



FACILITATION GUIDE

What's Left

Knowing someone is not the same as noticing them

An Every Piece Matters exercise

Yours to run with your own team.

People by Design

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Before you run it

PRACTICE	Noticing
TEACHING OBJECTIVE	Prove that most of what we know about the people we work with is public record.
TIME	13 minutes. 7 activity, 6 debrief.
SHORTENED VERSION	In a packed workshop agenda, 11 minutes: 6 activity, 5 debrief. Hold the ten seconds of silence. Take the time from the debrief and drop question two.
GROUP SIZE	4 to 200
ROOM	Works seated in any room. Optional standing escalation if you have floor space.
MATERIALS	Worksheet, one per person. A bold marker or dark pen, not a pencil. The crossing out has to be visible.
MUSIC	None. Silence is part of the design.
SETUP	Seated. Worksheets face down until called.
SOURCE	People by Design original. The distinction between knowing and noticing is credited to Zach Mercurio's published work.

The action, step by step

0:00 to 2:00	Write six things
2:00 to 2:45	Cross out public record
2:45 to 3:30	Cross out small talk
3:30 to 3:40	Silence. Look at the page.
3:40 to 4:30	Write what's left
4:30 to 7:00	Write the noticed thing never said out loud
7:00 to 13:00	Full group debrief

What participants write on

Reproduce this on a single side. One per person. Face down until you call it.

Think of one person you work with closely.

Do not write their name.

Write six things you know about them. Anything at all. Take your time.

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

Facilitator script

Everything in the ruled blocks is said aloud and is meant to be rewritten in your own words. Everything in a copper block is a stage direction. The timings and the silences are the parts that should not change, because those are load-bearing.

"Pick one person you work with closely. Do not write their name down. You will know who you mean.

Write six things you know about that person. Anything counts. Take a full two minutes, and try to fill all six."

Pause two minutes. This feels long. Let it. People fill the easy three and then have to work.

"Everybody has six? Some of you have four. That is fine.

Now here is the part. Take your pen and cross out anything on that list that you could find out from their LinkedIn profile, their personnel file, or the org chart. Job title. How long they have been here. Where they went to school. What team they are on. Cross it out."

Pause 45 seconds.

"Now cross out anything you could learn from thirty seconds of small talk in the break room. They have kids. They pull for LSU. They went somewhere nice last summer."

Pause 45 seconds.

"Now look at your page."

HOLD. Say nothing. Count ten full seconds. This silence is the exercise.

"Write down what's left."

Pause 45 seconds. Then the final prompt, and 90 seconds for it.

"Last line. One thing you have noticed about that person in the last month that you have never said out loud."

Seated and standing

Seated is the default. Nothing about this exercise needs floor space, and it runs identically on a video call.

The standing escalation, if you have room. After the final write, ask participants to stand, find one other person, and read only their last line aloud. Not the crossed-out list. Just the thing they noticed and never said. It is a strong moment and it does not scale much past about sixty people.

Make standing optional out loud, every time, and never comment on who stayed seated.

Debrief questions, in order

Ask these three, in this sequence. The order is doing work. Do not add a fourth.

1. Show of hands. Who crossed out more than half?

Most hands go up. Do not comment. Let the room see itself. Three seconds.

2. For those of you who had something left, what kind of thing was it?

You will hear: they have been quiet lately, they take on too much, they light up when they talk about X. Take three or four, then name the pattern out loud. Every one of those is something you noticed about how they are doing, not about who they are on paper.

3. What is stopping you from saying the last thing you wrote to the person you wrote it about?

Let this one sit. If nobody speaks, name the three honest answers yourself: it feels weird, it is not my place, I do not want to make it a thing.

The tie-in

"You can know your best friend and not notice they are struggling. Knowing is information. Noticing is attention, and attention is the most finite thing you have.

Nobody in this room failed that exercise. What that page showed is that we are all running on the public file, because the public file is what gets handed to us and nobody ever asked us to go further.

Here is the good news, and it is the whole reason this is worth your time. The last line you wrote is proof that you already noticed. You did the hard part. The only thing missing is that you never said it out loud."

Behavior named

Say the last line on my worksheet to the person I wrote it about, this week. Write the day.

Fails when

- You rush the ten seconds of silence. That silence is the exercise. Count it in your head.
- You use a light pencil. The crossing out has to be visible on the page for the visual to work. Provide markers or bold pens.
- You ask people to share their six. Never. The list is private and it stays private. Only the last line is ever shared, and only in a pair.
- The room is all strangers. This needs people who work together. For a mixed public group, change the instruction to "someone in your life you see most weeks," which works but lands softer.
- Someone gets upset. Occasionally somebody realizes they know almost nothing about a person they see daily, and it hits harder than expected. Do not pursue it in the room. Catch them at the break.



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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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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