



PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

Every Piece Matters

Building a Culture of Significance in the Modern Workplace

An Every Piece Matters workbook

Yours to use with your own team.

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THIS WORKBOOK BELONGS TO

Welcome.

Here is what the next hour is, so nothing is a surprise.

You are going to write four times and talk to the people around you three times. Most of what happens in here happens between you and them, not between you and the front of the room.

This is not improv. Nobody performs. Nobody gets called on. Nobody has to be funny. Every exercise is structured and you will always know what is being asked before it starts.

Everything works seated or standing. Both are full participation. Choose whatever works for your body and change your mind whenever you want to.

What is said between you and the person next to you stays there. Take what you learn. Leave what they said.

And before you leave, you are going to write down one specific thing you are going to do differently, and the day you are going to do it. That is the point of the hour. Everything else is how we get there.

A culture of significance is built three ways.

NOTICING

Attention paid to a specific person on purpose.

Knowing someone is not the same as noticing them.

AFFIRMING

Naming the specific effect their work had, and why it had to be them.

Most recognition is about output. Affirmation is about the person.

SHOWING PEOPLE THEY ARE NEEDED

Proving their work reaches somebody.

Almost everyone can see their own piece. Almost nobody has been shown the picture.

Eleven seconds. No budget. Start Monday.

The Mattering Deficit Diagnostic

You are scoring your organization, not yourself.

There is no right answer. Nobody will see this. Your first instinct is the accurate one, so go fast.

1 = almost never true here · 3 = sometimes true here · 5 = consistently true here

SCORING YOUR ORGANIZATION	SCORE
1 A manager here could describe what is currently going on in a team member's life without looking anything up.	
2 Recognition here names the specific thing a person did and the specific effect it had.	
3 People here can name a real person who is better off because of the work they do.	
4 When someone's energy or behavior changes here, somebody says something to them about it within a week.	
5 People here hear what their strengths are from someone, at a time that is not a performance review.	
6 When someone is out, the gap they leave is visible, and somebody says so when they get back.	
7 People here are asked what they think before decisions that affect them are made.	
8 Appreciation here travels sideways between peers, not only downward from managers.	
9 New people here are told why their role exists, not only what the role does.	

Which practice is weakest here?

Copy your answers into the columns below and add each one up.

NOTICING	AFFIRMING	NEEDED
Item 1 _____	Item 2 _____	Item 3 _____
Item 4 _____	Item 5 _____	Item 6 _____
Item 7 _____	Item 8 _____	Item 9 _____
TOTAL _____	TOTAL _____	TOTAL _____

Circle your lowest total.
If two tie, circle the one that bothers you more.

TOTAL	WHAT IT MEANS
3 to 7	Deficit. This is not a gap, it is an absence, and it is where every dollar you spend on culture should go first.
8 to 11	Inconsistent. It happens here when an individual chooses it. It does not happen because anything in your system produces it. That means it leaves when they do.
12 to 15	Strength. Protect it, and find out exactly how it works, because you are going to need to copy it into the other two columns.

Your lowest column is your highest-leverage move. Not your lowest single score. Your lowest column. Work the weakest practice first and the other two get easier, because all three run on the same underlying skill, which is paying attention to a specific person on purpose.

NOTICING

What do you actually know about them?

Think of one person you work with closely. Do not write their name. You will know who you mean.

Write six things you know about them. Anything counts. Take your time and try to fill all six.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

STOP • WAIT FOR INSTRUCTIONS

WHAT'S LEFT

ONE THING I HAVE NOTICED ABOUT THEM IN THE LAST MONTH THAT I HAVE NEVER SAID OUT LOUD

I WILL SAY THAT TO THEM ON

AFFIRMING

Say it in eleven seconds.

Most recognition is about output. Great job. Nice work. Thanks for staying late. It is fine, and it is forgettable, because it could be said to anyone who produced the same thing.

Affirming is about the person and the effect. Three parts:

1. The specific thing they did.
2. The specific effect it had.
3. Why it had to be them.

That third part is the one everybody skips, and it is the one that does the work.

Write one. To someone in this room.

Somebody you came with. Somebody you met twenty minutes ago. Anybody. If you only just met them, write about what you observed in twenty minutes, because you observed something.

TO

THE SPECIFIC THING YOU DID

THE EFFECT IT HAD

WHY IT HAD TO BE YOU

FOLD THIS. POCKET IT. DELIVER IT BEFORE YOU LEAVE.

BACK AT WORK, WHO HAS GONE LONGEST WITHOUT HEARING SOMETHING LIKE THIS FROM YOU?

NEEDED

Where does your work actually land?

Most of the next seven minutes is quiet. That is on purpose.

SOMETHING YOU DID AT WORK LAST WEEK. NOT YOUR JOB TITLE. ONE TASK.

SO THAT

SO THAT

SO THAT

WHO IS THE PERSON AT THE END OF THAT CHAIN?

Do you know their name? Yes / No / There isn't one

The one nobody has ever done for you

Almost everyone can see their own piece. Almost nobody has been shown the picture it goes into.

Name one person whose chain you are going to trace, and then go tell them what you found. Not ask them. Tell them.

PERSON

DAY

The three things you wrote down today

All three in one place, in your handwriting. That is the point.

NOTICING • THE THING I NOTICED AND NEVER SAID

AFFIRMING • THE PERSON WHO HAS GONE LONGEST WITHOUT HEARING IT

NEEDED • THE PERSON WHOSE CHAIN I AM GOING TO TRACE

This room's result

Everyone here scored the same diagnostic you just scored. Write down what the room said.

THE WEAKEST PRACTICE IN THIS ROOM WAS

MINE WAS

**The one that scares you slightly is the right one.
Small is the point. If it takes more than fifteen minutes, it is too big and you will not
do it.**

Written down, with a day attached.

Pick one practice. The one that matches the column you circled, or the one that scares you slightly, which is usually the same one.

The practice I am working: NOTICING / AFFIRMING / NEEDED

WHAT I AM GOING TO DO

WHO I AM GOING TO DO IT WITH

WHAT DAY

WHAT TIME

Small is the point. Nobody built a culture with a program. People built it eleven seconds at a time, on a Tuesday, with one person.

Put your one thing online and it comes back to you in thirty days, in your own words.
pplbydesign.com/every-piece-matters · QR code on the back page.



Everything from Every Piece Matters is free and online.

The Mattering Deficit Diagnostic, the full workbook, both case studies, complete facilitation guides for all three exercises, and every research citation. No email required for any of it.

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Scan the code, or type the address. Both work.



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Inspire People. Ignite Culture. Transform Lives.

*The three-practice framework is Dr. Zach Mercurio's, from *The Power of Mattering: How Leaders Can Create a Culture of Significance* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2025). The Puzzle Philosophy, the Mattering Deficit Diagnostic, and the exercises are People by Design originals.*

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