

# HERDING TIGERS

**DISCUSSION GUIDE**



# CHAPTER ONE: WHAT CREATIVE PEOPLE NEED

1. (Share the Stability/Challenge matrix with your team.) Where do you think our team falls right now on the Stability/Challenge matrix? Are we struggling with too little challenge, or too little stability?
2. What could I do better as a leader to give you what you need right now?
3. Do you feel like I am protecting you from undue pressures from the organization right now, or is there something more I can be doing for you?
4. (Share the common myths about creative people.) Do you think any of these myths are affecting our organization right now?
5. Is there any place where you simply feel "stuck" right now? How can I help you?
6. What was the last creative risk you took, and why did it feel risky?

# CHAPTER TWO: STOP DOING THE WORK

1. Is there any place where I am suffocating you and not allowing you to do your best work? (Ask your team members to be honest about places where they need you to back off so that they can feel freedom to grow and assume more ownership.)
2. Is there any place where you're confused about our objectives or my expectations? (Offer your team a chance to show you where things aren't adding up. Everything might be crystal clear to you but thoroughly confusing to your team.)
3. What else do you need from me right now, in terms of resources or support? (This is a difficult question to ask, because it is a vulnerable one. However, simply offering your team a chance to air their desires will give you a better sense of where their collective minds are. And, you'll see whether there's an outage in focus - what are we doing?, function - how are we doing it?, or fire - why are we doing it?)
4. Do you think we struggle most with effective focus, efficient functioning, or a connection to the fire that drives our team's core mission?

# CHAPTER THREE: THEY BROKE IT, YOU BOUGHT IT

1. How do you think we define "good work"?
2. Is there anything I'm doing that's confusing you? It could be a decision I've made, a system I've implemented, a personnel change, or anything else you don't understand.
3. What do you think my leadership philosophy is? What do you think is most important to me?
4. Is there any place where you feel like I'm stepping in and controlling your work rather than allow you the freedom you need to make your own decisions?
5. Do you have a philosophy you live by in your work? How do you make decisions as you go about your day?

## CHAPTER FOUR: LEVEL UP

1. Do you think there are any weird power dynamics or relational quirks on our team? If so, why?
2. Have you ever experienced me being defensive or protecting my opinion in a seemingly irrational way? When, and what happened?
3. Is there any situation or project where you wish I'd better listen to your opinion(s)?
4. How can I better set you up for success in your role?
5. Is there any place where you don't understand my criteria for making decisions?

# CHAPTER FIVE: LEAD BRILLIANCE

1. (Share the three motivational types.) Do you think you're a builder, a fixer, or an optimizer? How do you feel your role matches up with your natural motivation?
2. Do you feel challenged by your work right now? What might help you increase your sense of challenge and engagement?
3. Is there any work that you wish you could do, but isn't a part of your normal workload? Why?
4. Are there any big decisions we've made as an organization where you clearly understand *what* we're doing, but not necessarily *why*?
5. What do you think is most holding you back in your effort to do great work right now?
6. What do you see as your greatest contribution to the team right now?

# CHAPTER SIX: EARN THE RIGHT

1. Is there any place where you think my stated expectations are out of alignment with my *actual* expectations?
2. How do you think our team's level of trust affects our work? Why?
3. What is the last major thing that you changed your mind about? Why did you do it, and how did it affect you?
4. Can you think of a time when I made a promise or declared something to be true that didn't actually happen? How did it make you feel?
5. How can I improve the level of trust you feel for me as a team?

# CHAPTER SEVEN: PRUNE PROACTIVELY

1. (Share the concept of ghost rules.) Do you think there are any ghost rules on our team that could be limiting our behavior?
2. Is there anything about our culture that you don't understand, or that you'd like to know more about?
3. What is the best thing about our team's culture? The worst?
4. When do you think our team is at our best? At our worst?
5. Do you believe that our rewards are consistent with what we say we expect from you, or that rewards don't really line up with our words?



# CHAPTER EIGHT: STAY ON TARGET

1. What opportunities do you see that we're not currently exploring?
2. Is there anything you're being asked to do, but don't understand why?
3. What is the biggest drain on your ability to focus right now?
4. Are there any assumptions you think I'm making about a project, or the work as a whole, that you think is affecting how our team functions?
5. What's something obvious that you think I don't see?

# CHAPTER NINE: DEFEND THEIR SPACE

1. Do you feel like you have the margin you need to do your best work? How can I help?
2. Is there anyplace where you feel overwhelmed right now? What would give you reprieve?
3. If you could make anything (meeting, system, etc.) go away right now, what would it be and why?
4. How could we protect predictable blocks of time throughout our week to do important, deep work?
5. Are there any meetings you think have outlived their usefulness? Or, are there any meetings you're a part of but don't understand why?

# CHAPTER TEN: BE THE MUSE

1. In general, do you prefer coming up with ideas on your own, or in a group format? Why?
2. What was the last thing you saw (or read) that inspired you to think differently about your work?
3. How could we make our creative process more effective?
4. Is there anything I am doing to squelch your creative passion or that is limiting your ability to generate ideas?
5. Talk about a time when our team was at its creative best. What was so special about that circumstance?

# CHAPTER ELEVEN: FIGHT WELL

1. Do you think we handle conflict well, poorly, or not at all? Why?
2. Is there anything we're doing right now that you disagree with? Why?
3. Is there anything that I'm doing right now that's preventing you from speaking truth to me? How can I be more open?
4. Are there any new resource constraints that are creating pressure or tension?
5. Talk about a time when our handled conflict well. Why do you think we were successful in that situation?

# CHAPTER TWELVE: BE A LEADER WORTH FOLLOWING

1. How do you define success in your life and work? What does success look like in 1, 5, 10 years?
2. Do you have a framework, or set of values, that you use to make decisions? What are they?
3. Think of a leader (not me) who has had a great personal impact on your life. Why were they so effective?
4. Is there any way in which you think you might be over-identifying with your role or title, in an unhealthy way?
5. If they were to put seven words on your tombstone, what do you think they would be?