

Modelling Excellence Without Apology

Find the structure behind a skill, test it, and use it with credit

Pick one **specific behaviour**, not a label. Not "great at sales" but "handles a price question without defending." Ask what a camera would see.

Three layers to elicit

Layer	Ask
Behaviour	What do you do, step by step? In what order?
Internal structure	When you do that, what do you see, hear, say to yourself and feel, in order? If the answer is "I just know": what was the first thing you noticed?
Beliefs	What do you believe about this kind of situation? What does it mean if it goes wrong? What would you have to believe to do it that way?

The five questions

1. What do you do?
2. In what sequence?
3. What is going on inside?
4. What is different from other people?
5. What would you never do?

Contrast, then test

- **Contrast.** Ask the same of a weaker performer. The difference that makes a difference is where they differ.
- **Test.** Run the model yourself. Remove one element at a time. Keep what changes the result. A model you have not tested is a story.

Without apology: consent and credit

Ask permission. Say what you will use it for. Credit the source. Model behaviour and structure, not identity. Choose exemplars whose results you can verify.

The three apologies

"Who am I to copy?" "Who am I to charge for what I learned from others?" "Who am I to say my way works?" Each one is a belief. Run it through Day 1's chain: sentence, rule, job, cost.

What is known. People often cannot report their own mental processes accurately (Nisbett and Wilson, 1977), so combine observation, questions and testing. Expertise is only reliable where the environment gives valid, quick feedback (Kahneman and Klein, 2009). Research on NLP modelling as a method is thin. Testing the model is the safeguard.

Try it now. Name your best result. Write five steps and give the card a name. Then ask: could someone else get this result from what I can say about it today?

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Nisbett, R.E. and Wilson, T.D. (1977) Psychological Review, 84(3), pp. 231-259. Kahneman, D. and Klein, G. (2009) American Psychologist, 64(6), pp. 515-526. Dilts, R. (1998) Modeling with NLP. Meta Publications.

YOUR NEXT STEP

NLP: Word Patterns That Hold a Room for an Hour

Tuesday 20 October 2026, 7:00 to 10:00 PM EDT, live on Google Meet, 20 seats. A practice class: you practise each skill twice with a partner and get feedback. Tickets from \$47.

ravingworld.co.uk/event-details/nlp-word-patterns-that-hold-a-room-for-an-hour