LISTEN / NOTICE / REPRODUCE

Content-Free Questioning

An annotated listening guide to a real seven-minute NLP demonstration with Dawn.

THE REAL DEMONSTRATION

Not knowing is part of the skill.

One person identifies a goal privately. Another guides the questioning. The content stays private; the structure remains observable.

9 / 10	Initial commitment
10 / 10	Later commitment



WHAT THIS IS FOR

To make the linguistic decisions in this conversation visible. The aim is not to memorise a script. It is to recognise how questions direct attention, invite internal processing and test commitment without obtaining an unnecessary personal story.

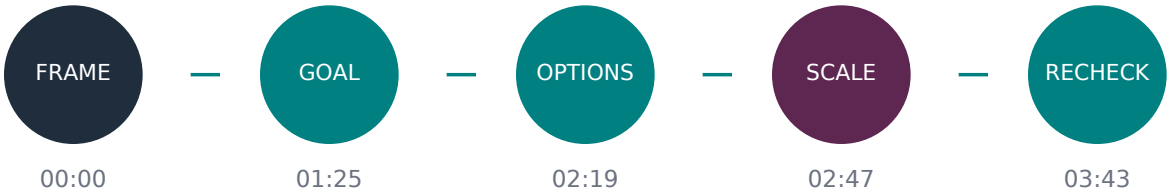
THE TWO-PART RESOURCE

Part 1: Listen to the complete 7:29 audio. Part 2: Use this guide to locate each beat, understand the functional intention, and practise adapting the question patterns.

Evidence boundary: Dawn reports a change from 9/10 to 10/10 in commitment during this exchange. The recording does not establish goal completion or a lasting behavioural outcome.

THE CONVERSATION AT A GLANCE

A seven-minute sequence, not a collection of tricks.



LISTENING MAP

TIME	MOVE	WHAT TO LISTEN FOR
00:00–01:01	Define the interaction	Withhold the story; agree how the exercise will work.
01:01–01:48	Time and goal	Orient to a specific timeframe; select one outcome privately.
01:49–02:19	Identify interference	Notice a possible reason or limitation without explaining it.
02:19–02:45	Represent alternatives	Visualise or talk through what could reduce the interference.
02:47–03:12	Measure commitment	Ask for honest commitment; a nine introduces the missing one.
03:12–03:41	Explore the missing one	A contextual reference appears; return attention to reducing its impact.
03:43–03:55	Re-rate commitment	Dawn reports a ten after considering what she could do.
03:58–05:04	Teach the scaling move	Explain what a rating below ten makes available to ask.
05:12–06:42	Explain content-free work	Distinguish the process from obtaining the client's private content.
06:42–07:29	Invite phenomenology	Ask about the experience of thinking without sharing the story.

ANNOTATED DEMONSTRATION / 01

Establish the frame.

BEAT 01 Make the content unnecessary 00:00–01:01

HEAR	“I don’t want you to answer any of these questions out loud.”
MECHANISM	A deliberately content-free contract redirects the exchange away from disclosure and towards inner work.
NOTICE	Dawn checks “Are you sure?” The repeated boundary is part of the demonstration, not disposable preamble.

BEAT 02 Orient time 01:01–01:25

HEAR	“What month are we in, Dawn?”
MECHANISM	A present-time reference makes the later deadline concrete, rather than beginning with an abstract aspiration.
NOTICE	The trainer moves from playful negotiation into an ordinary shared fact.

BEAT 03 Select one private goal 01:25–01:48

HEAR	“Is there something, one thing … you would like to achieve before the end of this year?”
MECHANISM	A yes/no question presupposes that the listener can identify a relevant goal without naming it.
NOTICE	One goal, clear end point, minimum content.

ANNOTATED DEMONSTRATION / 02

Turn towards alternatives.

BEAT 04 Locate possible interference 01:49–02:19

HEAR “Do you already know a reason or an excuse ... a limitation ...?”

MECHANISM The question asks Dawn to search her own representations for an obstacle. It does not ask her to justify or disclose it.

NOTICE Notice the intentionally broad categories: reason, excuse, limitation.

BEAT 05 Offer representational choice 02:19–02:45

HEAR “Maybe ... a visualisation or talk yourself through it ... however you wanna represent that.”

MECHANISM Invites either imagery or internal language; the listener chooses the route of processing.

NOTICE Representation is suggested, not dictated. The reported outcome remains private.

BEAT 06 Elicit alternatives 02:29–02:45

HEAR “What you can do to make ... those reasons have less impact?”

MECHANISM Attention shifts from the existence of obstacles to ways their effects might be reduced.

NOTICE This is an elicitation of possibilities, not a claim that any obstacle has vanished.

ANNOTATED DEMONSTRATION / 03

Measure the missing fraction.

BEAT 07 Ask for commitment 02:47–03:12

HEAR	“How committed are you ... be honest with yourself?”
MECHANISM	Introduces an explicit self-rating and emphasises internal honesty. Dawn volunteers 9/10.
NOTICE	A scale supplies a follow-up target; numbers alone are not a full ecological assessment.

BEAT 08 Investigate the missing one 03:12–03:41

HEAR	“What’s that missing one about?”
MECHANISM	A discrepancy question invites attention to the difference between current and complete commitment.
NOTICE	Personal context briefly appears. The trainer returns to a question about reducing its impact.

BEAT 09 Ask again, do not declare success 03:43–03:55

HEAR	“How committed are you to achieving this thing ...?”
MECHANISM	Repeats the same measurement after the internal exploration. Dawn now says “ten out of ten.”
NOTICE	The changed number is Dawn’s report, not an externally measured outcome.

ANNOTATED DEMONSTRATION / 04

Explain the observed process.

BEAT 10	**Debrief the missing fraction**	03:58–05:04
HEAR	“What’s the missing one? ... What’s the missing two?”	
MECHANISM	Makes an adaptable question pattern available to listeners: ask what would account for the gap.	
NOTICE	Useful for commitment, confidence or certainty; not a guarantee of lasting change.	

BEAT 11	**Name the principle**	05:12–06:42
HEAR	“There are ways to communicate with people that do not require any content or context.”	
MECHANISM	Turns the observed conversation into an explicit teaching point about process-directed language.	
NOTICE	There is a difference between protecting private content and neglecting relevant safety context.	

BEAT 12	**Ask about process, not personal facts**	06:42–07:29
HEAR	“What was going on for you when I was asking the questions?”	
MECHANISM	Invites a report about the experience of thinking. Dawn describes “processing ... moving files, checking boxes.”	
NOTICE	This is first-person feedback on experience, not proof of completed goal attainment.	

PRACTITIONER WORKSPACE

Practise the pattern without copying the person.

Run this with an appropriate, low-stakes goal. Obtain agreement before beginning and let the other person decide what they will and will not disclose.

01	Choose a goal Invite one specific future outcome and a timeframe; do not demand the story.
02	Recognise interference Ask whether there is a reason, limitation or competing consideration.
03	Invite options Let the person choose how to represent alternatives: images, words or another form.
04	Take a baseline Ask for an honest 1–10 commitment score; clarify what the number means to them.
05	Explore the gap Ask about the missing points. Check effects on other people, commitments and circumstances.
06	Re-rate and future pace Ask again; identify one observable action rather than treating a high score as the result.

Your practice notes

Which question changed the direction of attention?

_____

What would you ask differently in your own professional context?

_____

APPLY WITH PRECISION

What the demonstration shows — and what it does not.

Visible in the recording

Darren sets a content-free agreement; Dawn identifies a goal privately; she confirms potential interference; a sequence of questions asks her to consider how to reduce its impact; she reports moving from 9/10 to 10/10 in commitment; she describes internal processing afterwards.

Not established by the recording

We do not know the goal, the independent quality of the proposed options, whether a later action was taken, or whether the goal was achieved. Avoid describing the exchange as a proven long-term transformation.

Working ethically with content-free language

Content-free does not mean context never matters. In professional practice, check consent, capacity, risk, the limits of your role, and the wider consequences of a proposed action. Avoid pressing somebody to reach 10/10 when uncertainty is appropriate. A lower score may reflect a legitimate concern.

One next action

Listen to the recording once more. Choose a single move you could use this week — for example, “What is the missing one?” — and write down when, how and why you would use it.

LEARN THE STRUCTURE — THEN DEVELOP YOUR OWN PRECISION.

DSNLP teaches the language patterns behind the demonstration, including goal formulation, questioning, ecology and the practical application of NLP in communication.

Explore Introduction to NLP: www.ravingworld.co.uk/nlp