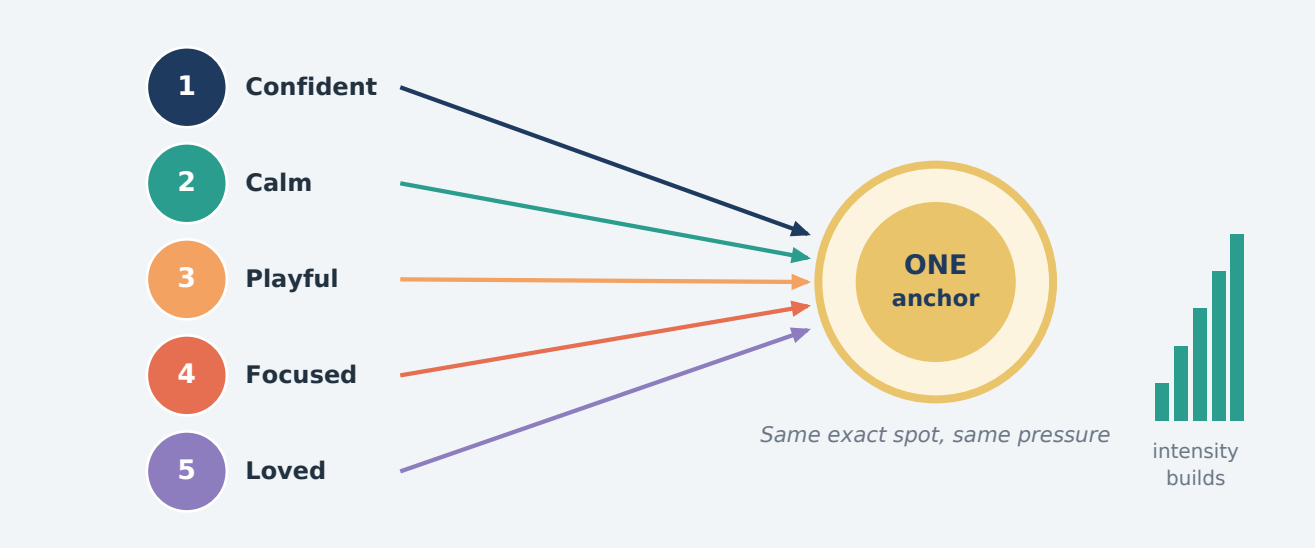


Figure 3 — Five different resource states stacked onto one anchor point

Two forms of stacking

Form	How it works	Result
Same-state stacking	Anchor 3–5 different memories of ONE state (e.g. five confident moments) to the same spot	A deeper, more reliable version of that single state
Multi-state stacking	Anchor different complementary states (confident + calm + playful) to the same spot	A rich, composite resource for a complex situation

Why stacking is powerful

- **Intensity accumulates** — each new pairing strengthens the neural association.
- **Robustness** — if one memory fades, the others still hold the response.
- **Better fit** — real challenges rarely need just one quality; a job interview might need confidence, calm and warmth together.
- **Foundation for other techniques** — the positive anchor in collapsing, the Circle of Excellence and the X-Y-Z state are all built by stacking.

SECTION 06

Stacking Anchors — Procedure

Allow 15–25 minutes. Work with a partner or self-anchor using a precise touch point.

1. **Choose the context** — Identify the situation where you want more resources and ask: 'What states would help me most here?' Select 3–5.
2. **Select the anchor site** — Choose a unique, replicable spot — e.g. the knuckle of the left index finger — and a matching pressure.
3. **Elicit state #1** — Recall a specific, vivid memory. Step fully in. Use VAK prompts until intensity reaches 7+/10.
4. **Anchor at the rise** — Apply the touch as the state builds; hold through the peak; release as it starts to level off.
5. **Break state** — Distract briefly — an unrelated question, a stretch.
6. **Repeat for each state** — Elicit states #2, #3, #4… applying the anchor to exactly the same spot with the same pressure.
7. **Test** — Break state, then fire the anchor alone. Calibrate: do you see the combined physiology return?
8. **Future pace** — "Imagine being in that situation next week. Fire the anchor. Notice how it's different."

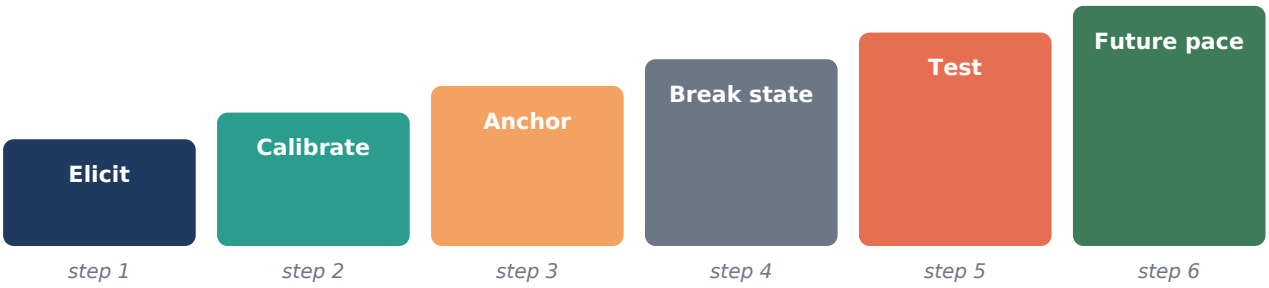


Figure 4 — The universal anchoring sequence used in every technique

Do	Don't
Order states so they flow (calm → confident → energised)	Stack incompatible states (sleepy + highly energised)
Use the same exact pressure and position	Drift your finger or vary pressure
Keep it clean — release if a negative feeling intrudes	Anchor a memory that has mixed feelings

SECTION 07

Collapsing Anchors — Concept

Collapsing fires an unwanted anchor and a stronger resourceful anchor at the same time. The nervous system cannot fully run both, and the old response is weakened or neutralised.

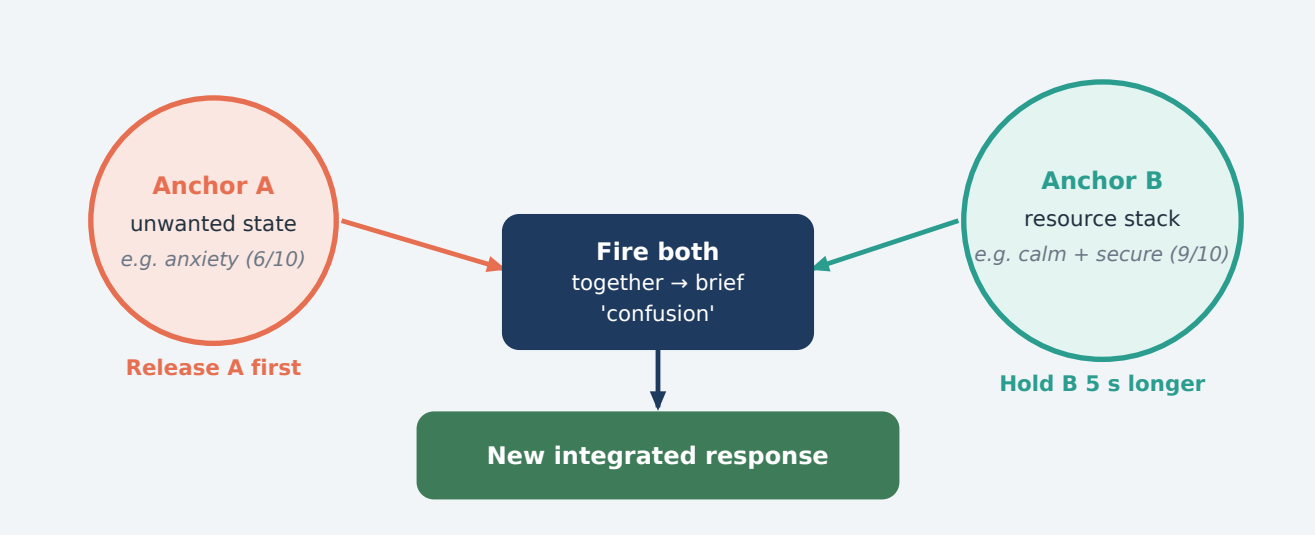


Figure 5 — Two anchors fired together integrate into a new response

The intensity rule

The resourceful anchor must be **stronger** than the unwanted one. That is why the positive side is almost always built by **stacking** several resources. If the negative state is a 6/10, aim for a positive stack of 8–10/10.

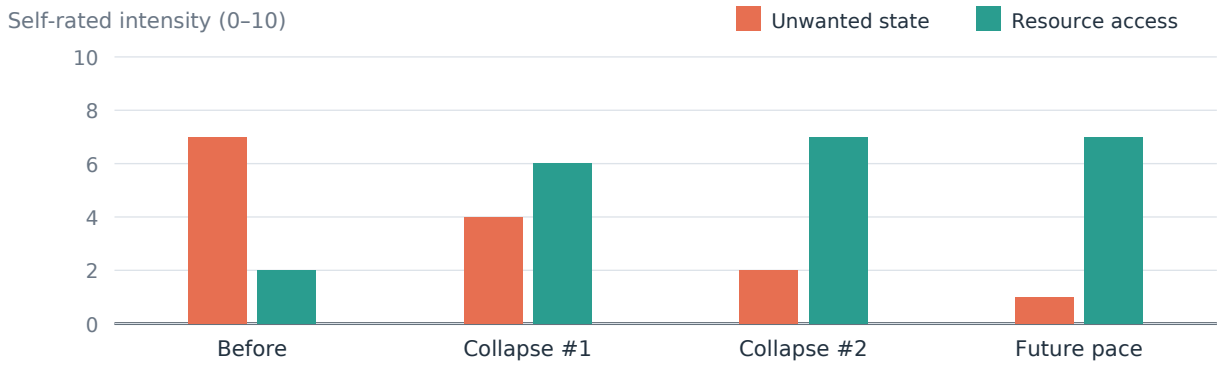


Figure 6 — Illustrative self-ratings across collapse rounds (conceptual, not research data)

Typical applications

Performance nerves, irritation at a specific person's habit, procrastination around a task, mild fear of a situation, a 'stuck' feeling when a certain email arrives. For trauma, phobias or clinical anxiety, refer to a qualified mental-health professional.

SECTION 08

Collapsing Anchors — Procedure

Allow 20–30 minutes. Traditionally uses two touch points — one on each knee or each hand.

1. **Build the positive anchor first** — Stack 3–5 strong resource states on Anchor B (e.g. right knee). Test it until it fires reliably.
2. **Break state** — Bring the person fully back to neutral.
3. **Anchor the unwanted state lightly** — Elicit the problem state at a *moderate* level only (not full intensity) and anchor on A (left knee). Break state immediately.
4. **Fire both together** — Apply A and B simultaneously. Watch for asymmetry, confusion or mixed expressions — this is integration happening.
5. **Release A first** — When the physiology begins to shift toward the resource state, release A.
6. **Hold B** — Keep B on for another 5 seconds or so, letting the resourceful state dominate, then release.
7. **Test** — Break state, then fire A alone. You should see a neutral or resourceful response, not the old one.
8. **Future pace** — "Think of the next time this situation could arise. What's different now?" Repeat the collapse if any residue remains.

Signal during collapse	What it means	Action
Facial asymmetry, blinking, confusion	Two states are integrating	Continue — this is expected
Physiology swings to the problem state	Negative anchor is stronger	Stop, break state, add more resources to B
No visible change	One or both anchors are weak	Re-test each anchor separately
A alone now gives neutral/positive response	Successful collapse	Future pace and check ecology

SECTION 09

Circle of Excellence — Concept

A spatial anchor: you imagine a circle on the floor, load it with your best resource states, then step into it whenever you need them.

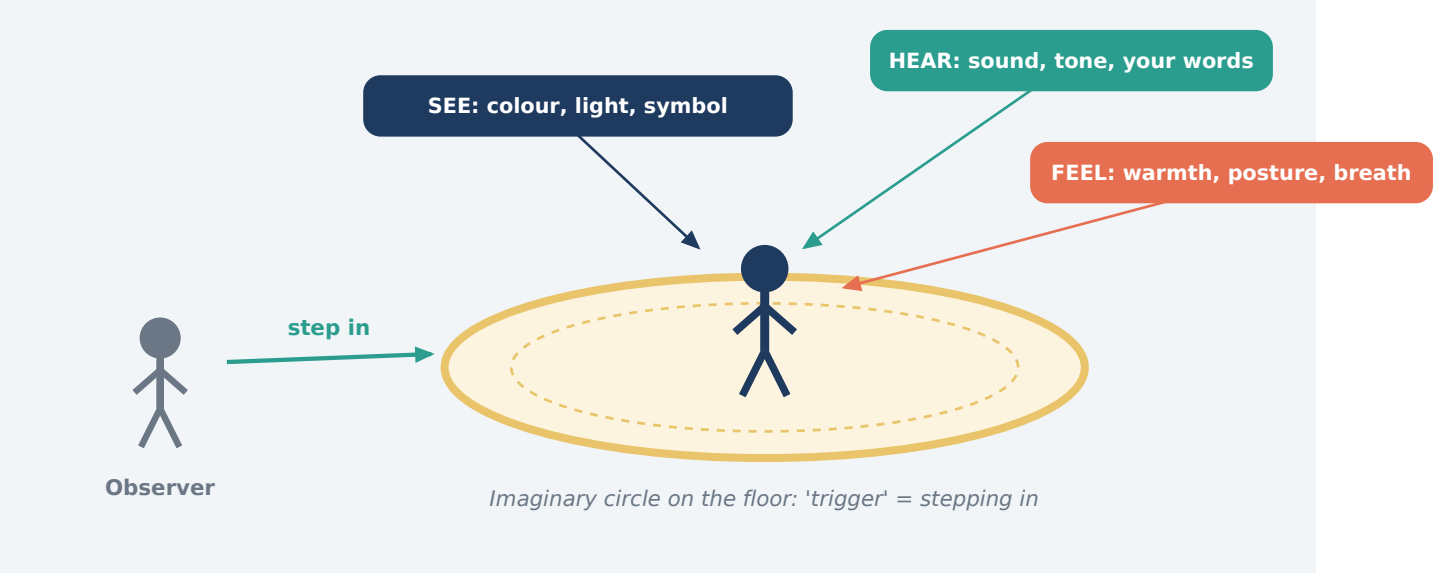


Figure 7 — The circle is a stacked, spatial, multi-sensory anchor

Commonly attributed to John Grinder and Judith DeLozier, the Circle of Excellence is one of NLP's most popular performance techniques. It combines three ideas you already know: **stacking**, **spatial anchoring** and **future pacing**. Because the circle can be imagined anywhere, it becomes portable — you can 'drop' it at a podium, outside a meeting room or on a sports field.

Component	Role in the technique
The circle	A spatial trigger with clear boundary — inside = resourceful, outside = observer
Colour / light / sound	Visual and auditory features that make the anchor multi-sensory and unique
Stepping in	The kinesthetic act that fires the anchor
Stepping out	A built-in 'break state' — you leave the resources in the circle
Picking it up	Some trainers have the person imagine shrinking the circle and carrying it

SECTION 10

Circle of Excellence — Procedure

Allow 15–20 minutes. Standing room needed; a partner helps with calibration and timing.

1. **Create the circle** — Imagine a circle on the floor in front of you, about a metre across. Give it a colour, a texture, perhaps a soft sound.
2. **Choose a resource** — Think of a time you were at your best — confident, resourceful, excellent.
3. **Step in & relive it** — Step into the circle and fully associate into the memory: see, hear and feel it. Notice posture and breathing.
4. **Amplify** — Make the colours brighter, sounds richer, feelings stronger. Let the circle's colour intensify too.
5. **Step out** — Before the state fades, step back out — leave the feelings in the circle. Break state.
6. **Repeat & stack** — Add 2–4 more resources (calm, humour, focus…), each with a step in, amplify and step out.
7. **Test** — From neutral, step into the empty circle. The stacked states should flood back automatically.
8. **Identify the cue** — What happens just before you need these resources? (e.g. hearing your name called.)
9. **Future pace** — Step in while vividly imagining that cue in the future context. Then imagine taking the circle with you.

Variation — the observer partner

A partner stands outside and calls 'step out' the moment they see the state peak. Their outside view is often more accurate than self-assessment, and it teaches calibration to both people.

Real-world moment	Cue to link to the circle
Presentation	Walking to the front; first sight of the audience
Sports performance	Stepping onto the court, the starting whistle
Job interview	Hand on the door handle of the interview room
Difficult call	Seeing the person's name on the screen

SECTION 11

The X-Y-Z State — Concept

A 'designer state' technique: you choose three qualities — X, Y and Z — that together describe exactly how you want to feel, build each one, then blend them into a single named state.

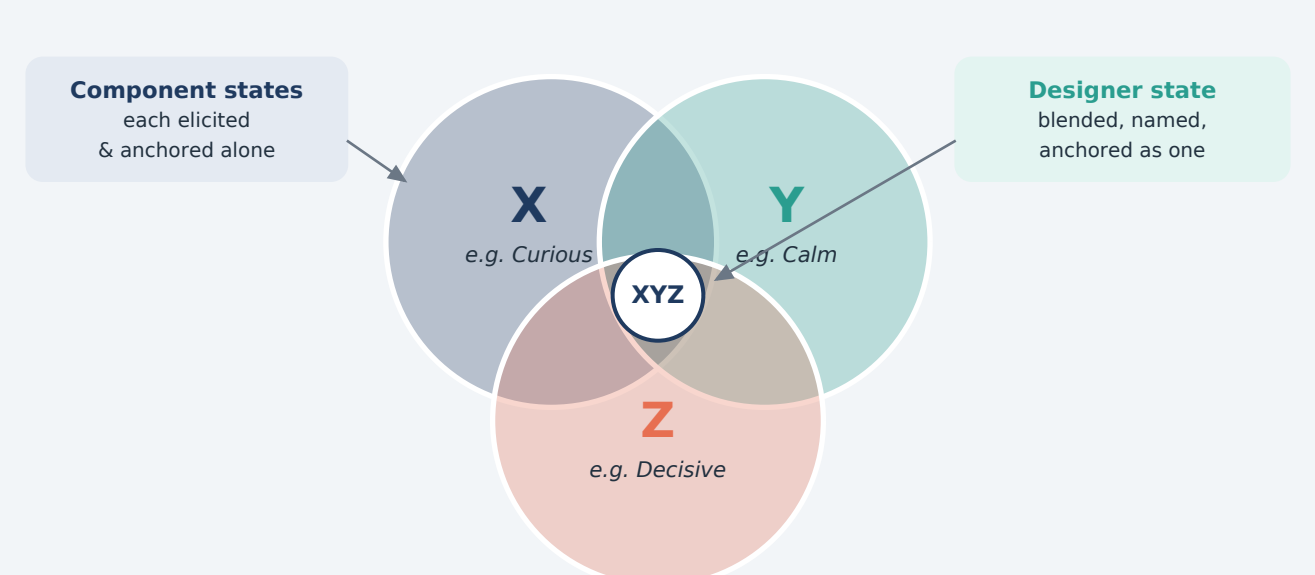


Figure 8 — The XYZ state lives where three component states overlap

Most of us have names for familiar states (happy, nervous), but the state we actually *need* in a demanding situation often has no single word. The X-Y-Z approach treats a state like a recipe: identify the ingredients, prepare each one well, then combine them. It differs from basic stacking in that the blend is given a **new identity** — a name, image or symbol — so it can be accessed as one coherent experience.

Context	X	Y	Z	Name of blend
Difficult negotiation	Calm	Curious	Firm	'Steady oak'
Public speaking	Playful	Grounded	Passionate	'Spotlight warm'
Parenting at bedtime	Patient	Loving	Clear	'Lighthouse'
Creative deep work	Absorbed	Relaxed	Bold	'Blue studio'

Note: 'X-Y-Z state' is used by different trainers with slightly different emphases; the version described here focuses on designing and anchoring a three-part composite state.

SECTION 12

The X-Y-Z State — Procedure & Worksheet

Allow 20–30 minutes. Can be done using touch anchors, spatial anchors (three spots on the floor) or both.

1. **Define the context** — Where exactly do you want this state? Be specific about time, place and people.
2. **Choose X, Y, Z** — Ask: 'If I handled this perfectly, what three qualities would I have?' Choose ones that complement each other.
3. **Anchor X, then Y, then Z** — Elicit each separately to 7+/10, anchoring each to its own spot (e.g. three knuckles or three floor positions).
4. **Blend** — Fire all three together (or walk through the three floor spots into a fourth 'blend' spot). Let them merge.
5. **Name & symbolise** — Give the blend a name, colour, image or gesture. Anchor this new composite to a single trigger.
6. **Test & future pace** — Fire the single trigger from neutral; then rehearse entering the context in that state.

Worksheet

Item	Your answer	Intensity (0–10)
Context		
X quality + memory		
Y quality + memory		
Z quality + memory		
Blend name / symbol		
Final trigger		

Stacking vs X-Y-Z — the difference

Stacking piles resources onto one trigger and lets them mix however they mix. X-Y-Z deliberately **designs** the proportions, tests the blend, and gives it a new identity. Use stacking when you want 'more'; use X-Y-Z when you want a **specific flavour** of state.

SECTION 13

Chaining Anchors (added technique)

When the gap between the stuck state and the desired state is too large to jump in one move, chaining builds a series of stepping-stone anchors that lead from one to the next.

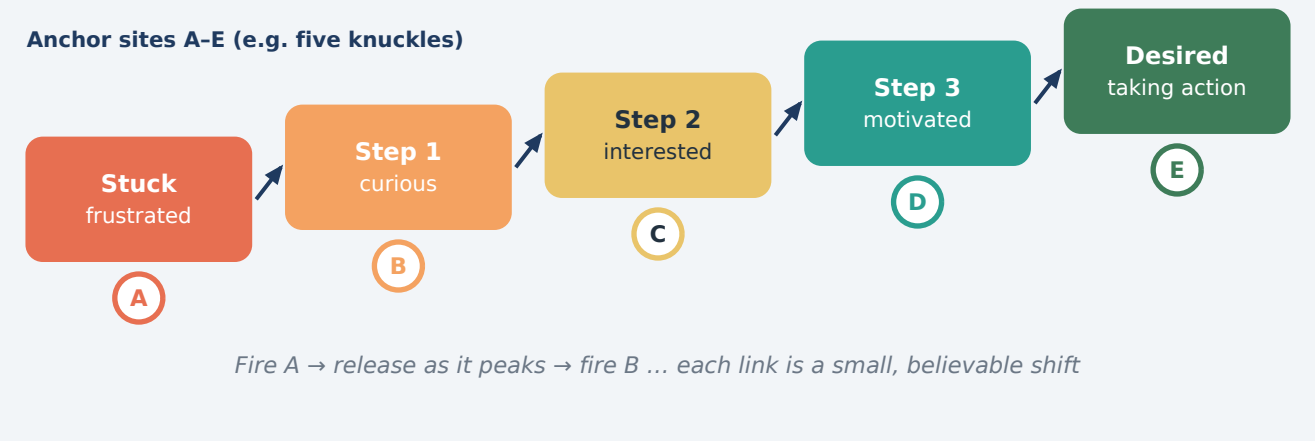


Figure 9 — A chain moves you from stuck to resourceful through intermediate states

Why add chaining?

Collapsing works best when the positive state can overpower the negative one. If someone is deeply frustrated, jumping straight to 'motivated' may feel false and fail. A chain lets each step be a believable, small shift — and once installed, firing the first anchor tends to run the whole sequence.

Procedure

1. **Map the chain** — Pick the start state and the goal, then 2–3 intermediate states. Each step should feel like a natural next move from the one before.
2. **Anchor every state separately** — Use a different site for each (A–E). Test each one.
3. **Link pairs** — Fire A; as it peaks, fire B and release A. Then B → C, and so on.
4. **Run the full chain** — Repeat the whole sequence 3–5 times, faster each time.
5. **Test** — Fire A alone (or put the person in the stuck state) and watch whether they move through to E.

Example chain	A	B	C	D
Procrastination	Bored	Curious	Interested	Motivated
Anger at a colleague	Irritated	Detached	Understanding	Assertive
Pre-exam panic	Anxious	Concerned	Focused	Confident

SECTION 14

Sliding Anchors (added technique)

A sliding anchor encodes not just a state but its intensity, so you can dial a feeling up or down like a dimmer switch.

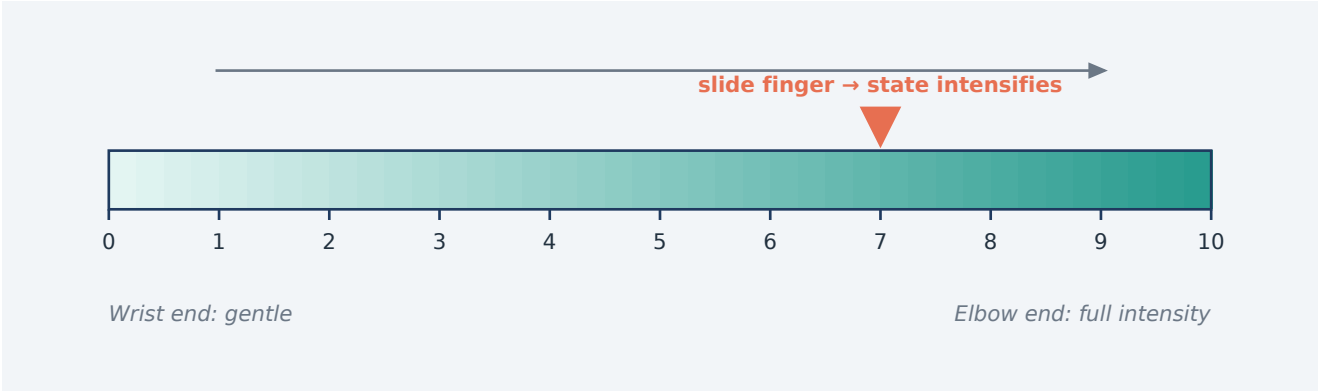


Figure 10 — A sliding anchor along the forearm maps position to intensity

How to build one

1. **Choose a track** — A line you can slide along, such as forearm from wrist to elbow, or along the side of the thigh.
2. **Start low** — Elicit a mild version of the state; touch the start of the track.
3. **Slide as it grows** — As the state intensifies, slide the finger along the track in step with it — the further you go, the stronger it gets.
4. **Lift at the peak** — Lift off at the top of the track exactly as the state peaks.
5. **Repeat & test** — Run 3–5 times. Then test whether stopping half way gives a medium state.

Use case	Why sliding helps
Relaxation for sleep	Lets you deepen calm gradually instead of forcing it
Energy before sport	Dial in just enough arousal — too much hurts performance
Teaching calibration	Partner watches physiology change in proportion to the slide
Reducing a state	A reverse slide can be used to wind down an over-intense feeling

Self-anchoring tip

Sliding anchors are especially useful for self-practice because you control both the slide and the feedback. Pair the slide with a breath — inhale as you slide up, exhale and hold at the peak — to give the anchor a second, built-in channel.

SECTION 15

Spatial Anchors & Future Pacing (added)

Placing states in physical space — along a timeline or in positions on the floor — makes them easy to visit, combine and carry into the future.

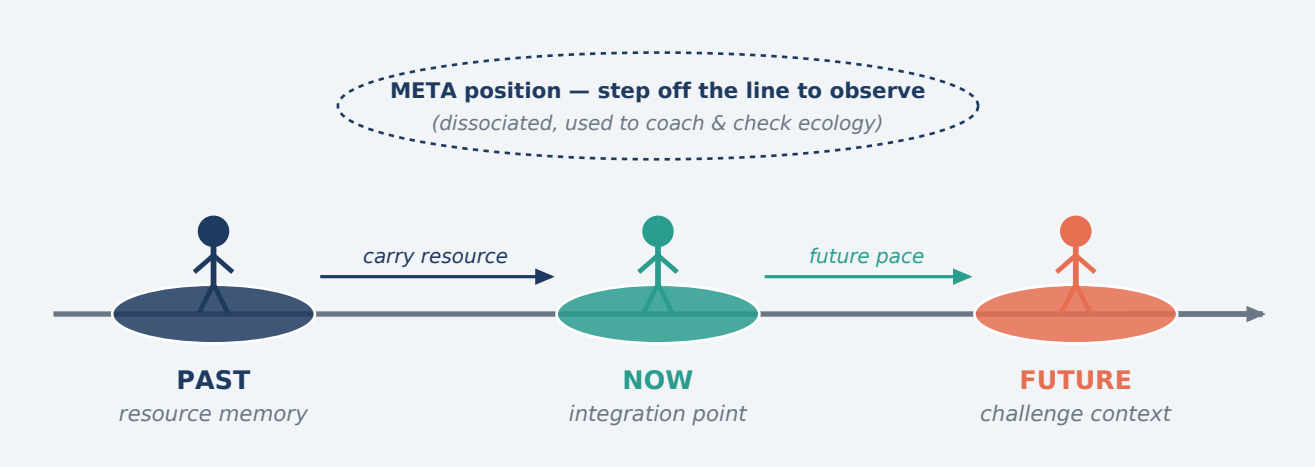


Figure 11 — A simple spatial timeline with a meta-position

Resource transfer along a timeline

- Lay out an imaginary line on the floor: past behind, future ahead.
- Walk back to a **past** spot where you had the resource; associate fully and anchor it (touch + spot).
- Walk forward to **now** carrying it, then on to the **future** spot where the challenge occurs — fire the anchor there.
- Step off to the **meta-position** to observe yourself: is the response right? What else would help?

Future pacing — the essential final step

Future pacing means mentally rehearsing the future situation with the new resource in place. It does two things: it links the anchor to the **real cue** in context, and it **tests** whether the change generalises.

Future-pace question	Purpose
"Think of the next time you'll be in that situation. What's the first thing you notice?"	Find the real-world cue
"As you notice that, what happens now?"	Test whether the resource fires automatically
"Is there any part of you that objects?"	Ecology check — surface hidden concerns

SECTION 16

Troubleshooting Guide

Most anchoring problems are diagnosable. Work through these before concluding a technique 'doesn't work'.

Symptom	Likely cause	Fix
Anchor fires weakly or not at all	State never reached 7+/10, or poor timing	Re-elicit with more VAK detail; anchor on the rise
Anchor gives a mixed feeling	Memory contained negatives, or state was 'contaminated'	Use cleaner memories; release if negatives appear
Worked in session, not in real life	Not linked to the real-world cue	Identify the cue and future pace with it vividly
Anchor fades over weeks	Not reinforced	Re-fire it in positive moments; add new stacked examples
Collapse made things worse	Negative anchor stronger than positive	Stop; break state; build a bigger positive stack; start negative lower
Person can't access any resource	Asking for too big a state	Use 'as if', modelled states, or a chain from a smaller step
Trigger fires by accident	Trigger not unique	Choose a less common site or gesture
Practitioner unsure if state is present	Insufficient calibration	Establish a baseline first; watch breathing, colour, face

Ecology check

Before and after any change work, check that the new response fits the person's whole life. Ask: "*What could be a downside of having this state available all the time?*" and "*Is there any situation where you'd want the old response?*" Fear sometimes protects; irritation sometimes signals a boundary. Good anchoring adds choice rather than removing useful signals.

Limits of practice

Anchoring techniques are coaching and self-development tools. They are not a substitute for therapy or medical care. Strong trauma responses, panic disorder, depression and phobias should be worked with by a licensed professional. Evidence for NLP as a clinical therapy is limited, so present these as practical skills rather than treatment.

SECTION 17

Choosing the Right Technique

Use this flowchart as a starting point. In practice, techniques are often combined in a single session.

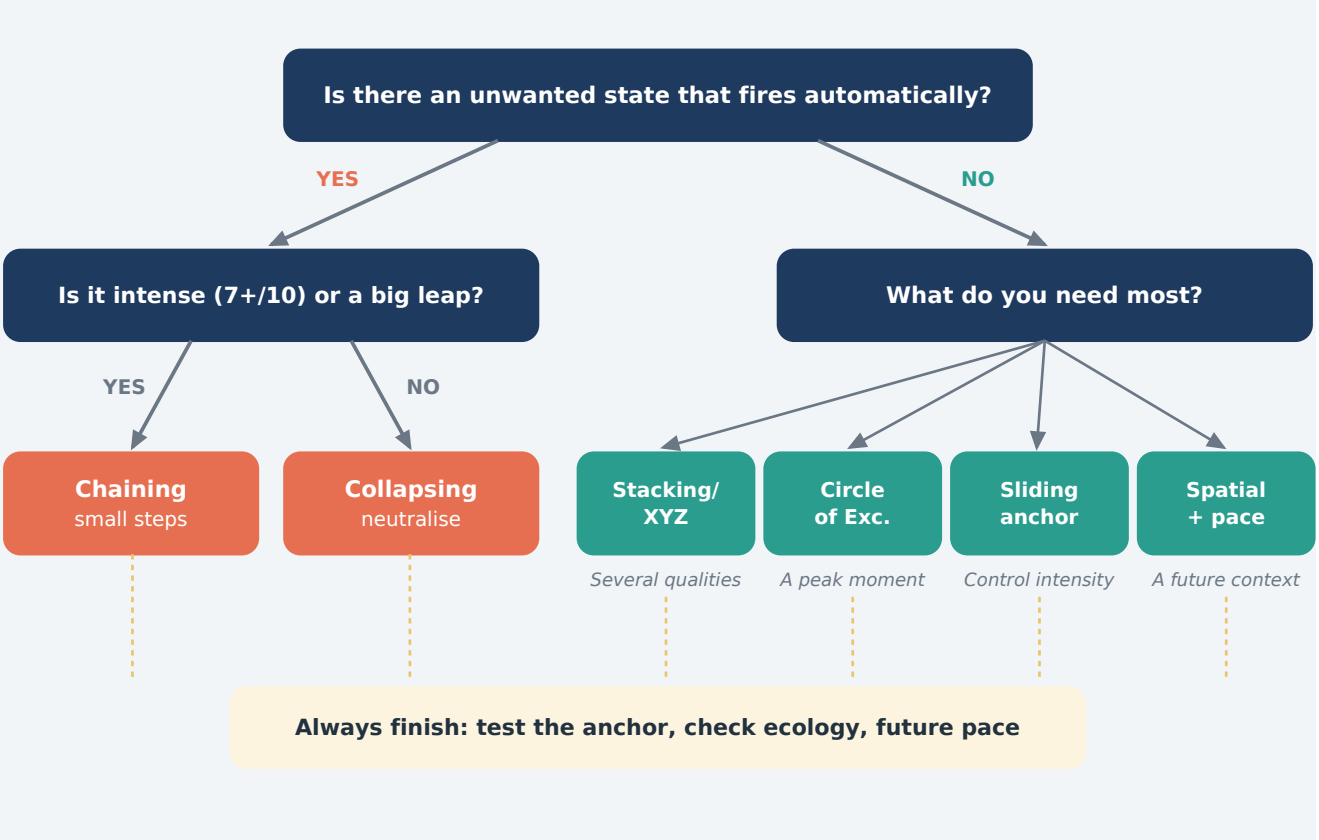


Figure 12 — Decision flowchart for selecting an anchoring technique

Technique	Primary goal	Complexity	Time
Stacking	Strengthen / combine resources	●●○○○	15–25 min
Collapsing	Neutralise an unwanted response	●●●●○	20–30 min
Circle of Excellence	Portable performance state	●●●○○	15–20 min
X-Y-Z state	Design a custom composite state	●●●○○	20–30 min
Chaining	Bridge a large emotional gap	●●●●●	25–40 min
Sliding anchor	Control the intensity of a state	●●○○○	10–15 min
Spatial / future pace	Transfer resources to a future context	●●●○○	10–20 min

Complexity and times are typical practitioner estimates for a first run with a partner; they shorten considerably with practice.

SECTION 18

Practice Plan & Quick Reference

Skill comes from repetition. This three-week plan builds competence in a logical order.

Week	Focus	Daily practice (10–15 min)
1	Foundations	Build your resource library; install one self-anchor (stack 5 confident memories); test it twice a day
2	Combining	Circle of Excellence each morning; design one X-Y-Z state for a real upcoming event; build a sliding anchor for calm
3	Changing	With a partner, practise collapsing on a mild irritation; build one chain; future pace everything

Quick-reference cheat sheet

STACKING
Many states → one spot. Same pressure every time. Break state between.

COLLAPSING
Positive stronger than negative. Fire both. Release negative first, hold positive.

CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE
Imagine circle → step in → relive → amplify → step out. Stack, then future pace.

X-Y-Z STATE
Three qualities, each anchored, then blended, named and anchored as one.

CHAINING
Stuck → small steps → goal. Fire A, at peak fire B, release A.

SLIDING
Slide along a track as intensity rises; lift at peak. Distance = strength.

FIVE KEYS
Intensity · Timing · Uniqueness · Replicability · Repetition

ALWAYS FINISH WITH
Test · Ecology check · Future pace

Ethics

Anchor with consent and transparency. Use these tools to expand the other person's choices, never to manipulate. When in doubt, explain what you are doing and why — it usually makes the technique work better, not worse.

Further reading: *Frogs into Princes* (Bandler & Grinder), *Turtles All the Way Down* (DeLozier & Grinder), *NLP: The New Technology of Achievement* (NLP Comprehensive), and Robert Dilts' work on resource states.