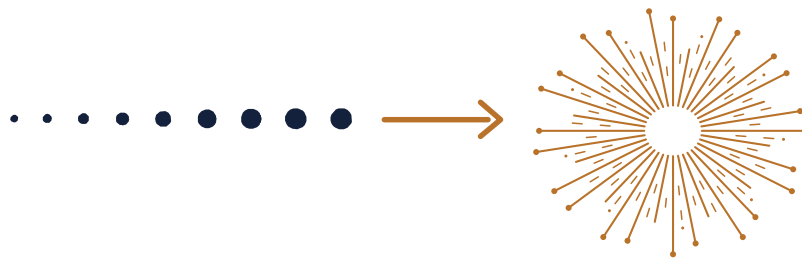


LEADER COMPANION

What Happens Next Matters

A Workbook & Journal



MARCY FETZER, PhD

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BEGIN HERE

How This Companion Works

Read the named chapter of *What Happens Next Matters*. Then work through the same five steps. Each chapter takes about eight pages and ends with room for notes.

1

The Lens

See the chapter's central distinction, and notice it in your own work.

2

A Moment That Matters

Consider what each possible response teaches.

3

The Tool

Use the chapter's instrument. A worked example faces it.

4

Try It

Plan one change in one conversation, then record what followed.

5

Carry It

Return to your relationship and take one question forward.

BEFORE CHAPTER 1

☐ Choose one relationship p. 5

☐ Take the Ecology Audit p. 6

When you want more, the Toolkit at the back holds questions to ask a colleague, sentences you can use, and extra journal pages (p. 118).

BEGIN HERE

One Relationship

Choose one working relationship in which something has become predictable. It does not have to be the most difficult relationship you have; one with enough trust to support experimentation may be a better place to begin. You will return to this relationship at the end of every chapter.

The relationship (initials or role) _____

What tends to happen between us

What I have probably learned to expect

What I would like this relationship to become more capable of holding

BEGIN HERE

Ecology Audit

Rate your team's recent experience: 1 (rarely) to 5 (consistently).

Date _____

	1	2	3	4	5	
PART I • SEEING THE ECOLOGY						
01a	People bring me unfinished ideas.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
01b	When someone disagrees with me, the disagreement changes something.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
02a	We ask about the history behind an unexpected response.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
02b	We compare patterns across settings before judging a person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
03a	We ask what people have already learned to expect from us.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
03b	We keep responding in ways that can change an inherited expectation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PART II • WHAT THE ECOLOGY TEACHES						
04a	We notice when someone's participation changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
04b	Our response to imperfect candor makes speaking again less costly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
05a	We describe specific behavior rather than assign a fixed identity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
05b	New evidence can change the conclusions we hold about someone.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
06a	We ask what made an apparently easy success possible.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
06b	We recognize preventive work and others who helped with a rescue.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PART III • WHAT RELATIONSHIPS BEGIN TO CARRY						
07a	We ask what a new request will cost people before making it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
07b	We notice whose repeated adaptation has become part of the plan.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
08a	People can see leaders admit uncertainty and change their minds.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
08b	Using a stated permission preserves a person's standing here.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
09a	What someone told us earlier influences our later decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
09b	We remember people's aspirations when opportunities appear.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PART IV • CHANGING WHAT HAPPENS NEXT						
10a	We notice when conflict begins narrowing our available responses.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10b	We choose a response for the moment rather than follow our default.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11a	A repair survives the pressure that produced the old pattern.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11b	People can keep their protections while new trust develops.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12a	We notice useful contributions that people have stopped offering.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12b	People still have ways to influence decisions made above them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

BEGIN HERE

Ecology Audit · Scores

For each Part, add its six ratings and divide by six. Shade each bar to the average you calculated; use a partial segment when needed.

PART I · SEEING THE ECOLOGY

Total _____ ÷ 6 = Average _____



PART II · WHAT THE ECOLOGY TEACHES

Total _____ ÷ 6 = Average _____



PART III · WHAT RELATIONSHIPS BEGIN TO CARRY

Total _____ ÷ 6 = Average _____



PART IV · CHANGING WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Total _____ ÷ 6 = Average _____



Lowest Part _____ Average _____

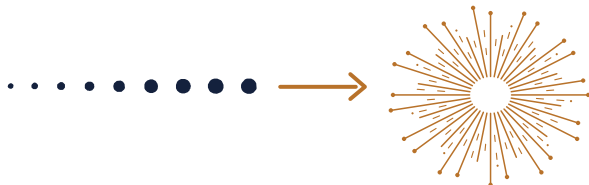
Highest Part _____ Average _____

Let your records inform the ratings; a higher number alone cannot show what another person experienced.

CHAPTER 1

What Happens After Someone Speaks

What happens when someone actually walks through that opening tells us considerably more.



Read *What Happens Next Matters*, pp. 11–22, before beginning.

An invitation creates an opening. What follows helps people learn whether their thinking can matter there. Leadership requires judgment and the willingness to let another person's contribution affect what happens next.

What we invite people to bring into the conversation.

What we do with what they actually bring.

Their contribution can matter.

My thinking may have somewhere to go.

WHNM Ch. 1, p. 19

Think of the last time someone brought you an unfinished idea, concern, or disagreement. What did your response make easier—or harder—the next time?

A Moment That Matters

From the book • WHNM Ch. 1, pp. 17–19

A team member says, “I have an idea for reducing the handoffs, but I haven’t worked out all the details.” You are responsible for the deadline, and a previous process change caused delays.

A “Thanks; send me something when the details are worked out.”

What this teaches the person next time

B “Which handoff are you trying to improve? Let’s understand that first; we may need to test a small part to protect the deadline.”

What this teaches the person next time

C “We tried something similar last year; let’s stay with the current process.”

What this teaches the person next time

Which response is closest to yours? What would you want to understand first?

Interaction Trace

From the book • WHNM Ch. 1, p. 14

Choose a recent moment when someone brought you an idea, a concern, or a disagreement. Record what you did at each step, as it actually happened.

ASK

for their thinking

LISTEN

long enough to understand

CONSIDER

the answer seriously

CARRY

a different experience forward

What might they be learning about bringing their thinking to you?

See it filled in on the next page →

Worked Example

ILLUSTRATIVE ENTRY • Operations supervisor • Weekly one-on-one

A direct report brings a half-formed idea about removing a duplicate handoff.

ASK

for their thinking

I asked, "Which handoff are you trying to improve?" I almost added my solution, then stopped and asked where the work was getting stuck.

CONSIDER

the answer seriously

I had assumed the second check caught errors. We found it sometimes only repeats the first entry, so I agreed to test one routine order while keeping the final check.

LISTEN

long enough to understand

I let the explanation finish, although I checked the clock once. I heard that two teams enter the same update, and asked to see one example.

CARRY

a different experience forward

I returned on Friday with what I had checked and what we could try. The idea changed part of the process, though I kept the deadline and said what we would watch.

What might they be learning about bringing their thinking to you?

They may learn that an unfinished idea can reach my thinking without already being a complete solution.

It records the questions, the interruption almost made, and the choice that followed.

It shows consideration in the decision rather than using good intentions as evidence.

Try It: Make Consideration Visible

From the book • WHNM Ch. 1, pp. 12–14, 18–19

Let the contribution reach your thinking before you settle your response.

BEFORE

In my next conversation with _____

I will _____

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“Tell me more.”

“I want to understand your reasoning before I decide.”

“Let me think about that and come back to you.”

I will try this on _____

AFTER

WHAT I DID

WHAT FOLLOWED

What will I continue or adjust?

Carry It

THIS RELATIONSHIP

The one you chose on p. 5 • Date _____

Through this chapter's lens, what did I notice about this relationship?

What would I want this relationship to experience next?

One line for this chapter _____

QUESTION TO CARRY

WHNM Ch. 1, p. 22

When people speak to me, what do my responses teach them about what will happen if they speak again?

Come back to this on _____

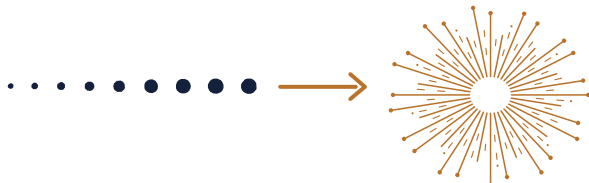
CHAPTER 1 • NOTES

A response becomes information for the next.

CHAPTER 2

The Ecology Around Us

We do not communicate on blank ground. We communicate inside conditions that communication has already helped create.



Read *What Happens Next Matters*, pp. 23–33, before beginning.

Every conversation occurs inside conditions created by earlier conversations. The room existed before the meeting began.

what the organization says
communication should be like

what communication actually feels like
through interaction

The official invitation is only part of the environment. The lived response tells people what participation actually requires.

WJHM Ch. 2, p. 31

Where does the most honest conversation happen in your workplace: in the room, or after people leave it?

A Moment That Matters

From the book • WHNM Ch. 2, pp. 23–24, 28–29

You open a meeting meant to build collaboration and the room is closed: guarded posture, failed humor, defensive comments.

A Set the agenda aside and ask what the group still needs to have acknowledged before the planned work can be useful.

What this teaches the person next time

B Press on with the agenda and tell the group that dwelling on the past will prevent progress.

What this teaches the person next time

C Thank everyone for being candid about the tension, then continue with the planned collaboration exercise.

What this teaches the person next time

Which response is closest to yours? What would you want to understand first?

Questions That Widen the Frame

From the book • WHNM Ch. 2, p. 30

What has usually happened when people tried this before?

What does participation require in this setting?

Which responses are common enough that people have learned to account for them?

Is the behavior we are seeing only a characteristic of the individual, or does it also make sense inside the conditions surrounding that individual?

What this tells me about the ground people are standing on.

See it filled in on the next page →

Worked Example

ILLUSTRATIVE ENTRY • Library circulation manager • Shift handoff

The evening assistants leave concerns out of the shared handoff log.

What has usually happened when people tried this before?

Last month a late note was read aloud as an example of poor preparation. Two assistants remember that more clearly than the new logging instructions.

Which responses are common enough that people have learned to account for them?

I have thanked complete reports and questioned incomplete ones in front of the whole shift. I can see why people check with a colleague first.

What this tells me about the ground people are standing on.

I need to make it possible to flag a problem before its cause is known, and then show that in how I use the next note.

It distinguishes a repeated response from an isolated bad day.

It uses contrast as information while leaving the explanation open to checking.

What does participation require in this setting?

Writing a concern seems to require being certain it is not your own mistake. I had called the log a learning tool without asking what using it now costs.

Is the behavior we are seeing only a characteristic of the individual, or does it also make sense inside the conditions surrounding that individual?

The same assistants flag problems freely with each other. Their caution around the log may say something about how I have responded, not just their confidence.

Try It: Widen the Frame

From the book • WHNM Ch. 2, pp. 27, 29–30

Do not diagnose the ecology from the exception. Watch the pattern.

BEFORE

In my next conversation with _____

I will _____

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“What has usually happened when people tried this before?”

“What does participation require in this setting?”

“I may be walking into something already underway. What should I understand first?”

I will try this on _____

AFTER

WHAT I DID

WHAT FOLLOWED

What will I continue or adjust?

Carry It

THIS RELATIONSHIP

The one you chose on p. 5 • Date _____

Through this chapter's lens, what did I notice about this relationship?

What would I want this relationship to experience next?

One line for this chapter _____

QUESTION TO CARRY

WHNM Ch. 2, p. 33

What do people repeatedly experience when they try to participate here?

Come back to this on _____

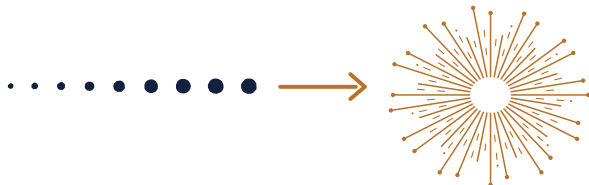
CHAPTER 2 • NOTES

Do not diagnose the ecology from the exception. Watch the pattern.

CHAPTER 3

The Next Interaction Does Not Begin From Zero

The next interaction does not begin from zero; it arrives carrying something from what came before.



Read *What Happens Next Matters*, pp. 35–46, before beginning.

Responses acquire meaning, meaning shapes adaptation, adaptation repeats into patterns, and patterns become the expectations people bring into the next exchange.

What might our repeated interactions—or the expectations we carried into them—have taught each of us to do?

An inherited expectation can shape a relationship before the relationship has much evidence of its own.

WJHM Ch. 3, p. 44

What does this person need to own about the behavior? What might repeated interaction, prior experience, or inherited expectation have helped make reasonable?

A Moment That Matters

From the book • WHNM Ch. 3, pp. 35–36

A new colleague is guarded with you from the first week, though you have almost no history.

A Remain courteous, keep exchanges about the work, and leave the guarded beginning unexplored.

What this teaches the person next time

B Conclude that the colleague is difficult and keep your distance; his guardedness confirms your first impression.

What this teaches the person next time

C Ask what he has come to expect, then keep adding ordinary evidence that does not fit the inherited story.

What this teaches the person next time

Which response is closest to yours? What would you want to understand first?

The Ecology Loop

From the book • WHNM Ch. 3, pp. 38, 41

Trace one response around the loop.

1 • RESPONSE

2 • MEANING

6 • NEXT INTERACTION

3 • ADAPTATION

5 • EXPECTATION

4 • PATTERN

Relational memory: what has this relationship learned to expect from me?

See it filled in on the next page →

Worked Example

ILLUSTRATIVE ENTRY • Finance team lead • First budget review

A newly assigned analyst brings a draft forecast with one assumption still unresolved.

1 • RESPONSE

I said, "Bring this back when it's ready," before asking which assumption needed help.

2 • MEANING

The analyst may have heard that uncertainty makes a draft unwelcome. I did not ask how the sentence landed.

6 • NEXT INTERACTION

I will ask to see one unresolved assumption early and work through it together. Repeating that may add different evidence.

3 • ADAPTATION

The next forecast came later and had fewer questions attached. I first called that independence.

5 • EXPECTATION

The analyst may expect to need an answer before approaching me. I need to check that, not announce it as the truth.

4 • PATTERN

Across three reviews, I mostly see settled figures. I cannot tell whether the questions disappeared or moved elsewhere.

Relational memory: what has this relationship learned to expect from me?

My requests for early drafts may have taught them to hide uncertainty.

It follows the response through meaning, adaptation, and expectation.

It marks interpretation as provisional and names evidence the next response could add.

Try It: Add New Evidence

From the book • WHNM Ch. 3, pp. 41–45

The awkward beginning did not have to become the permanent relationship.

BEFORE

In my next conversation with _____

I will _____

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“I trust you. You decide.”

“What might our repeated interactions have taught each of us to do?”

“What have you been told to expect from me?”

I will try this on _____

AFTER

WHAT I DID

WHAT FOLLOWED

What will I continue or adjust?

Carry It

THIS RELATIONSHIP

The one you chose on p. 5 • Date _____

Through this chapter's lens, what did I notice about this relationship?

What would I want this relationship to experience next?

One line for this chapter _____

QUESTION TO CARRY

WHNM Ch. 3, p. 46

What are people learning to expect before the next interaction begins?

Come back to this on _____

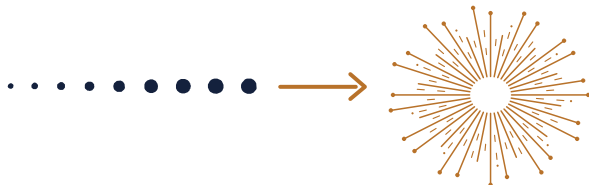
CHAPTER 3 • NOTES

Every response teaches.

CHAPTER 4

The Cost of Speaking

The question moves from Is this important enough to mention? toward Is mentioning it worth everything that comes after?



Read *What Happens Next Matters*, pp. 49–59, before beginning.

A channel for voice tells us that speaking is possible. It does not tell us what speaking costs.

the channel exists: survey, open door,
one-on-one

what people anticipate they will have to
absorb, explain, repair, or risk

The survey channel stayed open. The anticipated cost of using it changed.

WHNM Ch. 4, p. 54

Whose participation has changed, not simply who is quiet?

A Moment That Matters

From the book • WHNM Ch. 4, pp. 49–50

Survey results include pointed criticism of senior leadership, and you are the senior leader in the room.

A “If you do not like working here, there is the door.”

What this teaches the person next time

B “Some of this is difficult for me to hear, and I want to understand what is underneath it.”

What this teaches the person next time

C “Thank you for the feedback. We appreciate everyone taking the survey.” Move to the next result.

What this teaches the person next time

Which response is closest to yours? What would you want to understand first?

From the book · WHNM Ch. 4, p. 50

INVITATION

RESPONSE

WHAT CHANGED

What Happens Next Matters • Leader Companion

Worked Example

ILLUSTRATIVE ENTRY • Clinic nursing manager • Safety huddle

A charge nurse raises a concern about the new medication handoff.

INVITATION

I asked for any problems with the new handoff. I said we needed to hear them before the next shift.

RESPONSE

When the nurse described a delay, I said we had already trained everyone. I asked why the procedure had not been followed.

WHAT CHANGED

The nurse stopped adding detail, and no one else spoke. Afterward I learned that another shift had seen the same delay.

Whose participation has changed?

The nurse who used to flag near misses now checks with the shift coordinator before bringing them to me. I need to ask about that change.

It records the invitation and the actual response side by side.

It notices changed participation without deciding that silence has only one cause.

Try It: Lower the Cost

From the book • WHNM Ch. 4, pp. 53–54

An open communication ecology still requires standards.

BEFORE

In my next conversation with _____

I will _____

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“I have noticed that I am hearing less from you in these discussions than I used to. Is there anything about the way we are working that I should understand?”

“I see this differently, but I want to understand how you reached that conclusion.”

“Some of this is difficult for me to hear, and I want to understand what is underneath it.”

I will try this on _____

AFTER

WHAT I DID

WHAT FOLLOWED

What will I continue or adjust?

Carry It

THIS RELATIONSHIP

The one you chose on p. 5 • Date _____

Through this chapter's lens, what did I notice about this relationship?

What would I want this relationship to experience next?

One line for this chapter _____

QUESTION TO CARRY

WHNM Ch. 4, p. 59

What have people learned might happen if they tell me what they really see?

Come back to this on _____

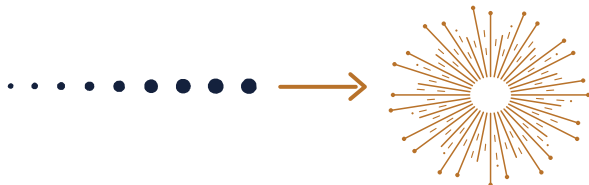
CHAPTER 4 • NOTES

The cost of speaking becomes a cost of knowing.

CHAPTER 5

Who We Decide People Are

The language grows more efficient at exactly the moment the interpretation grows less precise.



Read *What Happens Next Matters*, pp. 61–72, before beginning.

Interpretation is unavoidable. The danger begins when a judgment about behavior migrates into a conclusion about who the person is.

OBSERVED BEHAVIOR

“He questioned this decision repeatedly.”

IDENTITY

“He is resistant.”

Once someone is 'resistant,' legitimate caution can enter the relationship already carrying an explanation.

WHNM Ch. 5, p. 68

Think of someone whose behavior has become easy for you to explain. What else could the same behavior mean—and what evidence would cause you to revise your interpretation?

A Moment That Matters

From the book • WHNM Ch. 5, pp. 64–67

An employee you have come to describe as “resistant” offers a thoughtful challenge to a decision.

A Evaluate the challenge on its merits and name what evidence would make you revise your conclusion about this person.

What this teaches the person next time

B Thank the employee for the perspective, then leave both the decision and your interpretation unchanged.

What this teaches the person next time

C Treat the thoughtful challenge as more resistance and tell the employee that the decision is not open for discussion.

What this teaches the person next time

Which response is closest to yours? What would you want to understand first?

From Behavior to Identity

From the book • WHNM Ch. 5, pp. 63, 70–71

THE IDENTITY STATEMENT I HAVE BEEN USING	THE EVIDENCE STATEMENT I CAN REPLACE IT WITH

What evidence would cause me to revise it?

Stories I have been given about others: evidence, or inherited certainty?

See it filled in on the next page →

Worked Example

ILLUSTRATIVE ENTRY • Purchasing director • Supplier review

I have begun describing a procurement coordinator through a set of fixed labels.

THE IDENTITY STATEMENT I HAVE BEEN USING	THE EVIDENCE STATEMENT I CAN REPLACE IT WITH
“Resistant.”	<i>Challenged the new ordering route twice after the pilot began.</i>
“Careless.”	<i>Sent one order without the updated delivery code.</i>
“Unreliable.”	<i>Missed Tuesday’s promised comparison; sent it Thursday.</i>
“Negative.”	<i>Named three risks without offering an alternative that day.</i>
“Not ready.”	<i>Needed help negotiating one unfamiliar contract clause.</i>

What evidence would cause me to revise it?

I would revise these conclusions if I saw the new route used consistently, earlier notice of delays, and a proposed alternative when a risk is raised. One good week would count as evidence, not a final verdict.

Stories I have been given about others: evidence, or inherited certainty?

A previous supervisor called this coordinator “hard work.” I have examples I can evaluate; I do not yet know what produced that supervisor’s conclusion.

The concern remains specific enough to evaluate and discuss.

The entry says what could revise the judgment without excusing the behavior.

Try It: Keep the Story Revisable

From the book • WHNM Ch. 5, pp. 67–69

Leader and employee can add evidence, not control interpretation.

BEFORE

In my next conversation with _____

I will _____

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“In two recent implementations, he continued challenging the direction after the decision was final and the team had begun execution.”

“His repeated challenges after decisions are final are disrupting the team.”

“What else could this behavior mean?”

I will try this on _____

AFTER

WHAT I DID

WHAT FOLLOWED

What will I continue or adjust?

Carry It

THIS RELATIONSHIP

The one you chose on p. 5 • Date _____

Through this chapter's lens, what did I notice about this relationship?

What would I want this relationship to experience next?

One line for this chapter _____

QUESTION TO CARRY

WHNM Ch. 5, p. 72

Have I left this person any way to become different in my eyes?

Come back to this on _____

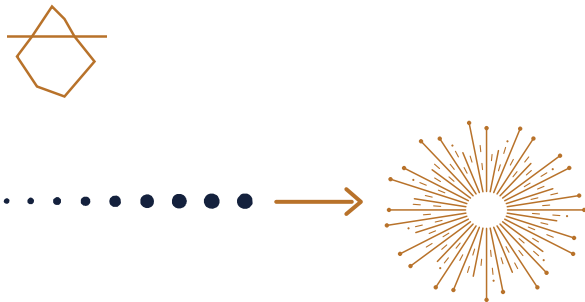
CHAPTER 5 • NOTES

The goal is not positive interpretation. It is revisable interpretation.

CHAPTER 6

The Work Behind the Work

Visibility and value are not the same thing.



Read *What Happens Next Matters*, pp. 73–82, before beginning.

Leadership encounters work near its endpoint. Similar outcomes can come from very different work, and prevention leaves almost no evidence.

- a crisis resolved
- a smooth implementation
- a capable employee
- a visible owner

- risk noticed early
- coordination before friction
- patient development
- distributed contribution

Some contribution becomes harder to see precisely because the problem never occurs.

WHNM Ch. 6, p. 79

What work around you has become invisible because it works?

A Moment That Matters

From the book • WHNM Ch. 6, pp. 73–78

One project manager rescues a troubled project in a visible way; another has quietly prevented three crises this year. You have one development opportunity to offer.

A Thank both project managers for their work, then use the same visibility-based judgment to choose who gets the opportunity.

What this teaches the person next time

B Look beneath both outcomes, including prevention and colleagues' contributions, before deciding who is ready for the opportunity.

What this teaches the person next time

C Give the development opportunity to the visible rescuer; the rescue is the contribution you saw, so you treat it as the strongest evidence.

What this teaches the person next time

Which response is closest to yours? What would you want to understand first?

Look Beneath the Outcome

From the book • WHNM Ch. 6, pp. 76–77

VISIBLE RESULT	WORK BEHIND IT	WHO ELSE MADE IT POSSIBLE

Who is missing from my talent conversations?

See it filled in on the next page →

Worked Example

ILLUSTRATIVE ENTRY • Warehouse manager • Development allocation

I am reviewing three results before choosing the next cross-training opportunity.

VISIBLE RESULT	WORK BEHIND IT	WHO ELSE MADE IT POSSIBLE
<i>Orders left on time.</i>	<i>Dispatch checked incomplete addresses a day early.</i>	<i>Customer service supplied corrections before picking.</i>
<i>A scanner failure was resolved.</i>	<i>A technician stayed late; delayed maintenance helped create the problem.</i>	<i>The floor trainer moved work to a spare station.</i>
<i>A new picker reached target.</i>	<i>The shift lead practiced the awkward routes with them for two weeks.</i>	<i>A senior picker quietly checked the first batches.</i>

Who is missing from my talent conversations?

The dispatch coordinator and shift lead are barely in my notes. I need to ask about their judgment before giving the opportunity to the person whose rescue I watched.

It identifies work and contributors beneath the visible result.

It notices prevention without assuming prevention is always worth more than recovery.

Try It: Look Beneath the Outcome

From the book • WHNM Ch. 6, pp. 79–81

Look beneath the outcome before deciding what contribution deserves attention.

BEFORE

In my next conversation with _____

I will _____

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“What made the assignment difficult? Who helped it succeed?”

“Whose judgment, patience, preparation, or coordination is embedded in this result?”

“What have you done this quarter that I probably never saw?”

I will try this on _____

AFTER

WHAT I DID

WHAT FOLLOWED

What will I continue or adjust?

Carry It

THIS RELATIONSHIP

The one you chose on p. 5 • Date _____

Through this chapter's lens, what did I notice about this relationship?

What would I want this relationship to experience next?

One line for this chapter _____

QUESTION TO CARRY

WHNM Ch. 6, p. 82

Where might I be mistaking visibility for value?

Come back to this on _____

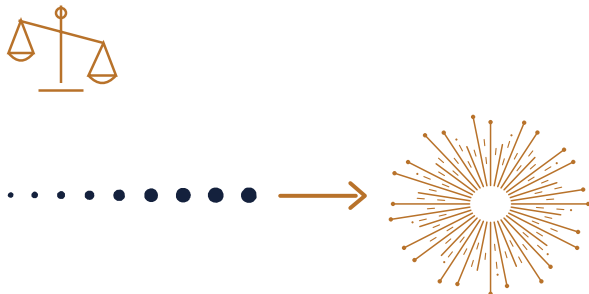
CHAPTER 6 • NOTES

There is a difference between expecting excellence and becoming unable to see it.

CHAPTER 7

Relational Debt

Professionalism can coexist with depletion. A relationship can continue functioning while becoming less generous.



Read *What Happens Next Matters*, pp. 85–94, before beginning.

Relationships run on more than compliance. Repeated one-sided adaptation accumulates quietly until an ordinary request arrives inside a history.

asks whether someone will do what is required

asks what that person is still willing to
give that cannot really be required

A shared outcome can conceal who repeatedly absorbed the cost of getting there.

WJHM Ch. 7, p. 92

What are they no longer willing to give freely?

A Moment That Matters

From the book • WHNM Ch. 7, pp. 88–89

You need one more stretch from a team that has absorbed three late changes this quarter. The request is reasonable.

A Tell the team that everyone needs to be flexible and make the request without acknowledging the three late changes.

What this teaches the person next time

B Thank the team for always being willing to help, then make the same request with the same deadline.

What this teaches the person next time

C Acknowledge the history, ask what this request will cost, and allow the answer to change what you ask of them.

What this teaches the person next time

Which response is closest to yours? What would you want to understand first?

The Same Outcome, Different History

From the book • WHNM Ch. 7, p. 87

The relationship (initials or role) _____

I REMEMBER

YOU REMEMBER

Whose flexibility has quietly become built into the way the work gets done?

See it filled in on the next page →

Worked Example

ILLUSTRATIVE ENTRY • Facilities coordinator • Weekend event change

I asked a caretaker to absorb another room change with less than a day's notice.

The relationship (initials or role) caretaker

I REMEMBER

I remember three events being delivered without complaints. I thought I had helped by sending each change as soon as I received it. I did not count the arrangements that had to be remade at home.

YOU REMEMBER

The caretaker told me those changes had meant swapping two days off and finding a different school pickup. I wrote "no complaints" as if that meant the changes were easy. I had not asked.

Whose flexibility has quietly become built into the way the work gets done?

This caretaker's flexibility has become part of my planning. For the next event, I will bring the scheduling choice back to them before promising the room.

It separates the leader's memory from what the other person actually reported.

It makes accumulated adaptation visible in an otherwise ordinary request.

Try It: Make the Cost Visible

From the book • WHNM Ch. 7, pp. 89–91

The present request does not have to be unreasonable for the history to matter.

BEFORE

In my next conversation with _____

I will _____

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“What has this already cost you, and what would make it workable?”

“What used to be available in this relationship that is becoming less available now?”

“I have been relying on something from you that I could never formally require. I want to say that out loud.”

I will try this on _____

AFTER

WHAT I DID

WHAT FOLLOWED

What will I continue or adjust?

Carry It

THIS RELATIONSHIP

The one you chose on p. 5 • Date _____

Through this chapter's lens, what did I notice about this relationship?

What would I want this relationship to experience next?

One line for this chapter _____

QUESTION TO CARRY

WHNM Ch. 7, p. 94

What have I begun to rely on from someone that I could never formally require?

Come back to this on _____

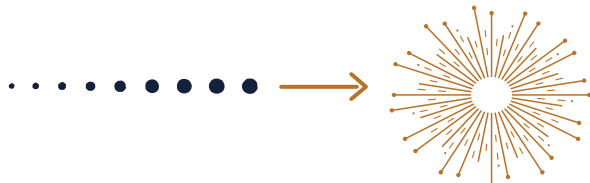
CHAPTER 7 • NOTES

Reciprocity becomes credible when the relationship is capable of requiring something from the leader too.

CHAPTER 8

The Permission Leaders Give Without Saying a Word

Technically allowed and socially possible are not always the same thing.



Read *What Happens Next Matters*, pp. 95–103, before beginning.

People learn what they can do and still be regarded as serious by watching what happens to those who use the permission.

LIVED PERMISSION

“Does that judgment still have room
when the stakes rise?”

Authority gives preferences reach.

WHNM Ch. 8, p. 102

What are people learning they are allowed to do here and still be taken seriously?

A Moment That Matters

From the book • WHNM Ch. 8, pp. 101–102

You send a non-urgent email at 11:34 p.m. One employee replies at once; another notices.

A Make sure waiting until morning costs the employee nothing in standing or opportunity, and let that be seen.

What this teaches the person next time

B “Late messages are simply how I work. I need people who can keep up.”

What this teaches the person next time

C “You don’t have to reply at night.” Continue treating immediate responses as a sign of commitment.

What this teaches the person next time

Which response is closest to yours? What would you want to understand first?

Formal Permission / Lived Permission

From the book • WHNM Ch. 8, pp. 97, 101

FORMAL PERMISSION	LIVED PERMISSION
Exercise independent judgment.	Does that judgment still have room when the stakes rise?
Ask for help.	Does asking leave confidence in the person's capability intact?
Protect reasonable boundaries.	Do people who use those boundaries continue receiving trust and opportunity?

WHAT SUCCESS CAN LOOK LIKE

Which of the five can people see in me?

- ☐ Competence can include curiosity.
- ☐ Authority can coexist with influenceability.
- ☐ Commitment can coexist with boundaries.
- ☐ Confidence can include uncertainty.
- ☐ Accountability can occur without humiliation.

See it filled in on the next page →

Worked Example

ILLUSTRATIVE ENTRY • Software engineering manager • Code review

My team says developers can ask for help, but I take over when a review exposes uncertainty.

FORMAL PERMISSION	LIVED PERMISSION
Exercise independent judgment.	Does that judgment still have room when the stakes rise?
Ask for help.	Does asking leave confidence in the person's capability intact?
Protect reasonable boundaries.	Do people who use those boundaries continue receiving trust and opportunity?
<i>"Ask for help."</i>	<i>When a developer asked about a test, I rewrote it instead of helping them reason through it.</i>
<i>"Change your mind when the evidence changes."</i>	<i>I defended my first design after a better failure case was shown.</i>
<i>"Protect focused work."</i>	<i>I praised the person who answered every review request immediately.</i>

WHAT SUCCESS CAN LOOK LIKE

Which of the five can people see in me?

- ☐ Competence can include curiosity.
- ☐ Authority can coexist with influenceability.
- ☐ Commitment can coexist with boundaries.
- ☐ Confidence can include uncertainty.
- ☐ Accountability can occur without humiliation.

It checks what happens after a permission is used.

It distinguishes the stated invitation from the evidence supplied by the leader's habits.

Try It: Widen the Permission

From the book • WHNM Ch. 8, pp. 97–101

People watch what happens when someone uses the permission offered.

BEFORE

In my next conversation with _____

I will _____

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“I don’t know enough about this to answer. Priya understands the issue better than I do.”

“You have changed my mind.”

“This is what works for me; it does not have to be what works for you.”

“What am I missing?”

I will try this on _____

AFTER

WHAT I DID

WHAT FOLLOWED

What will I continue or adjust?

Carry It

THIS RELATIONSHIP

The one you chose on p. 5 • Date _____

Through this chapter's lens, what did I notice about this relationship?

What would I want this relationship to experience next?

One line for this chapter _____

QUESTION TO CARRY

WHNM Ch. 8, p. 103

Which of my habits may have become an unwritten rule for other people?

Come back to this on _____

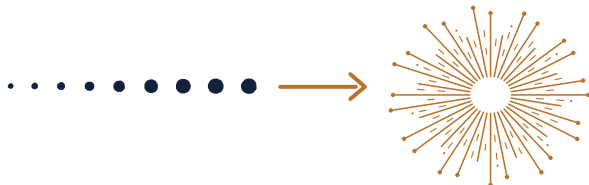
CHAPTER 8 • NOTES

Competence can include curiosity. Authority can coexist with influenceability. Confidence can include uncertainty.

CHAPTER 9

Access Is Not Connection

Access can be scheduled; connection has to accumulate.



Read *What Happens Next Matters*, pp. 105–114, before beginning.

A relationship can be warm and frequent while retaining almost nothing. Connection is visible in what survives the conversation.

allows information to enter the conversation

allows information to enter the relationship

The employee becomes responsible for remembering the relationship for both people.

WHNM Ch. 9, p. 108

Where might someone be repeatedly reintroducing a reality the relationship should already know?

A Moment That Matters

From the book • WHNM Ch. 9, pp. 109–111

An employee raises the same workload concern for the third time, and a new assignment is about to be made.

A Listen warmly, thank her for reminding you, then make the assignment as though the concern had not entered the relationship.

What this teaches the person next time

B Make the assignment without considering the concern; tell her that bringing it up again will not change the decision.

What this teaches the person next time

C Let the earlier concern influence the assignment decision and explain specifically what you considered, even if the answer is no.

What this teaches the person next time

Which response is closest to yours? What would you want to understand first?

What This Relationship Knows

From the book • WHNM Ch. 9, pp. 108–110

The relationship (initials or role) _____

WHAT THEY HOPE TO GROW TOWARD

Where has this shown up in my decisions?

A RECURRING DIFFICULTY THEY HAVE RAISED

Where has this shown up in my decisions?

CONDITIONS THAT AFFECT THEIR WORK

Where has this shown up in my decisions?

FEEDBACK THEY HAVE GIVEN ME ABOUT MY RESPONSES

Where has this shown up in my decisions?

See it filled in on the next page →

Worked Example

ILLUSTRATIVE ENTRY • Grant administration lead • Assignment planning

I am choosing who will handle a complex renewal, using what one grants officer has already told me.

The relationship (initials or role) grants officer

WHAT THEY HOPE TO GROW TOWARD

Where has this shown up in my decisions?

They want to learn negotiation with funders.

I gave them the first draft of the renewal

questions instead of keeping that work myself.

A RECURRING DIFFICULTY THEY HAVE RAISED

Where has this shown up in my decisions?

Late requests have repeatedly displaced

careful review. I added a review checkpoint

before promising the funder a final date.

CONDITIONS THAT AFFECT THEIR WORK

Where has this shown up in my decisions?

Their temporary care schedule limits late calls.

I scheduled the funder discussion during the

agreed working window.

FEEDBACK THEY HAVE GIVEN ME ABOUT MY RESPONSES

Where has this shown up in my decisions?

They said I usually settle the position before

asking for their view. This time I sent the

unresolved choices and waited for their

recommendation.

Earlier conversations appear in actual assignment and scheduling choices.

The entry shows where listening became knowledge the relationship could use.

Try It: Carry It Forward

From the book • WHNM Ch. 9, pp. 110–112

What you told me still matters here.

BEFORE

In my next conversation with _____

I will _____

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“I know this is not the decision you wanted, and I understand why it matters to you.”

“You told me about this a few months ago; how is it now?”

“What does our working relationship know about you that it should be acting on?”

I will try this on _____

AFTER

WHAT I DID

WHAT FOLLOWED

What will I continue or adjust?

Carry It

THIS RELATIONSHIP

The one you chose on p. 5 • Date _____

Through this chapter's lens, what did I notice about this relationship?

What would I want this relationship to experience next?

One line for this chapter _____

QUESTION TO CARRY

WHNM Ch. 9, p. 114

What should this relationship still know the next time we meet?

Come back to this on _____

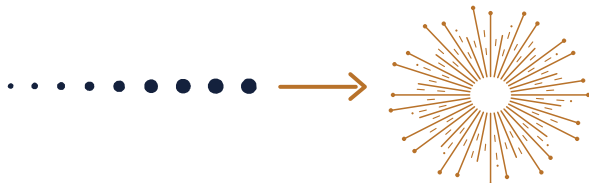
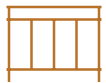
CHAPTER 9 • NOTES

What another person tells us must remain capable of mattering.

CHAPTER 10

Conflict Makes the Ecology Visible

Choice exists inside conditions; it does not erase them.



Read *What Happens Next Matters*, pp. 117–128, before beginning.

In conflict, people respond to what they believe the words represented. Accumulated meaning surfaces in the response, and the interaction narrows.

“The sentence was about an exit.”

“The response was about accumulated meaning.”

Each move can feel justified by the move immediately before it even as the interaction becomes less capable of producing what either person originally wanted.

WJHM Ch. 10, p. 124

When an interaction begins to narrow, what response becomes most automatic for you—and what does it tend to invite next?

A Moment That Matters

From the book • WHNM Ch. 10, pp. 117, 125–126

The conference exit: you point to a door and receive “I am perfectly capable of finding the exit.”

A Match the sharpness: “Fine. Next time I won’t bother trying to help.”

What this teaches the person next time

B Hold the boundary about how you were spoken to while asking what she believed she was responding to in your offer of help.

What this teaches the person next time

C Say, “No problem,” and move on without examining what happened between you.

What this teaches the person next time

Which response is closest to yours? What would you want to understand first?

Relational Range • The Balcony

From the book • WHNM Ch. 10, pp. 122–124

One current conflict _____

DIRECT

Define a boundary, make a decision, state a preference, correct, or exercise legitimate authority.

LEVEL

Move away from a contest over who controls the exchange and toward a more mutual position.

YIELD

Make room for another person's expertise, preference, judgment, or direction.

What keeps happening between us?

What did I hear in what was said?

What might the other person believe she is responding to?

What does my usual response tend to produce next?

Which response do I default to: direct, level, or yield? Which does this moment actually need?

See it filled in on the next page →

Worked Example

ILLUSTRATIVE ENTRY • Restaurant shift lead • Kitchen handoff dispute

The kitchen lead hears my handoff reminder as doubt about their judgment.

One current conflict *kitchen handoff reminder*

DIRECT

Define a boundary, make a decision, state a preference, correct, or exercise legitimate authority.

LEVEL

Move away from a contest over who controls the exchange and toward a more mutual position.

YIELD

Make room for another person's expertise, preference, judgment, or direction.

What keeps happening between us?

I remind them earlier; they answer more sharply; I repeat the instruction more firmly. We both end up defending ourselves instead of planning the handoff.

What did I hear in what was said?

I heard disrespect and a threat to the service deadline. I may have treated the tone as the whole message.

What might the other person believe she is responding to?

They may be responding to repeated checks after the task is already underway. I need to ask rather than decide what my reminder means to them.

What does my usual response tend to produce next?

My firmer reminder usually produces a short answer and less useful detail. It gets agreement, but I still do not know what help is needed.

Which response do I default to: direct, level, or yield? Which does this moment actually need?

I default to direct. This moment needs level first: clarify the service deadline, then ask what they have already arranged and where a reminder would help.

It steps back far enough to see a recurring exchange.

It keeps the operational boundary while choosing a response beyond the first impulse.

Try It: Go to the Balcony

From the book • WHNM Ch. 10, pp. 121–124

Range matters more than allegiance to one preferred response.

BEFORE

In my next conversation with _____

I will _____

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“I was only trying to help, and the way you spoke to me was not okay.”

“What keeps happening between us?”

“What did you believe I was responding to?”

Ask yourself: “What do I really want to make possible next?”

I will try this on _____

AFTER

WHAT I DID

WHAT FOLLOWED

What will I continue or adjust?

Carry It

THIS RELATIONSHIP

The one you chose on p. 5 • Date _____

Through this chapter's lens, what did I notice about this relationship?

What would I want this relationship to experience next?

One line for this chapter _____

QUESTION TO CARRY

WHNM Ch. 10, p. 128

When conflict makes the pattern visible, what do I want my next response to make possible?

Come back to this on _____

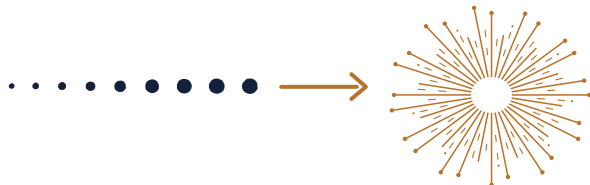
CHAPTER 10 • NOTES

Response choice matters because we have influence, not because we have control.

CHAPTER 11

Repair Is a Pattern, Not a Moment

*A new response can be sincere before it is credible, and
credible before it becomes expected.*



Read *What Happens Next Matters*, pp. 129–138, before beginning.

An apology or a courageous question creates an opening. What gives it credibility is what happens afterward, under the same pressure that produced the old pattern.

can name what happened

teaches what will happen next

Behavior and expectation do not necessarily change at the same speed.

WHNM Ch. 11, p. 133

What protection may still be doing useful work in a relationship you hope is changing?

A Moment That Matters

From the book • WHNM Ch. 11, p. 132

You apologized for repeatedly displacing an employee's protected time. The next urgent request arrives.

A Protect the commitment when the pressure returns, and explain what you are changing so the apology has evidence behind it.

What this teaches the person next time

B Apologize again and thank the employee for understanding, then make the same request of the same protected time.

What this teaches the person next time

C Ask for the protected time again and say the employee needs to move on from the previous interruptions.

What this teaches the person next time

Which response is closest to yours? What would you want to understand first?

Moment / Pattern

From the book • WHNM Ch. 11, pp. 130–133

One relationship you hope is changing _____

MOMENT

Repair may begin in a moment.

PATTERN

It becomes trustworthy through a pattern.

THE APOLOGY

can name what happened.

THE NEW PATTERN

teaches what will happen next.

The opening I created

The pressure under which the old pattern appeared

The evidence the relationship has seen since

The protection the other person is still using

See it filled in on the next page →

Worked Example

ILLUSTRATIVE ENTRY • IT service manager • On-call rota repair

I apologized for repeatedly overriding an analyst's agreed weekend break.

One relationship you hope is changing *on-call analyst*

MOMENT

Repair may begin in a moment.

PATTERN

It becomes trustworthy through a pattern.

THE APOLOGY

can name what happened.

THE NEW PATTERN

teaches what will happen next.

The opening I created

I named the two weekends I changed and the notice I failed to give. I did not ask the analyst to tell me we were fine.

The pressure under which the old pattern appeared

When a ticket escalates, I reach for the person whose skill I trust most. That pressure returned on Saturday.

The evidence the relationship has seen since

I used the agreed backup route and handled the first escalation myself. On Monday I explained what I had changed, without presenting it as a favor.

The protection the other person is still using

The analyst still checks the rota twice and keeps the confirmation messages. I will not treat those protections as evidence that the repair has failed.

The apology is followed by a response under the pressure that used to undo it.

The other person's remaining protections are allowed to have their own timetable.

Try It: Let Experience Do the Work

From the book • WHNM Ch. 11, pp. 131–135

The opening matters because of what it allows to happen next.

BEFORE

In my next conversation with _____

I will _____

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“Before we jump in, can I ask you something? Are we okay?”

“Can we start that again?”

“I handled that badly, and I need to correct it.”

I will try this on _____

AFTER

WHAT I DID

WHAT FOLLOWED

What will I continue or adjust?

Carry It

THIS RELATIONSHIP

The one you chose on p. 5 • Date _____

Through this chapter's lens, what did I notice about this relationship?

What would I want this relationship to experience next?

One line for this chapter _____

QUESTION TO CARRY

WHNM Ch. 11, p. 138

What would this relationship need to experience repeatedly before something different became reasonable to expect?

Come back to this on _____

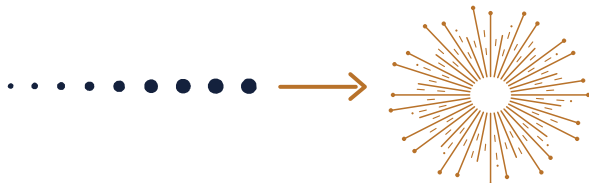
CHAPTER 11 • NOTES

Repair may begin in a moment. It becomes trustworthy through a pattern.

CHAPTER 12

Stewarding What Happens Next

What leaders tolerate becomes part of what other people have to adapt to.



Read *What Happens Next Matters*, pp. 139–153, before beginning.

Repeated responses become other people's working conditions. Stewardship is noticing those conditions, including what has quietly stopped being produced, and tending what is healthy before it becomes fragile.

WHAT A SYSTEM IS PRODUCING	WHAT IT HAS GRADUALLY STOPPED PRODUCING

Nothing dramatic announces these changes. In fact, they can initially look like improvement because the environment has become easier to manage.

WHNM Ch. 12, p. 147

What useful thing has quietly disappeared because people stopped believing it had somewhere to go?

A Moment That Matters

From the book • WHNM Ch. 12, pp. 145–146

Meetings have become calmer this year; disagreement has nearly vanished.

A Invite more input at the next meeting, then leave the decision process and your responses to disagreement unchanged.

What this teaches the person next time

B Compare with an earlier season: who used to bring problems early, what has changed, and what would help that participation return?

What this teaches the person next time

C Praise the quieter meetings and make clear that revisiting settled questions is what used to waste the team's time.

What this teaches the person next time

Which response is closest to yours? What would you want to understand first?

What an Ecology Can Sustain

From the book • WHNM Ch. 12, pp. 145, 149

WHAT ABSENCE CAN LOOK LIKE

Which of these do you recognize?

- ☐ A team meeting becomes calmer, but the people who once challenged weak assumptions have largely stopped doing so.
- ☐ A high-performing employee who routinely brought ideas now completes assigned work efficiently and contributes little beyond it.
- ☐ A relationship seems to contain less conflict, although neither person is raising the issues that once produced disagreement.
- ☐ A manager receives fewer requests for help and interprets the change as independence, while employees have quietly concluded that asking for help requires more explanation than it is worth.

WHAT AN ECOLOGY CAN SUSTAIN

Which of these are possible between us now?

1 RARELY • 5 CONSISTENTLY	
disagreement without relational rupture	1 2 3 4 5
authority that remains influenceable	1 2 3 4 5
accountability without humiliation	1 2 3 4 5
repair without forced reconciliation	1 2 3 4 5
competence without requiring one person continually to absorb everyone else's adaptation	1 2 3 4 5

Where have I seen it?

See it filled in on the next page →

Worked Example

ILLUSTRATIVE ENTRY • Manufacturing plant supervisor • Defect reporting

The line looks calmer, but experienced operators have stopped raising small quality concerns.

WHAT ABSENCE CAN LOOK LIKE

Which of these do you recognize?

- ☒ A team meeting becomes calmer, but the people who once challenged weak assumptions have largely stopped doing so.
- ☒ A high-performing employee who routinely brought ideas now completes assigned work efficiently and contributes little beyond it.
- ☒ A relationship seems to contain less conflict, although neither person is raising the issues that once produced disagreement.
- ☒ A manager receives fewer requests for help and interprets the change as independence, while employees have quietly concluded that asking for help requires more explanation than it is worth.

WHAT AN ECOLOGY CAN SUSTAIN

Which of these are possible between us now?

1 RARELY • 5 CONSISTENTLY	
disagreement without relational rupture	1 (2) 3 4 5
authority that remains influenceable	1 (2) 3 4 5
accountability without humiliation	1 2 3 (4) 5
repair without forced reconciliation	1 2 (3) 4 5
competence without requiring one person continually to absorb everyone else's adaptation	1 (2) 3 4 5

Where have I seen it?

Two operators who once questioned tolerances now wait until a defect is confirmed. One operator said explaining a concern takes longer than working around it.

It notices something useful that has disappeared, not only what went wrong.

It compares current ease with an earlier season and leaves absence open to inquiry.

Try It: Tend What Is Healthy

From the book • WHNM Ch. 12, pp. 146–148

Healthy ecologies require tending too.

BEFORE

In my next conversation with _____

I will _____

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“What are you seeing that I am not?”

“I see it differently; help me understand what you are seeing.”

Ask yourself: “Who used to bring problems early?”

I will try this on _____

AFTER

WHAT I DID

WHAT FOLLOWED

What will I continue or adjust?

Carry It

THIS RELATIONSHIP

The one you chose on p. 5 • Date _____

Through this chapter's lens, what did I notice about this relationship?

What would I want this relationship to experience next?

One line for this chapter _____

QUESTION TO CARRY

WHNM Ch. 12, p. 153

What are you helping make possible in the interactions that come after yours?

Come back to this on _____

CHAPTER 12 • NOTES

Power increases a person's capacity to shape what happens next; therefore power increases responsibility for the dignity of people who must live inside those consequences.

A Synthesis to Carry

Six ideas. One larger responsibility.

Dignity	gives us the moral reason to remain influenceable.
Reciprocity	describes how influence moves between us.
The response	is where we exercise choice.
The Ecology Loop	explains how those choices become patterns.
Repair	occurs when new reciprocal responses are repeated long enough to change what the relationship expects.
Stewardship	is the responsibility to notice and tend those patterns over time.

None of these ideas gives us control over other people. Together, they offer something more useful: a way to understand our participation in what happens between us.

A Letter to This Relationship

From the book • WHNM Ch. 12, pp. 150–153

AFTER THE CHAPTERS

Twelve Views of One Relationship

Copy the “one line for this chapter” from each Carry It page.

CHAPTER	DATE	ONE LINE
01		
02		
03		
04		
05		
06		
07		
08		
09		
10		
11		
12		

Read the twelve lines in order. What pattern do you see that no single conversation could have shown you?

AFTER THE CHAPTERS

After Twelve Chapters

Rate your team's recent experience: 1 (rarely) to 5 (consistently).

Date _____

	1	2	3	4	5	
PART I • SEEING THE ECOLOGY						
01a	People bring me unfinished ideas.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
01b	When someone disagrees with me, the disagreement changes something.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
02a	We ask about the history behind an unexpected response.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
02b	We compare patterns across settings before judging a person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
03a	We ask what people have already learned to expect from us.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
03b	We keep responding in ways that can change an inherited expectation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PART II • WHAT THE ECOLOGY TEACHES						
04a	We notice when someone's participation changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
04b	Our response to imperfect candor makes speaking again less costly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
05a	We describe specific behavior rather than assign a fixed identity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
05b	New evidence can change the conclusions we hold about someone.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
06a	We ask what made an apparently easy success possible.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
06b	We recognize preventive work and others who helped with a rescue.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PART III • WHAT RELATIONSHIPS BEGIN TO CARRY						
07a	We ask what a new request will cost people before making it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
07b	We notice whose repeated adaptation has become part of the plan.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
08a	People can see leaders admit uncertainty and change their minds.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
08b	Using a stated permission preserves a person's standing here.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
09a	What someone told us earlier influences our later decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
09b	We remember people's aspirations when opportunities appear.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PART IV • CHANGING WHAT HAPPENS NEXT						
10a	We notice when conflict begins narrowing our available responses.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10b	We choose a response for the moment rather than follow our default.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11a	A repair survives the pressure that produced the old pattern.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11b	People can keep their protections while new trust develops.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12a	We notice useful contributions that people have stopped offering.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12b	People still have ways to influence decisions made above them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

AFTER THE CHAPTERS

Ecology Audit · Scores

For each Part, add its six ratings and divide by six. Shade each bar to the average you calculated; use a partial segment when needed.

PART I · SEEING THE ECOLOGY

Total _____ ÷ 6 = Average _____



PART II · WHAT THE ECOLOGY TEACHES

Total _____ ÷ 6 = Average _____



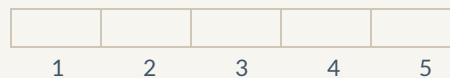
PART III · WHAT RELATIONSHIPS BEGIN TO CARRY

Total _____ ÷ 6 = Average _____



PART IV · CHANGING WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Total _____ ÷ 6 = Average _____



Lowest Part _____ Average _____

Highest Part _____ Average _____

Let your records inform the ratings; a higher number alone cannot show what another person experienced.

AFTER THE CHAPTERS

Experiment Index

One experiment per chapter. Mark each one when you have tried it, then record the date.



☐ 01 Make Consideration Visible

Date _____



☐ 02 Widen the Frame

Date _____



☐ 03 Add New Evidence

Date _____



☐ 04 Lower the Cost

Date _____



☐ 05 Keep the Story Revisable

Date _____



☐ 06 Look Beneath the Outcome

Date _____



☐ 07 Make the Cost Visible

Date _____



☐ 08 Widen the Permission

Date _____



☐ 09 Carry It Forward

Date _____



☐ 10 Go to the Balcony

Date _____



☐ 11 Let Experience Do the Work

Date _____



☐ 12 Tend What Is Healthy

Date _____

TOOLKIT

In the Next Interaction

Four questions can help you find your footing.

01 What is happening here?

The first question widens the frame beyond the latest sentence.

02 What has this pattern taught us to expect?

The second brings history into view without allowing history to become destiny.

03 What do I want to make possible next?

The third restores intention when emotion, habit, or urgency has narrowed the interaction.

04 What response would add evidence for that possibility?

The fourth returns us to agency.

TOOLKIT

Things You Can Say

Sentences from the book that leaders can actually say. Add your own.

- 01 “What do you think?” (asked before deciding)
“Tell me more.”
“I want to understand your reasoning before I decide.”
“Let me think about that and come back to you.”

- 02 “What has usually happened when people tried this before?”
“What does participation require in this setting?”
“I may be walking into something already underway. What should I understand first?”

- 03 “I trust you. You decide.” (when the decision is theirs to make and the needed boundaries are clear)
“What might our repeated interactions have taught each of us to do?”
“What have you been told to expect from me?”

- 04 “I have noticed that I am hearing less from you in these discussions than I used to. Is there anything about the way we are working that I should understand?”
“I see this differently, but I want to understand how you reached that conclusion.”
“Some of this is difficult for me to hear, and I want to understand what is underneath it.”

- 05 Instead of “He is resistant to change”: “In two recent implementations, he continued challenging the direction after the decision was final and the team had begun execution.”
Instead of “He is resistant”: “His repeated challenges after decisions are final are disrupting the team.”
“What else could this behavior mean?”

- 06 “What made the assignment difficult? Who helped it succeed?”
“Whose judgment, patience, preparation, or coordination is embedded in this result?”
“What have you done this quarter that I probably never saw?”

TOOLKIT

Things You Can Say

- 07 “What has this already cost you, and what would make it workable?”
“What used to be available in this relationship that is becoming less available now?”
“I have been relying on something from you that I could never formally require. I want to say that out loud.”
-
- 08 “I don’t know enough about this to answer. Priya understands the issue better than I do.”
“You have changed my mind.”
“This is what works for me; it does not have to be what works for you.”
“What am I missing?”
-
- 09 “I know this is not the decision you wanted, and I understand why it matters to you.”
“You told me about this a few months ago; how is it now?”
“What does our working relationship know about you that it should be acting on?”
-
- 10 “What do I really want to make possible next?” (to yourself)
“I was only trying to help, and the way you spoke to me was not okay.”
“What keeps happening between us?”
“What did you believe I was responding to?”
-
- 11 “Before we jump in, can I ask you something? Are we okay?”
“Can we start that again?”
“I handled that badly, and I need to correct it.”
-
- 12 “What are you seeing that I am not?”
“Who used to bring problems early?” (to yourself)
“I see it differently; help me understand what you are seeing.”
-

MINE

TOOLKIT

Ask One Person

We cannot see our own response position from inside it. Choose someone who brings you ideas, concerns, or disagreement, and ask them one chapter's questions. Make answering optional, and do not ask for reassurance; ask for information. Rotate who you ask.

- 01 What tends to happen after you bring me an idea?
 When you have disagreed with me, what did you learn to expect?
 Is there something you now bring to me carefully, or not at all?

- 02 What has usually happened here when someone raised something hard?
 Where does the real conversation happen: in the meeting, or afterward?
 What do you have to account for before you speak up in our meetings?

- 03 What did you expect from me before we had much history, and where did that come from?
 What have our interactions since then taught you to do?
 Is there a story about me you have been carrying that I could add evidence to?

- 04 What has it cost you to raise something difficult with me?
 What do you soften, delay, or route through someone else before it reaches me?
 What happened the last time you disagreed with me, as you experienced it?

- 05 What do you think I have decided about you?
 Is there something you have changed that I have not noticed?
 What would you want me to see that I may be missing?

- 06 What work do you do that I probably never see?
 Who helped the last thing I praised succeed?
 What used to be hard here that has become ordinary because of someone's effort?

TOOLKIT

Ask One Person

- 07 What have I come to rely on from you that I could never formally require?
What has this relationship asked of you lately, and what has it given back?
Is there something you used to offer freely that you now hold back?
-
- 08 What do you believe you are allowed to do here and still be taken seriously?
What have you watched happen to people who asked for help or protected a boundary?
Which of my habits has quietly become a rule for you?
-
- 09 What have you told me that I seem to have forgotten?
What do you find yourself explaining to me more than once?
What should I remember before our next conversation?
-
- 10 When we disagree, what do you believe I am responding to?
What does my usual response produce next, from where you sit?
What would make it easier to bring a disagreement to me earlier?
-
- 11 What protection are you still using with me, and what would let you set it down?
What would you have to experience repeatedly to expect something different from me?
Is there something I believe is repaired that is not?
-
- 12 What useful thing has quietly disappeared here?
What currently makes candor possible with me, and what would threaten it?
What do you watch me tolerate?
-

EACH TIME

Who I asked, and when _____

What I heard _____

What I will do with it _____

When I'll tell them what I did with it _____



CHAPTER 1

What Happens After Someone Speaks

What tends to happen after you bring me an idea?

When you have disagreed with me, what did you learn to expect?

Is there something you now bring to me carefully, or not at all?

Answering is optional. I am asking for information, not reassurance.



CHAPTER 2

The Ecology Around Us

What has usually happened here when someone raised something hard?

Where does the real conversation happen: in the meeting, or afterward?

What do you have to account for before you speak up in our meetings?

Answering is optional. I am asking for information, not reassurance.



CHAPTER 3

The Next Interaction Does Not Begin From Zero

What did you expect from me before we had much history, and where did that come from?

What have our interactions since then taught you to do?

Is there a story about me you have been carrying that I could add evidence to?

Answering is optional. I am asking for information, not reassurance.



CHAPTER 4

The Cost of Speaking

What has it cost you to raise something difficult with me?

What do you soften, delay, or route through someone else before it reaches me?

What happened the last time you disagreed with me, as you experienced it?

Answering is optional. I am asking for information, not reassurance.



CHAPTER 5

Who We Decide People Are

What do you think I have decided about you?

Is there something you have changed that I have not noticed?

What would you want me to see that I may be missing?

Answering is optional. I am asking for information, not reassurance.



CHAPTER 6

The Work Behind the Work

What work do you do that I probably never see?

Who helped the last thing I praised succeed?

What used to be hard here that has become ordinary because of someone's effort?

Answering is optional. I am asking for information, not reassurance.



CHAPTER 7

Relational Debt

What have I come to rely on from you that I could never formally require?

What has this relationship asked of you lately, and what has it given back?

Is there something you used to offer freely that you now hold back?

Answering is optional. I am asking for information, not reassurance.



CHAPTER 8

The Permission Leaders Give Without Saying a Word

What do you believe you are allowed to do here and still be taken seriously?

What have you watched happen to people who asked for help or protected a boundary?

Which of my habits has quietly become a rule for you?

Answering is optional. I am asking for information, not reassurance.

CHAPTER 9



Access Is Not Connection

What have you told me that I seem to have forgotten?

What do you find yourself explaining to me more than once?

What should I remember before our next conversation?

Answering is optional. I am asking for information, not reassurance.

CHAPTER 10



Conflict Makes the Ecology Visible

When we disagree, what do you believe I am responding to?

What does my usual response produce next, from where you sit?

What would make it easier to bring a disagreement to me earlier?

Answering is optional. I am asking for information, not reassurance.

CHAPTER 11



Repair Is a Pattern, Not a Moment

What protection are you still using with me, and what would let you set it down?

What would you have to experience repeatedly to expect something different from me?

Is there something I believe is repaired that is not?

Answering is optional. I am asking for information, not reassurance.

CHAPTER 12



Stewarding What Happens Next

What useful thing has quietly disappeared here?

What currently makes candor possible with me, and what would threaten it?

What do you watch me tolerate?

Answering is optional. I am asking for information, not reassurance.

JOURNAL

An Interaction Worth Noticing

Date _____

Context _____

What did the person bring, and what did I say or do in response?

WHAT I INTENDED

WHAT I ACTUALLY OBSERVED

What might my response have taught, and what other explanation is possible?

JOURNAL

An Interaction Worth Noticing

Date _____

Context _____

What did the person bring, and what did I say or do in response?

WHAT I INTENDED

WHAT I ACTUALLY OBSERVED

What might my response have taught, and what other explanation is possible?

JOURNAL

Before the Next Conversation

Conversation _____

Date _____

What matters here, and what has this person already told me?

What do I want to understand, and what am I willing to reconsider?

What must stay clear if their contribution challenges my view?

JOURNAL

Before the Next Conversation

Conversation _____

Date _____

What matters here, and what has this person already told me?

What do I want to understand, and what am I willing to reconsider?

What must stay clear if their contribution challenges my view?

Evidence Across Time

Response I am practicing _____

OCCASION	WHAT I DID	WHAT FOLLOWED
Occasion 1 Date _____		
Occasion 2 Date _____		
Occasion 3 Date _____		

What is becoming consistent?

Evidence Across Time

Response I am practicing _____

OCCASION	WHAT I DID	WHAT FOLLOWED
Occasion 1 Date _____		
Occasion 2 Date _____		
Occasion 3 Date _____		

What is becoming consistent?



CHAPTER 1

What Happens After Someone Speaks

THE DISTINCTION

Invitation: What we invite people to bring into the conversation.

Response: What we do with what they actually bring.

THE TOOL

Ask • Listen • Consider • Carry

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“Tell me more.”

“I want to understand your reasoning before I decide.”

“Let me think about that and come back to you.”

QUESTION TO CARRY

When people speak to me, what do my responses teach them about what will happen if they speak again?



CHAPTER 2

The Ecology Around Us

THE DISTINCTION

The official conversation: what the organization says communication should be like

The lived conversation: what communication actually feels like through interaction

THE TOOL

What has usually happened when people tried this before? • What does participation require in this setting? • Which responses are common enough that people have learned to account for them? • Is the behavior we are seeing only a characteristic of the individual, or does it also make sense inside the conditions surrounding that individual?

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“What has usually happened when people tried this before?”

“What does participation require in this setting?”

“I may be walking into something already underway. What should I understand first?”

QUESTION TO CARRY

What do people repeatedly experience when they try to participate here?



CHAPTER 3

The Next Interaction Does Not Begin From Zero

THE DISTINCTION

Who started this?

What might our repeated interactions—or the expectations we carried into them—have taught each of us to do?

THE TOOL

Response • Meaning • Adaptation • Pattern • Expectation • Next interaction

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“I trust you. You decide.”

“What might our repeated interactions have taught each of us to do?”

“What have you been told to expect from me?”

QUESTION TO CARRY

What are people learning to expect before the next interaction begins?



CHAPTER 4

The Cost of Speaking

THE DISTINCTION

Speaking is possible: the channel exists: survey, open door, one-on-one

What speaking costs: what people anticipate they will have to absorb, explain, repair, or risk

THE TOOL

Invitation • Response • What changed • Whose participation has changed?

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“I have noticed that I am hearing less from you in these discussions than I used to. Is there anything about the way we are working that I should understand?”

“I see this differently, but I want to understand how you reached that conclusion.”

“Some of this is difficult for me to hear, and I want to understand what is underneath it.”

QUESTION TO CARRY

What have people learned might happen if they tell me what they really see?



CHAPTER 5

Who We Decide People Are

THE DISTINCTION

Observed behavior: “He questioned this decision repeatedly.”

Identity: “He is resistant.”

THE TOOL

The identity statement I have been using · The evidence statement I can replace it with

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“In two recent implementations, he continued challenging the direction after the decision was final and the team had begun execution.”

“His repeated challenges after decisions are final are disrupting the team.”

“What else could this behavior mean?”

QUESTION TO CARRY

Have I left this person any way to become different in my eyes?



CHAPTER 6

The Work Behind the Work

THE DISTINCTION

Visible result: a crisis resolved, a smooth implementation, a capable employee, a visible owner

Work behind it: risk noticed early, coordination before friction, patient development, distributed contribution

THE TOOL

Visible result · Work behind it · Who else made it possible

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“What made the assignment difficult? Who helped it succeed?”

“Whose judgment, patience, preparation, or coordination is embedded in this result?”

“What have you done this quarter that I probably never saw?”

QUESTION TO CARRY

Where might I be mistaking visibility for value?



CHAPTER 7

Relational Debt

THE DISTINCTION

Compliance: asks whether someone will do what is required

Relational generosity: asks what that person is still willing to give that cannot really be required

THE TOOL

I remember · You remember

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“What has this already cost you, and what would make it workable?”

“What used to be available in this relationship that is becoming less available now?”

“I have been relying on something from you that I could never formally require. I want to say that out loud.”

QUESTION TO CARRY

What have I begun to rely on from someone that I could never formally require?



CHAPTER 8

The Permission Leaders Give Without Saying a Word

THE DISTINCTION

Formal permission: “Exercise independent judgment.”

Lived permission: “Does that judgment still have room when the stakes rise?”

THE TOOL

Formal permission · Lived permission · What success can look like

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

“I don’t know enough about this to answer. Priya understands the issue better than I do.”

“You have changed my mind.”

“This is what works for me; it does not have to be what works for you.”

“What am I missing?”

QUESTION TO CARRY

Which of my habits may have become an unwritten rule for other people?

CHAPTER 9



Access Is Not Connection

THE DISTINCTION

Listening: allows information to enter the conversation
Connection: allows information to enter the relationship

THE TOOL

What they hope to grow toward · A recurring difficulty they have raised
· Conditions that affect their work · Feedback they have given me about my responses

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

"I know this is not the decision you wanted, and I understand why it matters to you."
"You told me about this a few months ago; how is it now?"
"What does our working relationship know about you that it should be acting on?"

QUESTION TO CARRY

What should this relationship still know the next time we meet?

CHAPTER 10



Conflict Makes the Ecology Visible

THE DISTINCTION

The sentence: "The sentence was about an exit."
The response: "The response was about accumulated meaning."

THE TOOL

Direct · Level · Yield · The Balcony

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

"I was only trying to help, and the way you spoke to me was not okay."
"What keeps happening between us?"
"What did you believe I was responding to?"
"What do I really want to make possible next?"

QUESTION TO CARRY

When conflict makes the pattern visible, what do I want my next response to make possible?

CHAPTER 11



Repair Is a Pattern, Not a Moment

THE DISTINCTION

The apology: can name what happened
The new pattern: teaches what will happen next

THE TOOL

Moment · Pattern · The apology · The new pattern

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

"Before we jump in, can I ask you something? Are we okay?"
"Can we start that again?"
"I handled that badly, and I need to correct it."

QUESTION TO CARRY

What would this relationship need to experience repeatedly before something different became reasonable to expect?

CHAPTER 12



Stewarding What Happens Next

THE DISTINCTION

What a system is producing:
What it has gradually stopped producing:

THE TOOL

What absence can look like · What an ecology can sustain

SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY

"What are you seeing that I am not?"
"I see it differently; help me understand what you are seeing."
"Who used to bring problems early?"

QUESTION TO CARRY

What are you helping make possible in the interactions that come after yours?