

## Anchoring

When dealing with change – either for the self or facilitating it in others as happens in the Mentor/Mentee relationship one of the challenges is to embed or hold onto the changes and/or the emotional states that get generated along the way to success. The process of Anchoring helps do that.

An anchor is a stimulus, it may be a sound, an image, a touch, a smell or a taste that triggers a consistent response in self or another. This happens quite naturally if we think about it – a piece of music that brings to mind a past relationship or place we loved being in, and image such as a super moon rising over the horizon and the emotion it evokes, the smell of a beloved special dessert cooking in the oven, and many more.

So, this technique uses this natural process in order to enable the creation of a more resourceful state – on call. Using anchors in NLP enables:

- The gaining of access to resourceful states when they are wanted
- The replacement of unwanted feelings and thoughts with desirable ones (pattern interrupting)
- Gaining control over emotions
- Influencing responses that you may be triggering in other people
- Tapping into memory or imagination as part of supporting personal development and growth

We all have anchors that already work for us, and we do use them albeit unconsciously. EG. Going to our happy place when anxious. We also have anchors that are counterproductive – they may trigger unresourceful states such as depression, anger, frustration or other undermining states that limit subsequent behavioural choices.

Using anchors in conjunction with being clear about outcome, creates the ability to be in greater control of self and the impact on others. It might be one of many everyday situations that you would like to feel more resourceful in:

- At the start of a presentation
- Being on the receiving end of bullying
- When you must tell someone, they are losing their job
- When delegating a new area of work to a team member

- In a meeting when your view is different to that of the majority
- When you get some confronting feedback

Or, when you want to have greater influence over the effect you have on others. Such as:

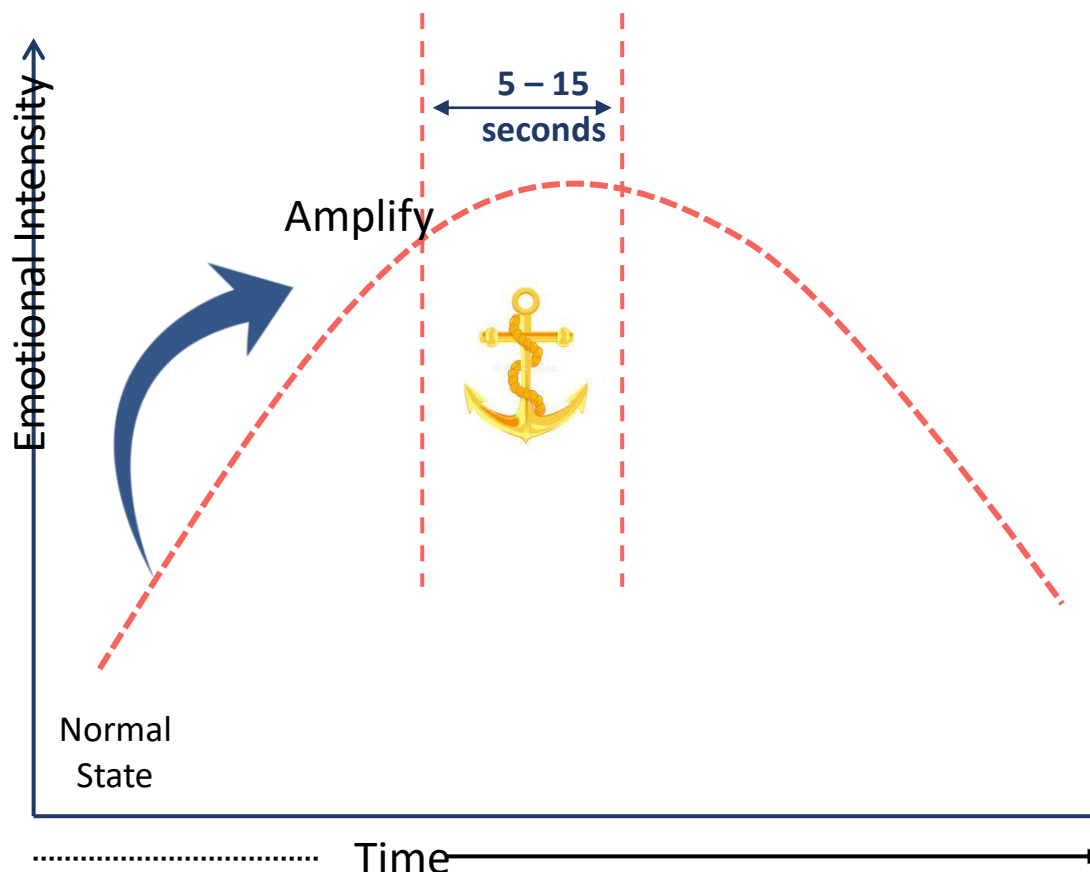
- When you are invited to discuss a topic that is controversial
- When you are delegating work
- When others ask you for feedback
- When you are laying down acceptable boundaries of behaviour

Let's look firstly at how to anchor a resourceful state in yourself. We recommend, that as Mentor you actually practice this process, in order to create the confidence to be able to use it with your Mentee, should the need arise whereby that need to have some access to a more resourceful state than they are in, built.

## **Anchoring a Resourceful State for the Self**

1. Find a quiet place, free from distractions where you can concentrate.
2. Choose a state/feeling/emotion that you've experienced in the past that you'd like to be able to access whenever you choose.
3. Choose a physical anchor that is easy to remember, easy to use and precise – that you can activate whenever you want to create the state. (For example – by touching the thumb and little finger on your dominant hand together)
4. Close your eyes (if you like) and recall a memory of a time when this state was at its strongest for you.
5. Make sure you are fully associated with it – that you are seeing it, hearing it, feeling it through your own perspective and NOT observing as if you are looking on. (it is only when you are fully associated that you can really experience the state and anchor it)
6. When fully associated, focus fully on what you see. What colours? Are they bright or pastel? Is the image clear or cloudy?
7. What other distinctions can you make? What can you hear? Is it loud or quiet? Where is the sound coming from? (in front, to the side, behind, above or below?) Are their voices present? Is it you who is speaking? Listen and connect with all the sounds present in this state.
8. Now, allow yourself to experience the emotion that is present. Enhance it until it is strong and envelopes you completely.

9. As you feel fully into the state, set the anchor by touching together the little finger and thumb of your dominant hand – continue to hold for 5-15 seconds, whilst you experience the sensation at its most intense.
10. Notice the feeling of the touch between the finger and thumb, and when you've experienced that, release it.
11. Shake yourself or move to break state and bring the self-back to the present.
12. This touching of the finger and thumb is the anchor. Repeat the same process steps several times until you know there is a strong connection between the action, and the feeling you want to elicit. (it's important to set the anchor as the experience is at its peak)
13. Now, test the anchor. Firstly, think of something entirely different, and as you do so, touch the finger and thumb together precisely in the same way as you did when you set the anchor. This is known as 'firing the anchor'.
14. What happens?
15. If you have set up the anchor effectively, the scene, sounds and feelings will appear.
16. If this doesn't happen – keep practicing with setting the anchor. Making sure you are fully associated, that you use exactly the same action, and that you engage the anchor whilst the state is at its peak – as shown below.



17. Now think of a future situation where you would like to have this feeling. Imagine yourself in this future, and as you immerse yourself fully into the situation, fire the anchor.
18. What do you see, hear and feel?

When you do this, you are in fact, transferring the desired state, the resourceful state to another future context.

## **Anchoring a Resourceful State for Another**

Exactly the same process works for anchoring others as it does for the self. So, this is the process you would use with a Mentee.

1. Ask the Mentee what state they want to have in a particular situation. Get them to find a time in the past when they were in that state.
2. Decide on the anchor
3. Invite them to step into the state fully. Help them associate by asking about the quality of what they see, hear and feel, you may use the sub-modalities in order to heighten the experience EG. What do you see? How far or close? How big or small? Etc.
4. Have them intensify all the sensations of being there – one at a time.
5. Pay attention to their expression, body language and use your intuition to estimate when they are moving toward the peak of their experience. Ask them to apply the anchor and hold it, for as long as the experience is still intense.
6. Bring them back to the present, and then repeat the steps a few times.
7. Test, by firing the anchor.
8. Test the anchor in a future situation – as described above, by asking them to imagine a future scenario

Over time, we can develop the ability to access the state without firing the anchor, as it becomes programmed into the neural pathways. Because we are physiologically associating the state (e.g., happy, confident, calm etc) with, the anchor.

Sometimes touch anchors aren't so available in business settings. You can use other modalities than kinaesthetic. Such as repeating a word, or positioning the body in a particular way. However, that said using touch is often the easiest and it's just a matter of finding what works. Examples are:

- Holding the ear lobe
- Squeezing a couple of fingers together
- Grabbing the wrist
- Placing thumbs together and steeping the fingers

Just experiment.

## Collapsing and Anchor

Finally, let's consider how to collapse anchors. As mentioned previously anchors happen quite naturally and this includes anchors that generate unresourceful states. In this process we do two things, collapse the anchor that is creating the interference, and enabling another anchor that provides an alternate positive state.

1. Choose the unresourceful state you wish to work on. EG. state of anxiety, frustration, lack of confidence etc.
2. Associate into this state to re-experience it. When moving to its peak, anchor it by touching the index finger to the first knuckle on the other hand. Repeat and test the anchor until you know that it works.
3. NOTE: only access this state briefly.
4. Choose a different state, a break state such as thinking about something funny or something that requires thought – like spelling your name backward.
5. Choose an alternate state, a resourceful state you would like to evoke. Associate into the time you had this present and when the feeling is intense, anchor it by touching your second finger to the second knuckle on your other hand.
6. Test these two anchors in the following sequence:
  - a. Break state
  - b. Fire the first anchor
  - c. Break state
  - d. Fire the second anchor
7. If either of the anchors fail to fire, repeat the programming sequence to reset them

8. Applying these two anchors at the same time will create confusion, as they sort themselves out into a new integrated state.
9. If the less resourceful state is still the stronger, then go back and choose and anchor and even stronger resourceful state. Repeat the process.
10. It may also help to anchor for the resourceful state, a moment before firing the anchor for the unresourceful state.
11. Now for the acid test. Think of a future situation, one which typically would have triggered the unresourceful state in the past. What happens now when you think of that situation?
12. If the collapsing anchors worked, the previous response will be gone.