

FRICTION

INTERPERSONAL Don't Feed the Fire

The Experiment: The Signal Plan

Duration: One week

Time required: 5–10 minutes of preparation before a high-stakes interaction

Goal: Build emotional self-regulation and interpersonal trust by replacing subconscious physical “tells” with a conscious, practiced response during high-stakes moments.

Step One: Identify Your “Leaks” (3 Minutes)

Think of the last time you got activated with someone at work. Write the first three things your body did (pick from: faster speech, quieter/colder voice, raised eyebrows, narrowed eyes, tight smile, clipped answers, long silence, sarcasm, looking away, interrupting, over-explaining). These are your tells.

Step Two: Decide Your “Default Signal” (2 Minutes)

Choose one outward posture you want to be true when you're hot—something observable. Examples:

- “Slower voice, fewer words.”
- “Open hands on the table.”
- “Ask one question before I state my view.”
- “Neutral face + warm tone.”

Step Three: Write Your One-Sentence Meta-Script (2 Minutes)

"If I notice **[my leak]**, then I will **[my default signal]** and say **[my meta-script]**." Example: If I notice I'm talking fast, then I will exhale, slow my voice, and say, "I'm getting frustrated, give me a minute to respond well."

Step Four: Use It Once This Week (1 Minute + The Real Moment)

Don't wait for a big blow-up. Use it in a small tense moment: a pushback email, a meeting interruption, a misunderstanding.

Afterward (30 seconds): jot two notes:

1. What changed in me when I used it?

2. What changed in them?