

Tidy vs Truth

Use these reflection questions to explore where the pressure to be positive, grateful, or quick to move on may be crowding out honest dialogue, emotional processing, and meaningful learning.

Core framing

- Where in our culture do we prioritise tidiness over truth?
- When tension appears, do we try to understand it, or do we try to smooth it over?
- Where might gratitude be functioning as a genuine response, and where might it be acting as a shortcut to resolution?

For leaders

- When have I encouraged positivity or gratitude instead of inviting candour?
- What am I concerned might happen if people say what they really think or feel?
- Where in my team might people feel pressure to be grateful rather than safe to name what is not working?
- How do I respond when someone brings anger, disappointment, or frustration into the room?
- Do I stay curious long enough to understand the issue, or do I steer too quickly toward reassurance, solutions, or closure?
- What would it look like for me to value truth over tidiness in the next difficult conversation?

For teams

- When have you felt pressure to "just be grateful" instead of speaking openly about a concern?
- What phrases or habits in this team subtly signal that it is time to move on before something has really been worked through?
- Can you think of a recent issue that looked resolved on the surface but still felt unfinished underneath?
- What was left unsaid?
- What helps people here speak honestly without fear of being judged as negative, difficult, or ungrateful?
- What gets in the way of that?

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For team norms

- How do we want to respond when someone raises a hard truth?
- What is the difference between healthy appreciation and performative gratitude in this team?
- How can we make room for discomfort without letting conversations become destructive?
- What would "room to be real" look like as an everyday team practice?
- What is one behaviour we should start, one we should stop, and one we should protect?

Closing prompt

In cultures that value truth over tidiness, people are not rushed into gratitude; they are given room to be real.