Reductive Mindset Meeting Guide For Leaders

A REDUCTIVE MINDSET TOOL

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

→ **OVERVIEW**

→ **FORMAT FRAMEWORK**

→ **REDUCTIVE MINDSET BASICS**

→ **FORMATS #1–3**

jfg Juliet Funt Group | Info@JulietFunt.com | JulietFunt.com

→ OVERVIEW

Dear Leaders:

We commend you for beginning the organizational path to more capacity, creativity, and breathing room for your talented teams. You are part of a growing segment of aware leaders worldwide who are taking proactive steps to solve the overload problem that affects almost every business.

Although your teams will be empowered to make substantial changes in their workflows and habits through our highly effective Digital Micro-Learning course, **there is a category of waste that only you have the power to eliminate.**

When you apply a reductive lens to the overload issue, you liberate your talent and turbocharge your team efficiency. The following is a guide for how to do just that on a monthly basis. In addition to instruction about being reductive, this playbook will provide you with meeting guides about other critical topics such as email, Perimeter Friction, and meetings.

Also provided are optional add-on topics you may choose from according to your desires, featuring guides on urgent pain points including recognition, accountability and modeling, and assessing team bandwidth.

→ FORMAT FRAMEWORK

Formats provided here are for your Reductive Mindset leadership meetings, which should occur monthly.

Schedule all meetings now and do your best not to cancel them when an urgent need rears its head.

Facilitation: You may choose to have a single facilitator or take turns leading the meetings. Try to keep the meetings to forty-five minutes.

Handouts: At each meeting, provide a copy of the instructions to attendees and ask one person to read the full instructions out loud to start the meeting.

Materials: You'll need only the Post-it notes and the black markers. If your team is not centrally located, many of the tools can be replicated using a shared Google document

Your team will be doing their part to "De-Crapify" their workflow, but the rest is up to you. There is certain waste plaguing them that **only you can address.**

The following meeting formats are focused on being "Reductive", or getting into the habit of continually letting go, cutting, renouncing, and stripping away unnecessary actions. (Share this definition with your leaders in your instruction.)

Identifying things to cut from your project and workflow lists is hard. You might not eliminate anything the first session, because all of the items on your list are there for a reason. Do not be discouraged.

One key to any successful session is to expect friction to between viewpoints.

You may notice:

- Everything feels important.

- Nobody wants to eliminate his or her thing.

Also keep in mind:

- Large projects may have several sub-tasks associated with them that may need to be broken down to find areas of reductive possibility.

- Convoluted processes may at first seem too complex to slim down.

Critical communication:

When you successfully find an item or task to eliminate, **it is extremely important that you enthusiastically let everyone in the learning group know.** Your teams will feel increasingly grateful and empowered as they see you removing the sandbags weighing them down. This will increase organizational morale as well as motivate your team members to make cuts within their individual spheres of influence.

MEETING #1: RECOGNITION

OVERVIEW:

Whatever we as leaders shine a spotlight on will get stronger. Our overt and covert systems of recognizing and rewarding our employees powerfully dictate their future behavior.

Behaviorists have rich debates about whether incentives and rewards actually "work" at work. It's an interesting topic to Google. Many feel that temporary compliance is the best that can be expected from any kind of formal reward structure. One interpersonal truth rings clear, regardless of how you come down on the topic: people love to be seen and acknowledged for what they do. A simple old-fashioned acknowledgment or mention can work wonders for employees feeling appreciated.

While this is an interesting and varied topic, we will be looking at it here as recognition affects white space culture shifts and new behaviors.

Behavior goals:
- Become more aware of the busyness behavior that leaders reward.
- Continue to be aware of the individual recognition your employees need for being reductive and efficient.
- Habituate monthly, scheduled opportunities to give recognition.
- Use thoughtful acknowledgement to further your white space cultural goals.

Meeting steps:
1. Individually take five minutes to skim the list of topics below and choose one you would like to discuss with the group.
2. Then take the remaining forty minutes to discuss the list with an eye toward your behavior goals.

Topics you may want to discuss:
- Which behaviors currently get the most rewards: activity or true productivity?
- What behaviors are we currently spotlighting in town halls and conferences?
- How will we recognize white space superstars?
- How do the stories you tell (to yourself and others) influences the narrative of the group?
- What types of rewards and recognition fuel me most as a leader?
- What types of rewards and recognition are most appreciated by my team?
- How can interaction with the customer become its own reward?

MEETING #2: ACCOUNTABILITY AND MODELING

OVERVIEW:

In every business, it is hard to find motivated talent. Those who do not demonstrate accountable behavior and passion for their work tend to drain team effectiveness.

Unfortunately, the value of standing behind one's promises and actions is not taught in business school or even in every family, and therefore some folks will always try to get by with doing less. Additionally, what's perceived as a lack of accountability ("So and so does not do what they promise") is actually often a sign of overload ("So and so actually can't get to what they promise because they are drowning").

A lack of team accountability and an inability of others to execute the requests they promise is a drain on both white space effectiveness and morale.

Behavior goals:
- Rally the troops to hold accountability as a core value.
- Observe and support your team as they deal with interpersonal accountability.
- Take time to coach and inspire those who fall short of their word.
- Request and allow employees to keep you accountable as well as the reverse.
- Consider your own influence and example as pertains to accountability at work.
- Consider your own example as pertains to work–life balance.

Meeting steps:
1. Individually take five minutes to skim the list of topics below and choose one you would like to discuss with the group.
2. Then take the remaining forty minutes to discuss the list with an eye toward your behavior goals.

Topics you may want to discuss:
- What are the accountability issues we see and hear about in our teams?
- What have we done in the past to hold employees accountable to their word?
- How can we coach employees on escalating a complaint about the accountability of others?
- How can the value of accountability be included in our 1:1 protocols?
- How can we normalize understanding of the white space 50/50 rule in our communication? (The white space 50/50 rule states: Anything that bothers you at work is 50% your fault until you have asked for what you want.)

MEETING #3: ASSESSING TEAM BANDWIDTH

OVERVIEW:

A salaried employee who's motivated and treated well will often do as much work as is given to them, regardless of being overloaded. What is missing from this equation is that when employees work on evenings and weekends, or when they work fifty-, sixty-, or seventy-hour workweeks, the quality of their output suffers.

In studying this challenge, researchers have coined the term "work martyr" to describe someone who sacrifices too much to work, blinded by the idea that more work is always better for the company. What is a loyal employee to do? White space training will teach employees to set boundaries and eliminate low value tasks, but leadership must also step in to keep an eye on workflow.

Rather than falling prey to the mirage of endless employee bandwidth, leadership must learn to "See the Plate" of their direct reports before assigning more and more tasks, tasks that may be displacing or even compromising the quality of existing to-dos. Remember that you'll almost never hear an employee say he or she has spare time or open bandwidth just "sitting around unused." Each conversation must focus on rearranging bandwidth and tasks, rather than looking for empty space.

Behavior goals:

- Become curious and caring about the workload of your employees.
- Consider beginning each 1:1 with a bandwidth check-in.
- Then assign (and remove!) tasks in an informed way that adds to effectiveness.
- Learn to "See the Plate" of your team through inquiry and openness.
- Gauge or inquire about employee and team bandwidth before adding new projects.
- Learn to sometimes jettison something old when adding something new.

Meeting steps:

1. Individually take five minutes to skim the list of topics below and choose one you would like to discuss with the group.
2. Then take the remaining forty minutes to discuss the list with an eye toward your behavior goals.

Topics you may want to discuss:

- What's our cultural approach to loading up our teams beyond the max point?
- How much do your teams work outside of business hours and why?
- How much do your teams work on vacation and sick days?
- Am I truly aware of my team's overall bandwidth before assigning new tasks?
- When do I need to protect my team's bandwidth interdepartmentally?
- When is my own plate too full?