Pick one person you struggle to communicate with (or one conversation you keep avoiding). Don't pick the hardest person in your life, pick someone you'll actually talk to soon.

Who is it?

What's the pattern? (I over-explain / I shut down / they get defensive / I get sharp)

What do I want instead? (clarity / respect / buy-in / repair)

Example (for reference):
- Person: My boss who keeps changing "right now" priorities.
- Pattern: I get sharp and frustrated and resentful.
- Want instead: Clear expectations, consistency, and a calmer tone.

Name your "too muchness" (your too much is often your leadership edge untrained.)
- My too muchness here is:

- Under stress, it shows up as:

- When trained, it becomes:

Example:
- Too muchness: Too intense / too direct.
- Under stress: I come in hot and create a power struggle fight.
- When trained: I'm clear, decisive, and respectful.

Clarity — Write the ask

1. What do I need?

2. How is not having it affecting me/us?

3. What would change if it's met?

Example:

- I need: A top 3 priorities list that remains consistent until complete
- Impact: Every time we change directions, I must redo work which costs time and energy. My team is struggling to keep adjusting which creates burn out.
- If met: We'll move faster with fewer mistakes and less stress for everyone.

Step 3: Connection — Build the bridge (their reality)
Connection is the bridge between your truth and their reality.

To them, this matters because:

What might they be protecting? (time / budget / workload / reputation / relationships)

Example:
To them, this matters because: Burnout equates to turn over and with less people on the team, we won't be able to get everything done.
Protecting: Time and reputation.

Step 4: Composure — Plan the first 10 seconds

Pause (choose your intention)
Before you speak, ask: "How do I want this conversation to go?
My end result goal: (respected / safe / clear / understood)

Example:
My Goal: To find a flow that allows both of us to get what we need. Stability and clarity for me and flexibility for them.

Ask (get curious)
Write one curious question:

Example: Question: "Can you help me understand what's driving the last-minute changes?"

Reconsider (stay flexible)
If I learn something new, I'm willing to:

Example: I'm willing to: Adjust my timeline if we agree on what's truly urgent.
Your opener (use this if you freeze):

Example: "I want to handle this new goal well—can we align on priorities so we both win this week and put out our best work?"

Step 5: Commitment — Create the ripple

Circle one:

Have the conversation | Send a message | Ask a question | Repair the moment

Date I'll do it:

One sentence I'll start with:

Start with: "For me to do a great job I need 10 minutes each morning/week to lock in the priorities so the team can execute quickly and effectively. Can we set up a brief standing meeting to make sure we are on the same page?"

NEVER FORGET!
Culture is built in moments and moments are built in conversations. What we carry becomes what others carry.