12 EARLY WARNING SIGNALS

Your Employee Is About to Leave

The average employee decides to leave **67 days** before they give notice. These are the signals that appear during that window. Most managers misread them as positive behavior.

THE NEUROSCIENCE BEHIND DEPARTURE

Each warning signal represents a specific shift in brain chemistry. When employees mentally check out, their **dopamine** (motivation) flatlines, **oxytocin** (trust/connection) withdraws, and **cortisol** (stress) drives protective behaviors. Understanding this chemistry helps you recognize what's really happening.

THE 12 SIGNALS

1. The Silence Shift

Once vocal in meetings, now quiet. Not listening more. Checking out. The opinions stopped because the investment stopped.

CLOVER Pillar:	Brain Chemistry:	Clover ERA Detects:
Communication	Oxytocin withdrawal	Communication scores decline

Manager Intervention:

Private 1:1 asking "I've noticed you've been quieter in meetings lately. I value your perspective. What's on your mind?" Open the vulnerability door without accusation.

2. Calendar Blocks

"Busy" during work hours. Personal call at 11am. Doctor at 3pm. These aren't health improvements. They're interview schedules.

CLOVER Pillar:	Brain Chemistry:	Clover ERA Detects:
Opportunity	Dopamine seeking elsewhere	Opportunity pillar scores drop

Manager Intervention:

Initiate a career conversation: "I want to make sure you see a future here. What does your ideal next role look like?" Address the opportunity gap directly.

3. The Agreement Pattern

"Sounds good." "Whatever you think." "I'm fine with that." When your most opinionated person stops having opinions, they're not maturing. They're mentally gone.

CLOVER Pillar:	Brain Chemistry:	Clover ERA Detects:
Vulnerability	Cortisol protection mode	Vulnerability scores decline

Manager Intervention:

Explicitly request disagreement: "I need your honest pushback on this. What am I missing?" Rebuild psychological safety by rewarding candor.

4. Effort Recalibration

From "going above and beyond" to "exactly what's required." No more volunteering. No more staying late. Not laziness. Conservation of energy for what's next.

CLOVER Pillar:	Brain Chemistry:	Clover ERA Detects:
Enablement	Dopamine extinction	Enablement scores flatten

Manager Intervention:

Reconnect effort to impact: "This project you completed directly resulted in X. Your work matters." Reactivate the dopamine pathway through recognition.

5. Future Disengagement

Stopped asking about the roadmap. No longer interested in next quarter's plans. Doesn't care about the promotion path. The future here doesn't matter to them anymore.

CLOVER Pillar:	Brain Chemistry:	Clover ERA Detects:
Opportunity	Serotonin depletion	Opportunity questions go neutral

Manager Intervention:

Paint a concrete picture: "Here's what I see as your path over the next 18 months. Let's talk about what excites you." Make the future visible.

6. Network Withdrawal

Skipping optional meetings. Declining lunch invites. Leaving Slack conversations. Reduced presence in team channels. They're already emotionally departed.

CLOVER Pillar:	Brain Chemistry:	Clover ERA Detects:
Communication	Oxytocin severing bonds	Connection questions decline

Manager Intervention:

Create a specific invitation: "I'd really value having you at Thursday's brainstorm. Your perspective on X is something the team needs." Make them feel essential, not optional.

7. Knowledge Hoarding Stops

They used to mentor juniors. Share context. Document processes. Now they're not investing in anyone else's growth. Why would they? They won't be here.

CLOVER Pillar:	Brain Chemistry:	Clover ERA Detects:
Learning	Oxytocin investment ceases	Learning pillar engagement drops

Manager Intervention:

Recognize their expertise publicly: "Your knowledge of X is invaluable. Would you lead a session for the team?" Reinforce their value and legacy.

8. Communication Frequency Drop

Fewer messages. Shorter responses. Delayed replies. Not overwhelmed. Disengaged. The relationship is already over in their mind.

CLOVER Pillar:	Brain Chemistry:	Clover ERA Detects:
Communication	Full relational withdrawal	Response quality declines

Manager Intervention:

Schedule an unstructured check-in: "No agenda. I just want to hear how you're really doing." Create space for honest conversation without performance pressure.

9. Sudden Punctuality

Perfect attendance. Always on time. Never works late. This isn't professionalism. It's boundary-setting before departure. Giving exactly what's required, nothing more.

CLOVER Pillar:	Brain Chemistry:	Clover ERA Detects:
Enablement	Energy conservation	Discretionary effort questions drop

Manager Intervention:

Acknowledge the shift without accusation: "I've noticed your boundaries are really clear lately. That's healthy. I want to make sure there's nothing we need to discuss."

10. Feedback Disappears

No more suggestions. No more "what if we tried." No more improvement ideas. They've decided the problems here are someone else's to solve.

CLOVER Pillar:	Brain Chemistry:	Clover ERA Detects:
Reflection	Investment futility	Reflection engagement declines

Manager Intervention:

Act on something they previously suggested: "Remember when you mentioned X? We're implementing it. Your ideas drive real change here." Prove feedback matters.

11. Conflict Avoidance

Previously would debate priorities, push back on unrealistic timelines, fight for resources. Now accepts everything. Friction requires investment. They've withdrawn theirs.

CLOVER Pillar:	Brain Chemistry:	Clover ERA Detects:
Vulnerability	Cortisol avoidance mode	Psychological safety scores drop

Manager Intervention:

Name the pattern: "You used to push back on timelines that didn't make sense. I valued that. What's changed?" Create safety to re-engage.

12. The Emotional Flatline

Not upset. Not excited. Just... neutral. The highs and lows that come with caring are gone. Steady, professional, and completely checked out.

CLOVER Pillar:	Brain Chemistry:	Clover ERA Detects:
ALL PILLARS FAILING	Full neurochemical shutdown	Multiple pillars decline together

Manager Intervention:

Direct conversation: "I've noticed a shift. I care about you as a person, not just an employee. What's really going on?" This may be a retention conversation or a graceful exit conversation. Either way, honesty serves everyone.

THE COUNTERINTUITIVE TRUTH

Here's what makes these signals dangerous: Most of them look positive on the surface. Managers interpret them as professional growth when they're actually pre-resignation behavior.

What You See	What It Looks Like	What It Actually Is
Less pushback	Getting easier to manage	Stopped caring enough to fight
Always agrees	Finally a team player	Mentally already gone
Perfect attendance	More professional	Strict boundaries before exit
No complaints	Happy with the role	Given up on change
Does exactly what's asked	Reliable performer	No investment in going beyond
Calm and steady	Emotionally mature	Emotionally withdrawn
Fewer questions	More confident	Disengaged from the future

SIGNAL COMBINATIONS: PATTERNS THAT PREDICT

Single signals can be noise. Signal combinations are patterns. When you see these clusters, you're not seeing separate issues. You're seeing a specific CLOVER pillar in collapse.

Vulnerability Collapse (Signals 1 + 3 + 10)

Silence Shift + Agreement Pattern + Feedback Disappears = **The employee no longer feels safe being themselves here.** They've concluded that speaking up has consequences, so they've stopped.

Opportunity Crisis (Signals 2 + 5 + 9)

Calendar Blocks + Future Disengagement + Sudden Punctuality = **They've concluded there's no future worth investing in.** The calendar blocks are interviews. The punctuality is boundary-setting before departure.

Communication Breakdown (Signals 1 + 6 + 8)

Silence Shift + Network Withdrawal + Communication Frequency Drop = **They're severing relational bonds before departure.** This is emotional pre-departure. The resignation letter is already drafted in their mind.

THE 67-DAY WINDOW

The average employee decides to leave 67 days before they give notice. That's 67 days where these signals are visible, if you know what to look for.

The problem isn't that the signals don't exist. It's that:

1. **Managers misread them as positive** (less friction = easier to manage)

2. **Managers don't report them** (flagging concerns has burned them before)

3. **The information is fragmented** (each person sees one piece, nobody connects the dots)

THE FRAGMENTATION PROBLEM

Signal #3 appears in meetings. Signal #6 appears in Slack. Signal #8 appears in email patterns. Signal #9 appears on the timesheet. Four different systems. Four different observers. Zero connection.

By the time anyone realizes these fragments form a pattern, the resignation letter is already drafted.

Clover ERA aggregates daily micro-signals across all six CLOVER pillars into a single dashboard. When Communication, Vulnerability, and Opportunity scores all decline for the same employee over 14 days, you don't need to wait for a resignation. You can act.

By the time the resignation letter arrives, the decision was made two months ago. Exit interviews capture the socially acceptable reasons, not the real ones.

The question isn't whether these signals exist in your company. They do. The question is whether you're seeing them in time to act.

NEXT STEP

Want to know what these signals are costing your company? The average 300-person tech company loses **$5.4M annually** to turnover they didn't see coming.

Schedule a free Turnover Analysis and I'll show you:

- Your estimated annual turnover cost (the real number, not the recruiting fee)
- Where the visibility gaps are in your organization
- What signals are likely being missed right now

No pitch. Just math.

Thank you for requesting this from Clive directly

Schedule a chat with Clive about your space

Find a calendar slot here