HERDING TIGERS

RITUALS CHECKLIST

WEEKLY RITUALS

— Do a mental sweep of the past week for times when you shifted into maker mode versus manager mode and consider how it affected the team dynamic.

— Do a quick scan of your principles or leadership philosophy and consider any areas where you or the team might be violating them.

— As you look at your upcoming schedule, consider any meetings or situations where you might encounter a power imbalance. How will you make everyone involved feel engaged and permitted to bring their best ideas? (This could mean having conversations ahead of time to encourage them to speak or being extra careful to put your gun away during the meeting.)

— Schedule a one-on-one coaching meeting with at least one person on your team this week. Listen to them and help them identify areas for growth.

— Reflect on current projects and where you may be allowing expectation escalation to overwhelm the rhythm of your team. Are you setting bait-and-switch expectations with your team?

— Consider your current project work, and whether your team has a clear understanding of roles, expectations, and strategy.

— Choose one cultural principle that you will elevate this week. Find ways of working it into your conversation.

— Consider each member of your team and the problems he or she is tasked with solving. Are the problems clearly defined?

— Look at your upcoming calendar and shift the schedule so that your team has blocks of time for focused work.

— Send an e-mail with a key resource or article to your team, and explain why you're sending it. Make sure it's something that will inspire them to think in new ways about the work, or open their minds to new possibilities.

— Set up your weekly schedule around when you will do your own deep work, which could involve strategy, team planning, or getting ahead of the team's work. Encourage your team to do the same.

— Take some time to consider the interactions on your team and note where there are any potential conflicts or signs of dissension.

MONTHLY RITUALS

— Review your scoreboard and dashboard and revise them as needed.

— Spend some time considering the marks of good leadership. (For example, from chapter 1: a good leader of creative people accomplishes the objectives while developing the team's ability to shoulder new and more challenging work.) Do you feel like you are accomplishing these right now, or is there an area you need to work on?

 — Invite someone on your team to connect with you over lunch or coffee with the sole purpose of getting to know them better and understand their aspirations.

— Consider someplace where your team has fallen short of its objectives. Schedule a time to discuss the failure and what you learned from it. Don't make this intimidating; make it as light and casual as possible.

— Consider the past month of work. Have there been any breaches of trust on your part? Do you need to make it right with someone?

 — As you look at your upcoming workload, consider the key decisions that will need to be made and when they will need to be made so that you can stay ahead of your team's work.

— Consider your team culture and where you need to prune. Are there any deviations from expected behavior that are in danger of becoming normalized?

— Consider the upcoming projects your team will be working on and establish clear challenges (problem statements) for each.

— Eliminate something from the calendar or tasks list this month so that your team has more time and attention for its most valuable projects.

— Consider what resources you can add to your team's "stimulus library" to help them stay inspired. What have you read or watched recently that you wish more of your team had access to?

— Take a look at all of your recurring meetings and time commitments. What has outlived its effectiveness and needs to be pruned?

— Have a conversation with your core team members about their level of satisfaction with the work and the team's overall dynamics.

QUARTERLY RITUALS

— Choose one to two projects that you will give yourself permission to stay directly involved in so that you don't become too disconnected from the work.

— Review your guiding principles to make sure that they are still relevant and comprehensive.

— Do a broad review of your relationships on your team and note any relational awkwardness or power imbalances that have developed.

— Consider the rhythm of your coaching conversations and your team's response to them. Have you seen growth in your team over the past few months? If not, how do you need to challenge individual team members to step out of their comfort zone?

— Identify a few stories from your past that you might want to share with the team at an opportune time. These can be times you failed and learned something, a story from your childhood, or anything else that humanizes you to the team.

— Consider your team's project work from a higher perspective. Are you hitting your marks? Is your team healthy? Are team members developing and growing in their capacity to do more and better work?

— As you look at your team's upcoming rhythm, consider the cultural principles that you want to elevate and reward over the coming quarter. How will you do so?

— Take time to think about areas of potential misalignment or assumptive behavior on your team. Are you sensing a growing gap between the what and the why of your work?

— Review your team's meeting schedule and organizational commitments—prune aggressively.

— Plan a stimulus dive for your team around a big project.

— Reconsider your team's meetings and who's invited to each. Do you need to make any changes?

— Reiterate your team's core principles, and review the rules of fair fighting.

 — You: What big decisions are on the horizon? Filter them through your personal decision-making criteria and anticipate how you might respond.

— You: Is my leadership consistent with my values? If not, how can I better align?