



Mindset Memo

Meeting Hygiene Best Practices

Once you have decided a meeting is the right call, how you run it matters as much as the decision to have it.

Set and share the agenda at least 24 hours in advance. No agenda, no meeting. This is a standard worth holding firmly. An agenda tells people what the meeting is for, what decisions need to be made, and how to come prepared.

State the goal at the top. Open every meeting by naming what needs to be decided or aligned on by the end. This gives the conversation a destination and makes it easier to pull back when it drifts.

Assign a facilitator and a notetaker at the start. The facilitator keeps the conversation moving and on track. The notetaker captures decisions and next steps so nothing gets lost in the debrief.

Schedule partial attendees at the front of the agenda. If someone only needs to be present for one section, put that section first. Let them contribute and get back to their work. Their time is not a holding cost for the rest of the meeting.

Start on time and end on time. Both signal respect for the people in the room. A leader who starts late trains their team that the start time is a suggestion. A meeting that runs over signals that the agenda wasn't realistic or the conversation wasn't managed.

Close with documented next steps. Every meeting should end with clear owners, clear tasks, and specific deadlines. If the meeting produced no next steps, ask whether it needed to happen at all. A follow-up summary should go out within 24 hours to everyone present and anyone who needs to be informed of the outcome.

Build in a mid-meeting pause. At the halfway point of any meeting, stop and ask the room: "Are we on track to hit our goal by the end of this?" It takes thirty seconds and it does two things:

1. It surfaces drift before the meeting runs out of time to correct it
2. It signals to the team that the goal of the meeting is a shared responsibility, not just the facilitator's problem to manage.

Give every meeting a shelf life. Meetings should start and end with a project or have a defined trial period before becoming a permanent calendar fixture. Run a new recurring meeting for four to six weeks, then ask honestly: did this serve us? The best leaders treat recurring meetings like contracts that require renewal, not defaults that run until someone is brave enough to cancel them.



Close with a 1-10 score. Before the room clears, ask everyone to rate the meeting on a scale of one to ten. No lengthy explanation needed - just a pulse check. Track the scores over a few sessions and then open a conversation: *"We've been averaging a six. What would need to change to make this seven?"* Small, specific improvements compound quickly. And asking the question at all signals that the meeting exists to serve the team, not the other way around.