

# Theatre-to-Leadership Toolkit

Free Resource from Mission-Driven Momentum Podcast

Practical tools and exercises for bringing theatre principles into leadership. Use these frameworks to prepare for high-stakes moments, strengthen team culture, and develop authentic executive presence.

## THEATRE PRINCIPLES FOR LEADERSHIP

<b>Rehearsal</b>	Practice until it's second nature, creating freedom to adapt
<b>"Yes, And"</b>	Build on ideas instead of blocking them
<b>Presence</b>	Project confidence through grounding, intention, and authenticity
<b>Ensemble</b>	Build teams through trust, timing, and collective success

## REHEARSAL PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Use before board presentations, funder pitches, difficult conversations, staff town halls, or crisis communications.

### Before You Rehearse

- ☐ Define your core message in one sentence
- ☐ List your 3-5 key points
- ☐ Anticipate likely questions or pushback
- ☐ Clarify desired outcome (what should they think/feel/do?)

### Rehearsal Stages

**Run 1 (Solo):** Say it out loud start to finish. Don't stop. Time yourself. Notice where you stumble.

**Run 2 (Solo):** Smooth transitions. Practice key phrases. Work on pacing.

**Run 3 (With Colleague):** Get interrupted with questions. Practice staying grounded.

**Final:** Focus on presence (eye contact, breath, grounding). Trust you know it.

### After Rehearsal, Ask

- Where did I feel confident vs. where did I stumble?
- What questions threw me off?
- Am I running too long/short?
- What would make this 10% better?

## "YES, AND" MEETING TEMPLATE

Duration: 60 minutes

<b>0-5 min</b>	Frame the challenge. Be specific. This is generative time, not decision time.
<b>5-20 min</b>	"Yes, And" Brainstorming. Build on what's offered. No criticism. Just addition.
<b>20-40 min</b>	Exploration. Ask clarifying questions. Stay curious ("What would it take?" not "Why won't this work?")
<b>40-55 min</b>	Synthesis. Identify patterns, promising directions, next steps.
<b>55-60 min</b>	Closing. Name what was valuable. Thank contributors.

### Ground Rules for "Yes, And" Meetings

- ✓ Listen fully before responding
- ✓ Build on ideas rather than replacing them
- ✓ Defer judgment during brainstorming
- ✓ Make space for quieter voices
- ✓ Celebrate wild ideas

### Momentum Prompts When Conversation Stalls

- "What if we had unlimited resources?"
- "What would success look like in five years?"
- "What's a small pilot version?"
- "If we couldn't do it this way, what's another approach?"

## PRESENCE-BUILDING EXERCISES

### Four Elements of Executive Presence

<b>Groundedness</b>	Physical awareness: feet planted, weight distributed, breath steady
<b>Intention</b>	Clear purpose: What do you want this room to understand?
<b>Authenticity</b>	Leading from your natural voice, not imitating others
<b>Silence</b>	Comfortable with pauses; using silence for emphasis

### Quick Presence Reset (2 minutes)

1. Stand with feet hip-width apart
2. Three deep breaths: in through nose, out through mouth
3. Notice tension. Gently release it.
4. Feel your feet on the ground

## Power Pause Technique

When asked a question → Count to 3 → Breathe → Respond

## ENSEMBLE-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Activity	Time	How It Works
Trust Circle	15 min	One person shares challenge. Group responds with supportive questions only. No advice.
Coordination	10 min	Count 1-20 as group. Only one person speaks at a time. If two speak, start over. No planning.
Shared Success	20 min	Share a win and credit someone who made it possible. Builds appreciation.
Role Rotation	Ongoing	Rotate facilitator, note-taker, timekeeper each week. Builds shared ownership.

## CRISIS ADAPTATION PLAYBOOK

### Immediate Response (First 5 Minutes)

1. Breathe. Ground yourself physically.
2. Acknowledge what's happened without dramatizing.
3. State what you know to be true right now.
4. Name the next step, even if it's small.

### Ask Yourself

- What resources do I still have?
- What's the core outcome I'm trying to achieve?
- Is there another path?
- Who can help right now?
- What would "good enough" look like?

### Team Communication

- ✓ Be transparent about what you know/don't know
- ✓ Stay calm (your team takes cues from you)
- ✓ Be decisive with available information
- ✓ Trust your ensemble to step up

## LEADERSHIP REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### On Preparation

- What conversations am I not rehearsing for?
- Where would practice give me confidence?
- What's one moment I could rehearse this week?

### On Improvisation

- When do I default to "no" instead of exploring?
- How do I respond when plans fall apart?
- What would "yes, and" change?

### On Presence

- When do I feel most grounded?
- What physical habits undermine my presence?
- Am I leading from my authentic voice?

### On Ensemble

- Do my team members trust each other?
- Am I building individuals or an ensemble?
- When did we last celebrate collective success?

## SIGNS THESE PRINCIPLES ARE WORKING

### Rehearsal

- More confident in high-stakes moments
- Handle unexpected questions smoothly
- People comment you seem more prepared

### "Yes, And"

- Meetings feel generative, not defensive
- Team brings more ideas forward
- Discovering unexpected solutions

### Presence

- Feel grounded during difficult conversations
- People listen more attentively
- Comfortable with silence

### Ensemble

- Team supports each other unprompted
- Success feels shared, not individual
- Others step up when someone's out

## NEED MORE SUPPORT?

**Podcast:** Listen to Episode 6 at [missiondrivenpod.com](http://missiondrivenpod.com)

**Blog:** Read the companion post for deeper examples and stories

**Consulting:** Want to develop leadership skills in your organization? Contact The Scanland Group at [contact@thescanlandgroup.com](mailto:contact@thescanlandgroup.com) or visit [thescanlandgroup.com](http://thescanlandgroup.com)

From The Scanland Group:

*Keep leading with heart, keep showing up with purpose,  
and keep creating a world where everyone belongs.*

