



# IGNITE THE SPARK WITHIN

By

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## Introduction

Take a moment and remember those conversations – especially the short ones – which have lasted a lifetime for you. Do you recall those words which suddenly, instantaneously opened a path in front of you? Who comes to your mind? Who said those words to you – exactly when you needed them? Those are your *Igniters*. And do you remember that heartwarming feeling, that gratitude, which came after?

They know you. They know what you need and when you need, and how much of it you need. They **listen**, **observe**, and **proactively learn about you** by watching you going through

your transactions. Most importantly, they somehow **know that specific moment** when you need that **specific guidance** which would make a huge difference to your pursuit and brings you closer to your objective.

And more likely than not, your **Igniters** are not just helping you! They are likely impacting many more people and showing them the path which is right for them.

Would it not be wonderful to learn this amazing skill? Imagine becoming a **Igniter** yourself! How would it change your life – with your spouse, with your loved ones, with your children, with family members, at work, among friends and in society? There is enough literature available to prove that helping others helps you at all levels – mind, body and soul.

So, how do these **Igniters** do it? **How do they learn about you?** How do they know that precise moment to deliver that guidance? Well, read on and find out for yourself!

## Outcome: The Effect of an Igniter

A moment ago, you recalled – and hopefully relived – those experiences with your **Igniters**. What was that like for you? What emotions and feelings did such conversations generate within you?

I have been fortunate to have **Igniters** in my life too. And when I relive those experiences, I feel a sense of awe and a pleasant surprise at first. As I begin to explore the path shown by my **Igniters**, I go quiet and feel the easing of tension in my shoulders. The meaning of that communication is the effect of revealing the next step I can and should take towards my objective. I also feel amazed and grateful, realizing how much my **Igniters** care about my well-being selflessly and how confident they are about the resources I have within myself. Finally, I save these moments in my memories as visuals, in a highly associated state, which I can recall easily when I need to. Thus, these golden aha moments and my gratitude, respect and love for my **Igniters** stay with me forever. I have found these conversations to be very valuable in my life, hence the decision to model these exemplars.

**The Igniter Model**, once adopted fully, will demonstrate for us:

- Changes in self
  - Increased awareness, observation and **curiosity** all the time
  - **Fully-body listening**, enhanced attention in the moment with complete focus on the person
  - Ability to recognize and put aside own ego and biases
  - Increase in self-esteem, happiness and contentment
- Changes in those for whom you are an **Igniter**, and whom you teach this model
  - Positive responses, feedback, and gratitude towards you
  - Deeper and more meaningful relationship with you
  - Move from Problem State to Desired State
  - Achieving the desired outcomes successfully

## My “IT”

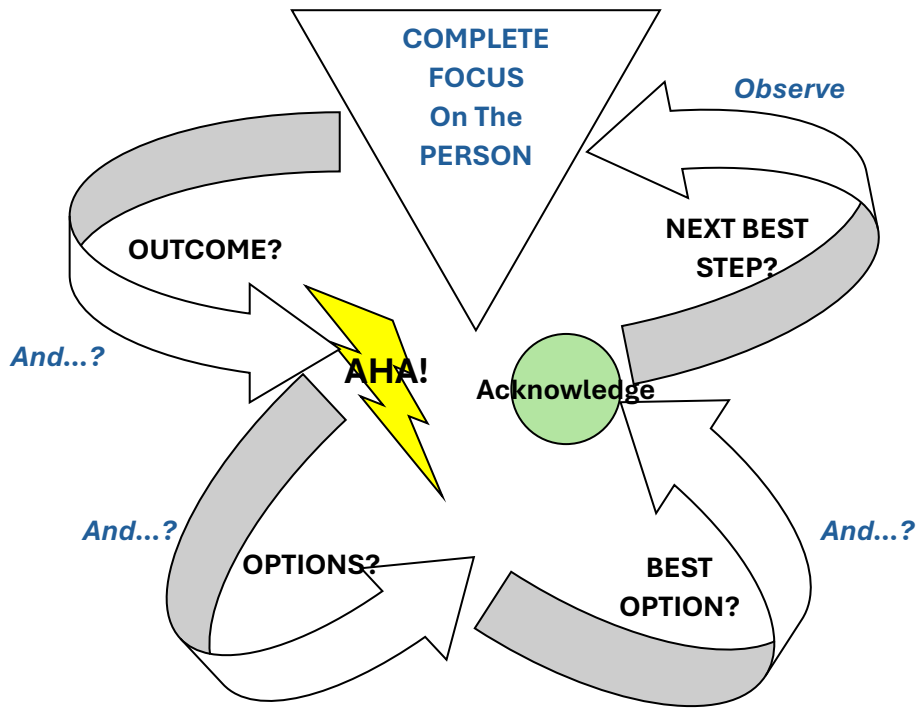
***That aha moment, in which one suddenly sees the path or realizes what one must do to solve a problem at hand, through a dialogue with you.***

## The Igniter Model

1. A person you care about has asked you for some help about a problem she is facing.
2. Take a deep breath and as you exhale, **become fully available** for this person. Feel all your thoughts converge around this person and the present situation. (Aid)
3. Begin by asking the person - in a gentle, calm, soothing and encouraging voice - about the **outcome** that she is after. (Aic)
4. Pay close attention on what is being said and how it is being said. Observe the choice of words and non-verbal cues as she tries to articulate her outcome. (Vic, Aic)
5. Build up the dialogue. **Start with “And”**, then repeat her own words and tone from previous response to form your next question. There WILL be silence for some time....and that’s good! (Vir, Air)
6. In a few iterations, she may have the **“aha” moment** – as she identifies the real outcome she should be pursuing. (Ki)
7. Next, frame another question to bring out **possible paths / options / strategies** she can consider. Remember to stand in her shoes and take due care not to add what may work for you if you are in that situation! Be a **निमित्त मात्र (nimitta matra) – just a conduit**, an instrument to help her analyse her own thoughts. (Vic, Aic, Ki)
8. Continue with the “And” questions and help her to **compare the possible paths**. Once she chooses the path which she believes is the best for her, **acknowledge** her choice. (Vic, Aic)
9. Lastly ask what the **next best step** she should take to get started on the chosen path, of course beginning with “And”. (Vic, Aic)
10. Continue to observe her over time as she takes the next steps towards her outcome. Continue to gather information. **Continue the dialogue**. Continue to be her “Igniter”. (Air, Ki)

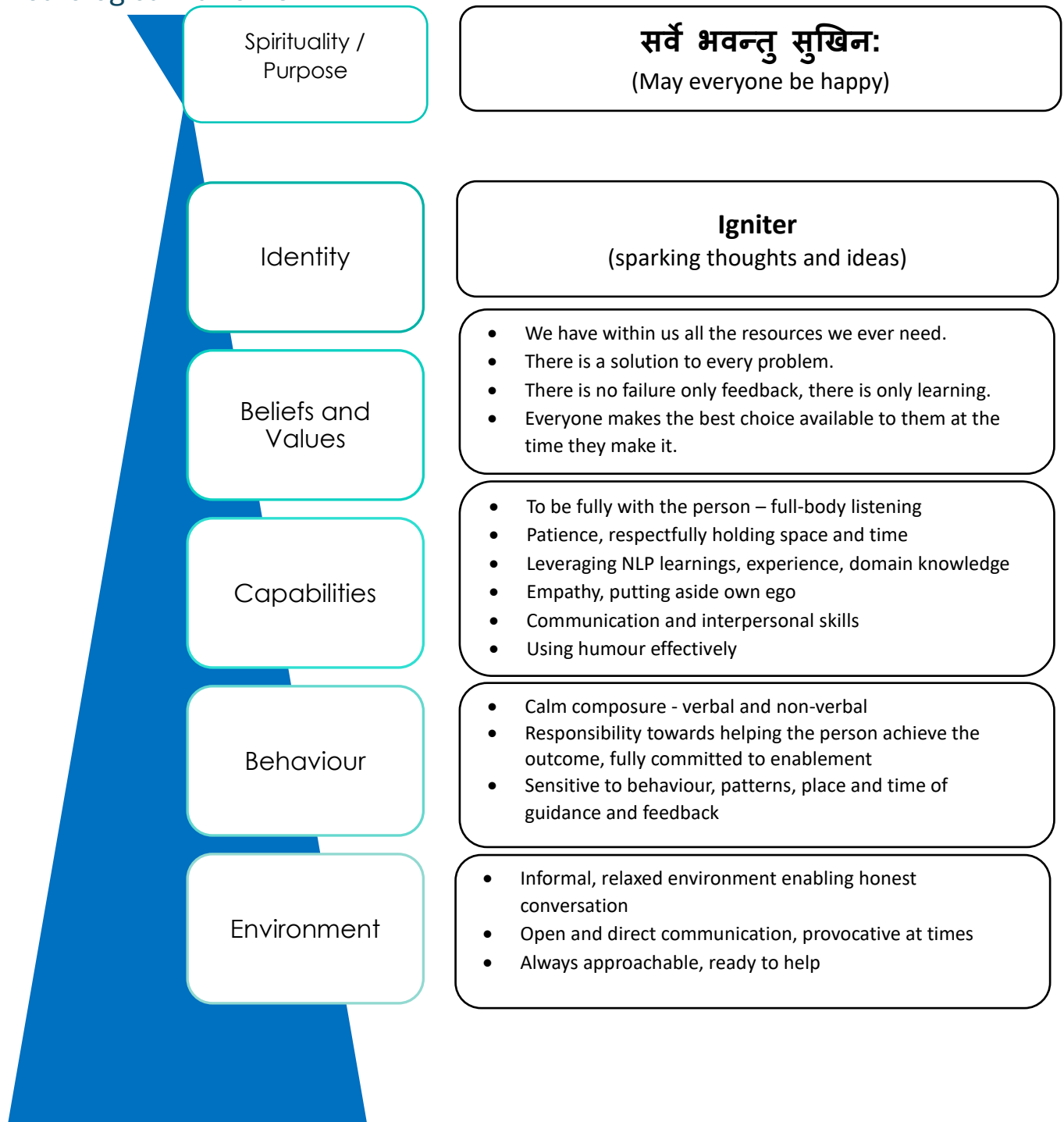
### Key

- Aid: Auditory / internal / dialogue
- Air: Auditory / internal / remembered
- Aic: Auditory / internal / constructed
- Vir: Visual / internal / remembered
- Vic: Visual / internal / constructed
- Ki: Kinaesthetic / internal
- Ke: Kinaesthetic / external



## The Igniter Model

## Neurological Patterns



## Filters

- Towards (Desired state)
- Auditory, Visual, Feelings
- People, Time, Activity
- Present, Future
- Other
- Match
- Small Chunk
- Choice
- Internal reference
- Associated



## Developing, Testing and Refining the Model

I learnt a lot about modelling, clean questions, neurological levels, metaphors and other NLP aspects conceptually during the Master Practitioner training. The journey to truly experience these concepts in day-to-day life was even more insightful for me.

Arriving at my “It” proved much harder than I expected, as my default filters (big chunk, procedure) restricted me to a rather broad topic. In my mind I was “done” (corporate mindset), and when I attempted to impart the model to the peer NLP group, I received valuable, honest and rather provocative feedback (thanks Ramesh and Prasanna!) - which really helped. (*Actually, I was laughed out of the room 😊*). After all, there is no failure only feedback, only learning!

Selecting my exemplars and interviewing them was a good experience, especially in using clean questions and taking my exemplars to experience that specific situation which I wanted to model. Recalling and revising the concepts helped in modelling the third exemplar through observation, watching his podcasts and reading his published articles. Yet, the “it” was eluding me. I had all the data points I needed, however what it means was still out of my reach.

I went back to the drawing board and continued to refine my “it” down to a specific moment. I decluttered my original model massively, removed the corporate jargon and realized that the model does not have to be very complicated. I also leveraged an aid to articulate well-formed outcome.

Then came the opportunity to truly test out the model. A colleague called in unplanned and wanted to seek some career advice. He was unsure if the new client-facing role he had taken up was taking him away from core engineering, which was his passion. I consciously applied the model step by step, focussed on his need and his situation, asked clean questions to help him look deeper inside. It took just 7 minutes for him to find the answer he was looking for – that it was his expertise in core engineering which is making him a trusted partner for his clients. He instantly knew what he would do next! And I had my own AHA moment after those 7 minutes – as I saw the model working successfully for the first time.

*“I feel that I should have such conversations with you every quarter....these few minutes open the path for me for next many months!”*

Now I was better prepared for the next opportunity to apply the model. It was not long before a team member approached me and shared how unhappy she was and was “feeling stuck” with the nature of work she was doing. She was also disappointed that while she had completed an exhaustive course over a year, and learnt new skills, no one was ready to offer her a new role. The model helped her realize that she does not need a change in job to utilize her new skills. She decided to approach other teams to freely offer her time to help them out, in return gaining valuable hands-on experience on new skills.

*“Interestingly enough, we had a similar chat a couple of months ago, and you used that exact approach to help me out of a jam. That conversation has stuck with me, and when you asked during the session if there’s any conversation I’d remember for a long time—well, that was it. I’m really amazed at how you can model different personalities and then learn from them. It’s interesting to know that we can pick and choose what aspects we want to incorporate into our own communication and personality.”*

In another scenario, the model helped one of my nephews realize that he needs to timebox certain tasks and set deadlines for himself to make real progress on his objectives. He was able to shake off the inertia and procrastination. He is now working towards completing his assignments.

*“Thank you for all your guidance. I have not felt this rush of enthusiasm in a long time.”*

Next, it was time to impart the model to a group. I requested time and permission from my team at work where I provided an overview of NLP, conducted a few short experience-driven exercises and imparted the model. It was generally well received (*Remember, it was a captive audience and it was the performance appraisal season 😊*), along with some great honest feedback.

*“Thanks for conducting the NLP modelling session. It gave me a different perspective on how to approach people, their ideas and thoughts and how to influence the outcomes of my discussions with them. I will try it in real life, consciously, especially with my kids to understand and appreciate the model. And I believe that, with practice, I will be able to apply it even unconsciously.”*

*“The NLP session was highly insightful and engaging. The interactive exercises and role-playing scenarios were particularly effective and made me feel that using this model can make me a better individual both personally and professionally.”*

*“Learning and take away:*

*1) Use of right words, understanding the difference like “have” and “want”, how these impacts the body language and shift in the energy*

*2) Learning from observing others - observing their body language, how they analyse the vibes or energies in the room, and the impactful feedback they provide*

*3) Not be a rescuer. Do we really have permission to recommend something, unless asked? This is so true. This resonates deeply and will truly help in my personal life*

*4) Help individuals tap their inner potential, rather than being their rescuers, unless they ask for help*

*5) I personally felt the visualisation exercise we tried*

With these experiences I found courage to request for another session with the peer NLP group to review my model. The feedback this time was positive, along with more work needed to effectively impart the model, and make people truly experience it. A challenge was then thrown at me to use my model “live” with one of the group members. One of the NLP peers was gracious enough to volunteer and share a situation she was facing right then. The model worked again, and she did get her aha moment, which she shared would have helped her prepare better for a job interview the next day!

*“For me the Aha moment came when you asked about what strategies I can think of for tomorrow. I suddenly knew how to approach the upcoming interview.”*

These interactions and experiences provided following valuable insights to me, using which I was able to further refine the model

- Focusing on the person and truly listening is the key.
- A spark can be ignited within seconds – it need not be a long-drawn conversation.
- A simple model is more effective as it can be used across different scenarios.
- Each person **truly** had all the resources within themselves.
  - There is absolutely no need to corrupt their map by adding my content.



## Effect of Integrating the Model on Myself

**Disciple: “Guru Ji! Guru Ji! I have gone through the complete Bhagvad Gita!”**

**Guru Ji: “That’s good. Has the Bhagvad Gita gone through you?”**

A quote from my high school Physics teacher comes to mind as I begin to write this section. He would often use this as we struggled to apply the theoretical concepts in solving numerical problems.

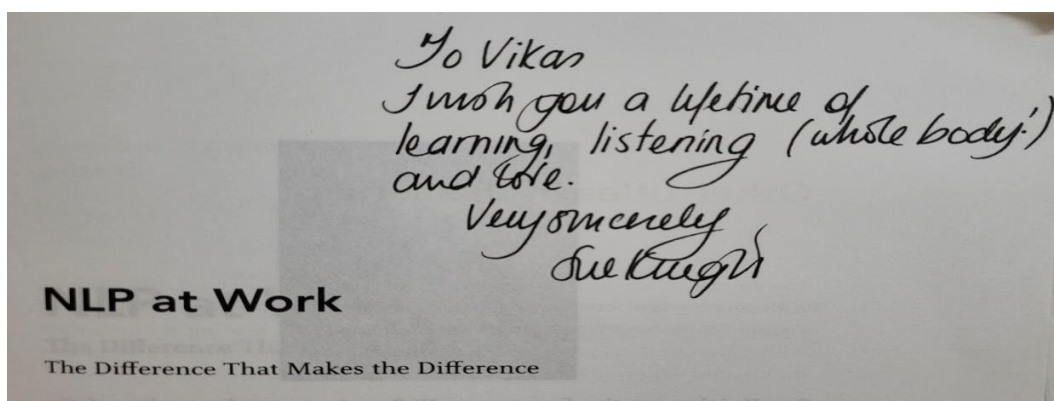
*“This is where Life becomes difficult, isn’t it?”*

I feel like I am on a journey of self-discovery and NLP is the vehicle. Every session from Foundation to Business Practitioner to intensive Master Practitioner has propelled me further in realizing what-I-do and understanding why-I-do-what-I-do.

There is definite evidence of changes within me. I am consciously observing myself now on more occasions. The language I use – externally and for internal dialogue - is changing as well. “Buts” are on their way out. “And?” is becoming my go-to word. I make sure to label my opinions are “for me”, and I no longer impose my likes and dislikes on others. I am beginning to consciously use the **igniter** model on myself as well as on others. Quite often my first response to others is “So, what’s the outcome you are looking for?”

I am holding time and space for others better, observing others consciously, listening better and talking less (*well...work in progress!*). People around me – my family, friends, colleagues – are noticing these changes. I often hear comment like “staying calm”, “always available to help”, “open to listen”. People are approaching me more often to bounce off their thoughts. Every interaction is a learning, and I discover a bit more about myself in each of these dialogues.

I also am asking and receiving rich feedback through which I am **very** aware that I have a long way to go... I am aware that I need to watch my default patterns, filters and beliefs in action and analyse which of these are helping or hindering my self-discovery journey to be my best self. I truly believe that it is a lifelong journey, and NLP is a tool I am using to make a difference, to **ignite** the spark within myself, and in others.



## My Exemplars

### Ramesh Prasad

I was fortunate to get an invitation for an NLP Foundation Training in 2016. I thoroughly enjoyed the subject as well as the experiential-learning mode Ramesh used to impart the concepts. That got me hooked on to this subject. I reached out to Ramesh again in 2022 and signed up with the Business Practitioner Training in a serene farmhouse setting. Attending the intensive Master Practitioner Training in 2024 was the logical next step for me. During these sessions and in between, I always found interactions with Ramesh as extremely helpful, insightful for me and exactly what I needed. Therefore, he was a natural first choice for me as an exemplar for my project. You can get to know Ramesh and his passion at <https://www.onefluencer.com/>.

### Demonstration of IT

Proactively observes delegates' patterns. Delivers feedback in a crisp, direct way and at an instant which is best suited for their outcome.

### Ramesh's Model: "See a Need, Help Fill the Need"

1. Engage with the delegate to understand their "want". (Aid)
2. Keenly observe the delegate as they go through various activities. Create or leverage a variety of situations for the delegate to experience - and generate rich observations. (Ke)
3. Notice the words they are using and the non-verbal behaviour they are demonstrating. (Air, Vir)
4. Identify the patterns and verify through repeat observations to confirm "default" patterns. (Aic, Vic)
5. Correlate their "want" (from Step 1) with the patterns observed (in Step 4). Analyse which of the patterns delegate is demonstrating will aid in fulfilling the need, and which patterns may need a change.
6. Step into the delegate's shoes to understand what the delegate may really "need" to achieve the "want" (Need is often in unconscious mind to begin with). (Ki)
7. Provide specific and on-the-spot feedback to delegate – leveraging their own behaviour from a few moments ago - to help them understand their patterns. Observe the response keenly to measure the impact of the feedback. (Air, Vir)
8. Help the delegate as they figure out their unconscious need, and what they need to change to fulfil it. (Ki)
9. Go back to step 2 and iterate till the delegate has enough of their own examples to learn from.
10. Support the delegate to identify the path forward which will lead them to change their patterns and fulfil the "need" thereby achieving the "want".

## Ritesh Malviya

I have known Ritesh since 2013, when we started to work as colleagues. We instantly connected as we found a huge set of common values, beliefs and styles of working. Over time I realized that Ritesh's vast knowledge in financial domain is an excellent asset and requested his help in my financial planning. I have learnt so much from him in many aspects of life. His calm composure, his "always on" nature and ability to give full attention to the listener prompted me to choose Ritesh as an exemplar for my project. You can get to know about Ritesh at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ritesh-m-88241315a/>

### Demonstration of IT

Responds exactly and instantaneously with the financial investment strategy what is best for me at that time

### Ritesh's Model: "Do unto others as you would have done unto yourself"

1. When someone asks for advice, first ask yourself to clear your heart - of your own biases, of negativity, of competition. (Aid)
2. Connect with your inner self and recall the purpose - सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः - let everyone be happy - and how it fuels your own sense of fulfilment. (Air / Ki)
3. Get into full-body-listening mode. Focus fully and give complete attention to the person's verbal and non-verbal cues. (Ke)
4. Visualize yourself into the person's shoes as much as possible. Leverage what you have known and learnt about the person so far and how the present context connects to that knowledge. (Vic / Ki)
5. Use your knowledge and experience to construct the advice / guidance which will be appropriate for the person in the current context and which the person will be able to put in action and sustain.
6. Ask yourself if you would follow the advice / guidance yourself. And how would you have felt on receiving this guidance. Still standing in the other person's shoes, would this advice help in showing the path to the person. (Aid / Ki)
7. Convey this advice / guidance to the person along with the reason / rationale behind its applicability to the person's background and specific current context.
8. Observe carefully what has been the effect of your communication on the other person.
9. If the effect is what you visualized for yourself in Step 6, proceed to complete the transaction. If the effect is not what you expected, record this new information about the person and go back to Step 5.

## Sajid Ahmed

Sajid joined my current organization in a senior leadership role. From Day 1 it was clear to me that he is a charismatic leader and that I have a lot to learn from him. Over past 6 years I have worked with him on several interesting projects, and I have grown as a professional with each interaction. I am amazed at Sajid's ability to instantly switch context and have a very precise - yet deep - conversation with an individual, and in the next instant repeat the same with another individual on a completely different topic! You can get to know about Sajid at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sajidahmedin/>

### Demonstration of IT

In just 30 seconds Sajid laid out the plan for entire year, which was best suited for me and which I executed to achieve successful outcomes.

### Sajid's Model: "Teach 'em how to fish"

1. Prepare:
  - Know your business. Know your outcomes. (Aid)
  - Understand the dynamics and various moving parts of the organization as best as possible. (Aid)
  - Actively look for connections and internalize the information which can impact your objectives – positively or negatively. (Air)
2. Recollect:
  - Just before or as you engage with a team member, recollect key programs or tasks the person is engaged in. (Air)
  - Recollect recent conversations and information gathered through various forums and your own analysis in Prepare phase. (Air)
  - Formulate the direction / advice which would be the best next step towards the outcomes important to the team member and to you. (Aic, Ki)
3. Engage:
  - Deliver the direction / advice to the team member in a direct, crisp manner. (Aic)
    - No prelude or formality is necessary as you are signalling this as an ongoing conversation
  - Keep the direction / advice at the strategic level.
    - If required, use whiteboard to lay out the vision. (Vic)
  - Connect the advice tightly to the outcomes important to the team member and to you. (Ke)
  - Trust that the team member would leverage the capabilities - existing or to be developed - to refine the direction and figure out a way to implement the strategy. (Ki)
  - Assess impact of your words and hold the space for the team member to ask any questions / clarifications. (Air, Ke)
4. Validate:

- Look for the impact of outcomes achieved in conversations with relevant stakeholders in subsequent interactions. (Air, Ke)
- Continue short conversations with team member to check on status / roadblocks and to provide feedback. (Aic)

## Acknowledgements

Signing up for [NLP Intensive Training](#) with Sue Knight and Ramesh Prasad at Cherai Beach was probably one of the best decisions I have taken towards my personal and professional growth.

This project is the outcome of the work allocated to me to complete the Master Practitioner level certification. The process was highly enriching as I researched more about the NLP concepts as well as applied them in real life situations. Admittedly I had to do multiple iterations and rework, however I learnt something more each time about NLP and about myself.

I would like to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to Sue and Ramesh for never giving up on me, never “rescuing” me and supporting me till I successfully completed my project and certification. Special thanks to Ramesh for agreeing to be my exemplar!

I would also like to thank Sajid and Ritesh to be my exemplars. This project would not have been possible without you. I continue to learn from you in each transaction.

I thank my NLP Support Group – Prasanna, Ajith, Chavi and Lohith – for peer review, exchanging ideas and valuable feedback during this project.

Finally, I would like to thank my lovely daughter Mugdha, who proofread the complete project and provided many useful insights in the way I could express myself better.

## My Coordinates

I am happy to connect with like-minded people to learn, apply and experience NLP at Work. You can reach me at:

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