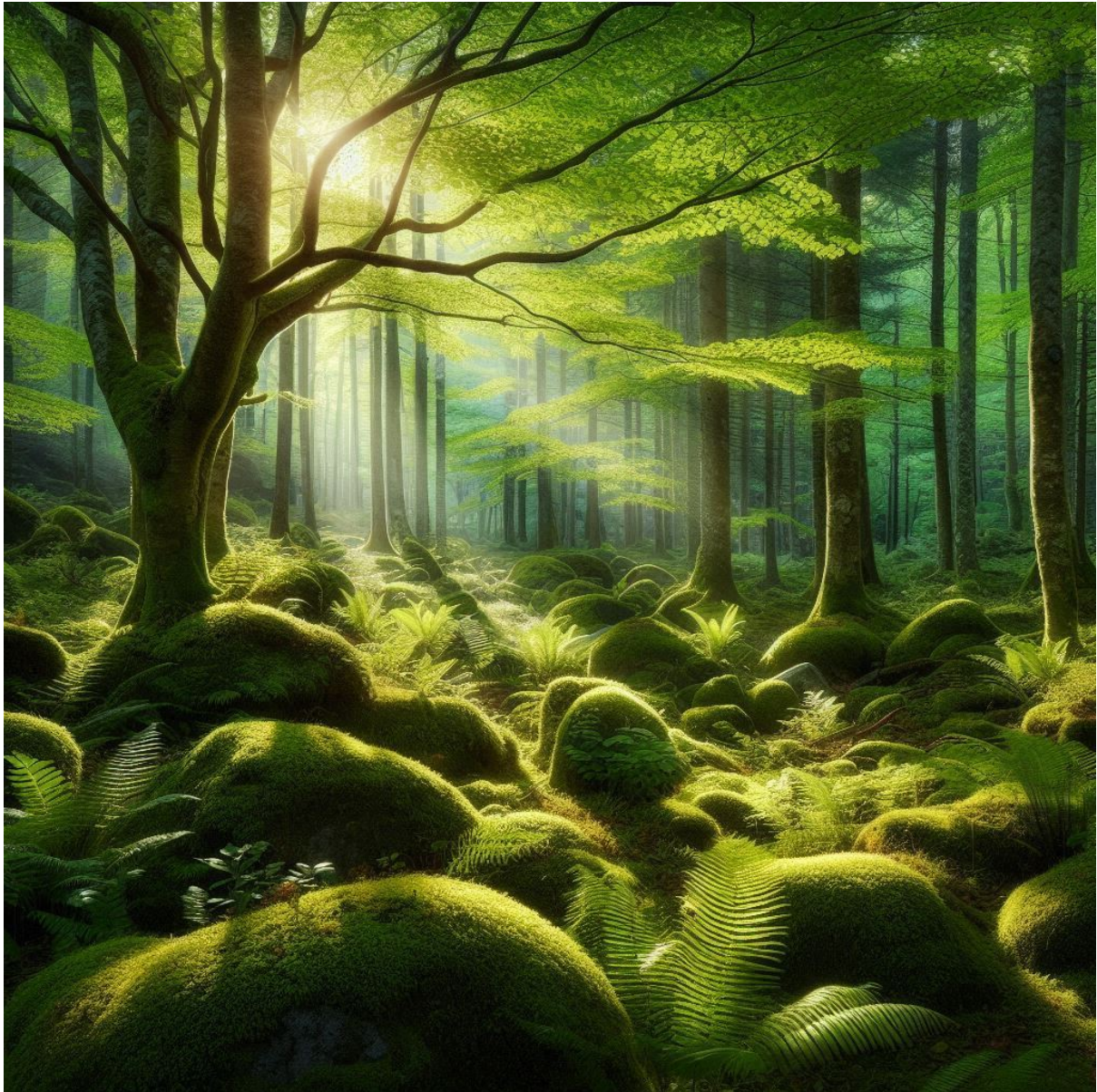


# **Empowered Language Guide**

**Communicate with confidence, clarity & calm**



***By Natural Reinventions***



## Welcome and foundational concepts

Welcome to the **Empowered Language Guide**, a practical tool to shift how you speak to yourself and others. This guide will help you spot disempowering patterns, replace them with stronger practical language, and build small habits that support your professional and personal growth.

### Why empowered language matters: the silent cost

If you often leave conversations feeling unheard, say 'yes' when you mean 'no,' or frequently tell yourself, "I'm a failure", this guide is for you.

Disempowered language is the silent tax on your time, confidence and mental energy. It contributes to:

- Burnout from poor boundaries
- Stagnation from absolute, self-limiting beliefs
- Self-sabotage through negative self-talk.

Words shape thoughts, feelings, behaviour, and ultimately results. Empowered language reverses those patterns and helps you to:

- Build confidence and self-belief
- Reduce overwhelm and mental clutter
- Communicate assertively and clearly
- Open doors to opportunities and better problem-solving
- Support healthier boundaries and decision-making.

This guide draws on positive psychology, verbal judo principles, and communication theories, to give you practical, evidence-based tools you can use now.

### What is Verbal Judo?

Verbal Judo is the professional application of language to defuse emotionally charged conversations and redirect energy toward mutual understanding. Its core idea is to use minimal force to guide dialogue, whilst staying calm, clear and energised.

### Message for you

Well done for downloading this guide, it shows you want better conversations, calmer presence and clearer boundaries. This is a practical toolkit to help you set boundaries, advocate for yourself (and others), handle tricky interactions, and, importantly, speak kindly and productively to yourself.

## 💡 Quick Reflection: Spotting Your Pattern

Before you begin, take a moment to notice your baseline. This is observation, not judgement. Use the simple table below (or copy it into your journal):

Question	Your answer
<b>1. What is the single most common self-defeating phrase you say to yourself?</b> (e.g. "I always mess up")	
<b>2. In a stressful interaction, what is the first disempowering phrase you typically use?</b> (e.g. "Sorry to bother you ...")	
<b>3. How often do you notice yourself and others using negative language?</b> (e.g. never, daily, weekly ...)	

Write brief answers – this small act of noticing is the foundation for change. After reading this guide, you will know how to create an empowered alternative.

### Who am I?

I'm Marianne Moore, and after five reinventions (yes, five!), I've learned a thing or two about bouncing back. Burnout, toxic workplaces, chronic illness - I've done the rounds. I discovered that that one of the simplest, most powerful tools for change is choosing words that lift us up, rather than use words that keep us stuck.

Now I use coaching and empowered positive language to help others reclaim their energy, rediscover their confidence, and shape a life that feels aligned, energising, and full of possibility.

Enjoy the guide,

*Marianne Moore*



Certified Coach  
Matrix Therapist  
NLP Practitioner  
Difference Maker Accelerator





## **Introduction:**

Why Empowered Language Changes Everything.

Reinvention rarely starts with a dramatic change or a perfect plan. It begins with the quiet, powerful conversations you have with yourself every day. Your words, both spoken and internal, shape how you feel, behave, and what you believe you are capable of.

Empowered language is not about fake positivity. It's about choosing words that honour your experience without letting a moment define your identity. That shift moves you from self-criticism to self-awareness, from stuck to forward-moving.

This guide will:

- Show you how to separate identity from experience
- Teach reframing techniques and practical word swaps
- Share body language cues that elevate presence
- Include scripts for common tricky conversations
- Give short exercises to embed the changes.

Think of this as both a companion and a gentle reset button.

Let's begin.



## 1. From self-defeating to empowered language

Most people talk to themselves in ways they would never use with a friend. Harsh judgement, sweeping statements, and identity-based labels create an internal environment where confidence shrinks and fear expands.

Empowered language invites honest naming of experience without dragging your identity into the problem. It's one of the most effective tools for emotional strength, clearer thinking, and sustainable change.

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### Identity vs experience — The foundation of empowered language

When you say “I am...” for negative situations, your brain hears identity; it becomes fixed and shameful. Replacing identity statements with experience statements reduces shame and keeps perspective.

#### Examples

<b>Identity</b>	<b>Experience</b>
“I’m anxious.”	“I’m experiencing anxiety right now.”
<i>“I’m so disorganised.”</i>	<i>“I feel overwhelmed and need a plan.”</i>
<i>“I’m a failure.”</i>	<i>“I made a mistake. I can learn from it.”</i>

These shifts are small yet powerful. They allow you to acknowledge difficulty while protecting your core sense of self.

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### Cognitive reframing and positive psychology

Reframing is not pretending things are fine. It's the art of telling a more accurate, helpful story based on what is true.

Positive psychology has proven that small shifts in language can interrupt spirals of fear, stress, or self-criticism — and open the door to solutions.

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### The “name it, reframe it, choose it” mini method

#### 1. Name it

Identify the feeling or thought.

*“I’m feeling uncertain about this project.”*

## 2. Reframe it

Offer a more balanced, factual framing.

*"It's normal to feel uncertain when I'm doing something new."*

## 3. Choose it

Pick a next step.

*"I'll map out the first two tasks and begin."*

This sequence moves you from threat to clarity to action.

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## Empowered language swaps (quick reference)

Below are common self-defeating phrases and practical alternatives to try immediately:

<b>Self-defeating language</b>	<b>Empowered alternative</b>
I can't do this	I haven't done this yet — I can learn
I always mess things up	I made a mistake, and I can fix it
Everything is going wrong	Some things aren't working — what's the next step?
I'm so bad at this	This is challenging; I'm improving with practice.
I should ...	I can soon ...
I am too ...	I have a unique perspective, because I am ...
I am not good enough	I am capable
I don't want ...[X]	I prefer ...[Y]

These are not about perfection. They're about choosing language that keeps you grounded and able to move forward.

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## When self-defeating language shows up automatically

It is normal for self-defeating phrases to surface when you're:

- tired
- under pressure
- stepping into something new
- worried about judgment
- chasing perfection.

The aim isn't to eliminate these moments; it's to notice them and shift gently. With practice, your empowered language becomes automatic, and confidence grows.

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## Quick Reflection: Spotting Your Pattern

To deepen your awareness, try this quick reflection:

1. **What phrase do you say most often when stressed?**  
(“I’m hopeless at this,” “I can’t deal,” “I always get it wrong,” etc.)
2. **How true is that statement logically?**  
Is it factual or emotional?
3. **What’s a plausible, kinder alternative?**  
(refer to empowered alternatives on previous page)
4. **How would you speak to a friend in this situation?**  
Use that as your guide.

Answering these makes shifting easier.





## 2. The four pillars of empowered language

Empowered language is a system made of four interlocking pillars. Use them as mental models to reframe stress and lead yourself calmly. Most people already do one or two of them naturally — the magic happens when you begin using all four.

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### Pillar 1 — I am NOT my problem (separate identity from experience)

The most common trap of disempowered language is confusing a **temporary experience** with a **permanent identity**. You are not the problem. You are the person navigating the problem.

To stop collapsing temporary experiences into permanent identity, replace “I am ...” with “I did ...” or “I experienced ...”. Some other examples:

<b>Identity</b>	<b>Experience</b>
I am lazy	I procrastinated on that task
I'm bad at math	I struggled with that specific calculation

This preserves self-worth while making problems actionable.

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### Pillar 2 — The power of 'yet' (conditional language)

Absolute statements (“I can't,” “I'll never,” “It's impossible”), close down possibility. The Empowerment: Simply adding “yet”, or “so far” opens the door to growth.

- “I can't do this... **yet**.”
- “I haven't figured it out... **yet**.”
- “I haven't mastered public speaking **yet**”.

Using these, you introduce the concept of future possibility. This is more than optimism. It's neuroplasticity-friendly language that signals to your brain: *“Stay curious. Keep learning. This is not the end of the story.”*

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### Pillar 3 — Facts over feelings (truth vs. drama)

It is easy to dramatize or exaggerate an experience. Exaggeration amplifies anxiety. Use specificity and facts to ground your feelings.

<b>Drama</b>	<b>Facts</b>
My boss hates me	My boss provided critical feedback on ...
I always mess things up	I made a mistake on that specific task
Everyone is judging me	Some people have a different opinion

Grounding feelings in facts reduces drama and leads to clearer action.

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## Pillar 4 — Practice self-compassion (the friend rule)

Would you say this to a friend? If not, don't say it to yourself.

Acknowledge, then redirect to action.

The "Friend Test": What would I say to my best friend in this moment?  
(e.g. "take a breath, you are doing your best", "try again, you are learning")

Acknowledge and Redirect: "I'm frustrated – what's one small step I can take?"

Compassion is not softness, it is resilience. Using this pillar, you shift from self-criticism to self-coaching.

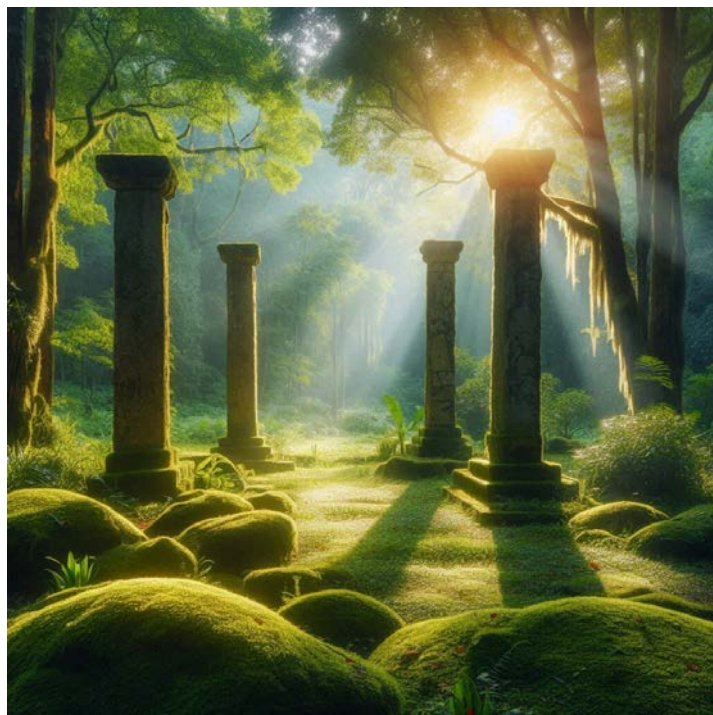
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## How these four pillars combine

Together they:

- Reduce self-criticism
- Keep possibilities open
- Generate clear, factual thinking
- Replace spirals with strategy.

These pillars are the foundation for the swaps, scripts and exercises that follow.





### 3. Everyday empowered language swaps

Tiny shifts. Big results. These **micro-adjustments** are practical for email, meetings, home life, and self-talk.

Each swap is grounded in neuroscience and positive psychology, designed to move you from tension to clarity and from defensiveness to possibility.

#### Positive self-talk (internal)

Start each day with a short positive intention:

- I choose to be present
- I will approach challenges with positivity
- I will trust my decisions today
- I will speak with confidence
- I ... [add your own]

Try a new declaration each day, to set you up for success.

#### Communication swaps (speaking with others)

To gain the attention of others and speak confidently, these swaps keep conversations constructive and clear:

##### When asking for help:

<b>Disempowering</b>	<b>Empowered alternative</b>
Sorry to bother you, but ...	When you are free, could you help me with ...
I might be wrong, but ...	My perspective is ...

##### When setting boundaries:

<b>Disempowering</b>	<b>Empowered alternative</b>
I can't do this	I'm not available for that today, but I <i>can</i> offer ...
That doesn't work for me	A better option for me would be ...

##### When receiving praise:

<b>Disempowering</b>	<b>Empowered alternative</b>
Oh, that was nothing	Thank you so much
This old thing	Thanks

##### When you disagree:

<b>Disempowering</b>	<b>Empowered alternative</b>
I don't think that is right	I see it differently. Here is my view ...
No, it isn't	I appreciate your opinion/view, and ...

## Problem-solving swaps

When things go wrong, language can calm and reorient:

<b>Disempowering</b>	<b>Empowered alternative</b>
Everything is going wrong	A few things aren't working – what's the next step?
This is a disaster	This is unexpected, and I'm adjusting
I can't deal	I will take this one step at a time

These phrases reduce threat and open opportunities. They also align with Pillar 1 (“I am not my problem”) and with Pillar 3 (“Facts over feelings”).

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## Confidence swaps — for speaking up

For presence without aggression:

<b>Disempowering</b>	<b>Empowered alternative</b>
This might be silly, but...	Here is an idea to consider ...
No worries if not ...	Please let me know if this works
I just think ...	I think ...
Maybe we could ...	I recommend we consider ...

Small shifts change how people hear you and how you hear yourself.

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## Strength-based swaps — using positive psychology in real time

Anchor conversations in capability and progress:

- “I’m yet to fully develop this skill.”
- “My strength is...[X] and I’m expanding into... [Y]”
- “Here’s what went well today...”

Strength-based language fuels motivation and reduces fear.

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## Quick reframes for daily use

Grab one to use now:

- **Pressure** → “One thing at a time.”
- **Fear** → “It’s okay to learn while doing.”
- **Self-doubt** → “I can work this out.”
- **Overwhelm** → “What’s the next best step?”
- **Frustration** → “I can reset and continue.”

Pick one and try it today. Note the small shift it creates.



## 4. Body language, tone and presence

There is a quiet side of empowered communication where you will notice that words land differently depending on your posture, tone and non-verbal signals. The following practical cues align your body with your speech.

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### Grounded presence: foundational practices

- **Plant your feet:** Both flat on the floor, hip-width apart. This stabilises your nervous system and instantly increases perceived confidence
- **Relax your jaw and shoulders:** release tension with a small shoulder roll and soft smile
- **Forearms:** Keep them relaxed by your side or parallel to signal steadiness and openness (holding a pen, book, or folder naturally encourages this posture)
- **Hands:** avoid fidgeting – use open gestures intentionally.

The '**power pose**' introduced by Amy Cuddy and the posture shifts above, can reduce stress and help you feel more present before a high-stakes conversation.

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### Eye contact & tone – communicating confidence and care

- Use soft natural eye contact – it builds trust
- When giving difficult feedback, shift focus briefly to a third object (like a document or a screen) to depersonalise the exchange
- Match tone to intent: calm for reassurance, clear for boundaries, warm for connection, steady for leadership
- End important lines with a downward, confident finish (using your voice to ensure the sentence sounds final).

Tone often shapes the emotional memory of a conversation more than words.

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### Pausing with purpose – slowing down to increase connection

A well-placed pause signals presence and authority:

- Pause before replying (prevents reactive language)
- Pause after key points (emphasises importance)
- Use a pause to regulate emotion or invite contribution.

Pauses reduce defensiveness and increase perceived confidence.

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## Managing difficult moments

Difficult conversations are an opportunity to lead calmly. Confidence isn't about avoiding these moments — it's about staying centred *through* them. When you do that, three things happen:

1. you feel more in control of your life and your decisions
2. others respect you more, because you communicate from calm authority
3. conversations that once drained you become manageable — even empowering.

### A. Slow the moment down

Use micro-pauses: a sip of water; or a short phrase “Let me think about that”

### B. Neutralise pressure with factual language

“What we *can* do today is...” or “Here’s what I can clarify.”

### C. Redirect toward a shared goal

“Let’s work on this together – what outcome do we want?”

### D. Protect boundaries with calm certainty

“That doesn’t work for me” or “I’m happy to continue after a reset”

### E. Close with clarity or next steps

“The next step is...” or “To summarise, here’s what we will do”.

This keeps conversation practical and prevents escalation.

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## Combining what you learnt in this section

This section has shown you the art of confident, empowered communication. It is not about sounding perfect, rehearsed or forceful. It's about the way you breathe, stand, speak, pause and response. Those small physical and verbal choices that quietly reshape how others experience you and how you experience yourself.

Individually each tool you have learned in this section is simple. When combined, they become transformative:

- **Grounded presence** settles your body so your mind can think clearly
- Competent, open **body language** communicates intelligence, steadiness, and self-trust without a single word
- Warm, intentional **eye contact** and **tone** create safety and connection
- **Pausing** with purpose portrays you as confident
- Managing **difficult moments** calmly allows you to stay in control, without force, fear, or defensiveness.

Together, these skills form a complete toolkit for confident communication, equally useful in meetings, feedback sessions, high-pressure moments, and everyday interactions where your confidence is quietly built.

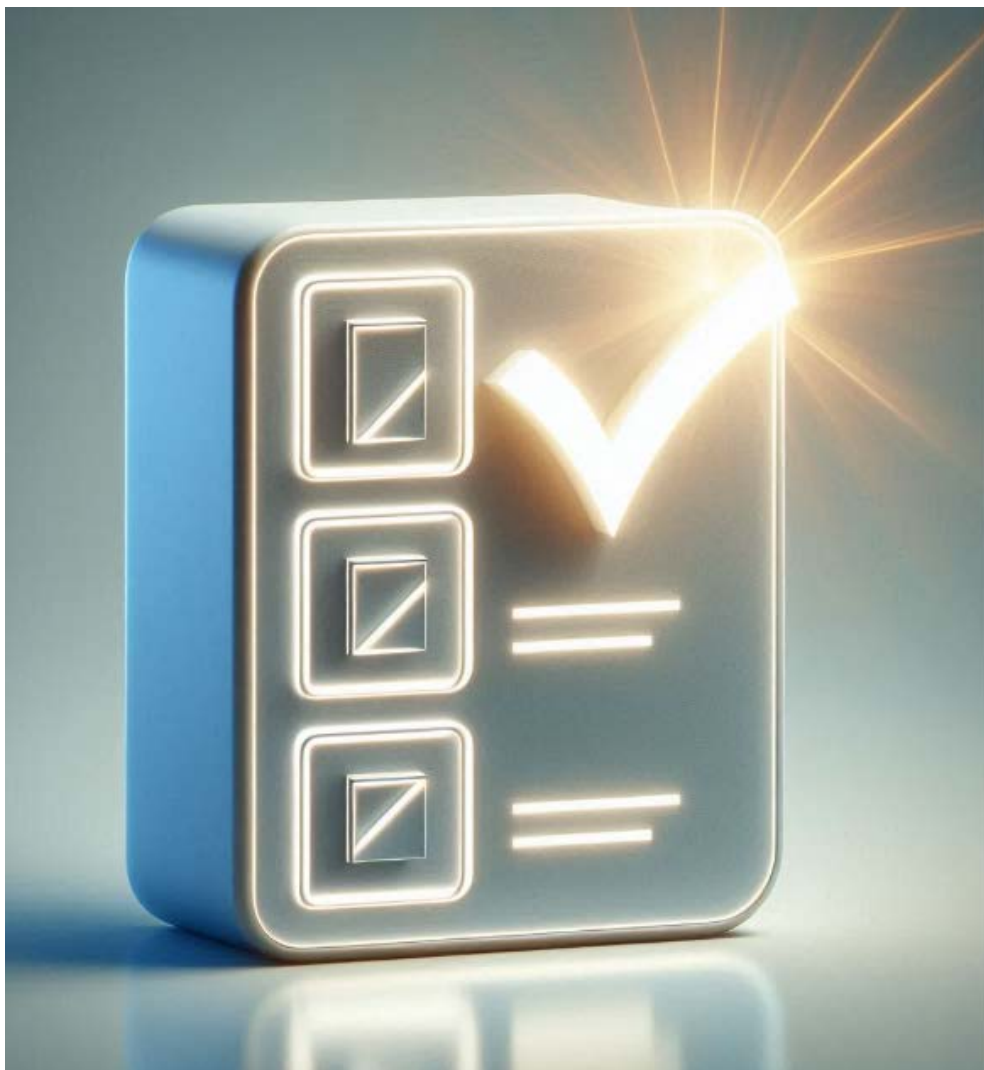
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## 💡 Choose one thing to practice

Instead of trying to master everything at once, pick one skill from this list and integrate it intentionally:

- A grounded, self-assured posture
- Soft but confident eye contact
- Tone that matches your intention
- Pausing with purpose
- Empowered, calming word choices.

Small shifts compound. Pick one, use it today, and notice what changes.





## 5. Real-world scripts and scenarios

In this section we cover practical language you can use immediately for common professional and personal challenges.

Let's explore the situations most people find challenging — and how to navigate them with confidence.

### Setting a firm boundary (without guilt)

Saying no is often hard because we fear disappointing others, looking unhelpful, or appearing incapable. Empowered boundaries work because they are firm, respectful and offers clarity without over-explaining. Use language that shows care for the quality of work while holding a boundary. Ensure your message is clear, kind, and honest to protect your time, energy, and wellbeing.

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>What to say</b>
Someone asks you to take on extra work	Thanks for thinking of me. I'm not able to take on anything additional today, but I can review it later in the week. When do you need it by?
No worries if not ...	I want to give this proper attention, and I don't have the capacity right now. Let's discuss a realistic timeline
You simply need to decline	That doesn't work for me, but I appreciate you asking. (Here it is ok to use 'but' because we want the person to remember the last part of the sentence)

### Other scenarios and simple language

There are many other scenarios where it is good to have something to draw on.

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>What to say</b>
Something isn't working	I've noticed a challenge that's affecting workflow. Can we explore a better approach?
Giving feedback about a mistake	Looking at this document together, I can see a couple of areas to tighten. Here is one example ...
Asking for support or resources	To deliver this effectively, I'll need support in these areas ...
Seeking development	I'm ready to grow in [X] area, and would like to discuss opportunities that align with my strengths
Blame or personal attack	Let's stay with the facts so we can resolve this.
Advocating for a team member	I want to highlight the strengths they demonstrated in this project and why it made a difference

These scripts give you a starting point, but the real transformation comes when you begin to weave this tone into your everyday conversations.

## In summary

Empowered language isn't about sounding perfect — it's about staying grounded, clear, and connected in the moments that matter.

With practice, it becomes natural to pause before responding, choose curiosity over defensiveness, and set boundaries that feel respectful and firm.

Over time, these small shifts compound into a new way of communicating, one that strengthens your confidence, and deepens your relationships.

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## 💡 What to do next

The French expression *L'esprit de l'escalier* literally means the spirit of the staircase and is used in English for the predicament of thinking of the perfect reply too late.

Come up with some potential scenarios, or experiences from your past, and create the words to say using what you have learnt so far.

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Having a few examples to draw on can help you in future situations of a similar kind, so you will have the witty / perfect retort and not be the wit at the bottom of the stairs wishing you had said [...] at the party, interview, or tense conversation.





## 6. Integration, reflection and daily practice

Making it stick is about short, repeated practice – not heroic effort. When you communicate with confidence:

- conversations become easier
- difficult moments become manageable
- other people respond differently
- your own nervous system stays calmer
- you make clearer decisions
- you stop over-explaining or apologising
- you express who you really are.

This is not about “fixing” anything, it’s about returning to clarity and strength.

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### The 5-minute daily practice

A short evening ritual to embed the changes:

1. **Spot the Trap:** Recall one moment when you used disempowering language either internally or externally (no judgement).
  2. **Identify the Pillar:** Which of the four pillars did you miss? (e.g., *I confused my identity with an experience*).
  3. **Rewrite the Script:** Note the disempowered phrase and an Empowered Alternative (swaps from Section 3).
  4. **Embody the Shift:** Mentally rehearse the new script with Grounded Presence (Section 4) – and plan to use it this week.
  5. **Celebrate:** Find one small communication win from the day. Ensure you really celebrate and note how you used positive, empowering language.
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### A Final reset: your empowered communication mantra

Choose one (or create your own) to repeat when you feel nervous, rushed, or unsure:

- “I can take my time”
  - “I speak with calm clarity”
  - “I choose grounded presence”
  - “I can pause and think”
  - “My voice is steady and valuable”.
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## Your toolkit for the future

Your toolkit now helps you:

- speak with clarity and confidence
- navigate difficult conversations
- set warm, firm boundaries
- communicate with emotional steadiness
- express values, needs, and strengths
- advocate for yourself and others
- stay centred even when others are not.



You don't have to be louder or forceful. Be present, grounded, and intentional, and your communication naturally rises to meet the moment.

Your empowered voice is already within you.

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## Final words and next steps

Go back to page 2 and reflect on how your answers to the three reflection questions differ now.

You have learnt:

- The "Silent Cost" of disempowered language
- The 4 core pillars: Separate identity, 'Yet,' Facts Over Feelings, Self-Compassion
- Everyday language swaps and quick reframes
- Body language, tone and pausing with purpose
- Real-world scripts for boundaries and advocacy
- A daily practice to integrate the work.

You deserve the attention, the confidence and the career you want. Start with one phrase. Then another small action. You're already on the path.

If you would like more practical tips for better communication and other coaching tools for a better life, sign up for my FREE monthly newsletter.

Go to [www.reinventyou.au](http://www.reinventyou.au) or  
Email: [mm@reinventyou.au](mailto:mm@reinventyou.au)

