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Mind Over Matter: How Harnessing Your Thoughts Can Change Your Everyday Reality

There's a saying I have always liked that says ***Your mind is either your best ally or your biggest barrier***. It is not about pretending hard enough and hoping life bends in your favour. It is about understanding that your thoughts, beliefs, and mental focus can shape how you show up and how you show up shapes the results you get.

Mind over matter isn't magic. It's not "just think positive" on repeat. It's a skill and like any skill, it can be practised and made part of your everyday life. And when you learn to influence your own mental and emotional state (that blend of how you feel, think, and carry yourself in the moment) you start making choices from a place of strength instead of stress.

Why Mind Over Matter Works

You have probably heard of the placebo effect – when someone improves after taking a "fake" pill because they believe it will help. It is so strong that in many medical trials, researchers have to compare a new drug not just against "doing nothing" but against placebo results.

That is mind over matter in action. Belief changes physiology. Your brain and body respond to what you expect as much as to what's actually happening.

Neuroscience calls this neuroplasticity, your brain's ability to rewire itself based on repeated thought and experience. In sport, athletes use mental rehearsal to improve

performance. In recovery, patients visualize movement before they can physically do it, helping the brain rebuild those neural pathways.

If this works in high-pressure labs and hospitals, imagine what it can do in the everyday moments that shape your confidence and decision-making.

Why It Matters for Empowered Living

Empowered living is about choice. You can't control the weather, the economy, or how someone else behaves but you can influence your internal world. That's where your response begins.

When you take responsibility for your mental and emotional state, you stop handing over all your power to external circumstances. You can decide: How do I want to feel going into this meeting, conversation or day?

That doesn't mean ignoring reality or forcing fake positivity. It means giving yourself more options. And the more options you have, the less likely you are to default to default mode reactions that keep you stuck.

Everyday Ways to Apply Mind Over Matter

1. Mental Rehearsal

Before a challenging situation, picture yourself handling it well. If you're nervous about a phone call, imagine sitting comfortably, speaking clearly, and ending the conversation feeling steady. Your brain doesn't fully distinguish between vividly imagined rehearsal and actual experience, so you are effectively giving yourself extra practice.

2. Language Swaps

NLP teaches that the words you use can shift your internal state. Swap "I can't do this"

for “I’m learning how to do this.” Replace “I’m terrible at this” with “I’m improving with each attempt.” Your nervous system responds differently to possibility than it does to a dead end.

3. Anchor a Resourceful State

Think back to a time when you felt confident, calm, and capable. Step into that memory – see what you saw, hear what you heard, feel what you felt. Then, press your thumb and forefinger together. Practise this when you’re calm so you can trigger it in moments you need that steadiness.

4. Micro-Challenges

Pick one thing a day that stretches you slightly. Not so big it paralyses you, but big enough to shift your comfort zone. The key is to approach it while holding a supportive internal dialogue. That combination of small risk + chosen state is what builds proof you can handle more.

Why It Can Feel Hard

Your brain likes familiarity, even if that familiarity isn’t helpful. Old thought patterns run like well-worn paths. Stepping off them takes awareness and repetition. At first, changing your mental state can feel forced. That’s normal. You’re building new neural pathways, and like a new trail through grass, it needs regular use before it becomes your new default.

Apply the Learning in Small Steps

This week, choose one situation where you’d normally feel nervous, unsure, or reactive.

Decide your state in advance. How do you want to feel? Calm? Curious? Determined?

Pick your tool. Will you use mental rehearsal, a language swap, or your anchored

gesture?

Do it in the moment. Notice any difference in how you feel and respond.

Reflect afterward. Jot down what worked and what you'd change next time.

Even if the outcome doesn't shift overnight, you will start building evidence that you can influence your experience and that's where real empowerment begins.

Reflective Prompts to Try This Week

When did I last notice my mindset influencing how I felt in a situation?

What state do I want to choose before my next challenging conversation?

How could I use mental rehearsal to prepare for something small but meaningful this week?

Which words or phrases do I often use that drain me — and what supportive swaps could I try?

Where have I already experienced “mind over matter” in my own life, even in a small way?

Capture the Takeaway

Mind over matter isn't about denying challenges. It's about meeting them from a place of choice instead of chance. By learning to guide your own state with simple, repeatable techniques, you create a buffer between you and whatever life throws at you.

That buffer is where better decisions happen. Where calm replaces panic. Where you stop running on someone else's script and start responding on your own terms.

Your Next Step

Before tomorrow, identify one tool from this article you want to try – mental rehearsal,

language swaps, anchoring, or micro-challenges. Use it in a low-stakes situation, then repeat it three more times this week.

Small, deliberate practice is what turns “mind over matter” from an idea into a daily habit and from there, into a quiet, steady kind of power you can carry anywhere.

Frequently Asked Questions

How does mind over matter work in everyday life?

Mind over matter works by changing how your brain interprets situations. Your thoughts and expectations influence your emotional state, which in turn shapes your actions and outcomes. For example, mentally rehearsing a presentation can calm nerves and improve performance, even before you step into the room.

What does “state” mean in NLP?

In NLP, “state” refers to the combination of your thoughts, emotions, and physiology in any given moment. Shifting your state – through language, focus, or anchoring – gives you more control over how you respond instead of reacting automatically.

Is mind over matter supported by science?

Yes. Research on the placebo effect, neuroplasticity, and visualization shows that belief and mental focus can alter both brain activity and physical responses. Studies with athletes, patients in recovery, and people using guided imagery all demonstrate measurable improvements linked to mindset.

Can mind over matter improve self-confidence?

Absolutely. By practising small techniques like language swaps or anchoring a resourceful state, you build proof that you can influence your experience. Over time, these shifts stack into greater self-trust and steady self-confidence.

What's the best way to start practising mind over matter?

Start small. Choose one low-stakes situation this week — a phone call, a meeting, a social interaction. Decide your desired state in advance, apply one tool (mental rehearsal, anchoring, or language swap), and reflect afterward on how it changed your response. Repetition is what builds long-term impact.

State Management – The Quiet Skill That Changes Everything

I have walked into situations already defeated, not because anything had happened yet, but because of the way I felt walking in. My mind was running on “*What if this goes wrong?*” and my body was matching it with tight shoulders, a clenched jaw and shallow breathing.

If you have ever tried to make a good decision from that place, you will know it’s like trying to cook dinner in a smoke-filled kitchen. You can’t think straight.

That’s what NLP calls your state: the mix of your thoughts, emotions, and physical condition in a given moment. And it matters more than most of us realise.

Why Your State Matters

Your state is the lens you see the world through in the moment. If you are calm, grounded, and present, you will interpret events differently than if you are stressed, tense, or fearful.

A calm state makes it easier to think clearly, spot solutions, and respond rather than react.

A stressed state narrows your focus to problems, triggers defensive thinking, and often leads to autopilot responses you regret later.

This isn’t about controlling every emotion or forcing yourself into fake positivity. It’s about learning to notice your state, and then having tools to shift it when it’s working against you.

Everyday Examples

Before a meeting: You rush in feeling flustered because of traffic. If you don't reset your state, you will probably sound distracted and defensive, even if your ideas are solid.

At home: You have had a frustrating day. Without realising it, your tone is sharp with your partner – not because of them, but because you carried the work stress into the conversation.

In a difficult conversation: If you are in a defensive state, you will listen to respond, not to understand and the conversation is likely to escalate.

In each case, the outcome could shift dramatically just by changing the state you were in before speaking or deciding.

Why State Management Can Feel Hard

Most of us never learned to check in with ourselves before acting. We are taught to push through, "get on with it," and hope the feeling catches up.

On top of that, your body and mind like the familiar – so if stress is your default, it's going to pull you back unless you practise something different.

How to Apply State Management in Small Steps

1. Start Noticing Your State

Before you take action, whether it's sending an email, picking up the phone, or walking into a room, pause for ten seconds and ask:

- How am I feeling right now?
- Where is my focus?
- What's my body doing?

You are not judging the answers. You are building awareness.

2. Use a Quick Shift Tool

Once you have noticed your state, you can choose to keep it or change it. Here are three ways to shift quickly:

Breath: Take a slow inhale to a count of 4, hold for 4, exhale for 6. This tells your nervous system you are safe.

Posture: Stand or sit tall, shoulders relaxed, head lifted. Your physiology sends feedback to your brain, strong posture signals calm capability.

Self-talk: Swap “I hope I don’t mess this up” for “I can handle this.” The language shapes the feeling.

3. Anchor a Resourceful State

This is an NLP technique you can build over time. Think of a moment when you felt confident and capable. Step into that memory and see what you saw, hear what you heard, feel what you felt – and press your thumb and forefinger together. Practise this in calm moments so you can trigger it when you need that confidence boost.

Building the Habit

Start with just one check-in a day. Pick a recurring event, maybe before your morning meeting or school run, and make it your cue to notice and shift your state.

Over time, you will catch yourself before walking into situations in a stressed or defensive mode. That’s where the real power is: you will stop handing control to the mood of the moment and start choosing how you want to show up.

Why This Matters for Empowered Living

When you manage your state, you are no longer at the mercy of whatever the day

throws at you. You might not control the event, but you control the version of yourself that meets it. That's a huge part of empowerment, making decisions from clarity, not chaos. You show up as the steady one in the room, even if things around you are messy.

Your Next Step

Today, pick one upcoming moment and decide:

- What state do I want to be in for this?
- Which quick shift tool will I use to get there?

Afterward, note how it went. Did you think more clearly? Did the conversation go differently?

This is mind over matter in its most practical form one state shift at a time. And the more you practise, the more natural it becomes.

Reflective Prompts to Try This Week

- When did I last notice my state affecting how I handled a situation?
- What signals (in my body, thoughts, or emotions) tell me my state is slipping into stress?
- How could I practise one quick state-shift tool — breath, posture, or self-talk — this week
- Which recurring situations would feel different if I chose my state before stepping in?
- What evidence do I already have that I can influence how I feel in the moment?

Frequently Asked Questions

What does “state” mean in NLP?

In NLP, “state” is the combination of your thoughts, feelings, and physical body in a given moment. It shapes how you experience and respond to situations.

How can I manage my emotional state quickly?

Simple techniques like slow breathing, shifting your posture, or using supportive self-talk can change your state within minutes. These tools calm your nervous system and help you think more clearly.

Why is state management important for decision-making?

Your state acts like a filter. When you are calm and grounded, you notice more options and make better choices. When you are stressed or defensive, your focus narrows and you are more likely to react automatically.

Can state management improve confidence?

Yes. Practising state management builds trust in yourself. Proof that you can influence how you show up. Over time, this steady self-trust translates into confidence in new and challenging situations.

What’s the best way to start learning state management?

Begin by noticing. Before entering a meeting, conversation, or task, pause and ask, What state am I in? Then try one quick shift tool. The goal isn’t perfection, but steady practice that makes state management feel natural.

Mental Rehearsal — Training Your Mind Before the Moment Arrives

I have lost count of how many times I have run a difficult conversation through my head before it happened. Sometimes that made it worse because I was simply looping the same worries. But when I learned to direct that mental run-through with intention, it became one of the most powerful tools I have ever used.

This is called mental rehearsal. Athletes use it. Public speakers use it. Surgeons use it. And you can use it too — to prepare your mind and body for situations before they happen, so you meet them from a calmer, more capable state.

Why Mental Rehearsal Works

Your brain doesn't fully distinguish between a vividly imagined event and a real one. When you mentally rehearse something in detail, your brain fires many of the same neural pathways as it would if you were physically doing it.

Sports psychology shows that athletes who combine physical practice with mental rehearsal outperform those who only practise physically.

NLP describes this as programming your state ahead of time – you are pre-loading the confidence, focus, and clarity you want to access when the real moment arrives. In other words, you're giving yourself extra "reps" without the wear and tear.

Everyday Examples

Work: Rehearsing how you'll present your ideas in a meeting so you sound clear and confident rather than rushed.

Relationships: Mentally walking through how you will raise a tricky subject with a

partner, choosing words that keep you calm and respectful.

Personal goals: Visualising yourself walking into a gym, using the equipment, and leaving feeling proud, especially if you have been avoiding it.

Why It Can Feel Hard

If you have ever tried mental rehearsal and ended up catastrophising – imagining everything going wrong – you are not alone. The key difference is in where you place your focus. You want to rehearse the process and the state you want, not just the “perfect” outcome.

You are not scripting life to match your vision exactly, you are preparing yourself to handle it well, however it unfolds.

How to Apply Mental Rehearsal in Small Steps

1. Choose a Specific Scenario

Pick something coming up in the next few days – a conversation, a task, an event. Make it small enough that it doesn’t feel overwhelming.

2. Decide on Your Desired State

Do you want to feel calm? Focused? Warm? Confident? This is your anchor for the rehearsal.

3. Run the “5-Minute Movie”

Find a quiet spot.

Close your eyes and picture the scene starting just before the event begins.

See it from your own perspective – what you see, hear, and feel in your body.

Imagine yourself moving through it in the state you chose.

If your mind jumps to “what if” fears, bring it back to the desired state.

4. Add Sensory Detail

The more vivid, the better. Notice the room you are in, the sound of your voice, the feel of the table under your hands. Your brain remembers sensory experiences more easily.

5. End with Success Signals

This doesn't mean picturing applause or perfection. It means ending the scene with yourself feeling steady and satisfied, knowing you handled it in line with your values.

Building the Habit

Start with just one mental rehearsal a day for a low-stakes situation. Over time, you can use it for bigger events like job interviews, negotiations, and important presentations.

The more you practise, the easier it becomes to “step into” the state you have rehearsed when the real moment arrives.

Why This Matters for Empowered Living

Empowerment isn't about never feeling nervous or unprepared. It's about having tools to influence how you meet situations. Mental rehearsal trains your brain to recognise a moment, drop into a resourceful state, and act with intention instead of reactivity.

It means that when you walk into that meeting, conversation, or new space, your mind says, I have been here before. I know what to do.

Your Next Step

Choose one upcoming event in the next 48 hours. Spend five minutes mentally rehearsing it, focusing on the process and the state you want to be in.

Afterward, jot down what you noticed when the real moment happened. Did you feel more prepared? More at ease?

Do it again. And again. With each rehearsal, you're building a bridge between your present self and the version of you who already handles it well.

Reflective Prompts to Try This Week

- What upcoming event or task could I mentally rehearse in a positive, supportive way?
- What state do I want to practise stepping into before that moment arrives?
- How would I describe the "5-minute movie" version of myself handling it well?
- When have I already used imagination or rehearsal (even unintentionally) to improve my performance?
- What small difference could mental rehearsal make if I repeated it three times this week?

Frequently Asked Questions

What is mental rehearsal in NLP?

Mental rehearsal is the practice of vividly imagining yourself carrying out an action before it happens. In NLP, it's used to program a desired state and behaviour so your mind and body respond as if you've already done it.

How does mental rehearsal work in the brain?

Research shows that visualisation activates many of the same neural pathways as real action. That means your brain "practises" the event, strengthening connections that make it easier to perform when the time comes.

Can mental rehearsal really improve performance?

Yes. Studies in sports psychology, public speaking, and even medical training show that people who combine physical practice with mental rehearsal outperform those who only rely on practice alone.

How is mental rehearsal different from daydreaming?

Daydreaming is passive and unfocused. Mental rehearsal is intentional – you choose the scenario, focus on process and state, and imagine yourself handling it well step by step.

How can I start using mental rehearsal in daily life?

Pick one low-stakes event, like a phone call or meeting. Close your eyes, run through it in detail for 3–5 minutes, and focus on the calm, capable state you want to bring. Repeat daily until it feels natural.

Language Patterns – How Changing Your Words Changes Your Results

I used to think the way I spoke to myself didn't matter much. My focus was on actions and what I did, not what I said. But over time, I realized my words were quietly setting the tone for how I felt, what I believed was possible, and the choices I made.

In NLP, we talk about how language shapes state – the blend of your thoughts, feelings, and physical presence in the moment. Your words aren't just labels for your experience. They are part of what creates it.

Why Language Matters

The language you use with yourself and others feeds back into how you think and feel.

Words can close you down: "I can't handle this" signals helplessness to your brain.

Words can open you up: "I'm learning how to handle this" leaves room for growth.

This isn't about sugar-coating or pretending things are fine when they're not. It's about choosing language that keeps you resourceful, curious, and able to move forward.

Everyday Examples

From pressure to choice: "I have to finish this report" → "I choose to finish this report so I can meet the deadline."

From stuck to learning: "I'm terrible at public speaking" → "I'm getting better at public speaking with each try."

From avoidance to agency: "I can't deal with this today" → "I'll tackle part of this

today and the rest tomorrow.”

Each swap shifts your state from being trapped to being in motion.

Why It Can Feel Hard

Most of our default phrases have been with us for years. Borrowed from family, school, work culture, or past experiences. They feel “natural” because they are familiar, not because they are helpful.

When you start swapping them, your brain might resist: It sounds weird. That’s just a sign you are breaking an old pattern.

How to Apply Language Pattern Swaps in Small Steps

1. Notice the Phrases You Use Most

For one day, keep a note on your phone. Each time you catch yourself saying something limiting either out loud or in your head, jot it down.

2. Pick One Swap to Practise

Don’t try to change everything at once. Choose one phrase and its upgrade. For example:

Old: “I have to...”

Swap: “I choose to...”

3. Practise It Every Time It Comes Up

At first, you will catch yourself after you have already said the old phrase. That’s fine, say the new version out loud anyway. The repetition trains your brain.

4. Expand Over Time

Once one swap feels natural, add another. You will start to notice patterns and you will have a growing toolkit of resourceful language.

Building the Habit

Anchor your swaps to a regular check-in. For example, every time you open your laptop, do a quick mental scan: What's the first phrase in my head right now? Is it helping?

Over time, your language will shift automatically and with it, your state.

Why This Matters for Empowered Living

Empowerment starts with how you speak to yourself. If your words keep you small, you will act small. If your words open space for growth, you will take different actions.

Language swaps are simple, but they work because they change the mental and emotional footing you are standing on before you do anything else.

Your Next Step

Choose one phrase you say often that makes you feel stuck or pressured. Write down its swap.

For the next 7 days, every time the old phrase appears, replace it with the new one.

Keep track of how it changes your mood, your actions, or even how others respond to you.

Reflective Prompts to Try This Week

- What phrase do I often use that makes me feel stuck or pressured?
- How could I swap that phrase for one that gives me more choice or possibility?
- When did I last notice my language shifting my mood or confidence?
- What supportive phrase could I practise this week until it feels natural?
- How might changing the words I use with myself change the way I act with others?

Frequently Asked Questions

What are language patterns in NLP?

In NLP, language patterns are the habitual ways we use words to describe ourselves and the world. They influence how we think, feel, and act. By changing language patterns, you can change your state and behaviour.

Why does changing my words change my results?

Words act as instructions to your brain. Saying “I have to” signals pressure and obligation, while “I choose to” creates a sense of agency. Over time, repeated language shapes your beliefs and behaviours.

What are some common empowering language swaps?

Examples include:

“I have to” → “I choose to”

“I can’t” → “I’m learning to”

“I always fail” → “I’m still practising”

Each swap reduces pressure and opens space for growth.

Can language swaps help with self confidence?

Yes. Self confidence grows from evidence and self-trust. Using language that frames challenges as growth opportunities reinforces proof that you are capable, which strengthens confidence over time.

How do I start changing my language?

Begin by noticing one recurring phrase that drains you. Write down a simple swap and practise using it daily. Over time, you can add more, building a personal “swap list” that supports the way you want to think and act.

Mind Over Matter Reflection Sheet

State Management

- When did I last notice my state affecting how I handled a situation?
- What signals (in my body, thoughts, or emotions) tell me my state is slipping into stress?
- How could I practise one quick state-shift tool — breath, posture, or self-talk — this week?
- Which recurring situations would feel different if I chose my state before stepping in?
- What evidence do I already have that I can influence how I feel in the moment?

Mental Rehearsal

- What upcoming event or task could I mentally rehearse in a positive, supportive way?
- What state do I want to practise stepping into before that moment arrives?
- How would I describe the “5-minute movie” version of myself handling it well?
- When have I already used imagination or rehearsal (even unintentionally) to improve my performance?
- What small difference could mental rehearsal make if I repeated it three times this week?

Language Swaps

- What phrase do I often use that makes me feel stuck or pressured?

- How could I swap that phrase for one that gives me more choice or possibility?
- When did I last notice my language shifting my mood or confidence?
- What supportive phrase could I practise this week until it feels natural?
- How might changing the words I use with myself change the way I act with others?

Who's On Your Mental Guest List? Expanding What Your Mind Lets In

Imagine you are hosting a dinner party. The table is set and the seats arranged just so. You are also the one standing at the door, greeting each guest. Some you welcome in immediately –familiar faces, easy company, people who always have something nice to say. Others you hesitate over. You might think, I'm not sure they will fit in, or they don't really match the rest of the crowd.

In NLP terms, that hostess is your mind. She is the one deciding which thoughts, ideas, and experiences get a seat at your table and which get turned away before they have even had a chance to say hello.

Why Your Mental Guest List Matters

Every day, your brain is bombarded with information – sights, sounds, memories, conversations, opportunities. It can't process all of it at once, so it uses filters to decide what's "relevant."

Some filters are based on your beliefs: I'm not good at networking will screen out moments where you actually did it well.

Some come from your values: you pay more attention to what matters most to you and ignore the rest.

Some are shaped by past experiences: if something felt risky before, your mind might not "invite" it in again.

These filters are helpful because they keep you from being overwhelmed, but they can also become too strict. Over time, you can end up inviting only the same

“guests” over and over. And that means the conversation in your head stays the same, too.

Signs Your Hostess Might Be Too Picky

- You keep replaying the same thoughts or stories about yourself.
- You dismiss new ideas with “That’s not for me” before you’ve even explored them.
- You feel like life is on repeat, with little variation in experiences or perspectives.

Why It Can Feel Hard to Invite New Guests

Your hostess likes predictability. She knows how the night will go if she keeps the list familiar. Inviting new guests with new ideas, perspectives and possibilities can feel uncomfortable.

In NLP, we say your mind deletes, distorts, and generalizes information to fit what it already knows. It is not being mean but efficient. But that efficiency can quietly limit your world.

How to Expand Your Mental Guest List

1. Notice Who’s Already at the Table

Take a week to pay attention to your recurring thoughts.

- Which “guests” show up again and again?
- Are they supportive, curious, open-minded or critical, cautious, and repetitive?

2. Question the Guest List Rules

When you catch yourself dismissing something like an idea, a compliment, or an opportunity, ask:

Why did I turn that away? Is this based on fact or on an old belief?

3. Invite One New Guest

This doesn't mean overhauling your whole table at once. It could be:

- Reading a book on a subject you would normally avoid.
- Saying yes to an activity outside your comfort zone.
- Entertaining a thought that starts with, What if I could... instead of I can't.

4. Mix the Seating Plan

If you have familiar "guests" who always sit next to each other – like "Play it safe" and "Don't get noticed" – try seating them next to something new, like "Why not me?" See what kind of conversation unfolds.

5. Be Open to Unexpected Connections

Sometimes the guests you think will have nothing in common turn out to be the ones who connect the most. Think of it like those social experiments where people from completely different worlds are thrown together. Two people who would never have crossed paths, maybe a 30-year-old musician and a 50-year-old farmer, end up forming a genuine friendship.

If they had met in everyday life, they might have dismissed each other at the door, assuming they had nothing to talk about. But once they shared a space and a conversation, they found common ground, mutual respect, and even laughter.

Your thoughts work the same way. A new idea might feel "too different" to be useful, but if you give it time to mingle with your existing beliefs, you may be surprised at the insights it brings.

Everyday Example

Let's say you have been invited to speak on a small panel. Your usual guest, I'm not a speaker, tries to block the door. Instead, you decide to invite I'm learning to share my ideas to sit down at the table. The conversation in your head changes:

Old script: I can't do this, I will mess up.

New script: This is a chance to grow, and I can prepare in small steps.

The event still feels challenging, but it no longer feels impossible.

Why This Matters for Empowered Living

When you expand your mental guest list, you give yourself access to more options, perspectives, and solutions. You are not forcing yourself to accept everything, you are simply opening the door to voices and possibilities you have been unconsciously shutting out.

That's empowerment: having more than one way to see and respond to the world, and choosing the one that serves you best.

Your Next Step

This week, notice one time you automatically dismiss an idea, compliment, or opportunity. Pause, and imagine your mental hostess leaning in to say: Let's invite them in and see what they have to say.

Write down what happens when you give that new "guest" a seat at the table. Over time, you will find your conversations (inside and out) becoming richer, more interesting, and far more empowering.

Reflective Prompts to Try This Week

- Which “regular guests” (recurring thoughts or beliefs) keep showing up at my table?
- What idea, compliment, or opportunity have I been quick to turn away recently?
- How could I experiment with inviting one new “guest” into my mental space this week?
- When did I last find common ground with someone or something I thought was “too different”?
- What rule or filter might be limiting the variety of experiences I allow myself to notice?

Frequently Asked Questions

What does NLP mean by mental filters?

In NLP, filters are the unconscious processes that decide which information you pay attention to and which you ignore. They’re shaped by your beliefs, values, language, and past experiences. These filters simplify reality, but they can also limit what possibilities you notice.

How can I change my mental filters?

You can expand your filters by questioning automatic thoughts, practising reframing, and experimenting with new experiences. For example, instead of dismissing a compliment with “they don’t mean it,” you can pause and try inviting it in as evidence of your strengths.

Why do I keep repeating the same thought patterns?

Your mind prefers familiarity and it’s efficient to replay what you already know. That’s

why recurring thoughts feel automatic. Reflection, journaling, and NLP techniques like reframing or anchoring can interrupt this cycle and create space for new patterns.

Can expanding my “mental guest list” help with confidence?

Yes. When you invite in new perspectives or possibilities, you create more evidence that you’re capable of growth. For example, trying one small action outside your comfort zone (with a supportive mindset) can shift your sense of what’s possible, which builds confidence over time.

How does this idea relate to empowered living?

Empowered living means making choices from clarity rather than default mode. By noticing who’s “at the table” in your mind and choosing to broaden the guest list, you reclaim more influence over your inner world — and therefore over the actions you take in your outer world.



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