EPISODE 2 · THE TOOLBOX

Leadership Gate 2 · Inventory

> **Reference to Series 1: WP 3 · No Side Door to Belief**, second part — the five conditions for lasting status and the finding on self-overwriting transformation programmes. The evidence, with references, is there. This episode turns it into an inventory.

You need your dependency list from Gate 1 for this episode. Anyone who does not have it should start there — the order binds, because each gate needs the key of the previous one. For personnel data and third-party names the rule still holds: the anonymized version goes into the AI system, roles instead of names.

ABSTRACT

This episode breaks the WP 3 finding on self-overwriting transformations down into a list that in most operations has never existed: everything started on the subject of leadership in three years, with a single additional column — what it refers back to. Gate 2 opens when a person outside the leadership circle can name which initiative is supposed to carry the others.

Suggested citation: Huesch, G. (2026). The Toolbox. Series 2 · The Superintelligent Leader, Episode 2. Working Paper Series 2026, Global Leadership Consultancy.

THE GATE

The lock	He does not know his own inventory of tools
The key	An inventory of the last three years, with a column for the reference
It opens when	a person outside the leadership circle can name which initiative is supposed to carry the others

PART 1 · THE FINDING

WHERE IT COMES FROM

WP 3 · No Side Door to Belief, Series 1, second part. There it is developed under which conditions a claim attains lasting status in an organization — and what happens when those conditions are missing: programmes do not add up, they overwrite one another. WP 3 names five conditions and six failure forms, all evidenced there.

This episode takes exactly one sentence from it and turns it into work: **a claim with no reference to the previous one erases the previous one.**

FORTY TOOLS AND NO WORKBENCH

A workshop with forty tools on the wall. Each one good, each one maintained, each on its hook. And no workbench.

You can work in this workshop. It even goes surprisingly far — you simply have to hold the workpiece the whole time, and that is why you are always one hand short. Every operation costs double, every change means starting over, and whoever has worked here for two hours is exhausted by something they cannot name.

Whoever enters this workshop and buys a forty-first tool has not understood the problem. And that is exactly the obvious reaction, because every single tool on that wall really is good. The diagnosis "we need better methods" is wrong in almost every operation and feels right almost every time.

The workbench is not the largest tool. It is what makes the others usable. That is the whole difference between a collection and a system, and it costs nothing in quality — only in order.

WHAT WP 3 MAKES OF IT

WP 3 shows the mechanism that turns a collection into an erasure. A claim attains lasting status only under five conditions; if one is missing, it stays an episode. And episodes are not neutral: four programmes in five years, none of which refers to the previous one, do not produce four layers of progress. They produce an organization that has learned **that nothing lasts.**

That learning is robust, because it is covered by experience and not by a claim. It therefore cannot be corrected by a further announcement. It is the most expensive lesson one can teach by accident, and it is booked nowhere.

FOUR FOLDERS IN A DRAWER

In a division head's drawer lie four folders: Values Process 2022, OKR Rollout 2023, Feedback Culture 2024, Transformation 2025.

She can say of each when it began. Of none when it ended. None is officially concluded, none officially abandoned — they faded, and nobody documented the fading, because it was nobody's job.

Ask her what the values process had to do with the feedback culture. She will answer politely that there were surely connections.

And when the fifth programme is announced, she will not object. She will not sabotage, not complain, not turn cynical. She will **wait** — courteously, cooperatively, and with the settled knowledge that this will be over in eighteen months. That is the economically most expensive attitude in any organization, and from the outside it is indistinguishable from assent.

WHAT THE LEADER RECOGNIZES HERE

1 · He has more tools than he knows. Three years of leadership work leave behind trainings, mission statements, feedback formats, OKR attempts, values processes, engagement surveys, reorganizations. A list of them almost never exists. The real surprise of this episode is not the finding but the length of the list — and that the level below you names things you had forgotten.

2 · Programmes do not add up, they overwrite one another. Without reference to the previous one, every new programme is an erasure of the previous one. Not in intent, but in effect — and the effect is what gets learned.

3 · The missing piece is the connection, not the quality. No tool on your list is bad. None refers to another. What is missing is not a further tool. It is what relates them to one another — and that is a decision, not a purchase.

PART 2 · THE WORK

THE OBSERVATION TASK

One week, backwards instead of forwards.

This episode does not observe the present, it digs. Go through your calendars, files and mail folders of the last three years and enter every initiative that had to do with leadership, culture, collaboration or transformation.

Including the abandoned ones. Especially the abandoned ones. A programme that stopped after four months taught more than one that ran — it taught how long you have to wait.

INITIATIVE	START	STATUS TODAY	WHO CARRIES IT	REFERS TO

The last column stays empty in most rows. Leave it empty. An invented connection is worse than a visible gap.

And then the part you cannot do alone: ask two leaders one level below you what comes to mind. Without showing your list. They will name things that are not on it, and they will call two programmes by the same name. Both are material, not grounds for a correction.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TASK

Monday, one thing. One sentence, two lines.

Write down, for exactly one running initiative, the sentence that is missing: **which previous one it continues, and what from that previous one still holds.**

For example: "The feedback routines we introduced in 2024 stay as they are — this builds on them and does not replace them."

Say this sentence in the next regular meeting, **before** you talk about progress. Not as a preamble, not with regret about the past. As a statement of fact.

Then watch who looks up. In many rooms it is the first time in years that anyone has spoken a connection between two programmes aloud, and it shows.

THE PROMPTS

Prompt 2.1 · The inventory

``` Below I list everything started in my area in the last three years on the subject of leadership, culture, collaboration or transformation — trainings, mission statements, values processes, feedback formats, OKR, engagement surveys, reorganizations, everything.

Build a table from it: Initiative | start | still running / ended / unclear | who carries it today | refers to which other initiative

The last column is the most important. Enter there only what I have explicitly written. Where I have named no reference, write "no reference named" — do not add one you consider plausible.

Then count: - How many initiatives refer to no other? - Which two evidently work on the same problem with different vocabulary?

The list: [insert here] ```

**Prompt 2.2 · The overwriting trail**

This prompt is the most uncomfortable in the whole series. It is also the most useful, because it tells you something nobody in your organization will tell you.

``` Here is my inventory. Take the perspective of a middle-level leader who went through all these initiatives, and answer in her voice, in no more than three sentences each:

1. What have I learned from this about what lasts in this house?
2. What do I do when the next initiative is announced?
3. Which of these initiatives could I not distinguish from the previous one?

Be uncomfortably precise. Do not soften anything, but also do not invent experience that does not follow from the list. Mark every statement that is a conjecture as a conjecture.

The inventory: [insert here] ```

**A word on reading 2.2.** What comes back is not a measurement and not an accusation. It is a plausible reading of your own list, and its value lies in arising from your material rather than from an opinion about you. If the answer strikes you as unfair, do not examine the answer. Examine the column it came from.

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# PART 3 · ABOUT GERALD HUESCH

**Anyone claiming that programmes must refer to one another should be asked what his own refers to.**

**Systems shape behaviour.** Through the selection of the right instruments, mechanics and leadership codes — derived from values and leadership guidelines — the behaviour of everyone involved is synchronized and aligned. Not through motivation, but through a system that produces the right behaviour when applied.

Sales has Salesforce. Finance has SAP. Leadership has LEAD21.

**About the author.** Gerald Huesch is the creator of the leadership operating system category – "one of the most professional and creative minds in the domain of leadership and difficult change projects" (Boston Business School). With LEAD21 he built the first operating system for leadership – 21 evidence-based methods, the comprehensive solution and the missing link for complete transformation, extreme growth and high-volume post-merger integration: a unique leadership system for human coordination at scale, in which alignment and culture emerge as a by-product. He has trained more than 30,000 executives in over 30 countries (NASA, Rolls-Royce, Airbus, Omnicom and others) and delivers executive leadership training, leadership development and executive mentoring for executives in Germany, the Americas, Asia Pacific and the UAE. Participants from 300+ companies report +87% clarity, +58% efficiency, +50% performance, +46% alignment and −50% negative stress after LEAD21 (participant-reported); a one-year study with 567 leaders (Prof. Beate Hanson & Prof. Mohit Bhandari, McMaster University) showed improvement in 8 of 9 climate dimensions. Dr. Charles Pellerin (NASA) on LEAD21: "Unique in the world, and a capability that nobody else has." **gerald-huesch.com/about-en**

# PART 4 · THE GATE AND THE PATH

## THE CHECKPOINT — GATE 2 OPENS WHEN

**The inventory exists as a document** — and a person outside the leadership circle can name which initiative is supposed to carry the others.

The second part is the actual test, and it cannot be done at a desk. Ask somebody two levels below you: "Of what is running here, what carries the rest?" If the answer is a shrug, the gate is closed — even if your list is complete.

**And if nobody can name it?** Then you have the answer to the question of why the fifth programme will meet the same fate as the four before it. Note it. Together with the checking budget from Gate 4 and the function assessment from Gate 5, this list is the material from which your gap map arises in Gate 6. Without it you will get a generality back there.

## STATUS OF THE GATES

| GATE | TITLE | YOUR KEY | STATUS |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The Sole Decider | Dependency list, 3 decision frames | passed |
| **▶ 2** | **The Toolbox** | **Inventory of the last three years** | **you are here** |
| 3 | Why Good Methods Evaporate | Fallback path, one mandatory question | to follow |
| 4 | The Bottleneck Is Not Information | Checking budget, extension, abstention | to follow |
| 5 | What an Operating System Must Do | Assessment of the four functions | to follow |
| 6 | LEAD21 — and What Is Still Missing | Gap map, requirements specification | to follow |
| 7 | The Sentient Organization | Codebook, three target bands | to follow |
| 8 | The Superintelligent Leader | Constitution list, succession test | to follow |

**Keep the inventory.** It is the first of three documents that converge in Gate 6.

## WHAT COMES NEXT

**Gate 3 · Why Good Methods Evaporate.** Your inventory shows what was started. Gate 3 asks what of it was still demanded a week after the last session — and the answer is usually: nothing. There the sentence will also fall that ends the most common misdiagnosis in leadership: relapse is not a motivation problem.

The lock there: nothing in the operation demands the new behaviour.

## OPEN QUESTIONS FROM THIS EPISODE

- The inventory records what was started, not what worked. Effect was measured in almost none of the programmes — that is itself a finding, and Gate 6 returns to it with the question of a metric.
- Whether two initiatives work on the same problem is decided in this episode by the AI from your description. That is a reading, not a determination. It only becomes robust once the terms are defined — Gate 7.
- How many initiatives can be carried at once is not stated by this episode, because WP 3 yields no number for it. The condition is the reference, not the quantity.

## REFERENCES

**Series 1, Working Paper Series 2026** WP 3 · No Side Door to Belief. The five conditions for lasting status, the six failure forms, and the second part on self-overwriting transformation programmes.

The primary sources used in WP 3 from the 19th Conference on Artificial General Intelligence (AGI-26), San Francisco, 27–30 July 2026, are identified there with volume and page numbers. This episode introduces no new references.