

SEASON 1 · EPISODE 8 · FROM PEER TO LEADER

Earning Authority Instead of Demanding It

Only about 20% of employees strongly agree they trust their organization's leadership. Your title buys compliance and nothing past the minimum. The rest accumulates in small increments — and every one of them starts with the conversation inside you.

SEE IT · SAY IT · LEAD

1 THE FIRST TIME SOMEONE ASKS YOU WHY

SEE IT — INSIDE YOU

The sentence that fires: "If I have to explain myself, I've already lost." It's protecting the feeling that the title is the only thing you're sure of.

SAY IT — TO YOURSELF

"Explaining isn't losing ground. Refusing to is."

SEE IT — ACROSS FROM YOU

Often it isn't a challenge at all. It's someone trying to handle the next twelve versions without asking you.

SAY IT — OUT LOUD

"Fair question. Here's the reason. If there's something I'm missing that makes Thursday unworkable, tell me. Otherwise, I need it Thursday."

2 THE SMALL THING YOU SAID YOU'D DO

SEE IT — INSIDE YOU

The sentence that fires: "Nobody said anything, so it didn't count." It's protecting you from thirty seconds of embarrassment, not your credibility.

SAY IT — TO YOURSELF

"They noticed. Silence is the second miss."

SEE IT — ACROSS FROM YOU

It works like a credit score, not a balance. Where leaders communicate, inspire confidence and support change, 95% fully trust them.

SAY IT — OUT LOUD

"I said I'd get you an answer on the parking issue by Friday, and I missed that commitment. I'm sorry. Here's where it stands, and I'll update you by [specific time], even if I don't have the final answer."

3 THE CALL YOU COULD JUST IMPOSE

SEE IT — INSIDE YOU

The sentence that fires: "If I ask, it looks like I couldn't decide on my own." It's protecting the picture of yourself as decisive.

SAY IT — TO YOURSELF

"Asking doesn't cost me the decision. It's still mine."

SEE IT — ACROSS FROM YOU

Given a real chance to push back on change, employees are more than seven times as likely to have confidence in their leaders.

SAY IT — OUT LOUD

"I'll make the decision by Thursday. Before I do, tell me what I may be missing — risks, problems down the road, or a better option. I may not follow every recommendation, but I will consider it and explain the decision."

TRY ONE THIS WEEK

1. Catch the sentence before you answer the next why. Then give the reason, and ask what you might be missing.
2. Raise a promise you dropped before anyone chases you, with a new date on it.
3. Ask for the case against your next decision, then decide — and explain the decision.

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

LEAD

Nobody follows you in one dramatic moment. They notice that what you say and what happens match. See the voice that wants to skip the reason, say the sentence anyway, and let the evidence stack up. **The first person you lead is you.**

You can do this!
— Matt

REMEMBER THIS

"A leader is best when people barely know he exists... when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves."

— LAO TZU

A common translation of Chapter 17 of the Tao Te Ching. A strange goal when you're new and desperate for evidence you're leading at all.

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