The Ten Channels Card

Words are only one of ten channels. Before it matters, check all ten.

NEW TO THIS? START HERE

Every time you speak, people read more than your words. They hear your tone, watch your face and hands, notice how close you stand, how long you took to answer, and what your silence says. This card names all ten channels so you can check them before a conversation that matters: a job interview, a hard talk at home, a meeting with a teacher or a doctor.

THREE HABITS

- Match the message to the manner: let all ten channels tell the same story.
- Read others with humility: every channel offers information, not certainty.
- When the signals are mixed, ask rather than assume.

A MYTH TO RETIRE

"Only 7% of meaning is words" misreads two small 1967 studies about judging feelings. Words carry the content; the other channels tell people how to take it.

1 Words ☐
Did I choose the clearest words, or the first ones?

2 Tone ☐
Does my voice match what I am saying?

3 Face ☐
What is my face saying before I speak?

4 Gesture ☐
Do my hands help the message or compete with it?

5 Posture ☐
Am I turned toward them, steady and open?

6 Touch ☐
Is touch welcome here? When in doubt, ask.

7 Space ☐
Is this a distance they are comfortable with?

8 Time ☐
Did I answer in a time that says this matters?

9 Appearance ☐
Does how I show up fit this moment?

10 Silence ☐
Have I left room for them to answer?