

SEASON 1 · EPISODE 5 · FROM PEER TO LEADER

The Awkward First Month

The first month feels like wearing somebody else's coat. The discomfort is a stage; the moves you make to end it early are what become permanent. And every one of those moves starts as a sentence inside you, before it reaches the team.

SEE IT · SAY IT · LEAD

1 THE FIRST MEETING YOU RUN

SEE IT — INSIDE YOU

The sentence that fires: "I have to make this stop feeling weird, right now." It's protecting you from ninety seconds of silence — not serving the room.

SAY IT — TO YOURSELF

"Ninety seconds doesn't have to fix a month."

SEE IT — ACROSS FROM YOU

Ninety seconds sets the year. "Nothing will change" is a promise you can't responsibly make, and a speech about standards is authority before context.

SAY IT — OUT LOUD

"Here's what stays steady this week: the work and our priorities. What changes is that I'm accountable for this team and for supporting your work. During the first month, I'll listen, ask questions, and make sure we're clear on what you need from me."

2 THE URGE TO CHANGE SOMETHING

SEE IT — INSIDE YOU

The sentence that fires: "I need to show them the promotion was the right call." It's discomfort looking for an outlet, not analysis.

SAY IT — TO YOURSELF

"The team doesn't need proof. I do."

SEE IT — ACROSS FROM YOU

Gallup: many employees need twelve months or more to reach full proficiency. At week three the urge to fix something is discomfort, not analysis.

SAY IT — OUT LOUD

"For the first thirty days, I won't rush nonurgent changes. I'll learn how the work gets done, ask the people closest to it, and explain the reason before we change it."

3 THE FIRST TIME SOMEONE TESTS YOU

SEE IT — INSIDE YOU

The sentence that fires: "It's small. I'm new. Don't make month one about conflict." It's protecting you from being the problem — by making you one.

SAY IT — TO YOURSELF

"Naming it isn't the conflict. Ignoring it is."

SEE IT — ACROSS FROM YOU

Ambiguous by design, and the team is watching. Early tone has a long tail, and most of the inputs land in the first thirty days.

SAY IT — OUT LOUD

"The report was due Friday, and I didn't receive it. Walk me through what got in the way. Then let's agree on the next step and what will prevent this from happening again."

TRY ONE THIS WEEK

1. Before your first meeting, catch the sentence in your head — then run it in ninety seconds, without a speech.
2. Say the thirty-day rule out loud, so somebody can hold you to it.
3. Name the first skipped thing within a week, privately, in a calm, neutral tone.

Pick just one — small reps beat big plans. Want the five-day version? Grab a Challenge Sheet at theworkingleader.com/challenge-sheets.

LEAD

You don't grow into the role and then act like it. You act like it — awkwardly — and the acting does the growing. The first rep is catching the sentence before you answer. **The first person you lead is you.**

You can do this!
— Matt

REMEMBER THIS

"Do the thing and you shall have the power."

— RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Not get the power, then do the thing. That order doesn't exist — waiting for it is a month spent feeling like a fraud.

GO DEEPER

Grab the free starter toolkit — checklists, scripts, and this week's challenge — at theworkingleader.com.

YOUR NOTES · THE SENTENCE YOU CAUGHT · THE ONE THING YOU'LL DO DIFFERENTLY