

# FLIP *the* script

## LEAD INWARD TO CREATE AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

Sometimes, you may do things that are divisive, dismissive, or demoralizing without even realizing it. Though your intent may be positive, the outcome of your words and actions may be harmful. But by intentionally **leading inward** in these situations, you can harness your ability to act courageously, learn, and reflect.<sup>1</sup> Choose your words thoughtfully to build an inclusive work culture in which people are heard, valued, and connected—because change starts with you.<sup>2</sup>

### CURIOSITY

*You proactively seek to understand different points of view.*

NOT CURIOUS ←



→ CURIOUS

#### WHAT PEOPLE THINK, SAY, OR DO

“I DON’T HAVE  
TIME FOR THIS.”

#### HOW IT’S NOT CURIOUS

A lack of curiosity about issues team members raise is dismissive and can diminish trust with colleagues.<sup>3</sup> While it may be understandable that now isn’t the best time, be sure to make time in the near future.

#### WHAT TO THINK, SAY, OR DO INSTEAD

“I appreciate your raising this concern/issue/idea and, while we have priorities we are managing, I want to learn more. Let’s set up a time to discuss and assess how they may affect our priorities and deliverables.”

Authentically **seek to understand** other people’s views, either in the moment or later.

#### WHAT PEOPLE THINK, SAY, OR DO

“ARE WE REALLY STILL  
TALKING ABOUT THIS?  
WHY CAN’T YOU JUST  
LET IT GO?”

#### HOW IT’S NOT CURIOUS

This sentiment is demoralizing and shuts down your ability to learn. When people express what appear like similar ideas, concerns, or questions multiple times, it suggests that they didn’t feel fully heard or understood, or that their concerns were not truly addressed.

#### WHAT TO THINK, SAY, OR DO INSTEAD

“I seem to be missing something. Help me understand why this is important to you. How is it important to our company?”

Be **curious** by exploring the opinions and ideas of your team members.<sup>4</sup>  
There is always something to learn.

## HUMILITY

You take ownership for mistakes and learn from missteps.

NOT HUMBLE ←



→ HUMBLE

WHAT PEOPLE  
THINK, SAY, OR DO

"OH WELL,  
NOBODY'S PERFECT!"

HOW IT'S  
NOT HUMBLE

When something doesn't go the way you expect it to, it's important to own up to it and demonstrate how you've learned from the experience.<sup>5</sup> This isn't about assigning blame but about recognizing your own room for growth as a member of the team.<sup>6</sup>

WHAT TO THINK,  
SAY, OR DO INSTEAD

"Here is where I made a misstep: \_\_\_\_.  
Here is what I learned: \_\_\_\_.  
This is what I can do to help the team next time: \_\_\_\_."

Take action with three steps: 1. **Identify** what went wrong, 2. **Share** what you learned, and 3. **Discuss** what you'll do differently next time.

WHAT PEOPLE  
THINK, SAY, OR DO

"I/MY"

HOW IT'S  
NOT HUMBLE

Using *I/my* is one way to stand up for what you believe in and show personal accountability. But often it is also used to claim credit for something that was achieved collaboratively<sup>7</sup> or assert power.<sup>8</sup>

WHAT TO THINK,  
SAY, OR DO INSTEAD

"Our team."  
"In [department or function],  
we are...."

Use "I" and "my" sparingly to foster an empowering environment, and be **intentional** when you do.

WHAT PEOPLE  
THINK, SAY, OR DO

"I WORKED HARD TO  
GET WHERE I AM—  
THEREFORE, I AM  
NOT PRIVILEGED."

HOW IT'S  
NOT HUMBLE

Working hard doesn't mean you don't have privilege too. It is possible—in fact, likely—that you worked hard to get where you are *and* that you have benefited from some systemic advantages.<sup>9</sup>

WHAT TO THINK,  
SAY, OR DO INSTEAD

"While my background may be complicated, it is my responsibility as a leader to acknowledge and recognize the systematic ways in which I may have benefited."

Be open to **learning** about other people's experiences without getting defensive about your own.

## COURAGE

You act in accordance with your principles, even when doing so involves personal risk-taking or is uncomfortable.

LACKING COURAGE ←



→ COURAGEOUS

**WHAT PEOPLE  
THINK, SAY, OR DO**

NOTHING.  
[AND SIT IN SILENCE.]

**HOW IT'S  
NOT COURAGEOUS**

Silence supports the status quo by allowing bad behavior to go unchecked.<sup>10</sup> It implies agreement with what just happened and allows issues to fester.

**WHAT TO THINK,  
SAY, OR DO INSTEAD**

"I'm tempted to stay quiet, but I wouldn't want my silence to be mistaken for agreement. Although it is hard, I need to speak up."

Have the **courage** of your convictions and speak up when you witness injustice, bias, and bad behavior.

**WHAT PEOPLE  
THINK, SAY, OR DO**

"I HEAR YOU, BUT  
NOTHING IS GOING TO  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE."

**HOW IT'S  
NOT COURAGEOUS**

Assuming that change is not possible is demoralizing and tells others that speaking up for inclusion is futile. If you don't use your own voice to speak truth to power, how will others learn to use theirs?<sup>11</sup>

**WHAT TO THINK,  
SAY, OR DO INSTEAD**

"I find this situation difficult as well. What are some of the unspoken issues? Let's work together to see if we can come up with some new, creative ideas that might have an impact."

Be willing to **challenge** a situation even when you are disheartened or think that your efforts will go unrewarded.

**SELF-REFLECT**

**Recognize** that change starts with you. Leading inward is a journey of humility that involves discovering how you can think, say, or do things differently to cultivate inclusion.

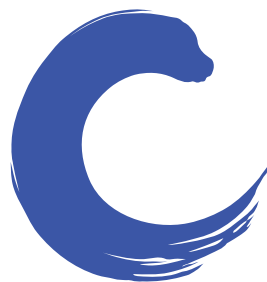
**LEARN**

**Create space for dialogue** with colleagues through your words and actions. Purposefully look for different ways to connect and build trust. Rethink the "I tried once, and it did not work..." mindset.

**BE COURAGEOUS**

**Pinpoint small and big actions** you can take to make your workplace more inclusive. Don't be afraid to make waves if a situation needs to be called out.

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