FROM NO BIG SPEECHES

Ten field notes, *in practice.*

Each one with where it comes from, what it means, and what it looks like in practice.

signal by Travis Loudin

Swipe →

“Be an umbrella, not a funnel.”

Common in tech circles

WHAT IT MEANS

Pressure from above should stop with you. Pass on the context and the reasons, translated into clear priorities. Hold back the noise, not the information.

IN PRACTICE

Before forwarding an escalation, rewrite it as a calm request with a clear ask and a realistic date.

“Take the blame and share the credit.”

Common usage

WHAT IT MEANS

Wins belong to the team by name. Misses belong to you. You can delegate the work but never the responsibility.

IN PRACTICE

In leadership meetings, use "we missed" and "[Name] delivered." Never the reverse. When unsure who deserves credit, name more people, not fewer.

“Praise in public, correct in private.”

Common usage

WHAT IT MEANS

Recognition in front of peers and leadership carries more weight than a private thank-you. Correction in public carries more sting than it needs to.

IN PRACTICE

Thank people by name in team channels and leadership updates. Save course corrections for one-on-ones.

“Say what you'll do, then do what you say.”

Common usage

WHAT IT MEANS

Reliability is the cheapest trust to build and the easiest to lose.

IN PRACTICE

Track every promise you make to your team, even small ones like "I'll ask about that." Close the loop every time.

“Clear is kind. Unclear is unkind.”

Brené Brown

WHAT IT MEANS

Vague expectations set people up to fail, then make the correction feel unfair.

IN PRACTICE

Write down what done looks like, by when, and how it will be judged. Ask the person to play it back in their own words.

“Bad news doesn't get better with age.”

Common usage

WHAT IT MEANS

Delayed feedback lands harder and feels like an ambush.

IN PRACTICE

Give corrective feedback within a few days of the moment, while the details are fresh for both of you.

The one-on-one is their meeting, not yours.

Andy Grove

WHAT IT MEANS

One-on-ones exist for the report's concerns, not your status updates.

IN PRACTICE

Let them set the agenda. If the conversation is slow to start, "What's in your way, and how can I help?" opens it without taking it over. Keep a shared running doc so topics carry over and nothing gets lost.

“Every yes is a no to something else.”

Common usage

WHAT IT MEANS

Capacity is fixed. Accepting new work silently takes it from existing commitments. Sequencing competing requests is the leader's job, not the individual's.

IN PRACTICE

Answer new requests with "Yes, and here's what moves" rather than a bare yes. Make the tradeoff visible to whoever asked.

“Hope is not a strategy.”

Common usage

WHAT IT MEANS

Plans that depend on everything going right will fail.

IN PRACTICE

For every critical date, ask what the fallback is if it slips.

“Your habits become their expectations.”

Common usage

WHAT IT MEANS

If you send messages at midnight, people assume they should answer at midnight, whatever you say.

IN PRACTICE

Use scheduled send. Take your PTO and actually unplug. It gives everyone else permission.

86 more, *free to read.*

All 96 field notes, No Big Speeches (the manual they come from), and a one-page card to print.

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