The background of the cover features a person from behind, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, with their arms outstretched. They are standing in front of a modern glass skyscraper with a grid-like window pattern. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day. The overall aesthetic is clean and professional.

THE MODELING EFFECT

HOW LEADERS SHAPE HABIT AND
PERFORMANCE THROUGH THE
PSYCHOLOGY OF PERSONAL EXAMPLE

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Table of Contents

01	<u>Your Team's Internal Operating System</u>	08
02	<u>The Architecture of Motivation – Unpacking Submodalities</u>	19
03	<u>Mapping Across Submodalities – Rewiring Emotional Barriers for Peak Performance</u>	29
04	<u>Modeling the Habit of Positive State Amplification</u>	40
05	<u>State Control on Demand – The Leader's Superpower</u>	46
06	<u>Rewiring Habits – Introducing the Swish Pattern</u>	51
07	<u>Dismantling Limiting Beliefs – Unlocking Hidden Potential</u>	56
08	<u>Using Submodalities to Soften and Reshape Beliefs</u>	64

Table of Contents

09	<u>Mapping Across to Absolute Belief</u>	74
10	<u>Cognitive-Emotional Leadership in Action</u>	80
11	<u>Leading Through a Culture of Mastery</u>	87
12	30-Day Onboarding Template: Habit Rituals for Teams and Leaders	93

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Introduction

The Real Engine of Performance—Modeling Habits, Emotion, and Results

I see it constantly in organizations. A relentless push for *more*.
More skills training.
More initiatives.
More productivity hacks.

Everyone's expected to pile more onto their already overflowing plates.

And many leaders, (bless them all), often think the answer is just another workshop, a new process, or the latest app.

But how often does that really change the game?

You send people off to learn a new skill, maybe they tick the box and even collect a certificate... and then?

Nothing.

They drift quietly back to their old ways.

Why?

Because the real levers—their emotional states, the habits they've absorbed from those above them, and the deep-seated beliefs about what they can (or can't) do—haven't shifted an inch.

Here's what most leadership books won't say out loud: You can *teach* someone what to do, but if their internal world is still screaming, "*I can't,*" "*This is too hard,*" or "*I'm not that kind of person,*" that new skill gathers dust.

How can we combat the limitations in others' minds, especially when

- changes happen at blazing speeds?
- you seem to handle it well but others don't?
- those that do well end up developing workplace trauma from burnout and stress, trying to push hard?

The key is modeling the possibility through showcasing habit.

I remember a time when I absolutely hated running (well, because in the military, we were forced to do it without really understanding the training required in the early days). In my later when I went into my NS (reservist) appointments, I met so many super-fit individuals who *loved* running. They went distances by the marathons in their 40s and even 50s... habitually. These role models wowed me. And for the first time in my life, I crossed the 15km mark running.

This is the power of role modelled habits.

Habits are real, daily actions and emotional postures. They aren't shaped by memos or training slides, but by what leaders actually do, day in and day out.

If you as the leader aren't building the *habitual system* but only the *operating system*, you'll be constantly chasing them and have less time to do your own work.

It's the same story with “wellness” programs. Yoga sessions, mindfulness apps, and resilience workshops are fine, but often become just another to-do, a superficial plaster over deeper issues. True well-being—the kind that fuels resilience and peak performance— isn't a calendar item; it's a state of mind and a pattern of habits. It's about feeling psychologically safe, energized, and capable from the inside out. And that most certainly starts with leadership that models what matters most.

You've probably heard about “people-forward” practices— companies that focus on employee well-being, growth, and supportive environments. The data doesn't lie: these organizations are 3.4 times more likely to be seen as top workplaces.

Why?

Because they know *performance isn't just mechanical; it's intrinsically human*. It hinges on leaders who don't just talk the talk, but who actively *model* the habits, emotional tone, and behaviors they want to see.

Think about it:

- When leaders consistently *model* and communicate an inspiring vision, engagement skyrockets.
- In **high-performing organizations**, only 9% feel their leaders lack this.
- In lower-performing ones, it jumps to 30%. Vision isn't just a statement—it's **grounding**, enabling us to look and move forward.

When leaders practice accountability *openly*—owning wins and losses—they build trust. People feel safer taking risks and owning their work.

What do top executives say are the biggest performance boosters? Not “skills,” but **attitude, accountability, and care.**

The biggest drains?

“Unaccountability” and “carelessness.” These aren’t skills—they’re modeled states and habits.

So, this book isn’t about giving you more to pile onto your plate—or your team’s. It’s about fundamentally shifting the focus.

We’re going to move beyond surface-level tactics to explore the **real engine of performance**: the cognitive and emotional landscape within each person, and the habits that leaders model, intentionally or not.

I call this **Cognitive-Emotional Productivity**, but it’s not just a concept. It’s a *practice*.

It’s about understanding the psychological roots of **why people get stuck, why motivation rises and falls**, and how you, as a leader, can help your team (and yourself) **master internal states, reshape limiting beliefs**, and most importantly *model* the habits that create a culture of growth and resilience.

We'll unpack practical tools drawn from fields like Neuro-Linguistic Programming—no theory, just what works. You'll learn how to:

- Decode the mind's operating system—how habits of thought, emotion, and action actually work.
- Shift emotional states on demand (yours and your team's).
- Rewire unhelpful habits from the inside out using repeatable techniques like the Swish Pattern.
- Dismantle the limiting beliefs that cap potential, and model the process so others follow.
- Forge beliefs and routines that fuel sustainable growth.

This is about shifting from being a **manager of tasks** to a **modeler of habits, emotion, and performance** in a manner that sets the pace, upholds a standard and lives the values in embodied human form.

It's about leading in a way that addresses the whole person—and knowing that your actions, not just your words, set the tone for everyone else.

Let's move from “doing more” to “doing well”. Let's explore doing things differently, sometimes even doing less of the wrong things, so you can unlock a level of performance and well-being you might not have thought possible.

01 Your Team's Internal Operating System

Think about the most talented person on your team.

Brilliant, skilled, full of potential, right?

Now, think about a time they *underperformed*.

Maybe they froze during a crucial presentation, sidestepped a difficult conversation, or just seemed disengaged from a project they were perfectly capable of handling.

What happened?

Did they suddenly lose their skills? Probably not.

More often than not, **something internal got in the way**—an “interference”.

Here's an equation I use constantly, whether I'm coaching CEOs or supporting high-potential leaders:

Performance = Potential – Interference

At first glance, it looks simple.

But in practice, it's profound.

- **Potential** is everything your people could bring to the table—innate talents, learned skills, experience, intelligence, creativity. Most organizations are adept at identifying and developing potential through recruitment and training.
- **Interference** is the crucial, often *invisible* part. It's the internal static—the mental and emotional roadblocks that prevent potential from translating into consistent, high-level performance.

What forms does interference take?

- **Negative Emotional States:** Fear, anxiety, overwhelm, frustration, boredom, cynicism.
- **Limiting Beliefs:** “I’m not good enough,” “This is impossible,” “Leaders have to be ruthless,” “Change is always painful.”
- **Unhelpful Mental Habits:** Procrastination loops, negative self-talk, catastrophizing, perfectionism that leads to paralysis.
- **Internal Conflicts:** Part of someone wants the promotion; another part fears the responsibility.

But here's the part many leaders miss:

**Our habits—of thought, emotion, and action
—are the hidden gears of this whole system.**

Teams don't just pick up skills or information from their leaders; they *absorb* the way leaders habitually respond to stress, setbacks, and opportunity.

If you, as a leader, *habitually model* resilience, curiosity, and honest self-reflection, your team will **unconsciously** start to mirror those habits.

If you default to cynicism, blame, or avoidance, those habits spread too—quietly, but powerfully.

Why does this happen?

Well, there's the idea of emotional contagion: we tend to experience emotions that are predominant.

If you've ever been in a standup comedy performance, sometimes, the audience laughs not because of the joke but because of the atmosphere.

You might even laugh only because someone else is laughing.

Mirror neurons make *modeling from a distance* (vicarious modeling) possible. That's driving the power of **the modeling effect**, as Professor Albert Bandura laid out in his now renowned *social learning theory*.

Here's how it actually plays out, and why it's the single most underutilized lever in leadership:

1. Attention: Your People Notice What You Do (Not Just What You Say)

People pay attention to leaders who stand out—by status, visibility, or sheer authenticity.

If you're the CEO, CHRO, or team lead, your actions are on the main stage, whether you like it or not.

They're watching how you handle pressure, how you respond to mistakes, and whether you walk your talk on values.

If you want your message to cut through the noise, you have to be the message.

2. Retention: Habits Are Caught, Not Taught

It's not enough for your team to see you do something *once*.

People remember through repeated, consistent behaviors—especially when you **narrate your thinking**. This is a form of overt mentoring.

“Here's why I'm taking a deep breath before this tough meeting.”

“When I paused at the comment, I was collecting myself because I wanted to shift from reaction to a proper, objective response.”

Unfortunately, if it is not congruent, people will still pick it up.

If you don't explain yourself, it can most certainly end up being misunderstood unintentionally.

Repetition plus context equals retention.

When you turn self-awareness, resilience, or feedback into a daily ritual, it becomes part of your team's muscle memory.

3. Reproduction: If You Can Do It, They Believe They Can Too

When a leader demonstrates a habit—say, owning a mistake or pausing to reflect before reacting—it signals, *“This is safe. This is doable. You can do this too.”*

You're not just teaching skills; you're lowering the bar for others to try, fumble, and grow.

4. Motivation: Culture Is Built on Rewarding What's Modeled

People aren't only motivated by lectures; they're motivated by what gets **noticed and celebrated**.

When you, as a leader, reinforce a new habit—by praising effort, spotlighting small wins, or even sharing your own awkward learning curve—you fuel motivation.

The team sees, *“If this is what gets respect around here, I want in.”*

5. Vicarious (Observed) Reinforcement: Others' Success (or Struggle) Becomes a Lesson

When your team watches you succeed—or even better, recover from a stumble—they're learning the consequences of the behavior.

If your vulnerability leads to stronger trust, or your willingness to ask for help results in a breakthrough, it becomes a case study for everyone else. Conversely, if leaders cut corners and get away with it, that's the behavior you'll see multiplied.

Your organization's **culture isn't what's written on the wall.**
It's what leaders **model in the hall.**

The fastest way to unlock new attitudes, behaviors, and emotional resilience in your people is to *model* it—habitually, openly, and with enough humility to show both the wins and the wobble.

The next time you want to see a new behavior in your team, don't just rely on a *training program*.

- Start with your own actions.
- Make your habit visible.
- Narrate your process.
- Invite feedback.

And remember: if you want a culture of mastery, it starts with you showing what mastery-in-progress really looks like.

Because in the end, leadership isn't about *telling* people where to go. It's about *walking* there first, so others see the path and believe they can follow. That's Bandura's modeling effect in action—alive, messy, and utterly transformational.

I remember working with a senior executive team at a large tech firm.

They were rolling out a major strategic shift—technically sound, logically brilliant. But adoption was stalling.

Why? *Interference*.

People were anxious about job security, cynical from past failed initiatives, and overwhelmed by the perceived complexity. The **potential** to execute was high, but the **interference**—especially *habitual patterns of worry and avoidance (driven by their very own CEO's underlying anxieties)*—was crippling their performance. More strategy decks weren't the answer; we needed to address the beliefs, emotional states, and, crucially, the default habits that leadership was modeling.

Decoding Mental States and Habits: The Real Drivers of Action

This is where we go beyond just observing behavior. Consider someone procrastinating.

The typical management response?

A reminder, deadline adjustment, maybe even a performance warning.

But why are they procrastinating?

- Are they overwhelmed?
- Fearful of failure?
- Lacking confidence?
- Bored?

Their internal state—and the habitual responses they've picked up, often from leaders—drive the behavior.

Our thoughts, the pictures we make in our heads, the sounds and voices we hear internally, and the physical sensations we feel—these aren't random. They form the structure of our emotional states and, over time, our most persistent habits.

Remember this:

**State dictates behavior.
Habits reinforce state.
Leaders model both.**

If a team member feels confident and energized (state), they're far more likely to take initiative, tackle challenges, and communicate effectively (behavior).

If they feel intimidated or confused, hesitation or avoidance becomes the norm.

And if you, as a leader, habitually show up empowered, regulate your own state, and narrate your process, you *model a repeatable habit loop that others unconsciously adopt.*

The User Manual for the Mind—and the Habit Loop

So, how do we start understanding and influencing these internal states and interference patterns? This is where Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) comes in.

Forget the misinformation that many freshly minted practitioners are spouting.

As a psychologist, I've seen much of the psychological research converge on how powerfully NLP can be applied, As a linguist, NLP is not really a psychological science - it's a linguistic one. I won't get into too much detail, but the structure of our language determines our way of thinking, and all we need to do is change the way we use language.

In my world—after 31 years in training rooms and boardrooms—NLP is a practical toolkit. It's about the structure of how we think, communicate (internally and externally), act, and, yes, *form habits*.

Its roots are in modeling excellence.

The pioneers of NLP didn't invent their techniques from scratch; they studied (i.e. these were *modelled* from) experts who were exceptionally good at what they did—therapists who created rapid change, communicators who influenced effortlessly, leaders who inspired deep loyalty.

They asked: **How do they do it? What are the “habitual codes” inside their heads that make the difference?**

Think about a masterful, captivating TED speaker.

It's not just their words—it's their state, their conviction, their repeatable preparation rituals. NLP gives us ways to decode and then *model* those repeatable patterns.

For you as a leader, NLP provides practical methods to:

- **Understand the "Maps" People Use**

Recognize everyone experiences the world differently, based on their internal filters, beliefs, and, yes, their habits of perception.

- **Manage Emotional States**

Learn techniques like anchoring to habitually access resourceful states like confidence, focus, or calm—on demand.

- **Change Habits Effectively**

Use patterns like the Swish to rewire automatic responses—turning procrastination or avoidance into productive action.

- **Communicate with Precision and Influence**

Use tools like the Meta Model to ask better questions, uncover hidden assumptions, and avoid misunderstandings—creating a habit of clarity.

- **Resolve Internal Conflicts**

Help individuals and teams align conflicting motivations or beliefs, so new, more productive habits can take root.

Think of this as enhancing your team's psychological capital: hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, built through the direct modeling of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral habits.

The Leader's Advantage: Seeing (and Shaping) Below the Surface

Why is this crucial for you?

Because understanding this internal dashboard moves you from being a manager of tasks and processes to becoming a genuine *developer of people*.

When performance dips, you won't just see the symptom (a missed deadline); you'll have a framework to explore the underlying interference (overwhelm, lack of clarity, unhelpful habits, limiting beliefs).

You can ask better questions, offer more targeted support, and—by modeling the change yourself—help your people unlock more of their inherent potential.

This is **people-forward leadership in action**: addressing the whole person, not just their output.

And it starts with **you**.

Every habit you model, every emotional state you regulate, every belief you challenge in yourself—it all becomes part of your team's **internal psychological operating system**.

We've now established that performance is potential minus interference, that internal states and habits drive behavior, and that NLP offers a practical toolkit for understanding and influencing this internal world.

We're looking at the mind's dashboard.

In the next chapter, we'll zoom in on the specific dials and gauges on that mental dashboard—the building blocks of our internal experience and habits, known as **submodalities**.

02 The Architecture of Motivation – Unpacking Submodalities

Why Do Some Tasks Energize Us and Others Drain Us? (Hint: It's Not Random—and It's Habitual)

Ever wonder why some tasks fire you up while others leave you cold, even if both are important? It's not just about the nature of the work. It's about how your brain “codes” these experiences internally—and how, over time, certain emotional responses become habitual patterns, especially in teams that unconsciously mirror their leaders.

Here's the secret most leaders miss:

Successful actions are carried out because you are in the *right state*, and those states are not random.

They're coded through the subtle details of our internal pictures, sounds, and feelings—what NLP calls *submodalities*. Over time, these internal codes become habitual emotional responses, setting the default “tone” for how we approach challenges, opportunities, and even setbacks.

How Habits of Perception Are Modeled

Pay attention to the tone you set as a leader.

If you habitually approach challenges with curiosity and optimism—framing setbacks as learning opportunities—your team starts to “catch” that perceptual habit.

If you default to cynicism, catastrophizing, or framing every obstacle as a threat, those responses become the team’s unconscious template.

Leaders’ daily moods, their ways of narrating events (“this is a chance to grow” vs. “here we go again”), and the emotional states they habitually bring to meetings—all of these are modeled and mirrored, turning individual submodalities into collective habits of perception.

You are often responsible for the responses you unintentionally co-created through your people.

Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic Modalities: The Building Blocks of Habitual Experience

Every memory, goal, or imagined scenario is constructed from three main modalities, and the details (submodalities) are what make certain experiences habitually energizing or draining.

1. Visual Submodalities

- Brightness: Is the mental image vivid or dull?
- Distance: Up-close and personal, or far away and detached?
- Size: Looms large or shrinks in the background?
- Color: Full of life or drained of energy?
- Clarity: Sharp and urgent, or fuzzy and unimportant?
- Dimension: 3d or 2d?
- Location: Center of vision or off to the side?
- Framing: Panoramic or boxed in?

2. Auditory Submodalities

- Volume: Loud encouragement or faint, nagging reminder?
- Pitch: High or low ?
- Timbre: Rich or flat?
- Distance: Close to you or far away?
- Orientation: Your own voice or someone else's?
- Location: Left ear, right ear, or all around?
- Tonality: Supportive and warm, or critical and cutting?
- Rhythm: Fast-paced and urgent, or slow and lethargic?

3. Kinesthetic Submodalities

- Temperature: Warm and inviting, or cold and unwelcoming?
- Weight: Heavy and burdensome, or light and buoyant?
- Texture/Movement: Still or moving? Prickly, soft, smooth?
- Location: Where in your body do you feel it—chest, gut, shoulders?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how intense is the feeling?

The Leadership Modeling Effect: How Perceptual Habits Spread

Over decades working with leaders and teams, I've seen this repeatedly: the difference between a high-performing, motivated team and a group stuck in procrastination is rarely just about skills or workload.

It's about the habitual emotional responses that get modeled at the top and ripple through the whole system.

For example, if a leader habitually narrates every Monday as a “battle” or a “grind,” the team's internal image of Mondays becomes darker, heavier, and more distant—draining motivation.

If a leader regularly reframes setbacks as “learning sprints,” the team's default mental pictures become brighter, closer, and more engaging. Over time, these submodalities are not just individual quirks—they become team-wide habits of perception.

Activity: Tuning Your Emotional State

Purpose

To help you and your team recognize how you “code” experiences like anxiety, low energy, or self-doubt, and to experiment with changing these codes (submodalities) to shift emotional states. This builds self-awareness, agency, and the foundation for more adaptive habits.

Step 1: Identify a Current Emotional State

Pick one of the following (or use your own):

- Anxiety about a deadline or meeting
- Feeling low energy/procrastination at work (e.g., post-lunch slump)
- Self-doubt before a presentation or tough conversation

Step 2: Notice Your Internal Experience – The Submodality Scan

Close your eyes for a moment.

Bring the situation to mind, and answer the following for Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic channels.

(You can do this solo or guide your team through it.)

Visual Submodalities (What do you “see” in your mind?)

- Is the image bright or dim? (Analog: degrees of brightness)
- Is it close or far away? (Analog)
- Is it color or black-and-white? (Digital: one or the other)
- Is it moving or still? (Digital)
- Is it sharp or blurry? (Analog)

Auditory Submodalities (What do you “hear” internally?)

- Is there an internal voice? Whose is it?
- Is it loud or soft? (Analog)
- Is the tone harsh or gentle? (Analog)
- Is it repetitive or a single statement? (Digital)

Kinesthetic Submodalities (What do you “feel” in your body?)

- Where in your body do you feel it? (Location)
- Is it moving or still? (Digital)
- Is the sensation heavy or light? (Analog)
- Is it warm or cool? (Analog)
- Is it constant or pulsing? (Digital)
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how intense is the feeling?

Step 3: Experiment with Changing Submodalities

Pick one or two submodalities and adjust them—either analog (scale/sliding) or digital (on/off, either/or)—and notice what happens to your emotional state.

For example:

1. Anxiety

- a. Visual: If the image is close and looming, push it further away or make it smaller (analog). If it's in color, turn it black-and-white (digital).
- b. Auditory: If the voice is loud and critical, turn down the volume (analog) or change the voice to a cartoon character (digital).
- c. Kinesthetic: If the sensation is tight in your chest, imagine it loosening or moving down to your feet (analog).

2. Low Energy/Procrastination

- a. Visual: If the image is dim or grey, turn up the brightness and saturate the colors (analog).
- b. Auditory: If things are quiet or slow, add an upbeat soundtrack or internal pep talk (digital).
- c. Kinesthetic: If your body feels heavy, imagine the sensation getting lighter or warmer (analog).

3. Self-Doubt

- a. Visual: If you see yourself small, enlarge your image, bring it closer, or stand tall in your mind's eye (analog/digital).
- b. Auditory: If there's a voice saying "You can't do this," change the words to "You've done this before—just do your best" or change the voice to something silly (digital).

c. Kinesthetic: Notice if the feeling is cold or sinking; imagine it warming up or rising upwards (analog).

Step 4: Compare and Reflect

After making these adjustments, ask:

- How does my emotional state change?
- Which submodalities have the biggest impact for me?
- How could I use this before high-stakes moments (meetings, presentations, feedback sessions)?

Example Debrief (from my sessions)

In a leadership workshop, we mapped anxiety about *public speaking*.

One manager realized his “anxiety image” was a giant, close-up, high-definition scene of people frowning. When he made the image small, distant, and blurry, the anxiety dropped dramatically.

Another participant noticed her inner critic’s voice was loud and harsh, so she made it soft and slow—her self-doubt lost its power.

Why This Works (and Why It’s Habit-Forming)

You’re not just talking about feelings. You’re adjusting the structure of experience. **Analog submodalities** give you a sliding scale, while **digital submodalities** are like flipping a switch. With practice, you can recode experiences resourcefully, making optimism, resilience, and motivation your new default settings.

Leaders who regularly model this “re-coding” process out loud (e.g., “I caught myself using ‘climbing Everest’ as a mental image as if this project is a difficult thing. In truth, we merely need to picture it as a series of small, continuous steps, using resources we already have.”) teach their teams to do the same.

Over time, this forms a *habit of emotional flexibility*—one of the key predictors of resilience and performance in the research.

From State Shifts to Habit Shifts

The real power comes not just from shifting your state once, but from making the practice of submodality awareness and adjustment a team habit. When leaders consistently model the habit of reframing, recalibrating, and narrating their own internal changes, they create a culture where emotional agility becomes the norm, not the exception

Limitations and Next Steps

Changing submodalities is a powerful **start**, but like any new habit, it takes **repetition** and **modeling** to *stick*.

You can't always pause in the heat of the moment—but by practicing in advance and narrating your own shifts, you set a new template for your team's internal operating system.

Key principles you must know for behavior and habit change:

Habit Stacking

- It takes between 16 to 254 days for habits to take shape, if you rely on basic methods of habit formation like *habit stacking*.
- You can form new behaviors by deliberately adding a new habit (doing 50 pushups) prior to an already formed habit (brushing teeth).
- However, there is an underlying mechanism that you can leverage to achieve this *utilizing any sensory trigger*.

Non-Repression

- What matters will weigh on your mind. When you notice that emotions are taking over you, you'll need to pay attention, and hold space for that emotion.
- If you hold space for a negative emotion, an answer will come especially if you treat that negative emotion as a message from your inner self.
- Repression creates more tension. No point ignoring them - suppressed emotions are the ingredient the mind needs to cause emotional exhaustion and burnout.

Secondary Gain

- Habits that persist often serve a secondary benefit. Find the underlying need.
- If you procrastinate, it may benefit you by delaying some pain. If you get angry, you might be protecting yourself from embarrassment. All these need to be recalibrated in order to serve the greater good, rather than a temporary fix.

Better Choice

- When you replace a behavior with a better choice, the old habit loses its reason to exist. This is precisely why learning how to adjust your own habits will allow you to lead the way in building habits within others.

The architecture of motivation **isn't just about one-off state changes.**

It's about the **habits** of perception and **response** you model, and how those become the invisible code shaping your team's performance—every single day.

03

Mapping Across Submodalities – Rewiring Emotional Barriers for Peak Performance

The Mechanics of Mapping Across Submodalities: From One-Off Shift to Habitual Pattern

If you've ever wished you could “flip a switch” to change how you feel about a daunting task or situation, you're not alone. In my coaching with executives and teams, I frequently encounter high-performers who know what they should do, but get blocked by feelings of anxiety, low energy, or self-doubt.

What's fascinating and often overlooked is that these emotional reactions are not isolated incidents. They're the product of *habitual internal coding*: the way your brain routinely structures experiences using submodalities (the fine details of your mental pictures, sounds, and feelings).

Here's the leadership insight:

The more you and your team practice mapping across submodalities, the more you form *new habits of emotional response*. When leaders model this “rewiring” process openly, it becomes part of the team's collective toolkit for psychological agility and peak performance.

How Does This Work?

Every experience—positive or negative—is built from a unique pattern of submodalities:

- **Visual:** Brightness, color, distance, size, clarity, movement
- **Auditory:** Volume, pitch, tempo, location, tone
- **Kinesthetic:** Location in the body, temperature, pressure, movement, intensity

When you feel anxiety, for example, the image might be big, looming, and close; the inner voice might be loud and critical; the feeling might be a tightness in your chest.

Confidence, on the other hand, might have completely different submodalities—bright, expansive, a supportive inner voice, and a sense of lightness.

Mapping across means *borrowing* the structure of a resourceful state (like confidence or motivation) and applying it to an unhelpful state (like anxiety, fatigue, or doubt). This is not about suppressing feelings—it's about literally rewiring your internal experience. You're putting on different shades so that regardless of the lens, you see the world differently. Over time, with repetition, this becomes a new *habit of mind*.

How Does This Work?

When leaders narrate their own “mapping across” process —“I noticed I was seeing this “deadline” as a looming threat that was making me feel edgy and impatient.

Instead of paying attention to a line that I 'die' from, I shifted my attention to other markers that encourage me toward the finish line... like you guys - my supporters along a marathon"—they normalize emotional agility.

This not only gives permission for others to do the same, but creates a ripple effect: teams start to use mapping across as a shared language and habit, especially before high-stakes moments.

The truth behind this approach?

Good old *storytelling*. Yes, it is actually that simple.

The challenge with most people is that they are **unable to structure the effect of their storytelling**.

Well, here's *mapping across*, where you

(1) first articulate your original, messy state

*(I noticed I was seeing this “**deadline**” as a looming threat that was making me feel edgy and impatient),*

(2) identify realizations about what you wanted (*instead of paying attention to a line that I 'die' from*), then

(3) share a better way by which you viewed the original problem (*I shifted my attention to other markers that encourage me toward the finish line... like you guys - my supporters along a marathon*).

Application to Common Barriers

Let's ground this with classic workplace emotional barriers.

1. Anxiety

- Identify the submodalities of your anxiety (e.g., close, large, dark, loud, tight).
- Find the submodalities of a time you felt calm or in control (e.g., distant, smaller, lighter, soft).
- Map the calm/confident submodalities onto your anxious experience.
- Notice how the emotional charge shifts.

2. Low Energy

- Notice how you represent “low energy” (dim, far away, slow).
- Compare with a time when you felt high energy (bright, close, vivid, fast).
- Map the energizing submodalities onto your memory of fatigue.
- Feel the lift.

3. Self-Doubt

- Self-doubt may have submodalities like a small, grey image, or a nagging, sharp voice.
- Compare with a memory of certainty or mastery (large, colorful, strong inner voice).
- Apply the “certainty” submodalities to the self-doubt scenario.

Worksheet: Comparative Submodalities Mapping

Instructions:

Use this worksheet for yourself or with your team. The goal is to make visible the invisible structure of emotional experience—and make the act of “mapping across” a regular, shared practice.

1. Choose the Situation:

Pick one (anxiety, low energy, self-doubt), and describe the specific scenario, your old narrative.

2. Elicit the Submodalities of the Problem State:

- Visual: What do you see in your mind? (Describe image, colors, distance, brightness, movement, size, clarity, location)
- Auditory: What do you hear? (Voice/tone, volume, pitch, location, rhythm)
- Kinesthetic: What do you feel? (Location in body, temperature, pressure, movement, intensity)

3. Elicit the Submodalities of a Resourceful State:

Recall a contrasting time (calm, energized, confident). Use the same questions.

4. Compare the Submodalities Side-by-Side:

Use a table to spot the differences. This builds awareness of your unique “emotional code.”

5. Mapping Across – Transfer the Codes:

Now, imagine taking the submodalities from the resourceful state and applying them to the problem state (adjust brightness, color, sound, bodily feeling, etc.). Pause and notice the change.

6. Future Pace:

Imagine facing a similar situation in the future. With the new coding, how does it feel?

7. New Narrative:

- Which submodalities created the biggest shift for you?
- What's the internal narrative you have for yourself now?
- How could you use this technique before an important meeting, presentation, or decision?

From One-Off Technique to Leadership Habit

Don't let mapping across become a "one and done." The leaders and teams who thrive make this a regular ritual—before meetings, after setbacks, even as a daily check-in. When it's modeled consistently by leaders, mapping across becomes a habit of resilience, emotional agility, and proactive self-regulation. That's when culture shifts for good.

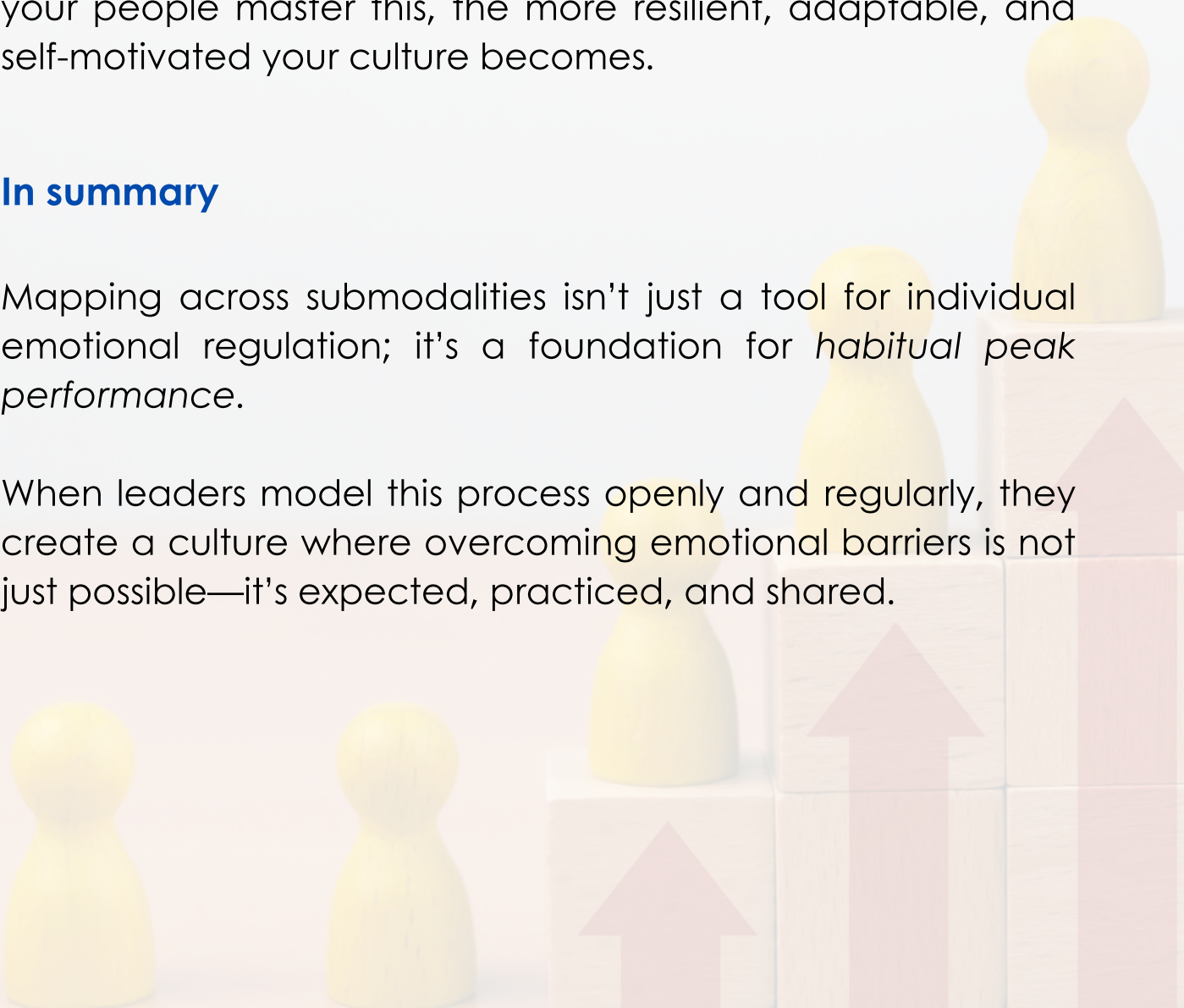
Tip for Leaders

Use **mapping across** as a team exercise to *normalize talking about internal experiences*. To do this, you want to recognize their own innate resourcefulness - that everyone has resourceful states can support any challenge that they face. Empower everyone to shift their own states—and make it a visible, repeatable, modeled habit. Over time, the more your people master this, the more resilient, adaptable, and self-motivated your culture becomes.

In summary

Mapping across submodalities isn't just a tool for individual emotional regulation; it's a foundation for *habitual peak performance*.

When leaders model this process openly and regularly, they create a culture where overcoming emotional barriers is not just possible—it's expected, practiced, and shared.



Worksheet: Comparative Submodalities Mapping

Instructions:

Use this worksheet for yourself or facilitate it with your team. It can be used for any unhelpful state, but here we focus on anxiety, low energy, and self-doubt.

1. Choose the Situation:

Pick one:

- Anxiety
- Low Energy
- Self-Doubt

Describe the specific situation in a sentence:

2. Elicit the Submodalities of the Problem State:

- *Visual*: What do you see in your mind? (Describe image, colors, distance, brightness, movement, size, clarity, location)
- *Auditory*: What do you hear? (Describe voice/tone, volume, pitch, location, rhythm)
- *Kinesthetic*: What do you feel? (Location in body, temperature, pressure, movement, intensity)

Write your observations here:

Visual:

Auditory:

Kinesthetic:

3. Elicit the Submodalities of a Resourceful State:

Recall a time when you felt the opposite (calm, energized, confident). Use the same questions:

Visual:

Auditory:

Kinesthetic:

4. Compare the Submodalities Side-by-Side:

Use this table to spot the differences:

Submodality	Problem State (e.g. Anxiety)	Resourceful State (e.g. Calm)
Visual		
Auditory		
Kinesthetic		

5. Mapping Across – Transfer the Codes:

Now, *imagine* taking the submodalities from the resourceful state and applying them to the problem state.

- Change the image in your mind to match the brightness, color, size, distance, and location of the resourceful state.
- Change the sound/voice to match the volume, tone, and rhythm of the resourceful state.
- Change the bodily feeling to match the location, intensity, and movement of the resourceful state.

Pause and notice: **How does your emotional response change?**

6. Future Pace:

Imagine facing a similar situation in the future. With the new coding, how does it feel?

7. Story Structure:

- How will you first articulate your original, messy state? What submodalities were you focusing on that made you feel challenged, statewise?

Example: *I noticed I was seeing this “**deadline**” as a looming threat that was making me feel edgy and impatient*

- Identify realizations about what you want

Example: (*I shouldn't pay attention to a line that I 'die' from; instead, I want to be grateful for the people around me supporting me*)

- What is a better perspective to focus on?

Example: (*you guys are like my supporters along a marathon*)

Reflection:

- Which submodalities created the biggest shift for you?
- How could you use this technique before an important meeting, presentation, or decision?

Tip for Leaders

Use this as a team exercise to normalize talking about internal experiences and to empower everyone to shift their own states. The more your people master this, the more resilient, adaptable, and self-motivated your culture becomes.

04

Modeling the Habit of Positive State Amplification

From Neutralizing Barriers to Unleashing Momentum

In the previous chapters, we explored how submodalities act as the “dials and sliders” on your mind’s dashboard—helping you decode and recode the internal experiences behind anxiety, low energy, and self-doubt.

Through **mapping across submodalities**, you learned how to take the structure of a resourceful state and use it to transform unhelpful states, **almost like copying the settings** from a confident moment and pasting them onto a stressful one.

High-impact leadership isn’t just using submodalities for “fixing” what’s wrong. When leaders *model the habit* of amplifying what’s already working, making it visible, routine, and collective. Positive states become an engine for team momentum.

Why Amplification as a Leadership Habit Matters

Imagine your team is already feeling motivated or creative.

Most organizations stop there—satisfied with “good enough.”

But high-performance cultures, and the leaders who shape them, ask: *How do we turn this up even further, and make it stick as a team habit?*

Research in positive psychology (you'd like to take a look at the concept of *Psychological Capital*) shows that amplifying positive states—like hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience—leads to compounding returns in **engagement, trust, and results.**

When leaders model this amplification habit, it quickly becomes part of the team's emotional muscle memory.

The Mechanics: Modeling and Ritualizing Positive State Amplification

I'd often wake up feeling 'meh'. But having learnt that this is nothing more than a neurophysiological choice, I would go in my mind and revisit great, motivating and powerful states that "wake me up". It's a ritual I utilize regularly and urge you to notice what's different when you choose your states.

Just as we mapped across submodalities to shift unhelpful states, we can "turn up the volume" on positive states by adjusting their submodalities.

My teacher and co-founder of NLP, Dr. Richard Bandler, taught me that we frequently feel bad for no good reason. Therefore, we can learn how to frequently feel good for no good reason!

When leaders do this openly and consistently, it becomes a contagious, culture-shaping practice.

Here's How to Model the habit.

1. Identify a Positive State

- Think of a recent moment where you felt energized, confident, creative, or grateful.
- Modeling tip: Share these stories out loud. (“Yesterday I felt especially energized when we solved that client issue together...”)

2. Notice and Narrate the Submodalities

- Close your eyes and focus on how you experience this state:
 - Visual: Is it bright, close, colorful, panoramic?
 - Auditory: What do you hear? Loud, harmonious, rhythmic?
 - Kinesthetic: Where do you feel it in your body? Is it warm, expansive, tingling?
- *Modeling tip*: Like a movie director, use sensory words to narrate your positive process. (“I’m picturing that moment right in front of me—bright and vivid, with your voices cheering in my head.”)

3. Amplify the Key Submodalities

- Make the image even brighter or closer.
- Expand the sense of space or add more vivid color.
- Turn up the volume of supportive inner sounds.
- Increase the warmth, flow, or intensity of sensations.
- *Modeling tip*: When people see you acting at your best, in spite of challenging circumstances, that’s when their respect begins to skyrocket.

4. Anchor the Amplified State

- Use a physical trigger—like squeezing your hand, tapping your fingers, or even sharing a team gesture—while in this amplified state.
- *Modeling tip:* Invite the team to join you—“Let’s all tap our pens together when we want to anchor a win.”

Mini-Habits for Positive State Priming

- **Daily Gratitude Round:** Start meetings with “one thing you’re grateful for this week.”
- **Share a Win:** Ask, “Who’s got a quick win to share?”—celebrate progress, not just big outcomes.
- **Visualize Success Together:** Before a big pitch, spend 60 seconds picturing the win as a group—describe it in vivid detail.
- **Anchor Rituals:** Create a team “success gesture”—a hand signal, a phrase, or a sound everyone does together after milestones.
- **Recognition Shout-Outs:** Normalize giving authentic, specific praise in public. (See doc_1: “Acknowledge individual contributions publicly.”)
- **Optimism Reframes:** When challenges arise, model the habit of asking, “What opportunity could this bring?” or “How have we bounced back before?”

When leaders practice and narrate these micro-habits, they’re not just boosting their own state—they’re actively teaching the team *how* to prime, amplify, and lock in positive energy.

Role Modeling During Bad Times

It's really easy to be a role model during good times. Athletes can dole it out when they feel at their prime, when the weather is cool, and when everything is well organized.

But the best athletes disregard the circumstances and build their inner states.

Similarly, many people already know how tough [fill in whatever you want - parenting, teaching, construction, technology - you name it] is.

In the end, top performers are the ones at the top not because they are just excellent at what they do. They are also excellent because they know what not to get in their way. As leaders, the process is simple.

1. Manage yourself, your states and responses **impeccably**.
2. Deal with anything and everything *in this state*.
3. Challenge yourself by **doing the same thing consistently** *regardless* the circumstances you are in, including physical pain.
4. Continue to **produce results in spite of these** apparent 'limitations' that you have relegated to just excuses, but never accuse anyone of making them. **Show them more, tell them less.**

You'll end up being more respected, trusted and loved because of how you show up!

Application: Make Amplification a Team Ritual

- **Personal Use:** Amplify your own positive states before key challenges—use before tough conversations, big decisions, or when your team needs you to set the tone.
- **With Teams:** In meetings, ask, “When have we felt most resourceful as a team? What did that look, sound, and feel like? How can we dial that up right now?”
- **Culture Building:** Normalize talking about positive state amplification. Make “turning up” hope, energy, and confidence a routine part of your team’s rituals (see doc_6: “Leaders who show appreciation for their teams create a feedback loop of positivity”).

How This Ties Back and Sets the Stage for Leadership Mastery

In Chapter 2, you learned to recognize and adjust the submodalities that drive motivation or procrastination.

In Chapter 3, you practiced mapping across—transforming negative states by borrowing structure from positive ones.

Now, you’re no longer firefighting the negative—you’re fueling the positive, and modeling the habit so it spreads.

When amplification becomes a ritual—modeled, narrated, and celebrated by leaders—it’s no longer a technique. It’s the emotional DNA of your culture.

Practice Prompt: Model and Amplify—Out Loud

Take five minutes today:

- Recall your best leadership moment.
- Notice its submodalities.
- Turn up every dial—brighter, closer, warmer, louder, bigger.
- Narrate this process to your team, and invite them to do the same.
- Anchor it. Step into your next challenge with this amplified state—and watch what happens.

In summary

Amplifying the best isn't about wishful thinking or toxic positivity.

It's about making the practice of “turning up” **resourceful** states a visible habit, modeled by you, adopted by your team, and woven into the rituals of your culture. High-performance isn't just built on fixing problems—it's built on multiplying momentum.

Ready to model the next level of positive energy for your team? Let's make amplification your new leadership reflex.

05

State Control on Demand – The Leader’s Superpower

Priming for Success: Turning State Control into a Leadership Habit

Let’s be direct: your emotional state as a leader is not just personal—it’s organizational. Walk into a room tense, scattered, or anxious, and your team feels it. You might be saying all the right words, but your *state* is what people catch. This is why *priming* is not just a neat trick for yourself, but a non-negotiable leadership habit.

What is Priming?

Priming is the deliberate act of setting your emotional and mental state before you engage—think of it as a pre-performance ritual. Instead of being a victim of circumstance, you choose the state you bring. And here’s the key: when leaders make this visible and repeatable, it becomes contagious.

Example from the Field:

In a merger scenario with massive stress, I had a CEO set a five-minute priming ritual every morning:

- Recall a moment of triumph (to access confidence)
- Visualize the team succeeding
- Physically shift posture to “stand tall”

When this became a *daily habit* (not just a crisis move), the CEO noticed smoother meetings, faster decisions, and a team that mirrored his composure.

Anchoring Peak States: Making Confidence and Calm Instantly Accessible

Anchoring is an NLP technique—a way to “install” a peak state so you can access it on demand. It’s the mental equivalent of setting a hotkey for your best self.

How to Anchor:

1. Recall a peak state—e.g., a time you felt unstoppable.
2. Intensify it: Make images brighter, sounds louder, sensations stronger (submodalities from Chapter 2).
3. Apply a unique trigger (squeeze your fist, tap your fingers).
4. Repeat, so the trigger reliably brings back the state.

Why Does This Matter?

Leaders who use anchoring before big moments (presentations, tough conversations, crisis meetings) don’t just “hope” to be confident—they *choose* it, and teams start modeling those micro-habits of resilience.

Making State Shifts a Team Habit

Managing your own emotions is important, but the leadership leap happens when you *teach and model* state control as a team ritual. Here’s how you institutionalize it:

- **Normalize “State Talk”:**

Make it part of the language. Ask, “What state do we need for this project?” or “Let’s shift gears before we dive in.”

- **Demonstrate Vulnerability:**

Share your own state shifts. (“I was feeling overwhelmed, so I took a walk to reset.”)

- **Embed Quick State Shifts into Routines:**

- Start meetings with a grounding exercise (e.g., one deep breath together, quick gratitude round, sharing a win).
- Use pattern interrupts if tension rises (stand up, use humor, take a break).
- Practice micro-anchoring (a power pose, a chosen mantra).

- **Ritualize State Calibration:**

Establish a “state check-in” at the start of each project sprint or key meeting.

Case in Point:

At a global services firm, we built a “state calibration” ritual at the start of every sprint—teams checked their emotional readiness, shared the state they needed, and primed together. Over six months, productivity and morale soared, and attrition dropped.

Tracking and Measuring the Impact of Habitual State Control

Habitual state management isn't just "nice to have"—it's measurable:

- **Engagement Surveys:**

Teams with regular state rituals report higher psychological safety and trust.

- **Performance Metrics:**

Meetings run more efficiently, decision cycles shorten, and positive feedback loops emerge.

- **Resilience Scores:**

Teams show faster recovery from setbacks and greater innovation.

- **Attrition & Burnout:**

Regular state checks reduce burnout and decrease unwanted turnover.

Pro Tip: Make state check-ins part of project debriefs. Track not just what got done, but how people *felt* doing it. Over time, you'll see the correlation between habitual state rituals and team performance.

From Personal Superpower to Cultural Signature

State control is most powerful when it's habitually modeled by leaders and ritualized by teams. When you make state shifts a visible, repeatable practice, you create a culture where resilience, focus, and optimism become the default settings.

Remember: You can't control every outcome, but **you can always control the state you bring**—and you can teach your people to do the same.

Next Up:

We'll move from state to habit: how to rewire automatic behaviors and create lasting change using the Swish Pattern and other advanced tools. For now, challenge yourself and your team to utilize the Swish Pattern.

- What triggers do you want as primers for positive and energized states?
- What specific state can help you today that you can choose, anchor, and amplify today?
- How will you model and ritualize it so your team catches the habit?

Let's make state control not just your superpower, but the heartbeat of your leadership culture.

06

Rewiring Habits – Introducing the Swish Pattern

Why Willpower Isn't Enough for Sustainable Habit Change

If breaking habits was just about trying harder, every leader (and every team) would already be operating at their absolute best.

But you've seen it—maybe in yourself, and definitely in your people—willpower alone rarely delivers sustainable change.

Habits, whether empowering or limiting, are not just behaviors. They're **internal programs**, coded deep in the brain, running on autopilot.

And you know, if I *just* “lead by example”, it will become easier for people to look at me and say that I'm different.

If you look at a leader who is well put together, it would look like a miracle right?

Energized, pleasant, articulate, confident, humble... all dream traits.

Yet, ask others to be like him or her, and it will be impossible.

At least impossible without the underlying cognitive-emotional process that can get them there.

So of course, it will seem like it's impossible at first.

Yet, every magic trick that wows an audience initially always begins with a step by step process that you practice!

As we've discussed, every reaction, emotion, and habit is shaped by the *submodalities*—the structure of our mental images, sounds, and feelings.

Willpower tries to override these patterns at the surface, but unless you change the coding underneath, the old habit will keep resurfacing, especially when you're tired, distracted, or stressed.

Leader Story: “When I Shared My Habit Journey...”

A few years ago, I found myself procrastinating on giving tough feedback—a classic avoidance habit, despite knowing better!

Instead of pretending I had it all figured out, I shared my struggle with my leadership team.

I walked them through how I used the Swish Pattern on myself: identifying the trigger (the knot in my stomach), creating a new confident mental image, and rehearsing the “swish” until my response shifted.

Not only did this break my own avoidance cycle, but it set the tone for my team—suddenly, experimenting with habit change became normal.

The Swish Pattern Explained: A Leader's Step-by-Step Guide

The Swish Pattern is a rapid, brain-based way to reprogram automatic responses.

It's especially useful when you want to transform an unhelpful habit (like dread before a tough project, or hesitation before a sales call) into a more resourceful one.

Here's how it works, in practice:

1. Identify the Trigger Image

What is the very first image or feeling that pops up when you think about the habit you want to change? (e.g., a messy, chaotic desk triggering procrastination.)

2. Notice the Submodalities

Is it big or small? Close or far? Bright or dull? What sound or feeling is attached?

3. Create a Compelling Replacement Image

Imagine how you *want* to feel and behave instead. Make this image bright, close, vivid, and full of positive emotion.

4. Swish!

Bring up the old trigger image.

Then, in one quick motion, “swish” out the trigger and “swish” in the new, positive image up—make it big, bright, full-sensory, breathe the way you would breathe as if this new state is happening now.

5. Break the state before starting the next cycle, even faster.

Repeat this cycle 7-21 times, testing once you feel the “high” of the swish fades, and you experience taking this new visualized emotion or behavior as if it is normal.

6. Test for the Shift

Think about the old trigger—notice if the new, resourceful response pops up more automatically.

Why This Works (and the Science Behind It)

The Swish Pattern works because it literally *recodes* the submodalities—the fine details—of your experience.

The “swish” is both a neurological interruption and a replacement.

Over time (and with repetition), your brain automatically links the old trigger to the new, empowering response.

It's not just about “thinking positive.” It's about giving your nervous system a new default—one that serves your goals, your team, and your culture.

Modeling Habit Change: The Ultimate Leadership Move

You already know how the storytelling structure works with *mapping across* as a strategy.

But how about the Swish Pattern?

- **Practice the Swish on yourself first.**

Notice how quickly your brain “gets the message.”

- **You can make it deliberate practice.**

It's a 5-minute exercise that can shift months of avoidance or anxiety. Get them to visualize a trigger, then link it to a specific state that leads to a positive behavior.

- **You can structure it as a A -> B storyline.**

You actually see Swish triggers everywhere. A “no littering” sign. A pedestrian crossing. A pink or black ribbon. All these *signal* certain **expected behaviors**. Why not do this with your team?

I remember a student of my NLP class (who was a school principal at the time) who knew, year on year, that a group of students who were high strung would potentially hyperventilate, need medical attention and fail their exams.

About 2 months prior to the exams, she announced at the morning assembly that she would put up two scrolls of Chinese calligraphy that she procured from a well-known calligrapher.

She explained the meaning (*I forget the exact phrase itself, but it was about inner strength and personal fortitude*) and stated why she believed in her students.

I remember what she said she told them. *“When you look at these words, remember yourself filled with the inner strength and confidence that I know you already have within you.”*

She literally put up these scrolls as confidence anchors in the examination hall where all of them took the major exams. That year, there were zero cases of hyperventilation.

Interesting, isn't it?

Remember: Willpower might get you started, but changing the structure of your internal experience—and *modeling* that change—is what keeps progress sustainable. The Swish Pattern is your shortcut to rewiring habits from the inside out.

Ready to see the Swish Pattern in action for your team? Let's schedule a demonstration or a guided workshop. When leaders go first, teams follow—and that's how new habits, and new results, take root for good.

07

Dismantling Limiting Beliefs – Unlocking Hidden Potential

From Hidden Scripts to Habitual Beliefs

Building on what you've learned so far, we've explored how submodalities shape emotional states, how to map across and rewire habits, and how leaders can trigger powerful internal shifts for themselves and their teams. Now, we're tackling one of the most stubborn (and often invisible) barriers to high performance: *limiting beliefs*—not just as isolated thoughts, but as habitual patterns of perception that quietly set the ceiling on what your team believes is possible.

The Reality of “Belief Habits”

Limiting beliefs aren't usually one-off moments of doubt: they're *habitual narratives*—the internal scripts and stories we tell ourselves (and each other) so often that they become the default operating system.

For example:

- “We just aren't a creative team.”
- “Our market is too tough for real growth.”
- “I'm not cut out for leadership.”
- “Mistakes will ruin my reputation.”

These aren't just private doubts; they're often *modeled* and reinforced by leaders—sometimes unintentionally. Shift your focus from ‘What can I gain?’ to ‘How can we grow together?’

This mindset change can transform how you approach leadership.” When you, as a leader, habitually reframe obstacles as opportunities or model new ways of thinking about challenges, your team unconsciously absorbs these belief habits and makes them their own.

Basic Reframing – Adopting Alternative Perspectives

Reframing is the art of seeing the same situation from a different, more empowering angle. Simple in theory, powerful in practice, but—as you’ve probably noticed in real conversations—it’s rarely enough to just tell someone to “see it differently.” Reframing is most effective when it’s done in dialogue, not as a one-size-fits-all script.

Activity: Spot the Habitual Belief

Purpose: To help your team (and yourself) surface the limiting belief “habits” that are running below the radar, especially those modeled by leadership.

Try this in a team meeting:

1. List Common “Stories” or Phrases

- “We always struggle with deadlines.”
- “That client never listens.”
- “We’re not the kind of people who...”

2. Ask:

- Where did this belief come from?
- When do we hear it the most?
- Who tends to reinforce it—and who challenges it?

3. Reframe Together:

- What might be possible if we didn't hold this belief?
- What's a more empowering story we could try on for the next project?
- How would a high-performing team talk about this challenge?

Case in Point

A client team I worked with was stuck in a cycle of “We're not innovative—other departments get all the good ideas.”

When a leader began to habitually ask, “What have we tried before that almost worked, and how could we build on it?”—the team started to see themselves as experimenters, not just “non-innovators.”

Over a few months, the language (and the behaviors) shifted accordingly.

How Leaders' Reframing Habits Become Team Defaults

Reframing isn't just a one-off “think positive” pep talk. It's a *habit*—the regular act of questioning assumptions, offering alternative perspectives, and narrating challenges in new ways.

Encourage open communication: Create a safe space where team members feel comfortable sharing ideas without fear of reprisal. Trust me—people work better when they're not bracing for impact.

Practical Example

Let's say a team member says, "I'm always anxious before presentations."

A leader who habitually reframes might respond, "That's the same physiological state as excitement—how could you channel that energy?"

Over time, this creates a culture where belief habits are flexible, not fixed.

Single-Word Reframing: Micro-Shifts, Macro-Impact

Words matter. Provide constructive feedback that focuses on potential rather than shortcomings. Sometimes, the smallest shift—a single word—can destabilize a limiting belief and open up new possibilities.

- "Failure" becomes "learning."
- "Mistake" becomes "experiment."
- "Weakness" becomes "development area."
- "Overwhelmed" becomes "challenged."

Each reframe is a micro-habit, and when leaders model this consistently, the team's emotional tone and self-talk start to shift.

Example Table: Single Word Reframing for Leaders

We know that leadership strength and people-forward talent practices within organizations are crucial. Then what will enable the program to be successful?

Original Label	Reframed Word	Impact on Meaning/Emotion
Lazy	Deliberate	Shifts from negative judgment to intentional pause; "I'm not lazy, I'm being deliberate about rest or reflection."
Anxious	Excited	Reframes nervous energy as anticipation; "I'm not anxious, I'm excited for what's coming."
Harsh	Determined	Turns criticism into assertiveness; "That feedback wasn't harsh, it was determined."
Insensitive	Focused	Moves from disregard for others to single-mindedness; "Not insensitive, focused on the goal."

Original Label	Reframed Word	Impact on Meaning/Emotion
Disgusting	Acquired Taste	Reframes aversion as a matter of exposure or preference; “It’s not disgusting, it’s an acquired taste.”
Violent	Action-packed	Neutralizes aggression into energy or intensity; “Not violent, but action-packed.”

A Note of Caution

Not every reframe will “land” for every person.

The new word or story must feel plausible—otherwise, it can feel dismissive or fake. That’s why you can take time to understand your team members’ perspectives and challenges. Empathy isn’t just good leadership—it’s *good humanity*.

Dialogue, curiosity, and genuine listening are what make reframing stick.

Team Exercise: Spot, Surface, and Shift

Purpose:

Make *belief habits* visible—and create space for new ones.

How to do it:

1. As a team, list 3-5 recurring negative labels or stories you use about your work, clients, or yourselves.
2. For each, brainstorm a possible single-word or short-phrase reframe.
3. Try using these reframes in meetings or in your own self-talk for a week. Notice how the emotional and behavioral climate changes.
4. Debrief: What felt authentic? What shifted? What resistance did you notice?

How to Use This in Leadership

1. Self-Talk:

Notice your own labels. When you catch yourself thinking, “I’m so lazy,” try: “What if I’m actually just being deliberate about recovery right now?”

2. Feedback and Coaching:

When a team member says, “I’m always anxious before presentations,” offer: “That’s the same physiological state as excitement—can you channel that energy?”

3. Cultural Conversations:

Shift the narrative in team meetings. Instead of, “That was a harsh review,” try, “That was determined feedback focused on improvement.”

Quick Exercise for Your Team

List five negative labels you or your team commonly use (e.g., lazy, anxious, scattered).

Brainstorm single-word reframes for each.

Try them on in conversation and notice the impact on emotion and behavior.

Why This Matters for Senior Leaders

When you change the language and narratives around challenges, you lower resistance, unlock new behaviors, and model a growth mindset. As seen in the documents, “When leaders cultivate enterprise self-efficacy, the impact extends far beyond themselves: Teams become more confident and proactive because they trust their leader’s vision.”

The real power comes when you *model* the habit of questioning, challenging, and updating beliefs—out loud, in real time. When you do this, you don’t just unlock your own potential; you give your team permission to do the same.

In summary

Limiting beliefs are rarely just individual quirks—they’re collective habits, shaped and reinforced by leadership modeling. By spotting, surfacing, and reframing these belief habits publicly and consistently, you create a culture where potential isn’t capped by yesterday’s stories. Instead, you unlock a new level of performance, confidence, and creativity—one belief habit at a time.

08

Using Submodalities to Soften and Reshape Beliefs

As you've progressed through the previous chapters, you've begun to see your inner world not as a fixed landscape, but as a dynamic, editable environment. We started with the foundational concept of **submodalities**—those subtle building blocks of experience that determine how intensely we feel, remember, and react to situations. You've learned how the *brightness, distance, size, and clarity* of a mental image, as well as the *tone and location* of an internal voice or the *quality of a bodily sensation*, can amplify or diminish your emotional states.

From there, you practiced **mapping across** submodalities: taking the structure of an empowered or resourceful state and applying it to a less helpful one. You saw how, by adjusting the internal “settings” of a memory or a challenge, you could shift from stress to focus, from hesitation to action.

Building on that, you were introduced to the **Swish Pattern**—a powerful process for rewiring habits and automatic responses by rapidly replacing an old, limiting experience with a vivid, preferred alternative. Through repeated swishes, you learned how to weaken the pull of procrastination, anxiety, or self-doubt, and strengthen the neural pathways associated with confidence and momentum.

With each chapter, you've moved from *awareness* to *agency*:

- You don't just notice your internal experience—you can now *design* it.
- You don't just react to old patterns—you can now *update* them with intention.

Mindfulness as a Modeled Habit

Now, it's time to apply these tools to one of the most influential forces in our leadership and professional lives: beliefs. And here, a critical shift for leaders is to treat mindfulness and submodality adjustment not as a one-off personal exercise, but as a visible, repeatable practice. When leaders narrate how they notice, soften, and rewire their own limiting beliefs, they create psychological permission for their teams to do the same. This is mindfulness as a modeled habit—"Here's what I caught myself thinking, here's how I softened it, and here's what changed."

Beliefs are not just abstract ideas; they are coded in the same submodalities you've been working with. A belief like "I'll never make a good speaker" isn't just a sentence—it's a high-definition mental movie, a booming inner critic, a gut-level sensation. The more intense these submodalities, the more convincing and limiting the belief becomes.

In this chapter, I'll walk you through the inner workings of Linda's thoughts as an executive leader, who faces the challenge of building her gravitas due to many years of self-doubt, a feeling of imposter syndrome, and a pressure to conform to societal norms.

Illustration: Belief Swish in Action

Meet Linda:

Linda is a mid-senior level executive who dreads public speaking. She holds a stubborn belief: “I will never make a good speaker.” This belief is currently at a 9/10 intensity—it hijacks her confidence, keeps her from volunteering for presentations, and leaves her stuck whenever opportunities arise.

Step 1: Identify the Limiting Belief (Image A)

Linda closes her eyes and thinks about speaking at her company’s annual meeting. The belief, “I’ll never make a good speaker,” pops up instantly.

When Linda closes her eyes and the thought, “I’ll never make a good speaker,” flashes into her mind, a cascade of well-researched psychological dynamics begins to shape her real-world outcomes—often without her even noticing.

- **Belief Intensity:** 9/10

Step 2: Notice the Submodalities

- **Visual:** The mental image is a huge, high-definition picture of herself on stage, frozen, with an audience staring blankly. The image is close, looming, and harshly lit.
- **Auditory:** There’s a booming, critical inner voice repeating, “You’re going to mess up. Everyone will see you fail.”
- **Kinesthetic:** Her chest feels tight, her stomach clenches, and there’s a heavy weight on her shoulders.

The **Golem Effect** tells us that negative expectations, whether from others or, as in Linda's case, from herself, can actually lower performance; as she convinces herself she'll struggle, her brain and body start to act it out, making poor results more likely. Layer onto that the **negativity bias**—our evolutionary tendency to focus more on threats and past mistakes than on successes—and Linda's mind is primed to recall every awkward moment or fumbled word, fueling anxiety and avoidance.

Finally, according to **self-efficacy theory**, her belief in her ability to succeed is a critical predictor of actual performance; if she's convinced she's destined to fail, her motivation to prepare, persist, and recover from minor setbacks drops dramatically. In essence, Linda's limiting belief isn't just a private worry—it's a self-fulfilling prophecy, quietly scripting her behavior, her emotional state, and ultimately, her results on stage.

The key to unlocking the chains around her mental prison is to loosen the shackles that hold her in a stuck state. She must change the way she perceives her situation.

Only by doing that will she gain the momentum to enhance her gravitas. But not so much as to create arrogance: just enough for her to break free in a way that is wholesome and respectable.

Step 3: Soften the Submodalities

Linda now deliberately dials down the intensity:

- **Visual:** She makes the image smaller, pushes it farther away, and dims the lighting. Now, it feels like watching a scene from across the street rather than being in the spotlight.
- **Auditory:** She turns the critical voice down to a whisper, then changes its tone to something silly—like a cartoon character muttering nonsense.
- **Kinesthetic:** She imagines the tightness in her chest dissolving, her stomach relaxing, and the heaviness floating away.

She checks in:

- **Belief Intensity:** Now it's around 3/10. The thought, "I'll never make a good speaker," is still there, but it feels distant and less convincing. It's more of a nudge to prepare than a crushing verdict.
- **This new, manageable version is locked in as Image B.**

Harvard's Ellen Langer, often called the "mother of mindfulness," doesn't advocate mindfulness as a passive, zoning-out meditation, but as *active noticing*—a conscious, curious engagement with the present moment. In her research, especially as highlighted in her book *Counterclockwise*, she shows that when we bring fresh attention to what's happening right now, we disrupt the automatic scripts and habitual perceptions that typically shape our reality.

Now, overlay this with the NLP concept of submodalities—the fine details of our internal experience: the brightness, size, distance, and intensity of our mental images, the volume and tone of our inner voices, and the sensations in our bodies.

These “settings” are rarely questioned; they’re just accepted as “how things are.” But they profoundly color our world—often amplifying stress, anxiety, or limitation without us realizing it.

When we apply Langer’s approach—*mindfully noticing* and *diminishing* these submodalities—we do two things:

1. We break automaticity.

Mindfulness, in Langer’s sense, includes catching ourselves in the act of being mindless—of running old patterns without question. When you notice that your anxious image is huge and close, for example, you’re no longer *inside* the emotion; you’re *observing* it. This alone creates a tiny but powerful gap where change becomes possible.

2. We create psychological flexibility.

By intentionally adjusting submodalities—making that harsh image smaller, turning down the inner critic’s volume, softening the bodily tension—you learn that your perception isn’t fixed. As Langer’s work shows, this kind of mindful engagement makes us more adaptive, creative, and resilient, because we stop mistaking our internal “settings” for objective reality.

How to Model Mindful Habit Change

As a leader, you can make this process visible:

- Narrate your own “softening” in meetings: “I caught myself running an old belief just now and decided to shrink it and turn down the volume. It’s amazing how quickly the pressure drops.”
- Encourage your team to share their own adjustments, making it a safe, normal part of your culture.
- Build micro-habits of mindful noticing and submodality adjustment into your leadership rituals—such as before key meetings, after feedback sessions, or when preparing for new challenges.

In practice, when leaders and professionals learn to mindfully diminish unhelpful submodalities, they literally change their experience of stress, pressure, or fear. The world looks, sounds, and feels less overwhelming. And as you become more skilled at this, you start to realize: “If I can change how I code this experience, I can change my response—and possibly the outcome.”

This is the true shift that Langer’s mindfulness and NLP’s submodality work offer:

You stop being a passive recipient of your perceptions and start becoming an active shaper of them. In leadership, that’s the difference between reacting to the world and intentionally leading within it.

Step 4: Swish Pattern

Now, Linda uses Image A (the old, intense belief) as the trigger. She brings up Image A briefly, then quickly “swishes” Image B (the softened version) into place:

- As soon as she sees the old, overwhelming image, she mentally “slides” the new, distant, dimmer image over it—like swapping one slide for another in a presentation.
- She repeats this 7 times, fast, each time letting Image B replace Image A even more fluidly.

After 7 repetitions, she tests:

She tries to think of the belief, “I’ll never make a good speaker,” and finds that her mind now defaults to the quieter, less intense version.

She repeats the swish several more times (up to 14), each time feeling more detached from the old intensity.

Step 5: Test and Anchor the Shift

After the final test, when Linda thinks about public speaking, she notices:

- The harsh, close-up image is gone.
- The voice is faint, almost comical.
- The physical tension is minimal—she actually feels a bit curious, even motivated, about how she could improve.

The belief now sits at a functional 2-3/10:

It’s just enough to remind her to prepare and practice, but no longer enough to sabotage her confidence or block her actions.

Why This Works

As shown in the process, this method doesn't try to erase all self-doubt (which can have a motivational benefit), but it systematically *reduces* the emotional “charge” so that it becomes a constructive prompt instead of a crippling obstacle. By shifting the submodalities and locking in the change with the swish, Linda's brain learns to associate speaking with possibility and preparation, rather than overwhelming fear.

As with emotions and habits, beliefs have structure. You don't just *think* “I'm not good at sales”—you see, *hear*, and *feel* it.

Activity: Diminishing Heightened Beliefs

1. Identify a limiting belief.

(“I'll never get promoted.” Call this Image A)

2. How strong on a scale of 1 to 10 is this belief?

3. Notice the submodalities.

- Visual: Is the mental image big, close, bright?
- Auditory: Is there a loud, critical voice?
- Kinesthetic: Is the feeling heavy, tight, or intense?

4. Soften the submodalities.

- Adjust the submodalities until they are at a more comfortable level (e.g. from 10/10 to 3/10)
 - i. Make the image smaller, farther away, dimmer.
 - ii. Turn the voice down, make it slow or even silly.
 - iii. Imagine the feeling getting lighter or moving away.

5. Lock in the softened belief as Image B

6. Follow up with a Swish Pattern.

- Using Image A as the trigger, carry out the Swish Pattern
- Take the Swish and send Image A out, and send Image B in.
- Repeat 7 to 21 times.
- At each 7th, do a test and check the belief by recalling the limiting belief and notice how intense the submodalities are.
- If they are still intense, continue the swish from Image A to B until the test elicits Image B.

In summary

Mindful submodality work is not just a technique, but a leadership habit—one that gains exponential power when modeled out loud. By making your noticing, softening, and shifting process visible and repeatable, you give permission to your team to do the same. Over time, this builds a culture of psychological flexibility, resilience, and possibility—one belief at a time.

09

Mapping Across to Absolute Belief

Some beliefs are unshakeable (“The sun will rise tomorrow”). What if you could transfer that sense of certainty to an area of self-doubt? Wouldn't that make you feel unstoppable?

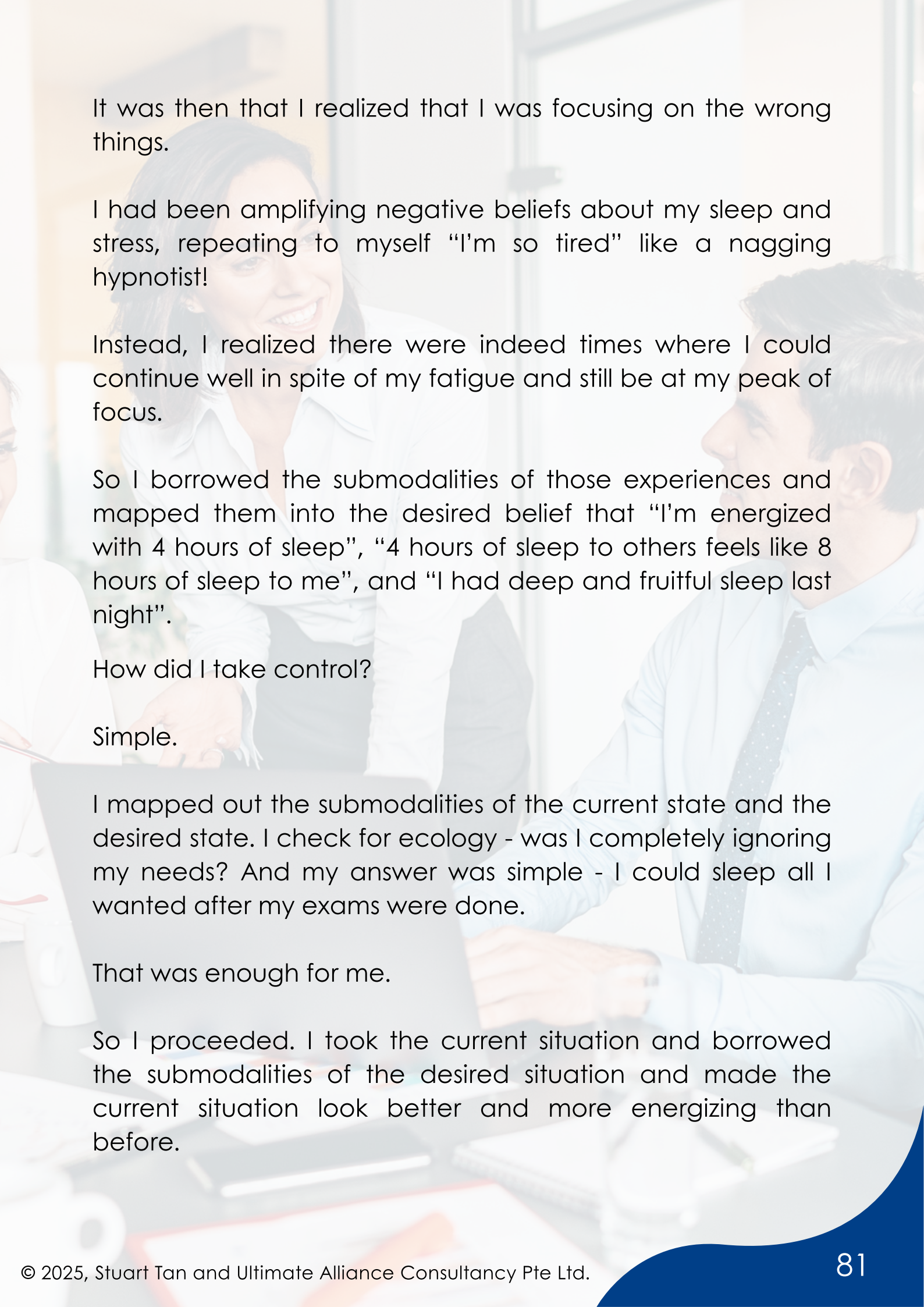
That's what I originally doubted. After all, how far can you push the extent of belief, right? Well, I remember feeling a tremendous amount of pressure from having to study five modules in my third year at the university.

I was clocking about 4-5 hours of rest and this was just the first week of studying for the exams which would take place in another 8 weeks' time. I couldn't see how much further I could stretch.

Then a voice inside me went: “hey, what if we tried something different?”

So I took out my NLP materials and began to explore the possibility of shifting my belief about sleep. Instead of thinking that I don't have enough sleep and constantly focusing on that, how about leaning into the belief that I did have a decent amount and that was sufficient for me to sustain myself?

The trouble was that I needed a reference point. When was the last time where I had insufficient sleep but yet was energized and continued my work through the day?



It was then that I realized that I was focusing on the wrong things.

I had been amplifying negative beliefs about my sleep and stress, repeating to myself “I’m so tired” like a nagging hypnotist!

Instead, I realized there were indeed times where I could continue well in spite of my fatigue and still be at my peak of focus.

So I borrowed the submodalities of those experiences and mapped them into the desired belief that “I’m energized with 4 hours of sleep”, “4 hours of sleep to others feels like 8 hours of sleep to me”, and “I had deep and fruitful sleep last night”.

How did I take control?

Simple.

I mapped out the submodalities of the current state and the desired state. I check for ecology - was I completely ignoring my needs? And my answer was simple - I could sleep all I wanted after my exams were done.

That was enough for me.

So I proceeded. I took the current situation and borrowed the submodalities of the desired situation and made the current situation look better and more energizing than before.

	Desired State: Good Sleep	Current state: Bad Sleep
Situation	Uninterrupted	Interrupted, difficulty falling back to sleep, waking up sleepy
State	Pleasant, energized, joyful	Grumpy, whiny
Submodalities	Bright Close Central Panoramic 3D Upright Open Regular pitch	Dark Closer Framed Below eye level 2D Hunched Closed Whiny pitch

My results showed no significant drop in grades from the previous semester when I was getting decent sleep. If anything (anecdotal, of course), my grades were *better* (maybe because I was feeling more driven and purpose fuelled).

I then used the *Swish pattern* to lock in the new belief by taking the old way I viewed the current situation and mapped it into the new way I viewed the current situation. And voila, I went about my day feeling really good.

In your situation, this message may need better guidance because you might have other ecological considerations for your behaviors.

Not all people should change their beliefs to sleep less. Sometimes, though, it may not be a choice because you have young children, and have to handle the belief about your sleep for more than just a few months.

Why Beliefs Change

So if you're hanging around a group of people who tell you how ugly you are, and you believe them, you're being inundated with belief patterns in language that influence you to hold that standard.

Then, when someone comes along and says you're gorgeous, it will be hard to accept, almost like they are lying,

Remember: just as positive beliefs take mindful awareness and reflection to find evidence and internalize. it's also just a matter of time and community before the next negative belief comes creeping through your mental doors. Guard that door with your life!

Modeling Certainty for Your Team

If you want your team to “install” habits of certainty, make your process visible. In ambiguous situations, narrate your thought process out loud:

- “I don't know all the answers yet, but I **trust our ability** to figure this out.”

- “It’s easy even for me to get flustered. But let’s focus on what’s worked before—where have we solved problems like this?”

The Habitual Nature of Certainty

Here’s the key: Certainty isn’t just a “feeling” that some people magically have. It’s built up through **habitual self-talk** and repeated experiences—often modeled from others.

Those who seem unshakably confident have usually been practicing certainty, sometimes unconsciously, in how they talk to themselves and what they choose to focus on.

If you pay attention, you’ll notice their language patterns: “I know I’ll figure this out,” “We always find a way,” “I’ve handled worse.”

They’re rehearsing certainty until it becomes second nature.

As a leader, your team is watching for these habits—especially in ambiguous or high-pressure situations.

If you habitually narrate optimism, possibility, and resourcefulness (even when you don’t have all the answers), you’re modeling a transferable certainty that your team can begin to internalize.

“Here’s how I’m choosing to look at this: if we act with what we know, we’ll gain clarity as we go.”

Be explicit about the *habit* of certainty. Share your own mapping process, let people see you shifting your self-talk from doubt to determination, and encourage them to do the same.

Certainty, like any habit, is more easily caught than taught.

Summary of how to do it:

- Think of something you doubt (“I can’t lead big projects”).
- Think of something you absolutely believe (“The sun will rise tomorrow”).
- Notice the submodalities of each (see above).
- Map the submodalities of the absolute belief onto the situation of doubt.
- Make the image as vivid, close, and certain as the absolute belief.
- Notice how the feeling of certainty grows.
- Lock in with a Swish Pattern for extra effect.

The Leader’s Role: Facilitating, Not Fixing

You don’t need to be a therapist to help your team shift beliefs.

Here’s what works:

- Model belief flexibility: Share your own stories of shifting beliefs. Normalize learning and change.

- **Ask powerful questions.** “What else could this mean?” “Who do you know who’s succeeded at this?” “What if the opposite were true?”
- **Create a safe space for experimentation.** Encourage your team to map across submodalities, try new perspectives, and share their shifts.
- **Celebrate new beliefs in action.** Highlight when someone moves past a limiting script and the positive results that follow.

Integrating With Your Leadership Toolkit

You’ve now seen how submodalities, reframing, and the Swish Pattern can work together to dissolve barriers—not just for yourself, but for your whole team. Remember:

- Chapter 2 & 3: You learned to notice and shift internal states.
- Chapter 6: You rewired habits at the source.
- Now: You’re rewriting the scripts that define what’s possible.

This is the heart of unlocking hidden potential—individually and organizationally.

Ready to lead your team past limiting beliefs? Try these activities in your next team meeting, or reach out for a facilitated workshop. The difference between “can’t” and “can” is often just a shift in the mind’s lens—and you now have the tools to adjust the focus.

10 Cognitive-Emotional Leadership in Action

Key Principles of Emotionally Evolved Leadership

Drawing from the frameworks and models developed earlier, emotionally evolved leaders:

- **Demonstrate Empathy as a Habit**

Regularly check in on team members' emotional states, not just their output. Empathy becomes a leadership routine, not a one-off event.

- **Model Authenticity as a Daily Practice**

Provide clear, honest feedback and create psychological safety. Make transparency and vulnerability observable habits in team interactions.

- **Practice Adaptability as a Leadership Reflex**

Adjust leadership style to meet the situation—coaching, directing, supporting, or delegating as needed. Show that flexibility is a daily, repeatable behavior.

- **Master Conversational Intelligence as a Team Culture**

Use active listening, emotional regulation, and reframing to transform every interaction. Make these skills visible and replicable—invite your team to reflect, debrief, and model them for each other.

- **Anchor Resilience and Morale as Shared Rituals**

Use deliberate priming and anchoring to generate positive emotional states, especially in challenging times. Establish rituals (like a shared gesture, mantra, or story) that anchor collective resilience.

1. Applying State Management to Difficult Conversations & Team Conflict

Why it matters

Your emotional state sets the tone and outcome for every conversation—especially the tough ones. If you enter a conflict conversation anxious or defensive, you broadcast it (consciously or not), and the team mirrors your tension.

Illustration: A Difficult Conversation in Action

Scenario

Sam, a team lead, needs to address recurring missed deadlines with Alex, a high-performing but currently overwhelmed team member.

Preparation (State Management)

Sam recognizes his own tension. Before the meeting, he uses mindfulness—a deep breath, visualizing his “calm and constructive” self, noticing his posture.

He adjusts submodalities: If he sees the conversation as big, scary, and looming, he mentally shrinks the internal image, moves it further away, and softens the lighting.

He self-anchors: Remembers a time he handled a tough talk well, feeling the confidence in his chest, breathing in that resourceful state.

During the Conversation

Sam opens with empathy: “Alex, I notice you’ve seemed under pressure lately. I want to understand what’s happening.” He uses active listening: Not just hearing words, but tuning into Alex’s tone, pace, and micro-expressions (submodalities in action).

He names the facts in an empathetic manner: “In the last month, three deadlines have slipped. I want to support you, but also need us to address it.” When Alex responds defensively, Sam maintains his regulated state. He grounds himself physically (feet flat, slow breath) and reframes internally: “This is about understanding, not blame.”

Closure

They co-create a plan. Sam summarizes: “Here’s what we’ve agreed. Let’s check in weekly.”

He closes by appreciating Alex’s openness, anchoring the positive end to a tough talk.

Result

Sam’s managed state, empathy, and submodality awareness diffuse tension, allow honest problem-solving, and preserve trust.

2. Using Anchoring and Priming to Boost Team Morale

Anchoring as a Team Ritual

Deliberate creation of resourceful states as a repeated, visible practice. Before a challenging project, a leader might say, “Let’s remember the last time we pulled together and delivered against the odds,” while inviting the team to recall and physically anchor those emotions (a gesture, a word, a shared ritual).

Priming as a Meeting Habit

Set the mental “frame” before every meeting: “Today, let’s focus on solutions, not just problems.” Use stories, visual cues (images of past successes), or even playlist music to shift the team’s emotional climate.

Practical Example

During a tough quarter, the leader starts each meeting by sharing a 2-minute story of overcoming adversity, then asks the team to recall a personal win that week. This primes the room for resilience and action.

3. Active Listening Enhanced by Submodality Awareness

Active Listening as a Habit

Leaders don’t just “listen.” They make it a routine to notice how things are said: Is the team member’s voice flat or energized? Are their words fast and pressured, or slow and deliberate? By tuning into these submodalities, leaders can ask better questions: “I noticed you went quiet when we mentioned the project. What’s coming up for you?”

This subtle awareness builds trust, surfaces hidden issues, and prevents blind spots from derailing performance.

4. Summary Table: Principles and Applications

Principle	Application Example	Practical Outcome
State Management	Leader self-regulates before tough conversation	Less defensiveness, more openness
Anchoring	Recall past wins before big challenges	Team enters resourceful state
Priming	Set intention for optimism/solutions in meetings	Elevated morale, creative thinking
Active Listening + Submodalities	Notice tone, pace, and energy shifts in team	Surfaces issues early, builds trust
Conversational Intelligence	Use SBI, empathy mapping, reframing	More effective, healing conversations

5. Are You Modeling the Right Habits? (Self-Checklist for Leaders)

- Do I routinely narrate my own state management before key meetings?
- Do I make team anchoring or priming exercises a visible, shared ritual?
- Do I habitually demonstrate active listening, including picking up on submodalities?
- Do I share stories of my own learning, reframing, and adaptability with my team?
- Do I encourage others to model these practices, not just as techniques but as habits?

6. Why This Matters (and the Metrics)

Teams led by emotionally evolved leaders are measurably more engaged, resilient, and innovative. Trust scores, retention, and self-reported morale rise when leaders model these principles as habits—not just one-off interventions. Conflict becomes a springboard for growth, not a trigger for disengagement.

7. Key Skills Required

- Mindful self-awareness (noticing your state and submodalities)
- Active listening with an eye for subtle cues
- Emotional regulation and conversational reframing
- Anchoring and priming techniques (both for self and team)

For more on how to operationalize cognitive-emotional leadership in your team, or to request a practical toolkit or workshop, reach out.

Real transformation starts with how you show up—moment by moment, conversation by conversation, and, most importantly, as a model for the habits you want to see throughout your organization.



11

Leading Through a Culture of Mastery

Do you ever wonder why most culture-change programs feel like a flash in the pan?

We launch a new initiative, schedule a workshop, maybe even hand out a checklist. Everyone nods, takes notes, and then... business as usual. The surface changes, but the undercurrent—the real culture—barely shifts.

I've seen it. I've designed those programs. I've watched them fizzle, too.

Here's what I've learned:

Lasting change doesn't come from "one-off" training. It happens when new thinking and new habits become as normal as breathing—woven into the fabric of daily work. This isn't a toolkit you pull out once a quarter. It's a way of seeing, feeling, deciding, and leading, moment to moment.

Culture is Caught, Not Taught—Through Habits.

Building Sustainable Practices (Not Just Another Training)

If you want mastery, don't ask: "What else can we train?"

Ask: "How will we make this stick—when nobody's watching?"

Habit Rituals for Culture:

- Start meetings with a simple “state check”—what’s the mood in the room, really?
- Make habit reviews and belief shifts a regular conversation, not an awkward confession.
- Normalize talking about what’s happening inside, not just what’s showing up on the dashboard.
- Use debrief circles after key projects: “What habit did we stretch this week? Where did we stumble?”
- Try team-wide belief mapping sessions to surface and reframe collective limitations.

Think of it as shifting from “roll-out” to “ritual.”
Every leader, every team member, every day.

Tools and Templates: Tracking What Really Matters

You don’t need a fancy app to track what’s changing inside your team.

You need simple tools that make the invisible, visible.

- Use a one-minute state meter. “On a scale of 1 to 10, where’s your energy today?”
- Have a habit tracker in your team’s chat. Not to shame, but to celebrate tiny wins and visible effort.
- Keep a running log of “belief shifts” in team retrospectives.

The secret? Make your own process transparent—warts and all.

Narrate your own state shifts and belief changes.
Admit when you're stuck and how you're working through it.
Invite your team to call you out when you slip into old habits.
People don't follow perfect leaders.
They follow real ones.

How to Walk the Talk

- Narrate your own use of tools. “Before this conversation, I anchored myself in a calm state.”
- Invite feedback on your own state and behavior. (“What are you noticing in my approach this week?”)
- Make belief and habit shifts visible—publicly share your own learning curve.
- Celebrate stumbles as much as successes. “Here's where I slipped this week, and what I learned.”
- Consistently use the language of submodalities, mapping, and anchoring in daily dialogue.

Making It Safe to Experiment

The bravest cultures aren't the ones that never fail.
They're the ones where people can say: “I tried something new. It didn't work, but here's what I learned.”

Psychological safety isn't a buzzword. It's what happens when leaders show up real.
Share your own missteps.

Laugh at yourself.
Invite feedback—even if it stings.

No one will dare to risk growing if you never show up and sharpen your own rough edges.

The Leader as Chief Modeler

You are the culture. Not your vision statement. Not your HR policy.

If you want people to use the Performance Code, show them how you use it—warts and all.

- Narrate your own state shifts and belief changes.
- Admit when you're stuck and how you're working through it.
- Invite your team to call you out when you slip into old habits.

People don't follow perfect leaders.
They follow real ones.

Your Next Steps: Committing to Mastery

Here's my challenge—one leader to another:

Pick one practice. Just one.

Maybe it's a daily state check. Maybe it's sharing a belief you're working to shift. Maybe it's admitting when you don't have the answer.

Make it public. Track your stumble and your progress.

Invite your team to join you—not because it's “the program,” but because it's real.

And if you mess up? Good. That's the invitation for a better conversation.

Mastery isn't a finish line. It's a habit. It's a choice to keep looking under the hood, especially when things get uncomfortable.

1. Pick one tool or practice from this book to deepen this month.

Maybe it's a daily state check, a team-wide belief mapping exercise, or simply narrating your own learning more openly.

2. Make it visible.

Share your commitment with your team. Invite others to join, adapt, and build together.

3. Track progress—however imperfectly.

Celebrate effort, not just outcomes. Use setbacks as learning, not evidence of failure.

4. Connect with other leaders.

Start a Cognitive-Emotional Mastery peer group. Share stories, swap templates, and support one another's growth.

5. Keep the conversation alive.

Embed practices in onboarding, feedback, and leadership development programs. Make this the new norm, not a passing fad.

Final Thought

Performance isn't just about what your team does—it's about how they think, feel, and believe. By embedding the Performance Code into your culture, you move beyond productivity hacks and into the realm of genuine, sustainable transformation.

You're not just managing people. You're unlocking human potential—one state, one belief, one conversation at a time.

If you're ready to lead this revolution, reach out.

Let's build a culture of mastery—together.