

NLP Meta Model – Quick Reference Sheet

Purpose: To uncover missing details, clarify thinking, and open up new choices by asking targeted questions.

Question	When to Use It	Example Statement	Meta Model Response	Purpose
How do you know?	When someone labels themselves or a situation without evidence	"I'm a terrible speller."	"How do you know you're terrible at it?"	Turns vague labels into actual evidence or process
What, specifically?	When a statement is too general to act on	"I'm upset."	"What, specifically, are you upset about?"	Focuses on the exact cause of the issue
Who, specifically?	When someone blames 'they,' 'everyone,' or 'no one'	"They never listen to me."	"Who, specifically, never listens?"	Breaks vague groups into real individuals
What would happen if you did/didn't?	When someone says they 'can't' or 'won't' do something	"I can't get started in the mornings."	"What would happen if you did get started?"	Reveals hidden fears, blocks, or consequences
Compared to what?	When someone uses a relative term like 'too hard,' 'too slow'	"This is too hard."	"Too hard compared to what?"	Exposes the reference point they're using

How to Use This in Conversation:

1. Listen for vague, absolute, or emotionally loaded statements.
2. Choose the question that fits the gap in the other person's description.
3. Ask with genuine curiosity — this is exploration, not interrogation.
4. Pause and let them think — silence is part of the process.
5. Follow up based on their new, clearer response.

Why It Works:

- Clears up deletions (missing info)
- Corrects distortions (twisted meaning)
- Breaks generalizations (over-applied rules)
- Gives people more choice in how they respond to situations