

Coaching Session #2 — May 31, 2025

Theme: Boundaries, Burnout, and Protecting the Team

Morgan: You mentioned some team burnout last time. How's that showing up?

Jamie: It's creeping in everywhere. One of my senior PMs told me last week, "I'm scared to say no in stakeholder meetings." That hit me hard. They're internalizing the chaos. They see me getting overridden, and it sends a signal: hold your breath, don't make waves.

Morgan: What does that mean for your culture?

Jamie: It's corrosive. We pride ourselves on clarity, ownership, autonomy. But the ground is shifting constantly. Roadmaps are getting rewritten mid-sprint. Priorities change with each whale opportunity. I'm trying to protect them, but I'm also... exhausted.

Morgan: What values are being tested for you?

Jamie: Clarity. Integrity. Stewardship. I want my team to feel proud, not like they're in a constant sprint with no finish line.

Morgan: And how do you model that under pressure?

Jamie: I think I've been trying to shield them too much. Maybe the better play is to equip them. To show them how to make trade-offs transparent, instead of just trying to say no.

Morgan: So move from buffer to boundary-setter?

Jamie: Exactly. I'm realizing that leadership isn't just about being the firewall. It's about helping them see the system and navigate it.

Morgan: What does that look like practically?

Jamie: I'm drafting a shared decision framework. Every request from GTM will be rated by strategic fit, repeatability, and opportunity cost. That way, my PMs don't have to guess what's "worth it."

Morgan: That's a huge win. What else can you celebrate?

Jamie: One of my PMs actually pushed back on a CRO request this week—and used the framework I'd started drafting. That gave me a glimpse of the culture shift I want.

Morgan: Amazing. Any moments where that didn't go well?

Jamie: Yes. I actually snapped at Ravi in our triage meeting. I felt like he was folding again to Avery without consulting product, and I just lost my cool. It wasn't public, but it wasn't fair. I circled back the next day and owned it. We had a deeper talk than we've ever had. Turns out, he's also feeling pressure but doesn't know how to show it.

Morgan: That's an important breakthrough. Conflict often opens the door to trust if it's repaired well.

Jamie: I agree. That repair built something new between us. I just wish I hadn't gone reactive first.

Morgan: That's part of growth. What's your intention going forward with Ravi?

Jamie: Invite him into the roadmap discussions earlier. Not just as an implementer, but as a co-owner. And be transparent about where I need his voice.

Morgan: Beautiful. What's a goal you want to hold onto for next time?

Jamie: Finish the framework, get buy-in from engineering leads, and present it in next week's exec sync.

Morgan: And what probing question are you still sitting with?

Jamie: Honestly: "Am I building the system I wish I had, or just reacting to the one I'm in?"