

# THE SEVEN CHOICES

## SELF-ASSESSMENT

### An Internal Audit for Mindful Leaders Faced with Conflict

*“What you’ve learned got you where you are, but it might not be what you need for the future.” — Nance L. Schick, Esq.*

Before you approach an employee, co-worker, partner, or supervisor to resolve a dispute, you must first prepare your internal environment. Use this scorecard to evaluate if you have completed the "inner work" required for a solution-focused discussion. Score each item (1 for Yes, 0 for No).

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#### Emotional and Mental De-Escalation

- Forgive Yourself.** Have you released yourself from the guilt of overreacting, misstepping, or allowing your buttons to get pushed? Can you accept your baseline humanity, so you can clean up the mess with a clear head?
  - Acknowledge Your Agency.** Have you validated your own courage and resilience for stepping up to address this dispute directly rather than defaulting to passive avoidance?
  - Accept the Reality of the World.** Have you abandoned the energy-draining trap of shouting into the wind about how things "should" be, choosing instead to accept the facts and work with the world exactly as it is right now?
  - Free the Emotions Safely.** Have you released your heaviest emotions (e.g., anger, sadness, panic) in private, ensuring you are not carrying exposed personal vulnerabilities into a professional negotiation?
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#### Cognitive Openness

- Mindful Observation.** Can you sit in the room or view the scenario without an immediate, reflexive defense mechanism, observing the details without instantly reacting to them?
- Clean Slate Assumption.** Have you consciously suspended your historical expertise on this individual or problem, allowing yourself to "assume you know nothing" so you can discover a new opportunity?

- Third Ear Tuning.** Have you looked past the abrasive words or hardline demands of the other party to identify the underlying professional fear or hurt driving their behavior?
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## **YOUR INNER WORK SCORE**

- **0–3 (Reactive State):** Your default personality style under stress is currently driving you. Entering a conversation right now carries a high risk of escalation, defensiveness, or unrestrained reaction. Pause, clear your mind, and release the emotional weight privately before proceeding.
- **4–6 (Steward-in-Training):** You have achieved structural compliance with neutrality, but your personal assumptions or unvented frustrations are still creating minor internal friction. Review your answers to Part 2 to unlock greater curiosity.
- **7–9 (Centered Mediator):** Your internal architecture is stable, objective, and prepared. You are ready to step out of individual heroics and lead a collaborative, relationship-repairing discussion.