ANITA B.ORG 2023 GRACE HOPPER CELEBRATION | THE WAY FORWARD

1

Raising the Bench:
Helping Multiple Levels of
Leaders Grow Together

the welcome elephant

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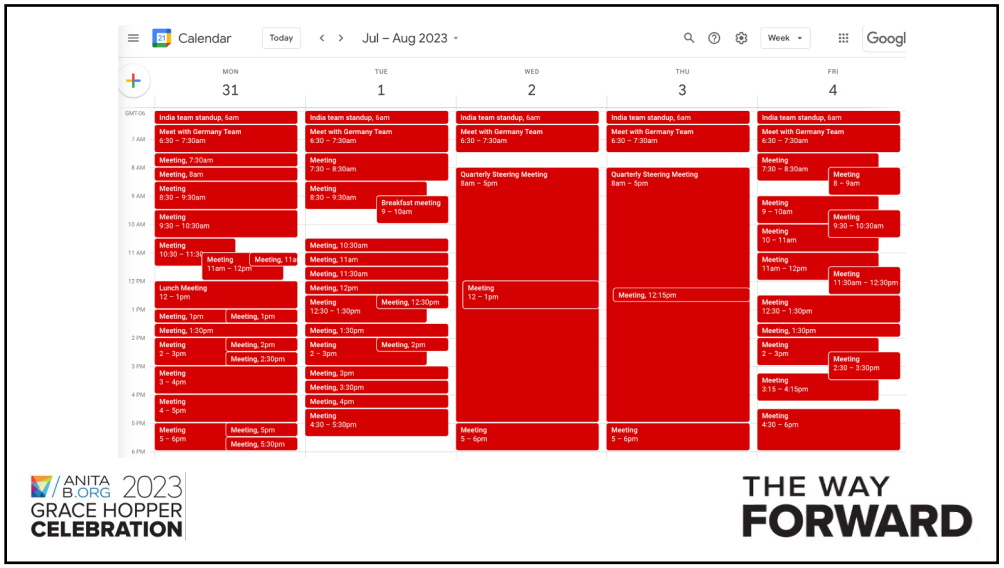
Calendar
Today
Jul – Aug 2023
Week
MON 31
TUE 1
WED 2
THU 3
FRI 4
India team standup, 6am
Meet with Germany Team
6:30 – 7:30am
Meeting, 7:30am
Meeting, 8am
Meeting
8:30 – 9:30am
Meeting
9:30 – 10:30am
Meeting
10:30 – 11:30
Meeting
11am – 12pm
Meeting, 11a
Lunch Meeting
12 – 1pm
Meeting, 1pm
Meeting, 1:30pm
Meeting
2 – 3pm
Meeting, 2pm
Meeting, 2:30pm
Meeting
3 – 4pm
Meeting
4 – 5pm
Meeting
5 – 6pm
Meeting, 5pm
Meeting, 5:30pm
Meeting, 10:30am
Meeting, 11am
Meeting, 11:30am
Meeting, 12pm
Meeting
12:30 – 1:30pm
Meeting, 12:30pm
Meeting, 1:30pm
Meeting
2 – 3pm
Meeting, 2pm
Meeting, 3pm
Meeting, 3:30pm
Meeting, 4pm
Meeting
4:30 – 5:30pm
Quarterly Steering Meeting
8am – 5pm
Meeting
12 – 1pm
Meeting
5 – 6pm
Meeting, 12:15pm
Breakfast meeting
9 – 10am
Meeting
8 – 9am
Meeting
9 – 10am
Meeting
10 – 11am
Meeting
11am – 12pm
Meeting
11:30am – 12:30pm
Meeting
12:30 – 1:30pm
Meeting, 1:30pm
Meeting
2 – 3pm
Meeting
2:30 – 3:30pm
Meeting
3:15 – 4:15pm
Meeting
4:30 – 6pm
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principle & co-founder // christine hudson
I leverage a background in leading and coaching large-scale business agility transformations and early-stage startups to provide mentoring and coaching for transformation leaders, key change roles and stakeholders. I love designing and facilitating experiences that help humans change what they believe is possible.
Practice Makes Culture™ Expert Facilitator
Business Agility Consultant
Facilitative Leadership Coach
Leadership Circle® Certified 360 Consultant
christine@thewelcomeelephant.co
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principle & co-founder // ronica roth (she/her)

I help leaders play with ideas, combining the art of the possible and curiosity with disciplined experiments. I love watching humans thrive and achieve together. I believe organizations of all types can elevate how people work together to unleash the potential of individuals and teams at all levels.

Practice Makes Culture™ Expert Facilitator
Business Agility Consultant
Facilitative Leadership Coach
Certified Scrum Trainer, Emeritus (CST)
Leadership Circle® Certified 360 Consultant

ronica@thewelcomeelephant.co

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trusted partner // lieschen gargano (she/her)

I lean on a background of facilitation and conflict resolution to lead the agile transformation inside a mid size, late stage startup. I am focused on evolving our leadership practices, and creating meaningful alignment from strategy development to value delivery.

Sr. Director, LACE Leader
SAFe Program Consultant
MA, Conflict Resolution

lieschen@parachutes.com

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trusted partner // cheryl crupi (she/her)

I am passionate about helping business leaders learn, believe in, and practice generative behaviors. I believe that by doing so, we will create work environments that are adaptable, focused, creative, and joyful, with people who are activated to build amazing solutions for their businesses and their world. After a decade as an enterprise Agile change champion at Fortune 500 companies, I now am a member of the team that authors the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe).

Methodologist
Scaled Agile Framework Fellow
cheryl.crupi@scaledagile.com

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trusted parter // bj (bedford) miller (she/her)

An Olympic Gold Medal and World Record in the 4x100 medley relay, BJ has maintained a passion for sports throughout her business career. At Parity, she plays a key role in executing a business strategy that provides funding and opportunities for female athletes.

Sports really gave me who I am. I didn't understand that things might not be completely equal between the genders because they were always equal with [my brothers]. And if they weren't, I fought like hell to make sure they were. I guess some habits die hard!

bj@paritynow.co

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practice makes culture™// the welcome elephant

What you practice as an individual as a leader and as a leadership team defines your culture. Your words and behaviors create experiences that shape others' beliefs and actions, and ultimately your results.

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Raising the bench // 01

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Who's on the bench?

How will the next levels of leaders be ready to enter the game?

How can we help them be ready to make great decisions and guide the organization?

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Changing habits, forming new habits

1. Make a clear statement and decision about who you are:

   I am the kind of leader who invests in the bench

2. Start small

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Start small: Redesign one meeting to provide an introduction and practice

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Choose a skill and a meeting // 02

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What poor behaviors or poor outcomes are we observing?

Speaking in outputs vs value

People not paying attention, tuned out

People cutting each other off

Droning on…

Finger pointing, blaming other parts of the org

People not sharing difficult information early enough to make a change

Not creating the results you wanted this quarter

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What skills would raise the bench?

Leadership
- ROI / Value
- Storytelling
- New idea pitching
- Jobs to be done (JTBD)

Collaborative culture
- Active listening
- Empathy
- Healthy conflict
- Appreciation

Systems thinking
- Systems understanding
- Roadmapping approach
- Personal responsibility
- Gradual empowerment

New technology
- Clarity & transparency
- Online collaboration tools
- Value stream mapping
- Machine learning / AI

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Examples of meetings you might choose and the skills you might practice in those meetings

Short and Medium-length meetings

- **Biweekly leadership meeting + active listening**
- Vendor or technology decision meeting + Jobs to be Done (JTBD)
- **Standup + speaking succinctly to value delivered**
- Marketing sync meeting + Chat GPT
- System Demo + lean-agile principles
- Extended leadership team monthly meeting + gradual empowerment

Longer meetings

- PI Planning + crucial conversations (at least observation/storytelling/emotion cycle)
- **Quarterly steering and planning + personal responsibility**
- Strategy articulation leadership offsite + measuring ROI and using a modified strategy A3

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Exercise: Choose a skill to work on and a meeting in which to practice

1. Solo brainstorm some trios:
   + meeting
   + observed behaviors or outcomes
   + skills to practice
2. Share your list with your tablemates.
3. Choose a trio to explore today, and write it in your worksheet.

Download worksheet: {link}

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Meeting purpose, participants and agenda // 03

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Use **Meeting Purpose** to to share and reinforce skills and behaviors to practice

To — WHAT

By — HOW

So That — WHY

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Example meeting purpose

To

decide what to focus on as our most critical work and experiments in next quarter

By

- building shared knowledge of recent results
- agreeing on next constraints and parameters
- **actively listening** to all the proposals
- choosing up to 3 critical efforts/experiments

So That

we improve our customer experience (goal is +10 NPS) and employee experience (goal is +10 eNPS) by the end of 2023

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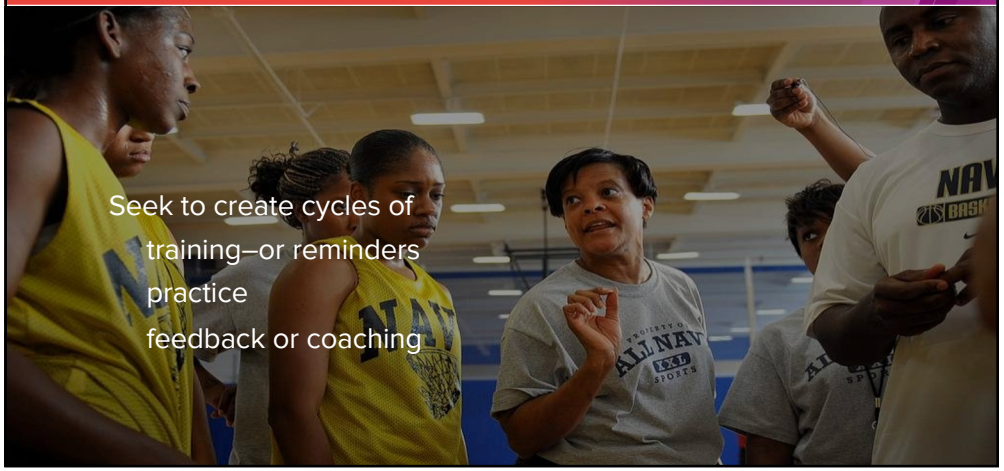

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Training Type, Style, and Design

What kind of training might most effectively improve the skills we want to work on? What kind of practice?

What format best fits the material and the audience?

How might the training fit naturally into the flow of the meeting while also providing ample time to practice?

Who might most effectively provide the training?

Agenda Design Example: Short | medium meeting with active listening

Problems: People talk over each other, repeat ideas as their own, tune out until their turn to talk.

Impact: Some of the best ideas get missed; people feel unheard; poor systems learning

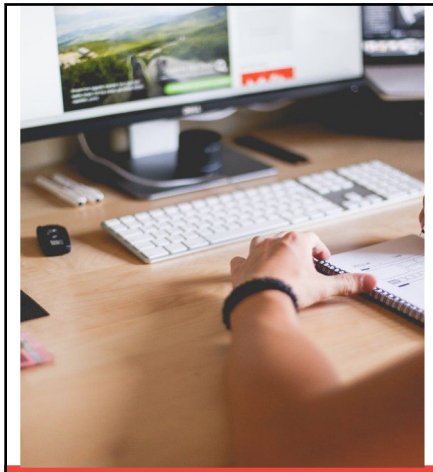
Skill: Active listening

Meetings: Update meeting, team meeting, retrospective

Agenda

[pre-work **training**: watch a short, 2-min video on active listening]

- Opening includes **training** watching the 2-min video *again to be top of mind*
- Round-robin updates [**remind everyone to practice active listening**]
  - After each, ask someone to **paraphrase for understanding** [perhaps choose the next speaker]



Agenda Refining Iteration #1

Solo work: Add some initial ideas about your meeting agenda to include cycles of training, practice, coaching

Use examples on back of your worksheet to guide you

We'll do several iterations of examples and updating. Some solo updates, some pair and group discussion

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Agenda Design Example: Long meeting w/ personal responsibility

Problem: Leaders use "office culture" or "politics" to justify work being stuck or change being impossible; related habit of finger-pointing and blaming others.

Impact: Initiatives never get started; energy is wasted on blaming rather than solving together.

Skill: Operating from a place of personal responsibility

Meetings: Quarterly steering, annual strategy, leadership off-site, &c

Agenda

[pre-work **training**: watch personal responsibility video]

- Icebreaker: stories about **being out of personal responsibility**
- Current state readouts
  - Guide presenters to notice the **language** they use, and listeners to notice their **responses**.
- Consider paths forward
  - Review proposed rocks, looking for **blame and obligation**. Review Strategy Worksheets for root cause **blind spots**.
- Decide which initiatives to pursue
  - Script **"Art of the Possible"** language
- ROAM Risks
  - Review step to check for **blame** language
- Consensus Vote
  - Use Fist of Five to **avoid pocket vetoes**
  - Carefully create a **safe space** for "1" and "2" votes to articulate their concerns

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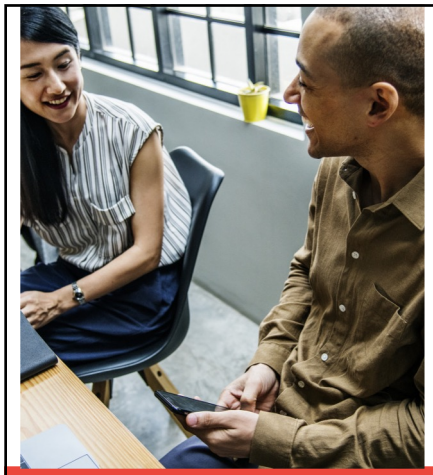

Agenda Refining Iteration #2

Chat with someone next to you about additional ideas for your meeting agenda to include cycles of training, practice, coaching.

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Agenda Design Example:

Short meeting with better value stories

Problem: Team focuses on outputs instead of outcomes

Impact: Poor prioritization, stakeholder confusion, less systems thinking

Skill: Describe the *value* whenever talking about work

Meetings: Daily stand-up, team or whole-org huddle

Agenda

- **Training:** Leader provides 3 quick, current examples of speaking to customer, org, and business value
- For each effort that had some change since yesterday:
  - What has changed?
  - Is this effort blocked?
  - How does this effort **contribute to a larger goal? (with feedback)**
- For each effort that will be worked on next:
  - What work will be done?
  - How does this effort **contribute to a larger goal? (with feedback)**

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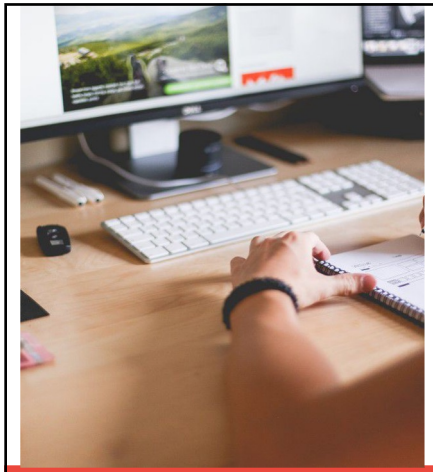

Agenda Refining Iteration #3

Solo work

Further refine your ideas for your meeting purpose and skills; how you might update your meeting agenda to include cycles of training, practice, coaching

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Agenda Design Example:

Medium meeting with lean-agile principles

Problem: Leaders are more focused on plans than results; learning seen as failing

Impact: Teams demoralized, not generating results

Skill: Leaders support Lean-Agile principles

Meeting: Biweekly system demo (other examples: biweekly leadership mtg; planning)

Agenda

[pre-work **training**: read a short article on iterative development]

- Purpose adds a WHY of "showing **progress toward outcomes**"
- Opening adds a working agreement around **safe to learn**
- Each demo includes narration:
  - Why this was the **most important work**
  - What the team **learned**
  - **Incremental results**
  - How next work will be **adjusted** based on learnings
- Invite leaders to practice celebrating learning, and providing feedback

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Agenda Refining Iteration #4
Group work
In 30 seconds or less, share with your group the following:
• Meeting
• Skill and training
• Agenda
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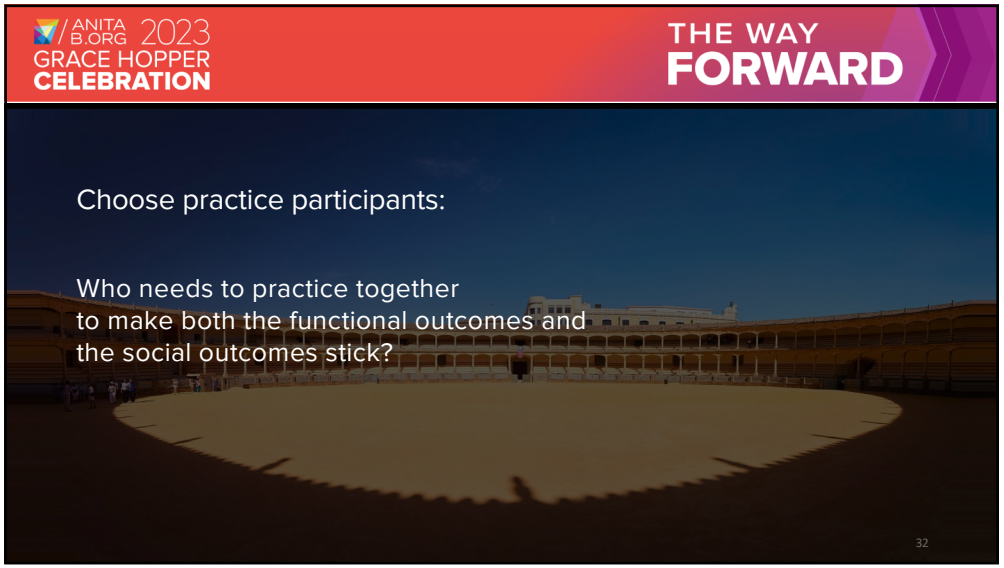
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Choose practice participants:
Who needs to practice together to make both the functional outcomes and the social outcomes stick?
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Exercise: How might you expand the participant list?

Capture your response on your worksheet.

Consider:

- Who models the skill well?
- Who should practice together, to help each other learn?
- What peers might we want to learn at the same time?

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Value and timing check // 04

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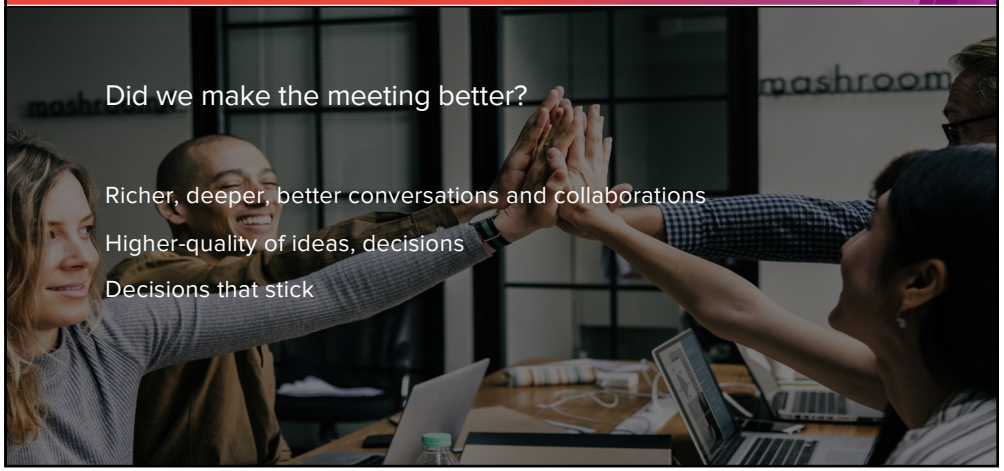

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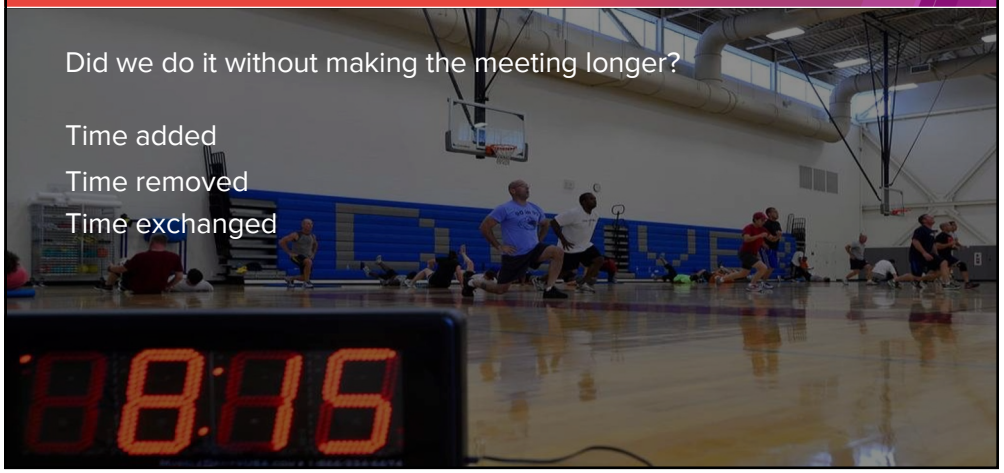

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Agenda Design Example:

Short meeting with better value stories

Problem: Team focuses on ... of outcomes

Impact: Poor prioritization, stakeholder confusion, less systems thinking

Skill: Describe the *value* whenever talking about work

Meetings: Daily stand-up, team or whole-org huddle

WORTH IT

Agenda

- **Training:** Leader provides 3 quick, current examples of speaking to ...ner, org, and business value
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  - ...hat has changed?
  - Is this effort blocked?
  - How does this effort **contribute to a larger goal?**
- For each effort that will be worked on next:
  - What work will be done?
  - How does this effort **contribute to a larger goal?**

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Exercise: Did we raise the bench? Did we also improve the meeting?

In your group, choose ONE person's work to evaluate.

- Is the training directly tied to the behavior change?
- Can participants practice in a meaningful way?
- Will the meeting better achieve its functional outcomes?
- Have we over-rotated on training and practice?

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Closing and committing to practice // 05

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Changing habits, forming new habits

1. Make a clear statement and decision about who you are:

   I am the kind of leader who invests in the bench

2. Start small

3. Be VERY specific.
   - Where (what meeting)?
   - Date, day, time
   - Use your specific agenda
   - When/how will you tell your responsibilibuddy that you held your updated meeting?

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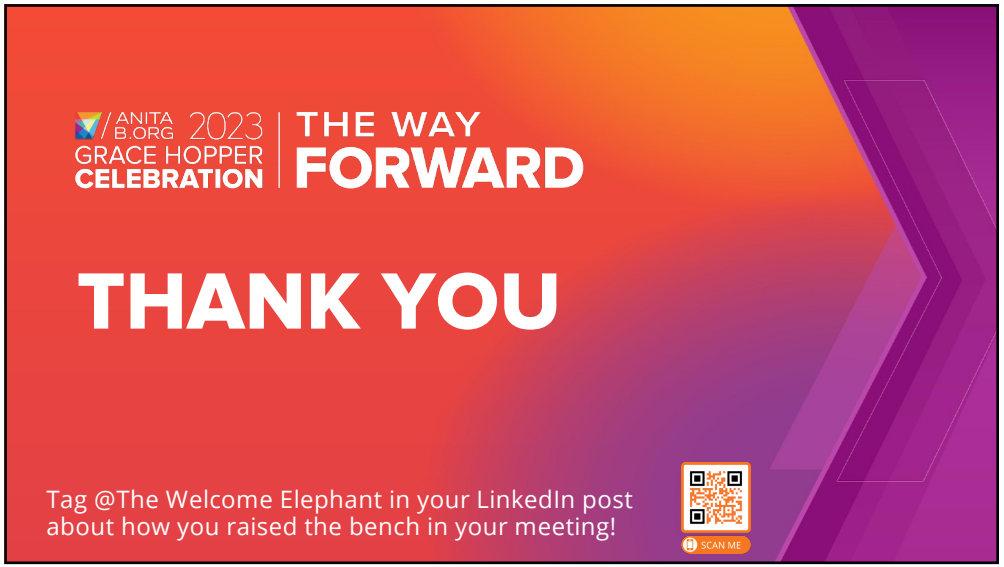

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Supporting Blogs: Foundations & Examples

TheWelcomeElephant.co/Stories

- Adding Leadership Skills Training to Everyday Meetings Part 1
  https://www.thewelcomeelephant.co/post/everyday-meeting-series-1-adding-facilitation-to-improve-everyday-meetings
- Adding Leadership Skills Training to Everyday Meetings Part 2
  https://www.thewelcomeelephant.co/post/everyday-meeting-series-2-adding-leadership-skills-training-to-everyday-meetings
- Raising the Bench in Big Meetings #1: Quarterly Steering Off to a Rough Start
  https://www.thewelcomeelephant.co/post/quarterly-steering-off-to-a-rough-start
- Raising the Bench in Big Meetings #2: Off to a great start–before the meeting begins
  https://www.thewelcomeelephant.co/post/raising-the-bench-in-big-meetings-off-to-a-great-start-before-the-meeting-begins
- Raising the Bench in Big Meetings #3: Practicing Personal Responsibility While Creating Better Meeting Outcomes: https://www.thewelcomeelephant.co/post/raising-the-bench-in-big-mtgs-practicing-personal-responsibility-while-creating-better-mtg-outcomes

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