

PRACTITIONER EXPERIENCE

Experience an Embedded Practice in real work.

Emotional Intelligence



PRACTICE: The Check-In Question

One real question before the agenda — because the answer might change what the conversation needs to be.

THE HOOK

One genuine question at the start of a 1:1. Not as a warm-up to your agenda — because the answer might change everything about how the conversation should go.

DEFAULT

BEHAVIOR SPECTRUM

EMBEDDED

01

SIGNAL

When does this matter?

The opening of each 1:1 — with a direct report, a peer, a manager, or any recurring relationship — before any agenda item.

You're about to open your weekly 1:1 and jump straight into the agenda, like usual.

02

REDIRECT

What do I do?

Ask one specific question — not “how are you?” — like “What’s on your mind before we get into it?” Then stop talking and listen.

You ask, and they mention a frustration you didn't know about. You let it reshape the rest of the meeting.

03

SHIFT

How will I know it's working?

You'll know it's working when people start answering honestly instead of saying “fine.”

Instead of “fine, let's get started,” they actually tell you what's on their mind.

04

EMBEDDED

How do I know it worked?

People leave 1:1s feeling the conversation was for them, not just with them. You catch things early instead of weeks later.

A frustration surfaces in week one instead of boiling over in week four — because you asked.



REPEAT UNTIL EMBEDDED

BEFORE (Old Pattern)

- You open the 1:1 with the agenda.
- Frustrations surface weeks later, once they've built up.

AFTER (Embedded)

- You ask one real question and stop talking.
- What's actually going on reaches you while it's still small.

THE GOAL

Make the 1:1 about them before it's about your agenda.