EPISODE 3 · WHY GOOD METHODS EVAPORATE

Leadership Gate 3 · Durability

> **Reference to Series 1: WP 3 · No Side Door to Belief** (conditions for lasting status) and **WP 4 · Leadership Climate as the Regulation Layer** (modulators as derived projections, timing as the decisive variable). The evidence, with references, is there. This episode turns it into one mandatory question.

You need your inventory from Gate 2. 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 ends the most common misdiagnosis in leadership. Relapse after a training is not a motivation problem but a finding about the week that followed: did anything in the operation demand the new behaviour? The route there runs through five of your own sentences and ends at a single mandatory question in an existing meeting. Gate 3 opens when three regular meetings carry that question and the minutes show, after four weeks, that it was asked.

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THE GATE

The lock	Nothing in the operation demands the new behaviour
The key	A fallback path, and one mandatory question in an existing meeting
It opens when	three regular meetings carry the question and the minutes show after four weeks that it was asked

PART 1 · THE FINDING

WHERE IT COMES FROM

Two papers from Series 1 carry this episode.

WP 3 · No Side Door to Belief supplies the conditions under which a claim attains lasting status — and with it the explanation of why an insight without a connection disappears.

WP 4 · Leadership Climate as the Regulation Layer supplies the mechanism. There it is shown, on a motivational architecture, that postures are not levers, and that the timing of a response decides, not its quantity. Both findings are evidenced and traceable there.

THE MUSCLE NOBODY ACCUSES OF POOR MOTIVATION

A muscle grows under load and disappears without it. Three weeks without stimulus and it is gone — measurable, predictable, without exception.

Nobody accuses the muscle of poor motivation. Nobody sends it to a refresher seminar, nobody appeals to its sense of ownership, and nobody writes in its appraisal that it failed to take the learning with it. Everybody understands immediately: **the growth was never in the muscle. It was in the load.**

With leadership behaviour, the same observation gets inverted. The training was good, the ratings were good, three weeks later nothing of it remains — and the explanation that arrives first is one about people: they did not want it enough, they did not take it with them, there is a lack of commitment.

The explanation via the load occurs to nobody, because the load is invisible. You see what a person does. You do not see what asked them to.

WHAT WP 4 SHOWS ABOUT THIS

WP 4 works with the modulators of a motivational architecture — valence, arousal, dominance, resolution level, focus, exteroception. None of them is programmed directly; each is an aggregate of the current need state. On the poster by Mikeda and Goertzel the sentence stands:

> "'Teaching mode' or 'citation rigor' are derived projections, not primitive states."

A posture is a derived projection and not a primitive state. That is the architectural core of this episode: **you cannot order a posture. You can only change the situation it arises from.**

And WP 4 adds the second sentence, which in practice costs more than the first: timing decides, not quantity. The same response, a beat early or a beat late, does a different thing. More feedback is therefore no answer to badly timed feedback — it is the same imprecision at higher frequency.

MONDAY AFTER THE WORKSHOP

Two-day leadership workshop, excellent ratings, everybody resolves to do something. One participant writes three points on a card and puts it in his laptop sleeve.

The following Monday the divisional meeting starts at 9, with the same agenda as always: numbers, projects, personnel, other business. No question in it demands the new thing. Nobody prevents the participant from applying it — it is just that nobody asks about it, and by 10 the week is the week again.

After three weeks the card is in the laptop sleeve and the behaviour is gone. In the debrief with HR development it is said that people did not take it with them.

They took it with them. It just had nothing to hold on to.

And here lies the reason this episode is so narrow. The solution is not a better training, not a follow-up session, not a buddy system and not an app with a reminder function. The solution is **one question in a meeting that happens anyway.** Everything else creates a new format, and a new format is the sixth initiative on your inventory.

WHAT THE LEADER RECOGNIZES HERE

1 · Relapse is the normal case, not a failure. A behaviour holds as long as something demands it. When the training ends and nobody demands it in the week that follows, it disappears. That is not a question of character and not grounds for a conversation about commitment.

2 · Appeals to a posture do not work. A posture is an aggregate of the situation it arises from. Whoever demands "more ownership" is demanding a projection, not a state. What can be required is an action whose fulfilment can be seen from outside.

3 · Timing decides, not quantity. More feedback is no answer to badly timed feedback. And a question that stands in the same place for twelve weeks works more strongly than twelve different impulses.

PART 2 · THE WORK

THE OBSERVATION TASK

One week, your own sentences.

Collect five sentences with which you tried to change behaviour this week — from emails, addresses, meetings, conversations in passing. **Verbatim, as you said or wrote them. Not as you meant them.** That is the hard part: the meant version is always more precise than the spoken one, and the spoken one is the one that took effect.

With emails this is easy — copy the sentence. With conversations, note it within the hour, otherwise you will reconstruct the meant version.

Then mark each sentence with one of two letters:

- **P** — the sentence demands a posture ("more ownership", "be more open with each other", "think more entrepreneurially")
- **A** — the sentence demands an action whose fulfilment can be seen from outside

Most of your sentences will be P. **That is the finding, not the fault.** Even very experienced leaders land at four out of five, and that is not their doing: P sentences are shorter, warmer and sound less like control. They just do not accomplish anything.

THE IMPLEMENTATION TASK

Monday, one thing. One question, one existing meeting.

Take an existing regular meeting — **not a new one** — and add to the agenda exactly one mandatory question that demands the behaviour your last training was meant to produce.

Three requirements for that question:

1. **It cannot be answered with "yes, we do that."** "Are we working in a customer-oriented way?" is not a question. "Which decision this week did we examine from the customer's point of view, and what changed as a result?" is one.
2. **It demands a case, not an assessment.** A case is verifiable, an assessment is a mood.
3. **It stands at the same point on the agenda, every week.** Not as the last item — the last item gets dropped when things run long.

It stays for twelve weeks. That is the real imposition of this episode, because after three weeks the question gets boring, and after five weeks somebody will propose striking it, on the grounds that everybody does this by now.

Whoever then strikes it has proved the point of this episode, not refuted it.

THE PROMPTS

Prompt 3.1 · The fallback path

``` Below I name a leadership training or format that was well received and whose effect has disappeared: what it was about, who attended, when it was, and what behaviour it was meant to produce.

Reconstruct the four weeks that followed. For each week: - Which recurring meeting, which template, which form, which question in a regular meeting would have demanded the new behaviour? - If you find none: write "nothing demanded it".

Then output: 1. The list of weeks with findings 2. Exactly three places in the existing operation — not newly created ones — where the behaviour would have been demanded if a question there had been put differently. State the question verbatim.

Do not invent meetings or formats I have not named.

The training: [insert here] ```

**Prompt 3.2 · The posture trap**

Runs on the five sentences from your observation week.

``` Below are five sentences with which I tried to change behaviour in recent months — from emails, addresses, meetings. Verbatim, as I said or wrote them.

For each sentence: 1. Does it demand a posture ("more ownership", "more open with each other") or an observable action? 2. If posture: which situation normally produces this posture — and which part of that lies in my hands? 3. Rewrite the sentence into a requirement whose fulfilment can be seen from outside, without looking inside the other person's head.

Format: one block of three lines per sentence. No general communications advice.

The five sentences: [insert here] ```

**A note on the rewriting in point 3.** What comes back will sound colder than your original. That is to be expected and no reason to discard it: warmth sits in the way you present the requirement, not in the requirement remaining indeterminate. An indeterminate requirement is not friendly. It is merely non-binding, and the work of figuring out what was meant then rests with the other person.

# PART 3 · ABOUT GERALD HUESCH

**Anyone claiming that behaviour needs a place that demands it must show where that place arises in the operation.**

**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 3 OPENS WHEN

**Three existing regular meetings carry a new mandatory question** — and after four weeks the minutes show that it was asked.

The minutes are the test, not your memory. If three of four sets of minutes contain an answer to the question, the gate is open. If three contain the agenda item and no answer, it is closed — the question has become decorative, and that is the most common outcome.

**And if the question was struck?** Then you now know what happens to every training in your operation, and you know it from a case you set yourself. That is more insight than four successful weeks. Note who struck it and on what grounds — the grounds are material for Gate 7, because they usually contain a word that was never defined.

## 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 | passed |
| **▶ 3** | **Why Good Methods Evaporate** | **Fallback path, one mandatory question** | **you are here** |
| 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 |

## WHAT COMES NEXT

**Gate 4 · The Bottleneck Is Not Information.** Up to here it was about behaviour. Gate 4 turns to decisions and answers the question every leader takes for a question of discipline: why submissions sit. The answer is an arithmetic and not a weakness of character — and it gets worse the more information arrives.

The lock there: checking costs more than acting, so time decides.

## OPEN QUESTIONS FROM THIS EPISODE

- Twelve weeks is set, not evidenced. WP 4 shows that timing decides, but gives no number for duration. Twelve weeks is the experience that a quarter is the smallest unit in which a regular meeting forms a habit — marked as an experience value, not a measurement.
- Whether the mandatory question produces the behaviour or only its reporting is not distinguished by this episode. Whoever wants to test that needs a second source alongside the minutes — Gate 5 returns to it under the function of feedback.
- The P/A distinction is stated sharply and is unsharp in practice. Some sentences demand both. When in doubt assign P; the rewrite costs nothing and never does harm.

## REFERENCES

**Series 1, Working Paper Series 2026** WP 3 · No Side Door to Belief. Conditions for lasting status. WP 4 · Leadership Climate as the Regulation Layer. Modulators as derived projections; timing as the decisive variable.

**Quoted verbatim in this episode** Mikeda, A. & Goertzel, B.: *A Motivational Architecture for Conversational AGI.* AGI-26, LNCS 16855, pp. 62–77, and conference poster. The quoted sentence appears on the poster.

All further primary sources used in WP 3 and WP 4 from the 19th Conference on Artificial General Intelligence (AGI-26), San Francisco, 27–30 July 2026, are identified there with volume and page numbers.