



Close the Loop

Your free sample from the
Manager Rituals Toolkit

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

www.ritualsforperformance.com

MANAGER RITUALS TOOLKIT – WHAT'S INSIDE

22 sections, each with practical rituals you can use, techniques, training tips, coaching guides, presentations and templates

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

Fancy more support? We offer live coaching packages to help you introduce, embed or customise the toolkit

EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Clarity and accountability in every meeting

- 1 Reduce the Meeting Load**
Helps managers cut unnecessary meetings, protect focused work time, and make sure people only come together when it genuinely improves progress.
- 2 Design Meetings for Outcomes**
Helps managers plan meetings around decisions, actions and ownership so time together creates useful progress.
- 3 Open Meetings Well**
Helps managers start with clarity, focus and energy so everyone understands why they are there and what matters.
- 4 Run Inclusive and Accountable Meetings**
Helps managers get the right voices into the conversation and turn discussion into clear commitments.
- 5 Close the Loop** **FREE SAMPLE SECTION**
Helps managers end meetings with shared understanding, clear owners and the next steps people will actually follow.
- 6 Cascade with Clarity**
Helps managers pass messages through the team without distortion so people know what it means for their work.
- 7 Meeting Templates**
Gives managers ready-to-use structures for better agendas, actions and follow-up across common meeting types.

CONFIDENT FEEDBACK

Confident and continuous feedback culture

- 8 Create the Conditions for Feedback Culture**
Make feedback feel normal, useful and safe so teams improve continuously instead of waiting for formal reviews.
- 9 Vulnerability: Turn Mistakes into Shared Progress**
Respond to mistakes constructively so learning happens faster and blame does not block improvement.
- 10 Role Modelling: Ask for Feedback First**
Helps managers invite honest input first so feedback becomes a shared habit, not just something done to others.
- 11 Give Clear Feedback for Tasks and Behaviour**
Helps managers separate task feedback from behaviour feedback so expectations are specific, fair and easier to act on.
- 12 Clarify Outcomes, Not Just Tasks**
Helps managers focus people on the result that matters so effort is aligned with the right standard of success.
- 13 Prioritise to Focus Effort**
Helps managers reduce noise, clarify trade-offs and keep team energy focused on the work that matters most.
- 14 Recognise and Share What Good Looks Like**
Helps managers reinforce strong performance by making good practice visible, repeatable and easier for others to copy.

TRUST-BUILDING CONVERSATIONS

Build trusted relationships that survive pressure

- 15 Master Your Mindset Before the Conversation**
Helps managers prepare calmly and deliberately so difficult conversations start with clarity, not reaction.
- 16 Create Trust Before You Need It**
Helps managers build trust in everyday moments so harder conversations become easier when pressure rises.
- 17 Coach, Don't Rescue**
Helps managers support people without taking over so ownership, confidence and problem-solving capability grow.
- 18 Clarify the Real Issue**
Helps managers get beneath surface-level symptoms, understand what is really going on, and avoid solving the wrong problem too quickly.
- 19 Have the Tough Conversation Early**
Helps managers raise issues before they grow so problems are easier to address and relationships are protected.
- 20 Turn Conflict into Collaboration**
Helps managers move people from positions to shared progress so disagreement becomes useful rather than personal.
- 21 Repair Misunderstandings and Relationship Fallout**
Helps managers rebuild trust after tension so unresolved friction does not damage performance or connection.
- 22 Agree Commitments and Follow Up**
Helps managers turn conversations into clear commitments and follow-up so progress is visible and accountability sticks.

CLOSE THE LOOP

End meetings with clear decisions, owners, deadlines, questions, contributions and next actions.

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

Inefficient meetings are the number one productivity disruptor

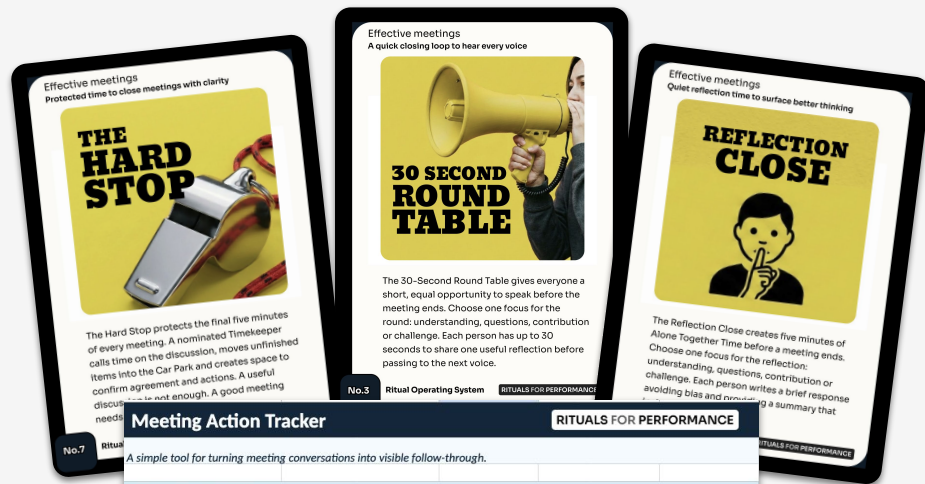
Source: Microsoft's 2023 Work Trend Index

CLOSE THE LOOP is part of the solution.

This sample section from the Manager Rituals Toolkit gives you three simple Meeting Closer rituals and an action tracker you can use straight away.

Start with The Hard Stop, then add a spoken or written loop when the meeting needs it.

These will help you have clearer endings, better contribution and more visible ownership.



Meeting Action Tracker

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

A simple tool for turning meeting conversations into visible follow-through.

WHAT THIS TRACKER IS FOR

Use this tracker during the final minutes of a meeting to capture the actions that matter: what needs to happen next, who owns it and by when. Keep the Action Tracker focused on commitments. Move unfinished discussion into the separate Car Park tab so the meeting can close cleanly.

WHY IT MATTERS

A useful discussion is not enough. Microsoft's 2023 Work Trend Index found that 78% of surveyed people said next steps at the end of a meeting were not clear.

HOW TO USE THE ACTION TRACKER

1. During the Hard Stop, ask: What actions are we committing to?
2. Add one action to the tracker.
3. Update the tracker as the meeting progresses.
4. Use the tracker to follow up on actions.

HOW TO USE THE ACTION TRACKER

Use the Car Park tab to capture unfinished discussion.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

- One action per row

Action Tracker

Capture commitments during the Hard Stop. One action. One owner. One deadline.

Open actions			Blocked	
7			2	
Date added	Action	Owner	Deadline	Status
Right click row and + insert 1 row above to add new entries				
06-Jun-2026	Estimate effort for automating the monthly reporting pipeline	Tom Reeves	11-Jun-2026	Not started
06-Jun-2026	Share the revised assumptions log with the client sponsor	Priya Shah	08-Jun-2026	Blocked
05-Jun-2026	Draft the model validation approach for the pricing project	Owen Brooks	10-Jun-2026	On track
05-Jun-2026	Clarify whether the weekly client update needs a written summary	Amira Khan	06-Jun-2026	Complete
04-Jun-2026	Run quality checks on the latest CRM data extract	Grace Liu	07-Jun-2026	On track
04-Jun-2026	Create a simple dashboard mock-up for the client workshop	Nina Patel	09-Jun-2026	Not started
03-Jun-2026	Prepare first draft of churn-model feature list	Priya Shah	06-Jun-2026	On track
03-Jun-2026	Book stakeholder interview with the Head of Operations	Leo Martin	04-Jun-2026	Complete

MEETING CLOSING RITUALS

Use them this week

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

A quick-start slide for introducing the three meeting closing rituals in a live meeting this week.

ONE ACTION. ONE OWNER. ONE DEADLINE.

1 Before the meeting

Choose a Timekeeper. Add a five-minute Hard Stop to the agenda. Open the Action Tracker before the meeting starts.

2 With five minutes remaining

Pause the discussion. Move unfinished topics into the Car Park rather than allowing the meeting to overrun.

3 Close with clarity

Ask: What did we agree? What actions need to happen next? Who owns each action? By when? Does anyone understand it differently?

4 After the meeting

Review open actions at the next agreed follow-up point. Keep the tracker focused on live commitments only.

Choose the right close

Start with The Hard Stop. Add one spoken or written loop only when the meeting needs it.



Default close: protect the final five minutes.



Spoken loop: hear every voice briefly.



Written loop: create quiet thinking time.

Team intro line:

"We're going to protect the final five minutes so we leave with clear actions and ownership."

Effective meetings
Protected time to close meetings with clarity

THE HARD STOP



The Hard Stop protects the final five minutes of every meeting. A nominated Timekeeper calls time on the discussion, moves unfinished items into the Car Park and creates space to confirm agreement and actions. A useful discussion is not enough. A good meeting needs a deliberate ending.

No.7

Ritual Operating System

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

Turn useful discussion into clear actions and ownership.

1. Decide who is the Timekeeper

Before the meeting begins, agree who will call the Hard Stop. Usually not the Host.

2. Call the Hard Stop

With five minutes remaining, pause the discussion. Move unfinished topics into the Car Park so they can be revisited separately.

3. Close with clarity

What did we agree?

What actions need to happen next?

Who owns each action and by when?

4. Capture the actions

Record each action, owner and deadline in the Action Tracker. Ideally run meeting recording software to make this a cut and paste task.

Open Action Tracker

No.7

Ritual Operating System

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

Challenge:

Meetings often run over and discussion ends up taking the place of actions and ownership

Solution:

Introduce a 5 minute standing agenda point to all meetings. Run the Hard Stop Ritual.

Results:

Clarity of actions and ownership become normal



It starts before the meeting begins, by creating clear shared roles. Nominate a Timekeeper and an Action Taker.

Coaching notes

To ensure better meetings, best not to hold all the responsibility of running them smoothly. The Hard Stop is a simple way to start sharing it. Most meetings do not fall apart because the discussion is bad. They fall apart because the ending is rushed.

The meeting runs right up to the wire. People jump to the next call. Actions are half-captured. Ownership is vague. Then the manager is left afterwards trying to chase commitments, clarify decisions and work out who is doing what.

The Hard Stop changes that pattern. But it does not really start with the final five minutes.

It starts before the meeting begins, by creating clear shared roles. Nominate a Timekeeper and an Action Taker.

The Timekeeper protects the final five minutes and calls the Hard Stop.

The Action Taker captures decisions, actions, owners and deadlines in the Action Tracker.

Those two roles are powerful because they turn the meeting from something the manager is carrying alone into a shared team event.

That shared responsibility creates more ownership and buy-in. When the Hard Stop is called, the team pauses the discussion. Anything unfinished moves into the Car Park. Then the group confirms:

What did we agree?
What actions need to happen next?
Who owns each action?
By when?

Ideally, the Action Taker works with meeting recording software, so capturing the actions becomes quick, accurate and easy to paste into the tracker.

The aim is not to add process for the sake of it.

The aim is to make accountability visible before people leave the meeting.

Talk it through with your team. Explain that you are trying a simple way to make meeting endings clearer and more useful.

Then test it in one meeting.

Choose the Timekeeper. Choose the Action Taker. Protect the final five minutes.

You may be surprised how quickly this changes the sense of ownership in the room.

HOW TO USE THE ACTION TRACKER

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

Capture actions, owners and deadlines during the meeting. Use meeting recording software to support full capture.

Use the action tracker during the Hard Stop so decisions turn into visible follow-through.

RUN IT IN 4 SIMPLE MOVES

- 1 Open it before the meeting**
Have the Action Tracker ready so capture happens live, not afterwards.
- 2 Capture clear commitments**
Write one action per line. Each action needs a named owner and deadline.
- 3 Use the Car Park separately**
Move unfinished discussion or unresolved questions into the Car Park tab.
- 4 Sort and review**
Use Date added to keep newest items at the top. Review open actions next time.

RECORD DATE, ACTION, OWNER, DEADLINE

Action Tracker				
Capture commitments during the Hard Stop. One action. One owner. One deadline.				
Open actions 7		Blocked 2		
Date added	Action	Owner	Deadline	Status
Right click row and + insert 1 row above to add new entries				
06-Jun-2026	Estimate effort for automating the monthly reporting pipeline	Tom Reeves	11-Jun-2026	Not started
06-Jun-2026	Share the revised assumptions log with the client sponsor	Priya Shah	08-Jun-2026	Blocked
05-Jun-2026	Draft the model va	Car Park		
05-Jun-2026	Clarify whether the summary			
04-Jun-2026	Run quality checks			

KEEP IT SIMPLE

One action. One owner. One deadline.

OPEN ACTION TRACKER

Use this after every Hard Stop to make follow-through visible.

Effective meetings
A quick closing loop to hear every voice



The 30-Second Round Table gives everyone a short, equal opportunity to speak before the meeting ends. Choose one focus for the round: understanding, questions, contribution or challenge. Each person has up to 30 seconds to share one useful reflection before passing to the next voice.

No.3

Ritual Operating System

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

Hear every voice and surface what might otherwise be missed.

1. Choose the focus

Understanding: What is your key takeaway and what happens next?

Questions: What is still unclear or unresolved?

Contribution: What would you add, build on or suggest?

Challenge: What risk, assumption or blind spot should we test?

2. Round Table 30 seconds each

The Timekeeper starts the timer. Each person has up to 30 seconds to share one useful reflection. It is always acceptable to pass..

3. Keep time, close the loop

Respect the 30-second limit. Capture anything that needs more time in the Car Park. Confirm actions, owners & deadlines in the Action Tracker.

Open Action Tracker

No.3

Ritual Operating System

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

Challenge:

The most confident voices can dominate meetings. Useful questions, contributions and risks may remain unspoken

Solution:

Add a 30-second closing Round Table. Choose one focus and give each person equal time to contribute or pass.

Results:

Every voice is heard and important insight surfaces before the meeting ends.



As a leader or manager, it is your responsibility to create the environment that helps your team do their best thinking.

Coaching notes

The 30-Second Round Table is one of the simplest ways to make meetings more inclusive.

We have used versions of this for years because it gives every person a clear, equal opportunity to speak. That matters because many meetings are shaped by the most confident voices in the room, while quieter questions, useful contributions or important challenges stay unspoken.

As a leader or manager, it is your responsibility to create the environment that helps your team do their best thinking. It is not enough to say, “Any questions?” and hope people speak up.

Most people will only contribute when the structure makes it feel safe, expected and useful. The 30-Second Round Table does that.

At the end of a meeting, choose one focus for the round. You might choose Understanding if you want to check what landed. You might choose Questions if you want to surface anything unclear. You might choose Contribution if you want to hear useful additions or ideas. You might choose Challenge if you want the team to test risks, assumptions or blind spots before you move forward.

These four areas help build what we think of as progressive contribution confidence.

First, people feel that they belong.

Then they feel able to ask questions.

Then they feel able to contribute.

Then they feel able to challenge.

Challenge is often the hardest behaviour to normalise, but it is one of the most valuable. Teams make better decisions when people can respectfully say what might be missing, what might not work or what needs to be tested. The 30-Second Round Table gives people a contained way to practise that.

The Timekeeper protects the pace and stops the round becoming another open discussion. This is important. The power of the ritual is the constraint.

It gives everyone a chance to speak without allowing one or two people to take over.

It is excellent at the end of a meeting, but it can also be used at other moments: before a decision, after a proposal, during a review or when you sense that some voices have not yet been heard.

Start simply. Choose one meeting. Give it a go.

Effective meetings
Quiet reflection time to surface better thinking

REFLECTION CLOSE



The Reflection Close creates five minutes of Alone Together Time before a meeting ends. Choose one focus for the reflection: understanding, questions, contribution or challenge. Each person writes a brief response avoiding bias and providing a summary that includes all voices equally.

No.9

Ritual Operating System

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

Create space for quieter, more considered thinking to emerge.

1. Choose the focus

Understanding: What is your key takeaway and what happens next?

Questions: What is still unclear or unresolved?

Contribution: What would you add, build on or suggest?

Challenge: What risk, assumption or blind spot should we test?

2. Start the reflection

Timekeeper start the timer. Everyone writes silently for 5 minutes in the agreed place: a shared document, meeting notes or individual cards.

3. Capture & close the loop

Thank the team. Review and share the reflections after the meeting. Add actions and owners in the Action Tracker.

[Open Action Tracker](#)

No.9

Ritual Operating System

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

Challenge:

Fast-moving meetings can favour people who think out loud. Quieter or more considered perspectives may be missed.

Solution:

Add five minutes of Alone Together Time. Choose one focus and ask everyone to write a brief reflection before closing.

Results:

Better-quality thinking and a more inclusive view of what the team needs next.



It starts before the meeting begins, by creating clear shared roles. Nominate a Timekeeper and an Action Taker.

Coaching notes

The Reflection Close is a simple way to create better thinking before a meeting ends. It uses a practice we often bring into workshops and product development environments: Alone Together Time.

The idea is simple. Everyone is in the same space, working quietly on the same question at the same time. That structure matters because group conversations can easily be shaped by the loudest voice, the most senior person or the first opinion that lands in the room.

Once that happens, other people may start editing their thoughts around what has already been said. The Reflection Close helps reduce that problem. Instead of asking people to respond immediately out loud, it gives everyone five minutes to think and write.

This creates a different kind of contribution. Some people think best by speaking. Others think better when they have time to process, reflect and put their ideas into words.

If you only rely on verbal contribution, you may miss some of the best thinking in the team.

The Reflection Close gives those quieter or more considered voices a way in.

At the end of the meeting, choose one focus.

Then set the timer for five minutes. Everyone writes silently. That silence is important.

Do not rush it. Do not fill it. Do not explain over it. The quality of the ritual depends on respecting the time and respecting the quiet.

At first, some teams may find it unusual. That is normal.

Many teams are used to meetings being dominated by live discussion, quick reactions and the people most comfortable thinking out loud. But with practice, Alone Together Time can become one of the most valuable habits in the room.

It helps reduce bias.

It creates more equal contribution.

It gives people time to think before responding.

And it gives the manager a richer picture of what the team has understood, noticed or needs next. Once the reflections are written, capture what matters. Use a AI tool to synthesise and share summary, insights and actions with the team.

Start simply.

Choose one meeting. Choose one focus. Set the timer. Respect the silence.

The rewards are worth the discipline.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT MEETING CLOSE

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

A quick guide to ending meetings with clarity, contribution and accountability.

Use these closing rituals to protect the ending, hear what matters and create visible follow-through.

1 START WITH THE HARD STOP



THE HARD STOP

Protect the final five minutes, move unfinished topics into the Car Park and confirm actions, owners and deadlines in the action tracker.

What did we agree?

What actions happen next?

Who owns each action?

By when?

Different understanding?

2 THEN CHOOSE THE RIGHT CLOSING RITUAL



30-SECOND ROUND TABLE

A fast verbal close that gives everyone equal airtime and surfaces what might otherwise be missed.

HEAR EVERY VOICE AND BUILD CONTRIBUTION CONFIDENCE



REFLECTION CLOSE

A written close that creates quiet space for more considered thinking to emerge.

CREATE RESPECTFUL THINKING SPACE AND UNBIASED CONTRIBUTION

SIMPLE AGENDA PLANNING DECISION FLOW

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

Choose one closing ritual that fits the meeting need.

USE THIS FLOW DURING AGENDA PLANNING



ONLY NEED TO CONFIRM ACTIONS AND OWNERSHIP?

USE →

THE HARD STOP



WANT TO HEAR BRIEFLY FROM EVERYONE IN THE ROOM?

ADD →

THE 30-SECOND ROUND TABLE



NEED QUIETER, MORE CONSIDERED THINKING?

ADD →

THE REFLECTION CLOSE

REMEMBER Choose one closing ritual and one focus. The aim is to close the meeting well, not create another meeting inside the final few minutes.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT FOCUS

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

Both the 30-Second Round Table and the Reflection Close use one chosen prompt.



CHOOSE ONE CLOSE. CHOOSE ONE FOCUS.

Select the prompt that best suits the meeting. Do not try to use all four.

U

UNDERSTANDING

Check that the same meaning landed for everyone.

Prompt: What is your key takeaway and what happens next?

Q

QUESTIONS

Surface anything unclear or unresolved.

Prompt: What question still needs an answer?

C

CONTRIBUTION

Invite useful additions or improvements.

Prompt: What would you add, build on or suggest?

C

CHALLENGE

Test assumptions and identify risk.

Prompt: What risk, assumption or blind spot should we test?

WHEN TO USE WHAT

Use this as a quick starting point. The best close depends on the meeting, the team and the quality of thinking you need.

MEETING SITUATION AND RECOMMENDED CLOSE

MEETING SITUATION	RECOMMENDED CLOSE
Weekly team meeting with clear next steps	The Hard Stop
Project meeting where several teams need to act	Hard Stop + Round Table for Understanding
Decision meeting where the room agreed too quickly	Round Table for Challenge
Complex planning meeting with a quieter team	Hard Stop + Reflection Close for Contribution
Sensitive discussion with strong power dynamics	Reflection Close for Questions or Challenge
Hybrid meeting where remote voices may be missed	Reflection Close or Round Table
MATCH THE ROOM Some teams speak best. Others think better when they write. Use the ritual that improves the quality of the close.	

FACILITATION TIPS

RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

Keep the close protected, simple and useful.

1

PROTECT THE CLOSE

Do not reopen discussion. Move anything substantial into the Car Park.

2

CHOOSE ONE FOCUS

A useful closing loop is simple. One prompt is enough.

3

MATCH THE ROOM

Some teams speak best. Others think better when they write.

4

USE THE ACTION TRACKER

Capture actions, owners and deadlines during the meeting — not afterwards.

OPEN ACTION TRACKER

Move unfinished discussion into the separate Car Park sheet on the Action Tracker so it stays visible without allowing the meeting to overrun.

Date added

Action

Owner

Deadline

Status

Blocker

Follow-up

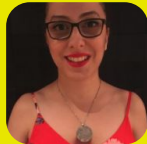
ONE ACTION. ONE OWNER. ONE DEADLINE.

Behavioral Systems Expert



Nick Bennett

**63,500 people trained
with science backed skills
for life and work**



Marjan Oloumi
Associate Coach



Jason Sinclair
Associate Coach

Behavioural Systems

**meet High
Performance**

**The Ritual
Operating
System™
methodology.**

Associate Coaching team



Charlene Carrett
Associate Coach



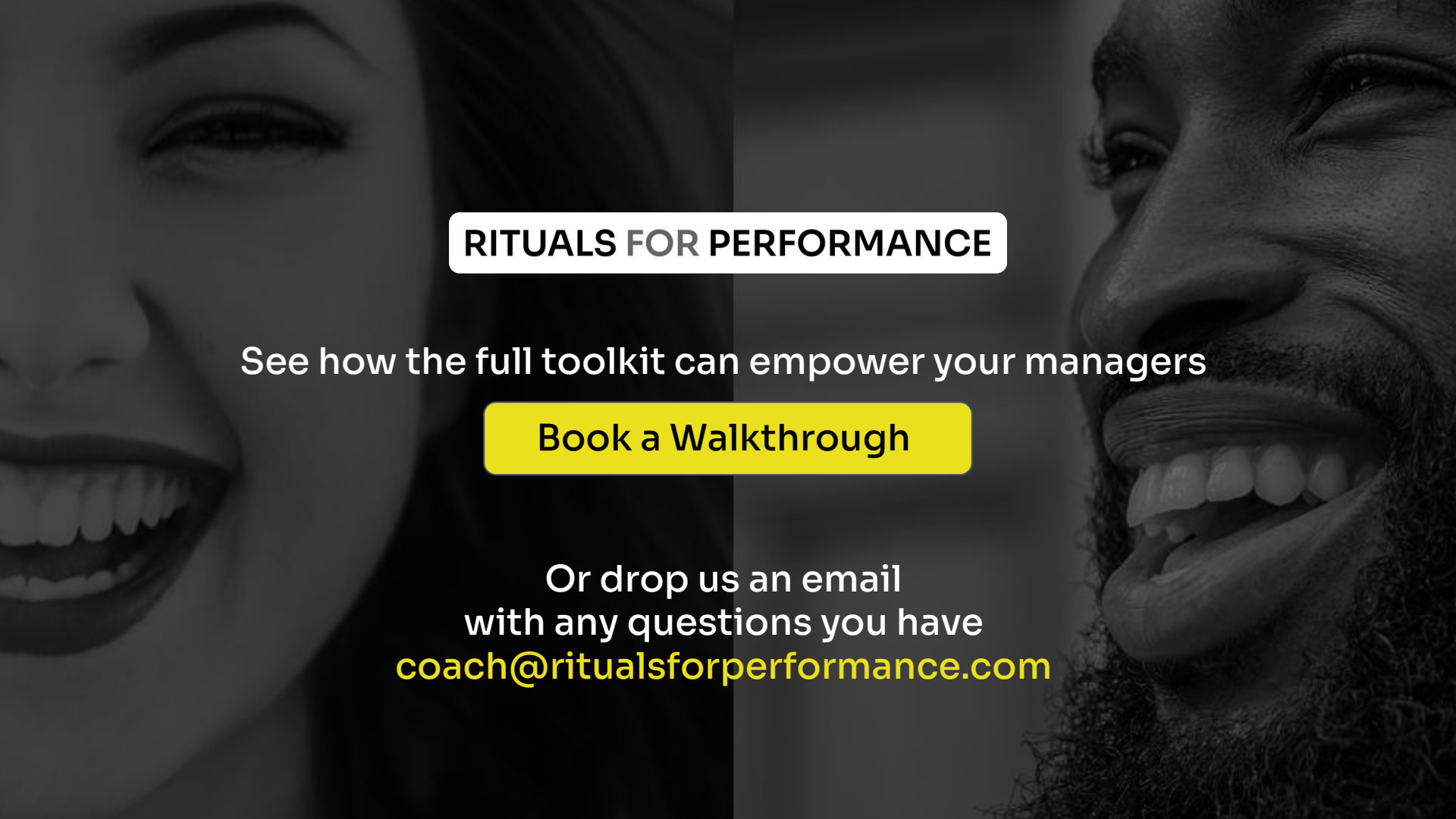
Ailin Werner
AI Agent specialist

Team Performance Expert



Greg Bateman

**22,500 hours in high
performance sport and
work environments**



RITUALS FOR PERFORMANCE

See how the full toolkit can empower your managers

Book a Walkthrough

Or drop us an email
with any questions you have
coach@ritualsforperformance.com