NEXTGEN Leadership Practice Guide

After the session

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You have a report about how you see yourself. The next step is to find out what happens when you put one of its suggestions to work with another person. Choose a situation that matters to you and start with the case closest to it. You do not need to finish this guide before trying something.

This packet responds to the request for more detailed examples and practice tools. The cases are fictional. Their conversations offer possible wording to adapt, not scripts that guarantee agreement. Your goal is to make a useful adjustment while staying accountable for the work.

Find your starting point

Understanding your report: page 2. The four approaches in practice: pages 3–6.

Taking over someone's work: pages 7–8. Objections after a meeting: pages 9–10. Questions under time pressure: pages 11–12. An overcommitted teammate: pages 13–14. Feedback without authority: pages 15–16. A mentor relationship that needs adjusting: pages 17–18.

Using the practice tools: page 19. Mentor conversations: pages 20–21. Your next 30 days: page 22. A final challenge: page 23.

Start with one experience

Write down what happened in a recent conversation or group task. Include the words you remember and what you did next. Leave the other person's motives undecided until you have asked them. Bring this account to your mentorship partner, along with the passage in your report you want to examine.

Keep your notes somewhere private. Share only what supports the conversation. Everyone in NEXTGEN has their own work to do, including mentors.

Reading your report with judgment

Locate the two parts

The four scores near the beginning describe working style: Trailblazer, Connector, Anchor and Architect. Farther down, the section called Your leadership habits summarizes your responses about everyday practices. Slide 8 called this distinction Preference and practice. It is the same distinction.

A familiar approach does not establish how well you use it. Preferring quick decisions still leaves you responsible for seeking information that could change the decision. Preferring careful preparation still leaves you responsible for naming the information you need and agreeing on when to decide.

Test a passage against experience

Suppose your report suggests you move quickly when a team stalls. Find a specific occasion. What did you do? Did the group make progress? Did someone lose a chance to contribute? Ask a person who was there to describe your part before showing them the report language. Their independent account gives you something to compare.

Look for a counterexample too. You might move quickly with familiar work and ask many questions in a new role. That difference tells you where the description fits. A close or tied score is a reason to explore the blend. You do not need to choose a permanent label.

Read practice scores in context

"No real opportunity" records a lack of opportunity to rate that behavior. It should not become evidence of inability. A lower score deserves a question about what the person has experienced, what they understood the item to mean and what opportunity would let them practice.

The assessment is an informal self-reflection. It is not a validated DISC assessment or a comparison with classmates. Treat the narrative, including any AI-assisted interpretation, as a set of suggestions to examine. A description that sounds flattering still needs evidence.

Your first task: choose one observation, find a supporting example and write down what would make you revise your interpretation. Use the After the attempt sheet when you test it.

Trailblazer in practice

A useful contribution

A Trailblazer preference often centers on direct discussion, decisive action and ownership of results. Someone who recognizes this approach might help an uncertain team choose a direction. A clear outcome and authority to decide how to reach it tend to support their engagement. Responsibility without authority or repeated unnecessary approvals tend to create frustration.

Imagine a volunteer committee with many ideas and no decision. You propose a modest event that fits the budget and offer to coordinate the first tasks. The team now has something concrete to respond to. Your contribution becomes less useful if you announce the plan before hearing from the person who understands the venue restrictions.

Communicating and taking responsibility

Lead with the result or decision when working with someone who prefers this approach. Explain the constraint and clarify who owns which decisions. Try: "We need a workable plan by Friday. You own the schedule. Check with the venue lead before changing the room arrangement." Avoid vague expectations followed by close control of every step.

If you recognize yourself here, ask: "Whose information could change the plan?" Give that person time to answer before you advocate for your choice. A pause has a purpose when it improves the decision. It does not require giving everyone a veto.

An experiment to try

At your next two planning conversations, hear from someone affected by the decision before proposing your solution. Afterward ask: "Did you have enough room to explain your concern? What did I miss?" Record an example of input that changed the plan, or explain why the plan stayed the same.

Counterexample: an urgent problem with an established response calls for prompt action. State the decision and your reason, then review the impact when the immediate pressure passes. Style flexibility includes recognizing when consultation would create a harmful delay.

Challenge: when you say the team needed you to take over, what evidence shows that a clearer agreement or an earlier check-in would not have worked?

Connector in practice

A useful contribution

A Connector preference often centers on conversation, shared possibilities and involving people. Someone who recognizes it might notice who has been left out and help others see why the work matters. Interaction and room to exchange ideas tend to support engagement. Dismissed ideas, isolation or detail with no explained purpose tend to create frustration.

Imagine you recruit several volunteers with an enthusiastic description of a community event. People want to help. The difficulty begins when everyone leaves believing they agreed to something different. Your invitation succeeded, but the commitments still need definition.

Communicating and taking responsibility

Begin with the purpose and the people affected. Let the person talk through the idea, then agree on the work. Try: "I understand why this would bring people in. Which part are you taking on, and what will be ready by Thursday?" Avoid treating an enthusiastic response as proof that capacity and details are settled.

If you recognize yourself here, close a conversation by stating your own commitment in plain language. Ask the other person to correct anything you have misunderstood. A written note gives both of you something to revisit when the excitement of the conversation has passed.

An experiment to try

For your next two commitments, check your calendar before saying yes. Send a brief confirmation naming the deliverable and deadline. If the scope changes, tell the other person what that means for your capacity before accepting more work. Ask afterward whether your follow-through matched the expectation you created.

Counterexample: some conversations exist to explore possibilities. Label them that way. "We're generating options today. Nobody is volunteering for a task yet." This protects creative discussion from becoming an accidental assignment.

Challenge: when people leave a conversation with you feeling encouraged, what tells you they also understand what happens next? Look for a completed agreement, not only a positive reaction.

Anchor in practice

A useful contribution

An Anchor preference often centers on dependable relationships, cooperation and a steady pace. Someone who recognizes it might notice how a change affects people and help a team keep its commitments. Trust and clear expectations tend to support engagement. Repeated surprises or pressure to answer immediately tend to create frustration.

Imagine a new schedule will make it difficult for two volunteers to attend. You notice the problem and want to preserve goodwill. If you raise it early, the group has time to adjust. If you stay quiet to avoid slowing the meeting, others might treat your silence as agreement.

Communicating and taking responsibility

Explain a change early, including the reason. Invite questions and give a reasonable opportunity to think. Try: "The venue needs us to start earlier. Please check what that means for your team, and let's decide tomorrow." Avoid interpreting a calm response as evidence that the change creates no difficulty.

If you recognize yourself here, practice stating a concern before it becomes a private frustration. You do not need to speak harshly. "I see a scheduling problem we need to address before agreeing" is a clear contribution. Once you have voiced it, help the group consider options.

An experiment to try

At your next planning conversation, name one genuine concern while the decision is still open. State who or what it affects and ask a question that helps resolve it. Later ask someone present: "Was my concern clear enough to act on, or did I soften it until the point got lost?"

Counterexample: agreement is sometimes sincere. Do not manufacture an objection to prove that you participated. Offer an explicit commitment when the plan works, or ask for thinking time when you are undecided.

Challenge: whose comfort are you protecting when you withhold a concern? Consider the future person who will have to repair the problem. What would speaking earlier have allowed them to do?

Architect in practice

A useful contribution

An Architect preference often centers on accurate information, preparation and clear standards. Someone who recognizes it might find a requirement others overlooked and improve the quality of a plan. Reliable information and room to analyze tend to support engagement. Unsupported claims or changing definitions of success tend to create frustration.

Imagine the team wants to reserve a venue immediately. You ask about access and cancellation terms. Those questions could prevent a costly mistake. If you continue collecting details after the important uncertainties are resolved, the team still needs a way to reach a decision.

Communicating and taking responsibility

Share the reasoning and define what a sound decision requires. Try: "These are the options and our deadline. Which unanswered question would change your recommendation?" Avoid dismissing detailed questions as negativity. Equally, ask for a distinction between essential information and information that would only be nice to have.

If you recognize yourself here, explain the consequence behind a question. "I need the cancellation terms because we have no reserve for a lost deposit" makes your concern easier to evaluate than "We need more information." State what you would recommend if the information remains unavailable.

An experiment to try

For your next decision, identify the two uncertainties that matter most. Agree with the decision owner on how to resolve them and when to stop researching. Record what changed your recommendation. If nothing changed it, consider whether the additional review was worth the delay.

Counterexample: a consequential or difficult-to-reverse decision deserves more scrutiny than an easily reversible choice. A request for speed does not remove a real requirement. Explain the remaining risk and identify who has authority to accept it.

Challenge: what evidence would be sufficient for you to commit? If your answer keeps changing, examine whether the standard is unclear or whether you are avoiding ownership of an uncertain decision.

Case 1 Taking over the work

Read before discussing

You coordinate a volunteer event. Jordan agreed to finish the flyer Thursday. On Wednesday evening, the draft still lacks details. You rewrite it and distribute it so registration opens. Jordan says, "Why did you ask me to do it if you were going to replace my work?"

You respond, "We were running out of time. Someone had to get it done." Jordan stops offering ideas at the next meeting. You interpret the silence as resentment. You have not asked what it means.

Separate what happened from your explanation

You know you replaced the draft and sent it without checking. You know the agreed date was Thursday. You do not yet know why the details were missing, whether Jordan understood the registration deadline or what Jordan intended to finish next.

Before turning the page, write your opening sentence. It should address your decision to take over. Then list the information you need before deciding whether this is a reliability problem.

One possible conversation

You: "I replaced your draft and sent it without checking with you. I was worried about registration, but I took away your chance to finish the work. What was still in progress when I stepped in?"

Jordan: "I was waiting for the address you said you'd confirm. I thought Thursday was the deadline."

You: "You're right. I hadn't sent the address, and I moved the deadline without telling you. I owe you a clearer agreement. What would have helped you finish?"

Jordan: "The address, and a review time before anything went out."

The point is not to make Jordan accept your apology immediately. Your acknowledgment establishes which part you own. The question gives Jordan room to add information before you decide how to prevent a repeat.

Case 1 Accountability after the apology

Make a different agreement

Agree on a draft review before the release date. Name who provides missing information and who authorizes distribution. If timing changes, the coordinator contacts the owner before reassigning work, unless an immediate action is necessary. Any urgent override still deserves an explanation afterward.

You might say: "You own the next flyer. I'll get the confirmed details to you Monday. Let's review the draft Tuesday afternoon and release it Thursday. If either of us sees a problem, we'll contact the other before changing the plan."

Now make the case harder

Suppose Thursday was clearly the release date, every detail was available and Jordan has missed two earlier commitments. Your takeover still needs an explanation. Jordan's reliability also needs attention.

"We have missed the agreed release date on the last two assignments. I want to understand what is getting in the way before we assign another. What are you able to own this time, and when will you tell me if it is slipping?"

If Jordan refuses to discuss capacity or an earlier checkpoint, stop treating the assignment as settled. Reallocate it transparently through the person who owns the project. Repeated reminders without a revised agreement leave the same problem in place.

Practice with a partner

Use the Before the conversation sheet. The speaker explains their action and asks what they missed. The partner chooses either version of Jordan's situation. Do not reveal the version in advance. After three minutes, discuss whether the speaker listened differently when new information appeared. Switch roles.

Check the result

Look for evidence that both people understand ownership and the next checkpoint. "The conversation felt better" is useful but incomplete. Ask whether the next task finished as agreed and whether either person flagged a change early.

Your challenge: what responsibility belongs to you even when the other person also handled something poorly? Name the responsibility without adding "but" to the acknowledgment.

Case 2 Objections after the meeting

The situation

A committee agrees to run registration online. Priya nods when the chair asks, "Everyone good?" The next day she emails three people saying the plan will exclude some attendees. You chair the committee and feel undermined. Priya says there was no room to raise a concern once everyone else supported the plan.

Your first impulse is to say, "You should have spoken up." That addresses one responsibility while leaving the meeting process unexamined. Priya's concern might be legitimate even if the way she raised it created confusion.

Ask what you need to know

Did the chair ask for objections before advocating a preferred option? Did Priya understand that the decision was final? Did anyone test how attendees without reliable internet would register? Who owns the decision now?

Write an opening that addresses both the missing concern and the competing messages. Avoid deciding which style Priya represents. Her behavior in one meeting does not establish that.

One possible conversation

You: "Your email raised an access issue we didn't discuss yesterday. I also have people asking which plan to follow. What did you see that we missed?"

Priya: "Two of our regular attendees call to register. I didn't know if we were dropping that option."

You: "That's a useful distinction. Online registration doesn't have to end phone registration. What kept you from asking in the meeting?"

Priya: "You said the online option solved our problem before asking for comments."

You: "I see how I made the choice sound finished. Next time I'll ask about consequences before stating my recommendation. For this decision, let's confirm the phone option and send one update to everyone."

Case 2 Making disagreement usable

Clarify what changes

A concern deserves consideration. It does not automatically cancel a decision. Ask whether the new information changes the goal, the method or the support people need. Here the group might preserve online registration while assigning someone to enter phone registrations.

Then agree how to handle late concerns: "If something important comes up after a decision, bring it to the decision owner first so we address it and communicate a single update." Leave room for appropriate escalation if the concern involves serious misconduct or risk.

A harder version

Priya has raised the same concern twice, the committee has addressed it, and she continues telling volunteers the plan is undecided. Ask whether there is new information. If there is none, explain the current decision and what implementation requires. Respectful disagreement does not erase the need for a coordinated plan.

Conversely, if the concern reveals an unmet requirement, the chair needs to reopen the relevant part of the decision. A desire to appear consistent is a poor reason to ignore new information.

Practice in the next meeting

Use the Meeting participation check. Before deciding, invite concerns from people who will implement the plan. Allow a quiet moment to write. Ask, "What would make this difficult to carry out?" Close by stating the decision owner's choice and the process for raising new information.

Debrief questions

Whose information changed the plan? Did you invite a concern and then argue with every answer? Was silence treated as consent? What did the people doing the work believe they had agreed to?

Your evidence: a person affected by the decision is able to explain the final agreement and knows where to raise a new concern. Count that as stronger evidence than the number of people who nodded.

Case 3 Questions under time pressure

The situation

A venue offers a discounted room if you pay a deposit today. Luis asks about cancellation terms, accessible entry and insurance requirements. A teammate says, "You always get stuck in the details. We need a decision." Luis replies, "Fine. Do whatever you want."

The team now has a conflict about pace and an unresolved decision. The dismissive comment gives Luis a reason to feel unheard. His withdrawal leaves everyone else without his recommendation. Both behaviors deserve attention.

Before choosing a side

Which unanswered question could make the venue unsuitable? What is the cost of waiting? Is the deadline real? Who has authority to approve the deposit? Different answers justify different amounts of review.

Use a blank Working agreement sheet to identify a decision owner, the information needed and the latest useful time to decide. Do this before reading the example exchange.

One possible conversation

Coordinator: "We have an hour before the offer closes. Luis, which unanswered question would change your recommendation?"

Luis: "If the deposit is nonrefundable, we'd lose money if our event date changes. We also need to confirm accessible entry."

Coordinator: "Those affect whether the venue works. I'll call about entry. Please get the cancellation terms. We'll decide at three with what we know."

Luis: "If entry works and we are comfortable risking the deposit, I'd support it. I don't need every room measurement today."

The exchange makes the questions useful to the decision. The time limit also becomes an agreement instead of pressure expressed as a personal criticism.

Case 3 Deciding with incomplete information

The complication

At three, the venue confirms accessible entry but has not answered the cancellation question. Do you pay? There is no universal answer in this exercise. State the likely cost of losing the deposit, how much date uncertainty remains and who is authorized to accept that cost.

A decision owner might say, "We have no reserve for a lost deposit and our date is still tentative. We'll pass." Another set of circumstances might support proceeding. The quality of the reasoning matters more than selecting the fast or cautious option.

Address the exchange too

The teammate who dismissed Luis should return to the comment: "I called your questions getting stuck. Your questions identified two things we needed to know. Next time I'll ask which issue matters most instead of dismissing the concern."

Luis also has a task: "When I said do whatever you want, I left you without my recommendation. I'll state what I need and what I recommend if we don't get an answer." Neither acknowledgment requires the other person to go first.

Partner exercise

Give one person the role of decision owner and the other the role of reviewer. Choose a low-stakes decision from your own work. The reviewer gets two minutes to identify the uncertainties that could change the choice. The owner explains the deadline and consequences of waiting. Agree on what information is sufficient.

What to watch afterward

Did more information change the decision, or merely make everyone feel more comfortable? Did speed create avoidable rework? Were requirements kept intact? These questions help you distinguish useful review from delay without making caution or urgency a character flaw.

Challenge: explain your recommendation to someone who prefers the opposite pace. They should be able to understand your reasoning even if they still disagree.

Case 4 An enthusiastic yes

The situation

At a planning meeting, Avery offers to recruit six volunteers and create social posts. Everyone appreciates the energy. A week later, only one volunteer has confirmed, and the posts are unfinished. Avery says work got busy and assumes the team understands. Another member quietly starts recruiting without telling Avery.

Avery's enthusiasm helped the project begin. The missed commitments now affect work other people were planning around. Quietly duplicating the assignment hides the capacity problem and creates uncertainty about ownership.

Prepare before raising it

Name the agreed deliverables and dates. Check whether the agreement was explicit or whether people inferred it from "I'll help with that." Decide what the project needs now. Ask about actual capacity before agreeing to another optimistic deadline.

One possible conversation

You: "We agreed on six confirmed volunteers by Tuesday. We have one, and the activity leads need to know how many stations to plan. What is realistic for you to finish this week?"

Avery: "I thought I'd have more time. I could send a few messages tonight."

You: "How many, and when will you know whether people are available? We need a number the activity leads can use."

Avery: "I'll contact four people tonight and confirm the responses tomorrow by five. I need someone else to handle the posts."

You: "Let's ask the coordinator who has capacity for those. Until that person agrees, the posts are still an open task."

Before turning the page, identify the point where the conversation changed from a general intention into something another person could plan around.

Case 4 Renegotiating before failure

A clearer commitment

Avery sends a confirmation: "I own contacting four potential volunteers tonight and reporting confirmed names tomorrow at five. Social posts need a new owner. If I cannot finish the outreach tonight, I'll tell the coordinator by seven."

This agreement does not guarantee six volunteers. It separates the action Avery controls from the outcome that depends on other people. The project still needs a contingency if too few people agree.

The harder version

Avery says, "I'm a volunteer. You're making this feel like a job." Acknowledge the choice to volunteer while explaining the dependency: "You decide what time you are able to give. Once we agree on a task, other people plan around it. A smaller commitment we understand helps more than an assignment nobody has time to finish."

The coordinator might reduce the event scope or recruit another person. If the assignment requires more time than anyone has, the plan needs changing. Repeating the same request louder does not create capacity.

Practice tool

Use the Working agreement sheet before accepting your next task. Include what you will produce, what support you need and when you will signal a delay. Practice saying: "I have capacity for this part. I cannot own the full assignment by that date."

Measure something useful

Notice whether people receive an early warning when the agreement changes. Check whether the final outcome matches what others reasonably expected. A reduced commitment agreed in advance differs from a surprise at the deadline.

Challenge: think of a recent yes that someone else had to absorb later. What would an honest answer at the beginning have sounded like? Write it without making your workload the other person's responsibility to guess.

Case 5 Feedback without authority

The situation

You and Morgan are peers on a class project. Morgan speaks over you twice while you explain an idea. Later you tell another teammate, "Morgan never listens." You want the behavior to change, but you worry that raising it will create tension. You are not Morgan's supervisor.

You still have standing to describe an interaction that affected your participation. That does not give you authority to assess Morgan's personality or speak for the whole group.

Prepare your opening

Identify an example you remember accurately. Name the effect on your contribution. Choose a request small enough to act on in the next meeting. Arrange a private conversation when possible, rather than correcting the person for an audience.

One possible conversation

You: "During my explanation of the budget yesterday, you started speaking before I finished twice. I didn't get to the reason I thought the lower-cost option would work. Next time, would you let me finish the recommendation before responding?"

Morgan: "I was trying to save time. You were going into a lot of detail."

You: "I'm willing to make the explanation shorter. I still need enough time to state the recommendation and the reason. Would one uninterrupted minute work, followed by your questions?"

Morgan: "Yes. It would help if you led with the recommendation."

You: "I'll do that. Let's try it at the next meeting and check afterward."

This exchange makes room for Morgan's experience without withdrawing the request. You have not established that either person has a particular style. You have agreed on a behavior to test.

Case 5 When the answer is defensive

An uneven response

Morgan says, "Nobody else has a problem with me." Resist recruiting an imaginary majority. "I'm describing my experience. I want us both to have time to explain our ideas." Ask whether Morgan is willing to try the small agreement. You do not need Morgan to accept your full interpretation before trying it.

If the person refuses and the interruptions continue, involve the person responsible for the meeting process. Describe the observable pattern and request a participation rule that applies to everyone. Avoid presenting a style label as the explanation for the problem.

Your part still matters

Check whether you interrupted Morgan too, withheld needed information or used more time than agreed. Owning your contribution improves the accuracy of the conversation. It does not require accepting repeated dismissal.

Some situations need more than a peer practice exercise. Serious harassment, retaliation, safety concerns or repeated abuse should go through the appropriate organizational process. Do not use this packet to pressure someone into a private confrontation that puts them at risk.

Two rounds of practice

Use Before the conversation. In the first round, the listener responds cooperatively. In the second, the listener disagrees with the interpretation. The speaker's task is to remain specific and find out whether there is a workable next step. The listener should not make the role-play cruel or personal.

Debrief

Ask the listener to repeat the request in their own words. If they cannot tell what action would help, rewrite the request. Notice whether you assigned a motive, exaggerated frequency or apologized so extensively that the concern disappeared.

Challenge: what are you telling a third person that the person involved has not had a fair opportunity to hear? Decide whether a direct conversation or another appropriate process is the next responsible step.

Case 6 A mentor relationship needs adjusting

The situation

A participant brings a difficult work decision to their mentor. The mentor immediately describes what worked in their own career and gives several recommendations. The participant thanks them but does not act. At the next meeting, the mentor feels their time was wasted. The participant says they wanted help thinking, not a decision made for them.

The relationship lacks an agreement about the kind of help needed. Both people have been guessing. Experience is useful, but it does not establish that the mentor understands the participant's constraints.

One possible reset

Participant: "I appreciate that you bring experience I don't have. Last time we moved into advice before I had explained the situation. Today, would you ask me questions first so I work through my options?"

Mentor: "Yes. I thought you wanted a recommendation. What decision are you trying to make, and what have you considered?"

Participant: "Whether to volunteer to lead the project. I'm interested, but I'm already behind on another commitment."

Mentor: "What would taking it on require you to stop or renegotiate?"

Participant: "I haven't worked that out. I was hoping there was a way to fit everything."

The useful moment is the participant recognizing an unresolved tradeoff. The mentor has helped surface it without supplying an answer the participant does not own.

Before turning the page, write what you would ask next. Avoid a question that contains your preferred answer, such as "Don't you think you should decline?"

Case 6 Support with an honest challenge

Permission to offer perspective

A mentor might say, "Would it help to hear an example from my experience, or do you want to work through the options first?" If the participant wants the example, explain where the situations differ. Personal experience offers a perspective, not proof that the same choice will work here.

The participant might choose to speak with their current project lead before taking on more work. The agreement becomes: "By Friday, I'll clarify what the new role requires and discuss my existing deadline. I'll bring back what I learned before deciding."

The harder version

The participant repeatedly arrives without an example and makes commitments they do not revisit. The mentor should name that pattern: "We have ended the last two conversations with an action, but we have not reviewed what happened. Is the action wrong, is the timing unrealistic, or do we need a different agreement about these meetings?"

A participant also has a right to ask for a reset if the mentor regularly cancels or seems distracted. Respect for experience does not remove the need for mutual reliability.

Practice together

Use the Mentor conversation sheet. The participant brings one event and a question they genuinely have. The mentor asks for the participant's reasoning before giving advice. Reverse roles for a short second round so the mentor examines an experience of their own.

Evidence of a useful conversation

Both people understand the action the participant chose and when they will revisit it. At the next meeting, discuss what happened before introducing a new goal. A thoughtful decision to abandon an unhelpful experiment still counts as learning if the reasoning is clear.

Challenge: whose need is shaping the conversation? A mentor might want to feel useful. A participant might want reassurance. What question would help you serve the other person while keeping responsibility with the person who owns the decision?

Choosing a practice tool

Use the sheet that matches the work

Before the conversation helps you distinguish an event from your explanation and prepare a request. Use it for Cases 1 and 5, or whenever you are rehearsing an argument before asking the other person what happened.

Working agreement turns a broad commitment into something another person understands. Use it for Cases 3 and 4. Include dependencies and a checkpoint. An assignment is still open until its owner agrees to it.

Meeting participation check asks whose information shaped a decision. Use it for Case 2. Do not count speaking time as a measure of worth. Look at whether relevant information was available and considered.

Feedback request gives someone a specific behavior to comment on. After the attempt helps you record what happened without turning one successful interaction into proof that you have changed permanently.

Repairing a misstep helps you acknowledge your own action and decide how to follow through. Use it after a conversation or decision has caused a problem. An apology does not oblige the other person to trust you immediately.

A worked example of useful evidence

Goal: "At the next planning meeting, I'll hear the venue lead's concern before proposing the schedule." Observation: "I asked and waited. She explained that setup takes an hour longer than I assumed. We changed the arrival time." Feedback: "She said she had room to explain but wanted the questions in advance next time."

Next attempt: send the decision question ahead of time, then ask what information is missing during the meeting. This adjustment follows the other person's experience instead of relying on your impression that the meeting went well.

Each practice sheet includes a completed example and space for your situation. Start with one sheet. Use After the attempt to review the result with your mentorship partner. The separate Workbook examples show how this work connects to the four pages from the session.

A mentor conversation that goes deeper

Before you meet

Each person brings a specific event. Decide what is appropriate to discuss and remove identifying details about others when those details are unnecessary. Ask what kind of help would be useful: understanding the situation, considering options or getting feedback on an attempt.

For a 25-minute conversation, spend about five minutes describing the event, ten examining assumptions and alternatives, and the remaining time choosing an action and follow-up. This is a suggested structure. Change the pace if something needs more attention.

Questions worth making time for

"What did you want to happen, and what did the other person experience?" Ask what supports each part of the answer. If the person does not know the effect on someone else, identify a respectful way to ask.

"Which detail complicates your explanation?" Stay with it. A story becomes more useful when it includes information that does not flatter the storyteller.

"What have you already tried?" Understand the response before suggesting another approach. Advice that ignores previous attempts adds work without necessarily adding insight.

"What would a person who disagrees with you say?" Treat the answer as a hypothesis until it is checked. The exercise should make room for another perspective without pretending to read someone's mind.

Keep ownership clear

Ask the person to choose the action. Offer an experience or suggestion when it would help, then ask what fits and what does not. The mentor should not decide which report label is the person's real identity.

Close with an observable next step and a date to review it. The record belongs to the person doing the practice. Share notes only by agreement. Mentors should also choose a behavior to examine and invite feedback on their own participation.

Reviewing an attempt honestly

Start with what happened

At the next conversation, review the prior action before creating another one. Ask the person to describe the situation and the words or actions they tried. "It went well" is an opening, not enough detail to evaluate the attempt.

Suppose someone practiced inviting a quieter colleague to contribute. The colleague replied, "I wish you'd asked me beforehand instead of putting me on the spot." The intention was inclusion. The feedback suggests changing how the invitation happens. Agree on a better method with that colleague and test it again.

When the action did not happen

Ask what got in the way. The person might have lacked an opportunity, forgotten, avoided discomfort or chosen an action too large to attempt. These explanations call for different next steps. Do not mark lack of opportunity as failure. Find a realistic opportunity, or choose an action that fits the person's role.

If avoidance is the issue, make the first step smaller while preserving its purpose. Drafting the opening sentence and arranging a conversation might be the next commitment. Repeatedly choosing a new goal to avoid the old one deserves a candid conversation.

When the other person did not change

Evaluate the action within the learner's control. A clear request does not guarantee agreement. Ask whether they understood the response, maintained a needed boundary and identified the next responsible step. Do not reward them for getting compliance at any cost.

Decide what to keep

Continue a behavior when there is useful evidence that it helps. Adapt it when context or feedback calls for a different approach. Stop an experiment that is unhelpful and explain why. Record the evidence behind that decision.

A mentor's challenge: are you helping the person examine their reasoning, or steering them toward the story you prefer? Ask them at the end, "Where did my questions help you think, and where did I push you toward my answer?"

Your next 30 days

First week

Choose one observation from your report and one situation where it matters. Write a supporting example and a counterexample. Ask someone involved for their perspective without asking them to validate the entire report. Agree on an initial practice with your mentorship partner.

Example: "I move quickly when a plan stalls. At Thursday's meeting, I'll hear the person implementing the decision before proposing a solution." Avoid goals such as "be a better listener" until you define what someone would observe.

Second week

Try the action once. Record what you did, how the other person responded and what remains uncertain. Ask for feedback on the specific interaction while it is still recent. Keep the request small enough that the person has time to answer honestly.

If no suitable situation occurs, document that and choose a realistic next opportunity. Do not create unnecessary conflict to complete an exercise.

Third week

Repeat the action in another situation. Compare the effect. You might need more preparation with one person and a shorter invitation with another. Adaptation should respond to what people tell you and what the work requires, rather than an assumed style label.

By day 30

Meet with your mentorship partner. Bring both attempts and the feedback you received. Decide what to continue or revise. Identify the next setting where the behavior matters and put the next check-in on the calendar.

How you will judge progress

Use evidence you are positioned to observe: earlier warnings about delays, a clearer shared agreement, or input that changed a decision. Count attempts if that helps you remember to practice, but do not treat frequency alone as proof of better leadership. Someone affected by your behavior should have a voice in evaluating its usefulness.

The 30-day sheet records one experiment. Keep the scope narrow enough to repeat. You are learning how a change works in your life, not completing an assignment for its own sake.

What people work around

An honest closing exercise

Ask yourself: "What do people have to work around when they work with me?" Choose a behavior, not an insult directed at yourself. Examples include changing direction without updating others, making a commitment before checking capacity, or withholding a concern until after the decision.

Write the effect you suspect it has. Then ask a person you trust about a specific situation: "When I changed the plan after we started, what extra work did that create for you?" Give them room to disagree with your interpretation or name an effect you had not considered.

Hold two responsibilities together

You are responsible for examining your behavior. Other people remain responsible for theirs. Adapting your communication does not require accepting disrespect, abandoning a requirement or taking on work you have not agreed to own.

If the obstacle is unclear authority, conflicting expectations or too little capacity, name that. A style explanation should never hide a problem with the way the work is organized. Ask who has the authority to resolve it and what information they need.

Bring back a decision

At your next mentor conversation, explain what you learned and which behavior you intend to change. Include what would count as evidence that it helped. Invite your partner to question a conclusion that goes beyond the evidence.

You do not owe anyone a perfect account of yourself. You do owe the people working with you an honest effort to understand your impact and follow through on the agreements you make.

About these materials

This guide builds on the NEXTGEN session, Jeff Conroy's Behavior Style Guide and What Would You Do questions. Mike Baker and Jeff Conroy are the session facilitators. The six cases and suggested conversations are fictional practice material. They do not describe class members or establish predictable behavior for any style.

Return to the assessment resources at www.mikebakerhq.com/nextgen/. Keep your personal report and notes private unless you choose to share them. The participant packet contains no class results.