



TRAINING AND CULTURE

THE DEFAULT

STYLE SNAPSHOT

Find Your Gear. Name It. Shift It in Seven Days.

10 scenarios. 7 gears (styles). 20 marks. 20 minutes. One behavior you will change this week.

Participant Tool | For Every Riceland Leader Who Has People

Created and designed by KC Capers, PhD, for use by Riceland Foods, Inc.

Training and Culture

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Start Here

Every leader at Riceland has a gear they reach for when nobody is telling them how to lead, and that gear was chosen for you long before you ever had a title. The next twenty minutes are not about discovering who you are. They are about catching what you do on reflex, and then naming the gear you have quietly refused to reach for, in the exact moments your people are watching hardest.

This company is owned by the people who grow the crop. That raises the standard on everyone who leads inside it. A farmer-member does not get to choose which supervisor is running the shift the day his rice arrives. He gets whoever we developed.

STICKY WORKING DEFINITIONS

Six words that will change how you read your score. Learn them before you answer anything.

TERM	WORKING DEFINITION
DEFAULT STYLE	The <u>gear or style</u> you reach for when nobody tells you how to lead. It is not your best gear. It is your fastest one.
GEAR (LEADERSHIP STYLE)	A leadership style <u>deployed on purpose for a specific moment</u> . Every gear is right somewhere and wrong somewhere else. There are no bad gears. Only gears used at the wrong time.
RANGE	The number of gears you can reach under pressure. Preference is what you like. Range is what you can produce when the plant is on the line. The RANGE is the difference between a <u>TITLE-HOLDER</u> and a <u>LEADER</u> .
THE OVERUSE SHADOW	What your greatest strength costs you when you run it past the moment it was built for. Every strength casts one. Yours is already operating, whether you have named it or not.
THE TELL	The <u>observable behavior</u> on the floor that reveals your default before you open your mouth. Your team already knows your tell. This tool is how you catch up to them.
THE SHIFT	<u>The two-second gap between what the moment calls for and what you feel like doing</u> . Leadership lives in that gap. Everything else is habit.

THE CORE BREAKDOWN

1. Why We Call Them Gears, Not Styles

You have been handed a leadership styles assessment before. Most of them tell you who you are. This one will not, and the word we chose is the reason. Everywhere this tool says gear, it means leadership style. What changes is not the list. What changes is what the list is for.

A STYLE IS	A GEAR IS
Something you are	Something you select
A description of your personality	A description of your decision
It explains your behavior	It changes your behavior
You defend it	You deploy it
Fixed. You were born into it.	Trained. You built it, and you can build another.
The answer is 'that is just how I lead'	The answer is 'that is what the moment needed'

Picture the equipment you already trust. A truck does not have a favorite gear. It has a gear for the grade it is climbing. First gear is not better than fifth. First gear is wrong at highway speed, fifth gear is useless on a hill, and no driver has ever apologized for either one. Nobody says the transmission has a personality.

Your leadership works the same way, with one difference that matters. A truck shifts because the driver decides to . You shift because you notice. Everything in this instrument is built to sharpen the noticing.

The STYLE is a label. The GEAR is a choice. Labels get defended. Choices get made.

That is why nothing in this tool asks you to change who you are. It asks you to widen what you can reach.

2. The Seven Gears (Leadership Styles)

Each style is a gear, not a personality. Every gear has a moment it is built for and a moment it destroys. You will see all seven show up in the ten scenarios that follow.

GEAR (STYLE)	CODE	SIGNATURE MOVE	BUILT FOR	OVERUSE SHADOW
Directive	D	Tell and execute.	Safety events, new hires, clarity crises.	<i>A team trained to wait.</i>
Visionary	V	Point to the horizon.	Change, new strategy, ambiguity.	<i>A team that can quote you and still miss the target.</i>
Collaborative	Co	Build with the team.	Complex problems, cross-shift issues, buy-in.	<i>Decisions that stall while everyone gets heard.</i>
Relational	R	Person before task.	Broken teams, high turnover, post-conflict.	<i>Hard conversations that never happen.</i>
Developmental	De	Grow the person.	Bench-building, succession, hi-potentials.	<i>Coaching used as an escape hatch.</i>
Commanding	Cm	Take the wheel.	True emergencies, safety intervention.	<i>A team that has learned to route around you.</i>
Pacesetting	P	Model the standard.	High-performing teams, technical moments.	<i>A burnout engine and a floor full of spectators.</i>

3. Gear Boundaries: Where Styles Get Confused

Four pairs get confused on the floor. Confuse them here and your score will be wrong in a way you cannot see. Read these before you answer anything.

THIS GEAR (STYLE)	NOT THIS ONE	THE LINE BETWEEN THEM
Directive	Commanding	Directive <u>removes ambiguity</u> . Commanding <u>removes options</u> . If the person still makes the move, you were Directive. If you took the move, you were Commanding.
Collaborative	Developmental	Collaborative is about <u>the problem</u> . Developmental is about <u>the person</u> . If you needed their input to get the answer right, that is Collaborative. If you already had the answer and withheld it so they could build the muscle, that is Developmental.
Directive	Pacesetting	Directive <u>tells</u> . Pacesetting <u>shows</u> . Same standard, different transmission. One uses your voice. The other uses your hands.
Relational	Developmental	Relational <u>protects the person</u> . Developmental <u>stretches the person</u> . Both put the human first. Only one of them is willing to make the human uncomfortable.

4. How the Snapshot Runs

WHAT YOU DO	For each scenario, mark TWO codes. ML for the option you would MOST likely do. LL for the option you would LEAST likely do. Two different letters. Never the same one.
WHY TWO MARKS	Ten picks cannot separate seven gears. Twenty marks can. Your ML column finds your Default Gear. Your LL column finds your Missing Gear, and that is the one worth the drive here.
THE RULE	Mark what you would ACTUALLY do, not what sounds smart. Every option on this instrument is defensible. There is no wrong answer to find.
WHAT YOU GET	One page on your gear: Diagnosis, Real-Talk, three coaching moves, and one signed behavior change.

5. Your Twenty Minutes

SEGMENT	TIME
Read the Seven Gears and the Gear Boundaries	4 minutes
Answer the 10 scenarios, ML and LL	8 minutes
Score your tally	3 minutes
Work the reflection page	3 minutes
Read your gear page and sign your commitment	2 minutes
TOTAL	20 minutes

HOW THIS TOOL IS USED. This instrument is developmental. It is not validated for selection, promotion, compensation, discipline, or performance evaluation, and you must not use it for any of these. Nobody collects this page. Your score is yours. Answer accordingly.

6. Reading Your Score

You will finish with two numbers per gear. REACH is how many times you marked it Most Likely. REJECT is how many times you marked it Least Likely. Read them together. Neither one means much alone.

PATTERN	WHAT IT IS	WHAT IT MEANS
High Reach Low Reject	Your DEFAULT GEAR	Your reflex , your reputation , and your risk . This is the gear your team already expects from you before you open your mouth.
Low Reach High Reject	Your MISSING GEAR	Not a gear you have never used. A gear you actively refuse . This is measured resistance, and it is the most valuable line on your page.
Reach AND Reject both present	A SITUATIONAL GEAR	You reach for it in some moments and refuse it in others . That is not inconsistency. That is range, and it is the target.
Zero Reach Zero Reject	A DORMANT GEAR	Untested, not rejected . It never came up strongly either way. Treat it as unknown territory rather than as a weakness .

TIE-BREAK RULES

1. Two gears tied for **highest Reach**: the one with the **LOWER Reject** is your Default Gear.
2. Two gears tied for **highest Reject**: the one with the **LOWER Reach** is your Missing Gear.
3. A flat spread with no clear high on either column usually means you answered as the leader you described in interviews, not the leader who walked the floor last Thursday. Go back and answer it again.

KC'S NUGGETS

1. **“Every gear has a moment it is built for and a moment it destroys.”**
2. **“Your first honest instinct is the data.”**
3. **“You cannot shift a gear you refuse to name.”**

KC'S REAL-TALK

Here is the hard part. You will be tempted to answer these ten scenarios as the leader you wish you were, and that temptation will feel like ambition. It is not. It is protection. Every answer you upgrade in your head is a data point you delete about the leader your team actually reports to, and you will walk out of this room with a clean score and an unchanged floor.

Understand what your default really is. It is not a gift. It is a groove. Somewhere in your history, one gear worked when it counted, and you have been running it ever since because it paid you once. Your default is not evidence of your strength. It is evidence of your last reward. The question this instrument asks is not whether your gear is good. It is whether the plant you are running today is still the plant that gear was built for.

And know which column will cost you more. Most Likely is easy. It is the gear you already tell people you are. Least Likely is the honest one, because it makes you name out loud the leadership move you refuse to make. Whatever you mark there seven or eight times is not a preference. It is a door you have decided stays closed, and the situation on the other side of it is coming anyway.

KC'S COACHING CORNER

1. **Answer in one sitting, phone down, no cross-talk.** Deliberation is where honesty gets edited. Your first instinct is the leader your team gets on a Tuesday. Give the tool that leader.
2. **Read your highest-Reject gear second, and name a date.** That is your Missing Gear. Identify one specific moment in the last 90 days when it was required and you did not reach it. Write down what it cost the plant, in dollars, hours, or people. An unpriced weakness never gets fixed.
3. **Sign the commitment out loud, in front of one person.** Name the behavior, name the date, and hand your accountability partner a copy before you leave the room. A commitment that stays in your workbook is a preference. A commitment somebody else is holding is a decision.

TWO MARKS PER SCENARIO

The 10 Scenarios

Two marks per scenario. Put an X in the **ML** box beside the option you would **MOST** likely do, and an X in the **LL** box beside the option you would **LEAST** likely do. Two different letters every time. Every option here is defensible, so answer with what you would actually do, not what sounds smart.

IF YOU DO NOT WORK ON THE FLOOR. These ten scenarios are set in the mill, at the pit, and during harvest, because that is where Riceland's hardest leadership moments are easiest to see. The setting is operational. The moment is not. A backed-up dump pit and a stalled month-end close are the same decision wearing different boots. Read past the equipment and answer the moment.

SCENARIO 1

A new hire mishandles a load at the dump pit

Second week of harvest. An operator you hired 45 days ago just dumped a load into the wrong bin. Trucks are backed up toward the highway and the mistake compounds every minute it sits.

	YOUR RESPONSE	CODE	ML	LL
A	Give the recovery in order: stop the pit, flag the bin, reroute the next three trucks. Harvest leaves room for instruction, not discussion.	D		
B	Ask him what the recovery is and build it with him as we move. He will own the next one because he built this one.	Co		
C	Take the pit myself and run the recovery at speed while he watches. A line of trucks is a demonstration, not a conversation.	P		
D	Name the moment for what it is, then work the fix beside him. Harvest is where operators become leaders.	De		
E	Steady him first so he can think clearly. A rattled operator at a dump pit makes the second mistake faster than the first.	R		

SCENARIO 2**Two shifts blame each other for a yield drop**

Head rice yield has slipped for two weeks. Day shift blames night shift's screen changes. Night shift blames day shift's dryer settings. Both are half right.

	YOUR RESPONSE	CODE	ML	LL
A	Put both shift leads in one room and do not leave until they own the handoff together. The people who run it have to build it.	Co		
B	End the debate today. One shared standard by end of shift, posted and enforced tomorrow. Two weeks of yield loss is already too long.	Cm		
C	Reset both shifts on who we work for. Every point of yield belongs to a farmer-member. Rebuild the handoff from there.	V		
D	Work the shift change myself across three handoffs. Both crews need to see a clean transfer before they can argue about one.	P		
E	Coach both leads to solve it themselves while I observe. If I fix this handoff, I will be fixing the next one too.	De		

SCENARIO 3**A grain dust near-miss on your watch**

Dust accumulation near a bucket elevator nearly ignited on your shift last night. No one was hurt. Your team is watching to see how you open the morning huddle.

	YOUR RESPONSE	CODE	ML	LL
A	State the non-negotiable standard in the huddle. No debate, no exception. Housekeeping around the elevators is the one place I do not open the floor.	Cm		
B	Walk the team through exactly what happened and exactly what every person does differently starting this shift.	D		
C	Anchor the team to why we exist. Every person going home is the standard, and the near-miss is proof of what is at stake.	V		
D	Name the fear in the room and thank the person who spoke up. If reporting feels expensive, the next one goes unreported.	R		
E	Walk the elevator deck early and do the housekeeping myself before the huddle. They should see the standard before they hear it.	P		

SCENARIO 4**A long-tenured performer starts slipping**

One of your best people, eleven years at Riceland, has quietly missed his numbers three weeks in a row. Your instinct says something is going on at home. He has not said a word.

	YOUR RESPONSE	CODE	ML	LL
A	Open with the person, not the numbers. Eleven years earns him the question before he gets the correction.	R		
B	Tell him directly: three weeks down, here is what changes starting this week. Clear expectations respect his record.	D		
C	Ask him what he sees getting in the way and build the recovery plan together. He knows the cause better than I do.	Co		
D	Work beside him for a shift. Standing next to a man tells you more than sitting across from one.	P		
E	Remind him who he has been here for eleven years and what I still see in him. He needs the picture before he needs the plan.	V		

SCENARIO 5**A supervisor tells you she wants your job**

A supervisor with four years at Riceland just told you, one-on-one, that she wants your job in five years. She is capable but raw.

	YOUR RESPONSE	CODE	ML	LL
A	Sit down and co-build the five-year plan right there. Ambition named out loud is the moment to convert it into a path.	De		
B	Show her what leadership looks like at that level and challenge her to grow into the picture before she gets the title.	V		
C	Ask her what she thinks the path is and build it together as peers. Her read on her own gaps is data I need.	Co		
D	Give her the next three assignments that will build her, with the check-in dates set before she leaves the room.	D		
E	Name the three behaviors that will decide it. Demonstrate them this season. Ambition without a standard is only a wish.	Cm		

SCENARIO 6**Your call gets reversed in front of your supervisors**

In this morning's leadership meeting, your manager reversed a call you had just made, in front of your two supervisors.

	YOUR RESPONSE	CODE	ML	LL
A	Handle it one-on-one after the meeting. Protect the relationship first, and the decision will keep until we talk.	R		
B	Go back to my team and own the new direction cleanly. My supervisors need to see alignment, not my opinion of it.	D		
C	Ask him to walk the decision through with me so we land in the same place before my team sees daylight between us.	Co		
D	Frame it for my team as one company making the best call available. Align them upward, not sideways.	V		
E	Raise it with him directly and immediately. Authority reversed in public has to be addressed, or it happens again.	Cm		

SCENARIO 7**Harvest starts in three weeks and you are short-handed**

You just learned you will run harvest two people short. You cannot tell your crew yet, because the staffing plan is not final. You have a normal team meeting in an hour.

	YOUR RESPONSE	CODE	ML	LL
A	Bring more presence than usual. Extra check-ins, extra listening. They will remember how I carried this stretch.	R		
B	Anchor them to what harvest means here. What we do in these weeks is the whole year for the people who grew it.	V		
C	Run the meeting exactly like every other meeting. Any deviation tells them something before I am permitted to.	Cm		
D	Use the three weeks to accelerate my two high-potentials. Short-handed or not, they need to be ready to carry more.	De		
E	Model calm at the highest standard. My crew reads me before they read anything else in this building.	P		

SCENARIO 8**Your team keeps waiting on you to decide**

You realize this week that three decisions are sitting with you because your supervisors are waiting for you to make them. All three are within their authority.

	YOUR RESPONSE	CODE	ML	LL
A	Coach each of them through their own decision instead of making it. The muscle only builds under load.	De		
B	Send all three back today with the expectation stated plainly: this is your call, make it by end of day.	D		
C	Bring the three of them together and work the decisions as a leadership team so they see the reasoning, not just the outcome.	Co		
D	Reset the picture. The Riceland we are building is one where leaders at their level make these calls. Then let them run.	V		
E	Decide all three now and show my work out loud. Sometimes the fastest way to teach a decision is to make one in front of people.	P		

SCENARIO 9**A seasonal hire is not going to make it**

A seasonal hire, 60 days in, is not adapting to the pace. You have coached him twice. Your supervisor thinks he is a wrong-fit hire, and harvest does not slow down for this.

	YOUR RESPONSE	CODE	ML	LL
A	Set the line: here is where you are, here is what changes in 30 days, here is what happens if it does not.	Cm		
B	Have the honest conversation about fit. Helping him land somewhere he can win is not a failure on either side.	R		
C	Give him one structured 30-day sprint with clear milestones. Some people need one more real rep before it clicks.	De		
D	Bring him into the assessment. Here is what I see, what do you see, and where do we go from here.	Co		
E	Make the call and begin transition this week. Sixty days and two coaching cycles is a fair and complete answer.	D		

SCENARIO 10**Week six of harvest and you are running on empty**

Week six. You are running on four hours of sleep and so is everyone around you. Your people are watching how you show up at two in the afternoon.

	YOUR RESPONSE	CODE	ML	LL
A	Lead with honesty and presence. Acknowledge it has been a brutal stretch for everybody and lead from care.	R		
B	Match the standard anyway. If the pace is what the crew needs this week, I am the one who sets it.	P		
C	Hold the line. Set the expectation for the rest of the week, state it once, and do not renegotiate because everyone is tired.	Cm		
D	Pull my leads in for ten minutes, tell them where I am, and ask them to help carry the back half of the week.	Co		
E	Use the fatigue out loud as the lesson. Sustainable leadership under pressure is worth teaching while it is happening.	De		

COUNT YOUR MARKS

Your Tally

Go back through the 10 scenarios. Count how many times each code carries an ML mark, and how many times it carries an LL mark. Write both numbers below. Net is Reach minus Reject, and it can be negative. A negative net is not a bad score. It is a clear one.

GEAR (STYLE)	REACH (ML)	REJECT (LL)	NET
Directive (D)			
Visionary (V)			
Collaborative (Co)			
Relational (R)			
Developmental (De)			
Commanding (Cm)			
Pacesetting (P)			
TOTAL (must equal 10 and 10)	10	10	0

MY DEFAULT GEAR (highest Reach)	
MY MISSING GEAR (highest Reject)	
MY SITUATIONAL GEARS (marked in both columns)	
MY DORMANT GEARS (zero in both columns)	

REMEMBER. This page is developmental. It is not used for selection, promotion, compensation, discipline, or performance evaluation. Nobody collects it. It stays with you.

THREE MINUTES. WRITE, DO NOT THINK.

Your Reflection

A score you do not price never changes anything. Answer these three in writing before you turn the page. Short answers. Specific names. Real numbers.

1. Name the moment in the last 90 days when your MISSING GEAR was required and you did not reach it. What did it cost, in dollars, hours, or people?

2. Your DEFAULT GEAR paid you once. Name the situation that rewarded it. Is the plant you run today still that plant?

3. Who on your team has been quietly absorbing the cost of your Default Gear? Write the name. You already know it.

Now turn to the coaching page for your Default Gear. Read it slowly. It is written for you, not about you. When you finish, read your Missing Gear second. That is the page you did not come here for and the page you most need.

FIND YOUR GEAR (STYLE) BELOW

Your Coaching Page

One page per gear (leadership style). Find your Default Gear and read that one first. Then read your Missing Gear, the one carrying your highest Reject count. That is the gear the plant will need from you before this quarter is over.

RANGE, NOT REPAIR. Read the next pages correctly. Your Default Gear is an asset. It is the reason you hold this role, and nothing here asks you to surrender it. Every page names a strength first and then names the shadow that strength casts when it runs past the moment it was built for. You are not being told to stop. You are being told to add. A leader with one gear is not broken. A leader with one gear is limited, and limits are the one leadership problem that can be solved on purpose.

One more thing. Your gear did not choose itself. Somewhere behind you, a situation rewarded it, and you have been running it ever since. That is not a character flaw. That is how every leader on this floor got here. The only question in front of you is whether the situation that trained you is the situation you are standing in now.

Notes and Reflections:

DIRECTIVE (D)

The Instruction-Giver | Leadership Style: Directive

THE SHORT VERSION

Your team never wonders what you want, and that clarity is a genuine asset on a floor where confusion costs money. It is also the exact reason they stopped bringing you what they think.

WORKING DEFINITION

Directive is the gear that removes ambiguity by naming the what, the when, and the how.

THE BREAKDOWN

BUILT FOR	Safety events, new hires, clarity crises.
THE TELL	The room slows down when you leave it.
OVERUSE SHADOW	A team trained to wait for you.

THE DIAGNOSIS

You lead by clarity. When something needs doing, you tell people exactly what, exactly when, exactly how. Your team knows where they stand and what is expected. Nothing is fuzzy on your shift.

KC'S REAL-TALK

Clarity is not the same thing as leadership. You have trained your team to wait for instructions, and now you wonder why nobody thinks. When you leave the room, the room slows down. That is not proof of your value. That is proof of your bottleneck. Direct is a scalpel, not a lifestyle.

KC'S NUGGET

“Direct is a scalpel, not a lifestyle.”

DO THIS WEEK · THREE COACHING MOVES

1. Take one recurring decision you normally just call and hand it to a supervisor with two questions instead: 'What do you think?' and 'What would you need to be sure?' Do not answer either one for them.
2. Cut your instructions in half. For five days, when you catch yourself giving a three-step directive, give step one and make the person name steps two and three.
3. Ask one direct report this exact sentence: 'When I give you instructions, what am I not letting you show me?' Sit with the answer without correcting it.

THE COMMITMENT	
The ONE behavior I change this week	
By when / Signed	
Accountability partner / Check-in	

VISIONARY (V)

The Horizon-Pointer | Leadership Style: Visionary

THE SHORT VERSION

You make the work mean something, and people will follow meaning further than they will ever follow instructions. But the horizon does not run the shift, and the machine running hot right now cannot hear your speech.

WORKING DEFINITION

Visionary is the gear that connects today's task to tomorrow's picture so the work carries weight.

THE BREAKDOWN

BUILT FOR	Change, new strategy, ambiguity.
THE TELL	You describe the destination more often than you touch the equipment.
OVERUSE SHADOW	A team that can quote you and still miss the number.

THE DIAGNOSIS

You lead by pointing at the horizon. You connect today's task to tomorrow's picture, and people follow you because you make the work mean something. Your team knows where they are going.

KC'S REAL-TALK

The horizon does not run the shift. Your team can quote your vision word for word and still miss their quality target, because you never come down from the mountain long enough to see the machine that is actually running hot.
Vision without proximity is a slogan. Slogans do not fix bearings.

KC'S NUGGET

“Vision without proximity is a slogan. Slogans do not fix bearings.”

DO THIS WEEK · THREE COACHING MOVES

1. Spend one full shift on the floor with no strategic agenda. Watch only. Notice what your vision has been missing.
2. In your next huddle, translate your 'why' into one specific, measurable, this week's behavior. If you cannot, your vision is not concrete enough to be executed yet.
3. Ask a shift lead: 'What am I asking you to do that does not connect to what I keep talking about?' The gap they name is your work.

THE COMMITMENT	
The ONE behavior I change this week	
By when / Signed	
Accountability partner / Check-in	

COLLABORATIVE (CO)

The Consensus-Builder | Leadership Style: Collaborative

THE SHORT VERSION

You believe the best answer lives in the room, and most days you are right about that. The days you are wrong cost this plant three hours it did not have.

WORKING DEFINITION

Collaborative is the gear that builds the answer with the team so ownership arrives at the same time the decision does.

THE BREAKDOWN

BUILT FOR	Complex problems, cross-shift issues, buy-in.
THE TELL	You call a meeting when you already know the answer.
OVERUSE SHADOW	Decisions that stall while everyone gets heard.

THE DIAGNOSIS

You lead by pulling people in. You believe the best answer lives in the room, not in your head. Your team feels heard because they are, and they take ownership because you make room for it.

KC'S REAL-TALK

Sometimes the answer is not in the room. Sometimes you already have it, and you are burning three hours of a team's time so that nobody feels left out. Collaboration is not a value. It is a tool. Reaching for it when the moment calls for a decision is not humility. It is avoidance dressed up as inclusion.

KC'S NUGGET

“Collaboration is not a value. It is a tool.”

DO THIS WEEK · THREE COACHING MOVES

1. Make one decision alone this week that you would normally socialize. Announce it. Do not apologize for it. Watch what actually happens.
2. In your next huddle, cut input-gathering time in half and spend the saved time telling the team what you see, what you decided, and what you expect.
3. Ask a peer: 'Where does my collaboration slow us down?' Do not correct their answer. Write it down.

THE COMMITMENT	
The ONE behavior I change this week	
By when / Signed	
Accountability partner / Check-in	

RELATIONAL (R)

The Connector | Leadership Style: Relational

THE SHORT VERSION

People tell you the truth because they trust you, and that gives you intelligence nobody else on this leadership team has. Then you spend that trust protecting them from the one conversation they actually need.

WORKING DEFINITION

Relational is the gear that puts the person before the task so that truth has somewhere safe to land.

THE BREAKDOWN

BUILT FOR	Broken teams, high turnover, post-conflict repair.
THE TELL	You already know the name of the conversation you are avoiding.
OVERUSE SHADOW	Hard conversations that never happen.

THE DIAGNOSIS

You lead through connection. People trust you. They tell you what is really going on. You know your team's names, kids, struggles, and wins, and that human intelligence gives you leverage nobody else on the leadership team has.

KC'S REAL-TALK

Care without candor is not kindness. It is avoidance dressed up in warmth. You built trust with your team, and now you are spending it shielding them from feedback they need to keep their jobs. When you leave a hard conversation unhad because you value the relationship, you are not being a good leader. You are being a good friend, at the cost of being a leader at all.

KC'S NUGGET

“Care without candor is not kindness. It is avoidance dressed up in warmth.”

DO THIS WEEK · THREE COACHING MOVES

1. Identify the one hard conversation you have been avoiding. You already know the name. Have it this week. Lead with care and still land the truth.
2. In your next feedback moment, deliver the direct performance message before the relational cushion. Reverse your usual order and notice what changes.
3. Ask a direct report: 'Where have I let you off the hook because we have a good relationship?' Their answer is your development plan.

THE COMMITMENT

The ONE behavior I change this week	
By when / Signed	
Accountability partner / Check-in	

DEVELOPMENTAL (DE)

The Coach | Leadership Style: Developmental

THE SHORT VERSION

You build the person before the numbers, and years from now they will come back to tell you that you made them. Some weeks, though, this plant does not need another coaching moment. It needs the number hit.

WORKING DEFINITION

Developmental is the gear that trades short-term speed for long-term capacity by growing the person inside the problem.

THE BREAKDOWN

BUILT FOR	Bench-building, succession, high-potentials.
THE TELL	You asked a question when the moment called for a decision.
OVERUSE SHADOW	Coaching used as an escape hatch from the harder gears.

THE DIAGNOSIS

You lead by growing people. You see potential nobody else sees, and you build the person before the numbers. Your team gets promoted, leaves for bigger roles, and comes back years later to tell you that you were the one who made them.

KC'S REAL-TALK

Development is not a substitute for delivery. Your problem is not that you develop people. It is that **you use coaching as a way to avoid the gears that cost you something**. You show up as the coach when the moment called for the commander, and your team is quietly paying that bill on your behalf.

KC'S NUGGET

“Development is not a substitute for delivery.”

DO THIS WEEK · THREE COACHING MOVES

1. Name one moment where you should have made the call instead of asking the coaching question. Own it out loud. Do not repeat it.
2. Give one direct instruction with no follow-up question. Just the instruction. Notice how uncomfortable that feels. That discomfort is the muscle you are missing.
3. Ask a supervisor: 'When have I coached you when I should have decided?' Their answer names your growth edge.

THE COMMITMENT	
The ONE behavior I change this week	
By when / Signed	
Accountability partner / Check-in	

COMMANDING (CM)

The Captain | Leadership Style: Commanding

THE SHORT VERSION

When the moment is chaotic, urgent, or dangerous, you do not hesitate, and your team knows it. Commanding was built for emergencies. It was never built for Tuesdays.

WORKING DEFINITION

Commanding is the gear that seizes control and ends debate when the cost of delay outweighs the cost of being wrong.

THE BREAKDOWN

BUILT FOR	True emergencies, safety intervention.
THE TELL	Problems stopped arriving at your desk.
OVERUSE SHADOW	A team that has learned to route around you.

THE DIAGNOSIS

You lead by taking the wheel. When the moment is chaotic, urgent, or high-stakes, you step in, cut through the noise, and make the call. Your team knows that when it matters, you will not hesitate. That is a leadership asset few people bring.

KC'S REAL-TALK

Commanding was built for emergencies, not for Tuesdays. When you command every moment, you turn your team into spectators of their own work. They stop bringing you problems, because you take the problem instead of coaching them through it. You are not the leader you think you are. You are the bottleneck they have learned to route around.

KC'S NUGGET

“You are not the leader you think you are. You are the bottleneck they have learned to route around.”

DO THIS WEEK · THREE COACHING MOVES

1. This week, when something needs deciding, count to ten before you speak. Ask two questions before you make the call. See who fills the space.
2. Deliberately give away one decision you would normally command and stay in the room without taking it back.
3. Ask your best supervisor: 'What decisions do you wish I would stop making for you?' Do not defend. Give the next one back.

THE COMMITMENT	
The ONE behavior I change this week	
By when / Signed	
Accountability partner / Check-in	

PACSETTING (P)

The Standard-Setter | Leadership Style: Pacesetting

THE SHORT VERSION

You set the standard by being the standard, and your presence on the floor lifts everyone around you. It is also the most respectable way a leader has ever stalled a career.

WORKING DEFINITION

Pacesetting is the gear that teaches the standard by demonstrating it at full speed.

THE BREAKDOWN

BUILT FOR	High-performing teams, technical moments.
THE TELL	You are the fastest person on your own team, and proud of it.
OVERUSE SHADOW	A burnout engine and a floor full of spectators.

THE DIAGNOSIS

You lead by example. You set the standard by being the standard. You outwork the room, you model the pace, and your presence on the floor lifts everyone around you. Your team does not need a speech. They can see you.

KC'S REAL-TALK

Pacesetting is the most seductive gear in the box, because it feels like humility. 'I am not asking anyone to do what I would not do myself.' **That is not humility. That is a bottleneck and a burnout engine wearing humility's coat.** When you set the pace, you make your team spectators to their own capability, and you make yourself irreplaceable in the exact way that ends careers at your level. Every hour you spend proving the standard is an hour you did not spend building the leader who could hold that standard without you.

KC'S NUGGET

“Every hour you spend proving the standard is an hour you did not spend building the leader who could hold it without you.”

DO THIS WEEK · THREE COACHING MOVES

1. Do less visible work on the floor this week. Delegate three things you would normally handle personally. Notice the panic. That is the addiction talking.
2. Before every task, ask: 'Is doing this myself teaching someone else how, or teaching them they cannot?' Act on your own answer.
3. Ask a supervisor: 'Where does my pace prevent your growth?' Whatever they name is the exact place to slow down and let them run.

THE COMMITMENT	
The ONE behavior I change this week	
By when / Signed	
Accountability partner / Check-in	

Notes and Reflections:

You cannot shift a gear you refuse to name.

You just named yours. The next seven days are what you do with it.



Owned by the people who grow it. Led by the people who run it.