

The Meaning Conversation Starter.

We Built Workplaces for Control. People Now Want Meaning.

Question sets for 1:1s, team meetings, and informal moments — organized by context.

THE MEANING CONVERSATION STARTER

Many people are not exhausted by effort — they are exhausted by work that no longer feels meaningful. These questions open that conversation before it becomes a resignation.

IN A 1:1 CONVERSATION

"What felt most alive in your work this week?"

Not 'how are things going.' Specifically alive — energized, purposeful, worth the effort.

"Is there a part of your role where you feel most like yourself?"

Meaning often lives in specific moments, not general satisfaction scores.

"What would you want more of, if you could shape your role a bit differently?"

This is job crafting in miniature. Small autonomy compounds into meaning over time.

"When was the last time your work felt genuinely connected to something that matters?"

If they struggle to answer, that answer is your starting point.

IN A TEAM MEETING

"What's one thing this team does that you think actually matters — beyond the metrics?"

This surfaces the meaning that's already present but rarely named.

"Where do you think we're doing our best work together right now?"

Meaning is often collective. Naming shared contribution builds it.

"What's one thing we could stop doing that would make the work feel more meaningful?"

Subtraction creates space. This question surfaces what's draining rather than energizing.

IN AN INFORMAL MOMENT

"What made today feel worth it?"

Simple. Low stakes. Surprisingly revealing. Try it at the end of a hard week.

"Is there something you've been working on that you think we're underestimating?"

People with meaning invest quietly. This question surfaces hidden contribution.

HOW TO USE THESE WELL

Ask one question at a time.

These are not interview questions. Ask one, then stop talking. The silence after is where the real answer often lives.

Don't fix — listen first.

The instinct to solve what someone shares will close the conversation. Acknowledge before you advise. Always.

Replace one directive with context this week.

Instead of telling someone what to do, tell them why it matters and what success looks like. This single shift moves compliance toward ownership.

Return to what you heard.

In the next conversation, reference something from the last one. 'You mentioned last week that... how is that going?' It signals that you actually listened.

Make it a habit, not an event.

These questions lose their power if they only appear during performance reviews or team offsites. The most meaningful conversations happen in the ordinary flow of work.

A NOTE ON MEANING

Meaning is not a perk or a program. It is built in small moments — when a leader tells someone why their work matters, when a person's input changes an outcome, when effort connects to something beyond output. These questions are the beginning of that architecture.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

When did you last tell someone why their work matters — not just what to do?

Meaning is built in small moments. This week, try replacing one directive with context.