

LEADERSHIP RESET IN PRACTICE

Scripts for Moments That Matter

Knowing what good leadership looks like and knowing what to say in the moment are often two very different things.

A difficult conversation starts. A decision is challenged. A team changes overnight. In these moments, a leader's first few words can determine the fate of a conversation—whether it opens up or shuts down.

Scripts for Moments That Matter offers practical language so managers can begin these conversations with clarity, curiosity, and candor. The sample dialogue below isn't intended to be delivered to employees word-for-word, but rather used as a jumping-off point. We encourage you to adapt these examples into your voice, for your team, and in the context of your specific situation.

The goal is never to say the "perfect" thing. It's simply to create the conditions for a more constructive conversation.

Recommended use case:

When a manager knows the kind of conversations they need to have but wants help finding clear, constructive language to get it started.

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The Scripts

Sometimes the hardest part isn't knowing what you believe. It's knowing what to say.

Talk Tracks

Use these as starting points rather than scripts to read word-for-word.

When you don't know	"I don't have the answer yet. Here's what I do know, here's what I'm trying to understand, and here's when I'll come back to you."
When a team has changed	"We're a different team than we were before. That may make some things harder for a while. Let's talk about what we need from each other to work well together."
When you recognize someone	"I noticed you did X. It mattered because Y. I want you to know that contribution made a difference."
When someone challenges your decision	"I'm glad you raised that. Tell me what you're seeing that I may be missing."
Then, when you've heard them:	"I appreciate the input. I'm still going to make the call, and here's why." Speaking up does not mean every decision becomes a group vote.
When someone brings bad news	"Thank you for telling me. Let's understand what's happening before we jump to a solution.

When you delegate	"I'm giving you ownership of this because I think you can do it. Here's what good looks like, here's what you own, and here's where I'm here to support you."
When you want someone to raise problems earlier	"You don't have to have the solution before you bring me the problem. I'd rather know sooner."

Next steps:

Pick 1 upcoming conversation where the stakes feel high or the entry point into the conversation feels uncomfortable.

Adapt the relevant script to your own voice, use it as a starting point, and pay attention to how the other person responds. Refine the language based on what creates more clarity, candor, and trust between you and your colleague.

Want more insights?

Watch our documentary investigation **The Leadership Reset. Available on demand now.**

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