# Before You Decide What It Means

## A small practice in observing.

A colleague questions your decision. An email comes back shorter than expected. A door closes. Before we realize it, we've moved from noticing something to deciding what it means: about them, about the situation, sometimes about ourselves.

**What happened is not always the same as what we've concluded.**

*"What am I treating as fact that is actually my interpretation?"*

### WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

| | At work | In life |
|---|---|---|
| **What happened** | A team member questioned my decision in front of the group. | I applied for something and didn't get it. |
| **What I concluded** | "She doesn't respect my leadership." | "They don't see what I'm capable of." |
| **Looking again** | I know she raised a concern. I don't yet know why, or what she saw that I didn't. | I know I wasn't selected. I don't know everything that influenced the decision, or what it says about my capabilities. |

### TRY IT · Think of something that happened recently that stayed with you.

**1. What do I know actually happened?**

**2. What meaning have I attached to it?**

**3. What else might be true that I haven't considered?**

**Going deeper: What did I decide was true about myself or someone else because of what happened?**

**Observing isn't finding a nicer explanation.** Sometimes our first conclusion is accurate. The practice is telling what we know apart from what we've assumed, without dismissing what we noticed.

**One more question to sit with:** *What have I decided is true about me because of someone else's conclusion?*

Want to look again at what's happening on your team? Let's talk.

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