



principle & co-founder // christine hudson

I leverage a background in leading and coaching large-scale business agility transformations and early-stage startups to provide mentoring and coaching for transformation leaders, key change roles and stakeholders. I love designing and facilitating experiences that help humans change what they believe is possible.

Practice Makes Culture™ Expert Facilitator
Business Agility Consultant
Facilitative Leadership Coach
Leadership Circle® Certified 360 Consultant

christine@thewelcomeelephant.co



principle & co-founder // ronica roth

I help leaders play with ideas, combining the art of the possible and curiosity with disciplined experiments. I love watching humans thrive and achieve together. I believe organizations of all types can elevate how people work together to unleash the potential of individuals and teams at all levels.

Practice Makes Culture™ Expert Facilitator
Business Agility Consultant
Facilitative Leadership Coach
Certified Scrum Trainer, Emeritus (CST)
Leadership Circle® Certified 360 Consultant

ronica@thewelcomeelephant.co



practice makes culture™ // the welcome elephant



What you practice as an individual as a leader and as a leadership team defines your culture. Your words and behaviors create experiences that shape others' beliefs and actions, and ultimately your results.

5



Choose a skill to practice // 01

6



What leadership skills would raise the bench?

1 Leadership

ROI / Value
Storytelling
New idea pitching
Jobs to be done (JTBD)

3 Systems thinking

Systems understanding
Roadmapping approach
Personal responsibility
Gradual empowerment

2 Facilitation + soft skills

Active listening
Empathy
Healthy conflict
Appreciation

4 New technology

Clarity & transparency
Online collaboration tools
Value stream mapping
Machine learning / AI



Or, what poor behaviors or poor outcomes are we observing?

Speaking in outputs vs value

Finger pointing, blaming other parts of the org

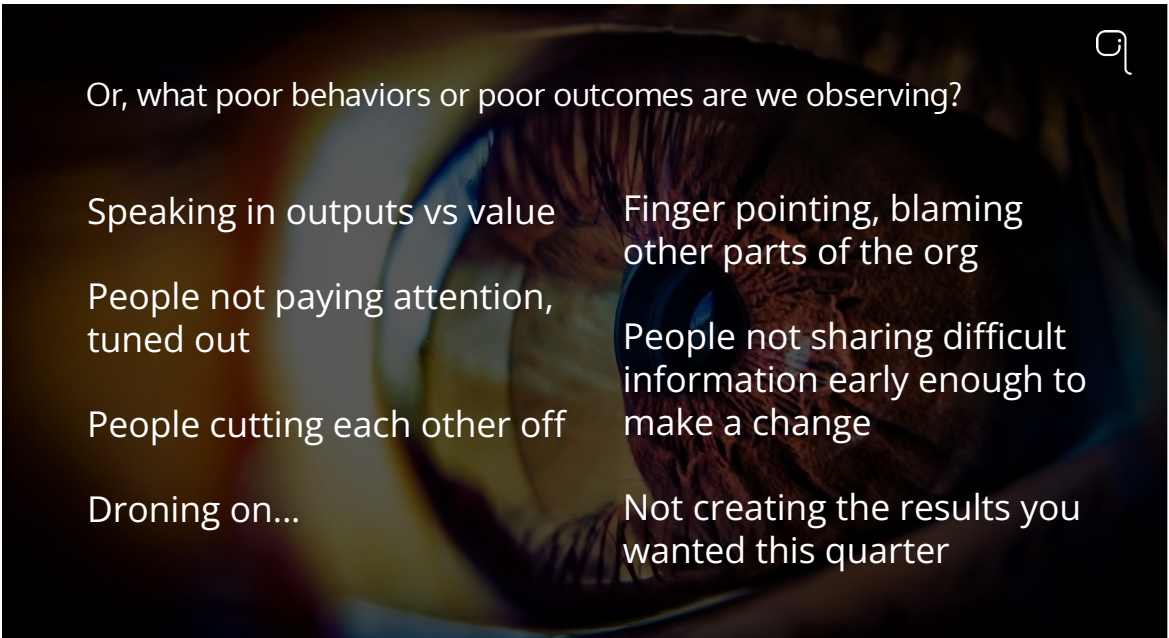
People not paying attention, tuned out

People not sharing difficult information early enough to make a change

People cutting each other off

Not creating the results you wanted this quarter

Droning on...



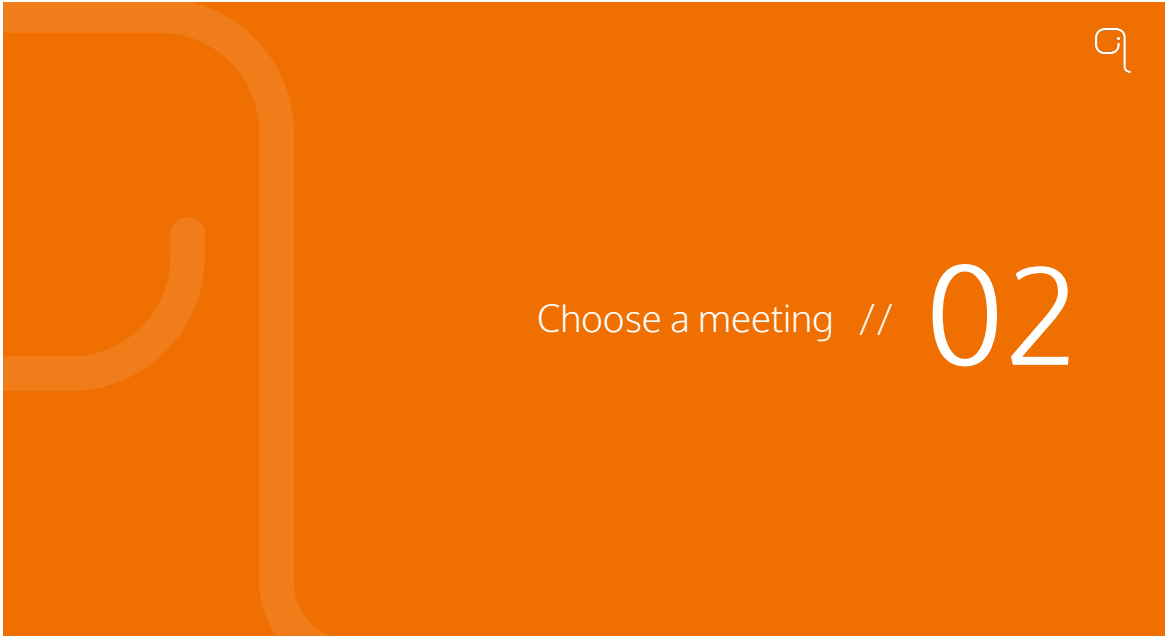


Exercise: Choose a leadership skill to work on



1. Solo brainstorm some of the leadership skills you might consider.
2. Share your list with your tablemates.
3. Choose one skill to work on, and write it in your worksheet.

** Homework? Consider researching options through empathy interviews*



Choose a meeting // 02

Examples of meetings you might choose – with associated skills



Short and Medium-length meetings

- **Bi-weekly leadership meetings + active listening (EXAMPLE+BLOG+WORKSHEET)**
- Vendor or technology decision meeting + Jobs to be Done (JTBD)
- **Standup + speaking succinctly to value delivered (EXAMPLE+WORKSHEET)**
- Marketing sync meeting + Chat GPT
- **System Demo + lean-agile principles (EXAMPLE)**
- Extended leadership team monthly meeting + gradual empowerment

Longer meetings

- PI Planning + crucial conversations (at least observation/storytelling/emotion cycle)
- **Quarterly steering and planning + personal responsibility (EXAMPLE+BLOG+WORKSHEET)**
- Strategy articulation leadership offsite + measuring ROI and using a modified strategy A3



Exercise: Choose a meeting in which to practice this leadership skill



Consider:

- Where have you seen the behaviors that led you to choose a particular skill?
- What meeting's outcomes might be improved with more skill by the participants?
- ***Imagine the meeting you most wish you could improve...***



Meeting Purpose and Participants // 03



Reinforce skills and behaviors in meeting purpose

To

WHAT

By

HOW

So That

WHY



Example: reinforce skills and behaviors in Quarterly Steering meeting purpose

decide what to focus on as our most critical work and experiments in next quarter

- building shared knowledge of recent results
 - agreeing on next constraints and parameters
 - **actively listening** to all the proposals
 - choosing up to 3 critical efforts/experiments
-

we improve our customer experience (goal is +10 NPS) and employee experience (goal is +10 eNPS) by the end of 2023

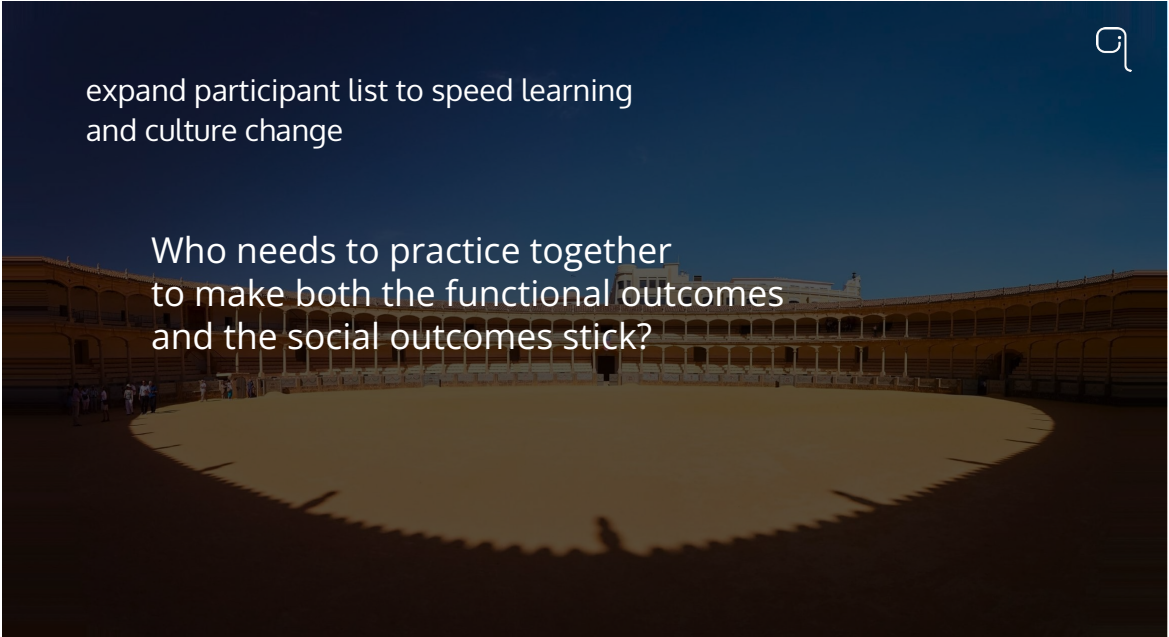


Exercise: Capture the role of skills in functional outcome

Consider the meeting you've chosen, and the training and practice you'll integrate.

In your worksheet, capture:

- What are the functional outcomes of the meeting? What will you accomplish?
- How will the skills practice directly improve the functional outcome? Or improve outcomes longer term?



expand participant list to speed learning
and culture change

Who needs to practice together
to make both the functional outcomes
and the social outcomes stick?



Exercise: How might you expand the participant list?



Capture your response on your
worksheet.

Consider:

- Who models the skill well?
- Who should practice together, to help each other learn?
- What peers might we want to learn at the same time?



Meeting Agendas // 04



Seek to create cycles of
training—or reminders
practice
feedback or coaching



Training Type, Style, and Design

What kind of training might most effectively improve the skills we want to work on? What kind of practice?

What format best fits the material and the audience?

How might the training fit naturally into the flow of the meeting while also providing ample time to practice?

Who might most effectively provide the training?



Agenda Design Example: Short|medium meeting with active listening

Problems: People talk over each other, repeat ideas as their own, tune out until their turn to talk.

Impact: Some of the best ideas get missed; people feel unheard; poor systems learning

Skill: Active listening

Meetings: Update meeting, team meeting, retrospective

Agenda

[pre-work **training:** watch a short, 2-min video on active listening]

- Opening includes **training** watching the 2-min video *again to be top of mind*
- Round-robin updates **[remind everyone to practice active listening]**
 - After each, ask someone to **paraphrase for understanding** [perhaps choose the next speaker]



Agenda Refining Iteration #1

Solo work: Add some initial ideas about your meeting agenda to include cycles of training, practice, coaching

Use examples on back of your worksheet to guide you

We'll do several iterations of examples and updating. Some solo updates, some pair and group discussion

Agenda Design Example: Long meeting w/ personal responsibility

Problem: Leaders use "office culture" or "politics" to justify work being stuck or change being impossible; related habit of finger-pointing and blaming others.

Impact: Initiatives never get started; energy is wasted on blaming rather than solving together.

Skill: Operating from a place of personal responsibility

Meetings: Quarterly steering, annual strategy, leadership off-site, &c

Agenda

[pre-work **training:** watch personal responsibility video]

- Icebreaker: stories about **being out of personal responsibility**
- Current state readouts
 - Guide presenters to notice the **language** they use, and listeners to notice their **responses**.
- Consider paths forward
 - Review proposed rocks, looking for **blame and obligation**. Review Strategy Worksheets for root cause **blind spots**.
- Decide which initiatives to pursue
 - Script "**Art of the Possible**" language
- ROAM Risks
 - Review step to check for **blame** language
- Consensus Vote
 - Use Fist of Five to **avoid pocket vetoes**
 - Carefully create a **safe space** for "1" and "2" votes to articulate their concerns



Agenda Refining Iteration #2



Chat with someone next to you about additional ideas for your meeting agenda to include cycles of training, practice, coaching

Agenda Design Example: Short meeting with better value stories



Problem: Team focuses on outputs instead of outcomes

Impact: Poor prioritization, stakeholder confusion, less systems thinking

Skill: Describe the *value* whenever talking about work

Meetings: Daily stand-up, team or whole-org huddle

Agenda

- **Training:** Leader provides 3 quick, current examples of speaking to customer, org, and business value
- For each effort that had some change since yesterday:
 - What has changed?
 - Is this effort blocked?
 - How does this effort **contribute to a larger goal?**
- For each effort that will be worked on next:
 - What work will be done?
 - How does this effort **contribute to a larger goal?**



Agenda Refining Iteration #3



Solo work

Further refine your ideas for your meeting purpose and skills; how you might update your meeting agenda to include cycles of training, practice, coaching

Agenda Design Example: Medium meeting with lean-agile principles

Problem: Leaders are more focused on plans than results; learning seen as failing

Impact: Teams demoralized, not generating results

Skill: Leaders support Lean-Agile principles

Meeting: Biweekly system demo (other examples: biweekly leadership mtg; planning)

Agenda

[pre-work **training**: read a short article on iterative development]



- Purpose adds a WHY of “showing **progress toward outcomes**”
- Opening adds a working agreement around **safe to learn**
- Each demo includes narration:
 - Why this was the **most important work**
 - What the team **learned**
 - **Incremental results**
 - How next work will be **adjusted** based on learnings
- Invite leaders to practice celebrating learning, and providing feedback



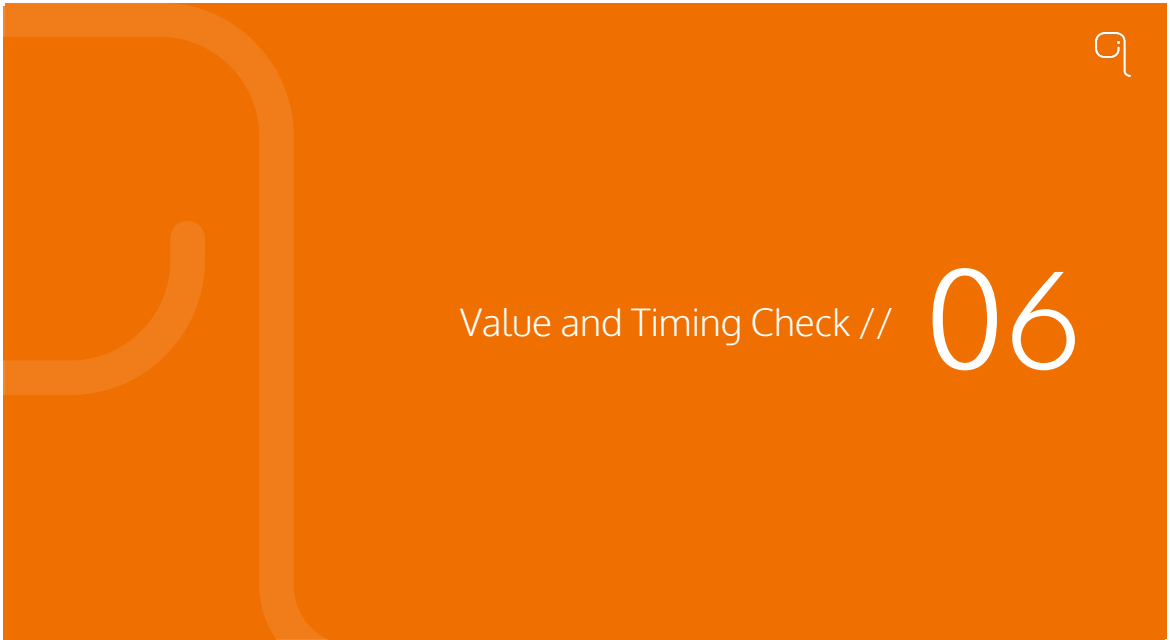
Agenda Refining Iteration #4



Group work

In 30 seconds or less, share with your group the following:

- Meeting
- Skill and training
- Agenda



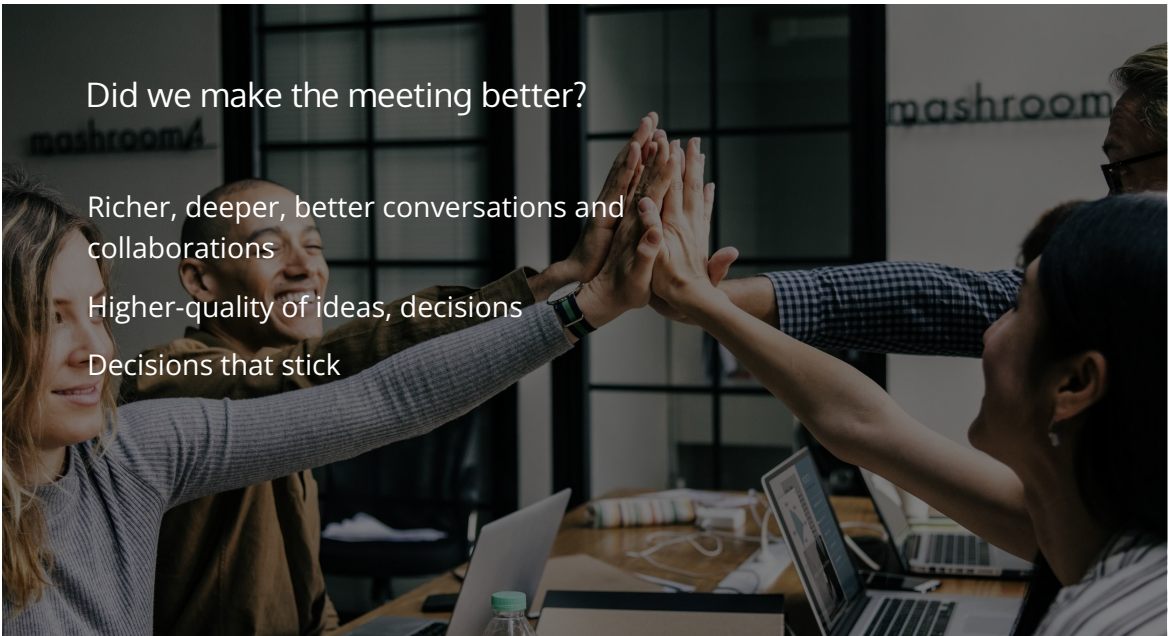
Value and Timing Check // 06



Did we raise the bench?

Did we design cycles of
training
practice
feedback

and create even better outcomes?

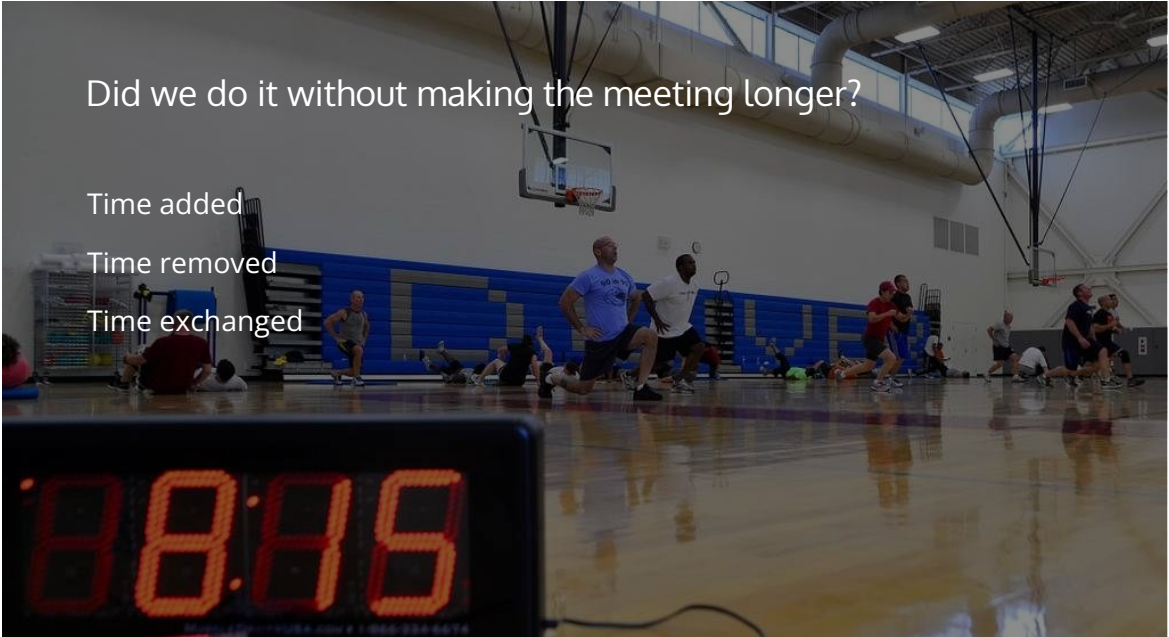


Did we make the meeting better?

Richer, deeper, better conversations and
collaborations

Higher-quality of ideas, decisions

Decisions that stick



Did we do it without making the meeting longer?

Time added

Time removed

Time exchanged

Agenda Design Example: Short meeting with better value stories

Problem: Team focused on
outputs instead of

Impact: Poor prioritization,
stakeholder confusion, less
systems thinking

Skill: Describe the *value*
whenever talking about work

Meetings: Daily stand-up, team
or whole-org huddle

Agenda

- **Training:** Leader provides 3 quick, different examples of speaking to customer, org, and business value
 - Each effort that had some change since yesterday:
 - What has changed?
 - Is this effort blocked?
 - How does this effort **contribute to a larger goal?**
- For each effort that will be worked on next:
 - What work will be done?
 - How does this effort **contribute to a larger goal?**

WORTH IT.





Exercise: Did we improve the mtg AND raise the bench?

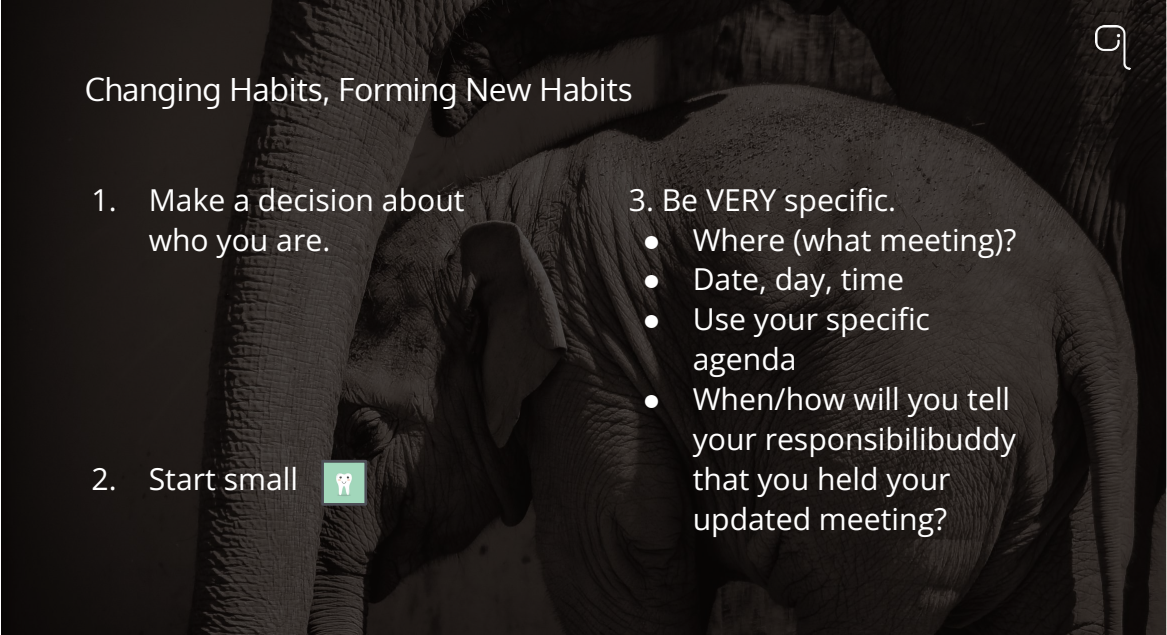


In your group, choose ONE person's work to evaluate.


- Is the training directly tied to the behavior change?
- Can participants practice in a meaningful way?
- Will the meeting better achieve its functional outcomes?
- Have we over-rotated on training and practice?

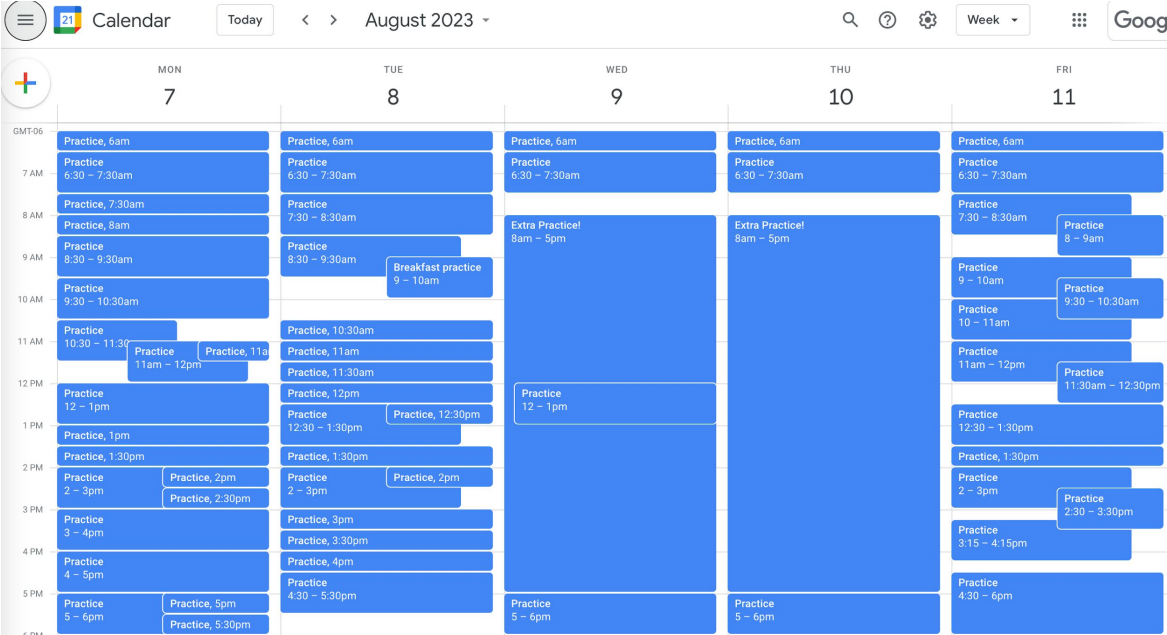


Closing and Committing to Practice // 07



Changing Habits, Forming New Habits

1. Make a decision about who you are.
2. Start small 
3. Be VERY specific.
 - Where (what meeting)?
 - Date, day, time
 - Use your specific agenda
 - When/how will you tell your responsibility buddy that you held your updated meeting?

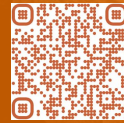


Christine Hudson christine@thewelcomeelephant.co
Ronica Roth ronica@thewelcomeelephant.co



thank you //

Tag @The Welcome Elephant in your LinkedIn post
about how you raised the bench in your meeting!



© The Welcome Elephant 2023. All Rights Reserved.

Supporting Blogs: Foundations & Examples



TheWelcomeElephant.co/Stories

- Adding Leadership Skills Training to Everyday Meetings Part 1
<https://www.thewelcomeelephant.co/post/everyday-meeting-series-1-adding-facilitation-to-improve-everyday-meetings>
- Adding Leadership Skills Training to Everyday Meetings Part 2
<https://www.thewelcomeelephant.co/post/everyday-meeting-series-2-adding-leadership-skills-training-to-everyday-meetings>
- Raising the Bench in Big Meetings #1: Quarterly Steering Off to a Rough Start
<https://www.thewelcomeelephant.co/post/quarterly-steering-off-to-a-rough-start>
- Raising the Bench in Big Meetings #2: Off to a great start-before the meeting begins
<https://www.thewelcomeelephant.co/post/raising-the-bench-in-big-meetings-off-to-a-great-start-before-the-meeting-begins>
- Raising the Bench in Big Meetings #3: Practicing Personal Responsibility While Creating Better Meeting Outcomes:
<https://www.thewelcomeelephant.co/post/raising-the-bench-in-big-mtg-practicing-personal-responsibility-while-creating-better-mtg-outcomes>