

Deliberate Doubt Decision Guide

A leader's quick guide for building thinkers

Deliberate Doubt is the practice of interrupting certainty with curiosity so our first answer doesn't become our only answer.

Use this when a problem lands on your desk and your first impulse is to answer.

1 | WHAT DOES THIS MOMENT NEED?

Before you answer, ask: Does this problem need my answer, their thinking, or both?

YOUR ANSWER	THEIR THINKING	BOTH
When the decision requires authority, context, or judgment only you have.	When they have enough information and authority to work through the problem and decide what to do.	When they need information or direction from you but can still work through part of the problem themselves.

2 | TWO DIFFERENT OUTCOMES

SOLVING FOR THEM	HELPING THEM THINK IT THROUGH
The problem gets handled.	They are better equipped the next time.

3 | QUESTIONS THAT BUILD THINKING

QUESTION TYPE	TRY ASKING
CLARIFY THE CHALLENGE	What's the real challenge here?
EXPLORE THE OPTIONS	What options have you considered?
TRANSFER OWNERSHIP	What do you think is the best next step?
ANTICIPATE ROADBLOCKS	What might get in the way?

These are not steps. Choose the question the moment needs. One good question may be enough.

4 | MAKE THINKING PART OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Set the expectation: When you bring me a problem, be ready to discuss the challenge, the options you considered, your recommended next step, and where you need my help.

When people know which questions are coming, they begin thinking before they walk through your door.

THE GOAL Recognize the difference between a problem that needs your answer and a moment that needs their thinking.

Curiosity before action—not curiosity instead of action.