SECOND IN COMMAND CLUB · LESSON 3 TOOL

The Drive *Discovery*

It takes about 90 minutes and will tell you more than a year's worth of status meetings.

When Jake finally stops talking about Eterna and starts asking about Sara, everything changes. That single shift from 'here is my problem' to 'what is your mountain?' opens the door to real partnership.

The moment Sara began speaking, Jake watched her change in front of him. She came alive. That's when Jake was able to see what drove her. That's when he caught a glimpse of **her mountain**.

That drive leaves fingerprints. It shows you what recharges someone. What irritates them out of proportion. What they reach for when everything breaks. And what they do when no one is paying them to do it.

The Drive Discovery is a three-part process for finding those fingerprints. First in yourself, then in each other, then in the work you share.

PART ONE

The Four Tells

> *Complete this section separately. Do not compare notes yet.*

Most people, when asked directly what motivates them, produce an answer they think sounds good. I like helping people. I like a challenge. Those answers are both true and *useless*.

But there are different questions that allow you to glimpse a "tell," a revelation of what lies below the superficial answer.

THE TELL	THE QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF	WHAT IT REVEALS
The Energy Tell	Look at last week. Which hours left you with more energy than you started with?	Not what you enjoyed, but what recharged you. Enjoyment is a preference. Recharge is a drive.
The Friction Tell	Where was your reaction bigger than the event deserved? What made you disproportionately annoyed?	An outsized reaction almost always means something you value was stepped on. Your irritations map your drive as accurately as your joys.
The Pressure Tell	The last time something broke badly, what did you reach for first, before you had time to think about it?	Under pressure, people revert to their drive. What you do in the first ten minutes of a crisis is the truest thing about you.
The Unpaid Tell	What have you done in the last year that nobody asked for, nobody measured, and nobody paid you for?	This is the strongest signal of the four. Effort with no external reward attached is drive in its purest form.

Now put it into words.

I do my best work when I am _____, because _____.

Be sure to describe the condition and the reason, not your personality. Second, if you can't finish the "because," you haven't gone deep enough yet. Go back to the Unpaid Tell.

Sara had already done this long before the coffee shop meeting. When she turned down the Director of Operations role, Jake asked whether she was unhappy at Eterna. Her answer was, “It’s a little chaotic, but in some ways, that’s part of the appeal. The crazier things get, the more I have to learn, and the more I can be of service.” That is a complete drive statement. It names service and learning, the two traits from Lesson 2, delivered in one sentence, in passing, to a man who wasn’t listening for it.

> **Sara:** *I do my best work when I am learning something new in service of someone else, because I watched my mother try to build a life without the support or the confidence she needed.*
>
> **Jake:** *I do my best work when I am building something that reaches more people than my own two hands can, because I grew up with a mother who had nothing, and I swore my life would be different.*

Neither of those is a personality type. They are engines. And notice what happens once both are on the table: two people who had worked side by side for two years discover they were raised in the same circumstances and are pointed at the same thing. Jake couldn’t see that alignment until he stopped talking.

PART TWO

The Coffee Shop Conversation

> *Sixty minutes, not in the office.*

Location matters more than you think. A conversation like this held in the same chair where you do performance reviews will get you performance-review answers. Jake got the truth out of Sara at a coffee shop, with no agenda and nowhere to be.

Three Rules

1. **Go first.** What unlocked Sara was not a better question. It was Jake telling her about his grandfather and his mother and the idea that a single mother could still have a destiny. He gave something real before he asked for something real. Whoever called the meeting shares their sentence from Part One first, including the part that is uncomfortable to say out loud.
2. **Ask, then ask again.** The first answer is the rehearsed one. The second is the honest one. The third is usually the important one. The only follow-up you need is “Say more about that,” and then silence. Do not fill the silence. Sara’s silence in the coffee shop lasted long enough to be awkward, and what came after it changed the company.
3. **Do not fix it, and do not price it.** If someone tells you what drives them and you respond by immediately solving it, or by converting it into a compensation discussion, they will stop talking. When Jake tried to make the job attractive with a raise, Sara’s answer was: That’s not why I’m here. The Coffee Shop Conversation isn’t for creating plans or getting tactical.

The Question Ladder

Work down the ladder. Both people answer every question.

1	What part of your week feels the most meaningful to you?
2	What task do you wish you could hand off tomorrow and never touch again?
3	When do you feel most effective in this role? What are the conditions when that happens?
4	When was the last time you lost track of time at work? What were you doing?
5	What is something you did here that you were proud of, that I probably never noticed?
6	Think about the job you had before this one. What did you like most about it? What did you like least?
7	Tell me where you really want to be in the future.

PART THREE

The Overlap

Knowing what drives someone changes nothing by itself. The value shows up when you put it next to the work.

Take a blank page. Create two columns:

WHAT THE BUSINESS REQUIRES OF THEM IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS	WHAT DRIVES THEM (THEIR SENTENCE FROM PART ONE)
The three or four outcomes this person genuinely owns. Be specific and be honest, and include the parts nobody enjoys.	*Their engine, in their own words.*

Now find two things:

The Leverage Zone is where the columns overlap. That's where the required work runs on their fuel. In this zone, the person is close to unstoppable, and you get results that look disproportionate to the effort. The goal is to start assigning this work on purpose, and to protect it the way you protect the Peak Zone on the calendar.

The Tax is where the columns don't overlap. That's where the required work runs on less reliable and less powerful fuel. Every role has some of this. The goal is not to eliminate it, because you can't. Instead, you want to get the tax out in the open, acknowledged, and smaller than the leverage. That makes the necessary work doable and avoids burnout.

One Change Each

End the conversation with each person committing to a single, specific change in the next thirty days that moves more of the other person's week into their Leverage Zone. Not a philosophy. A change. Write both down. Date them. Review them at your next weekly sync.

THE CHANGE	DATE

This is the mechanism behind the whole lesson. You reach your goals by helping others reach theirs is not a sentiment. It is an instruction, and this is the smallest possible way to following it.

Translate Before You Speak

Before you deliver something important, such as a recommendation, a pushback, a change of direction, look at the first sentence you were going to say. Then ask whether it leads with what drives you or what drives them.

The same message, delivered in the wrong language, lands as a threat. Delivered in the right one, it becomes an invitation. You are not changing what you believe or softening what you need. You are making it possible for the other person to actually hear it.

From Stephanie and Matt

> **Stephanie:** *I move fast. I see how something could be better and I want to build that version now, then learn from it and build a better one. Iteration is how I think.*
>
> **Matt:** *I go deep. I will drill down ten layers on a thing before I let it into the world, because putting out something half-finished is not an option for me.*

Before we said any of this out loud to each other, Stephanie looked scattered to Matt, always chasing the next thing. Matt looked like a roadblock to Stephanie, forever overthinking everything and slowing us down. Neither read was accurate, and both were doing quiet damage.

Nothing about either of us changed once we understood that. Everything about how we work together did. Matt refines what Stephanie initiates. Stephanie challenges what Matt wants to perfect. What we used to experience as friction, we now use on purpose.

How to Use This Tool

DREAMER PERSPECTIVE	DRIVER PERSPECTIVE
Before you run this conversation, do Part One on yourself and be prepared to say your sentence out loud first. The Dreamers who skip that step get polite answers and learn nothing. Note: Do not run this inside a performance review; the answers will be strategic instead of true. Do not run it immediately before or after a compensation conversation, or the whole thing becomes a negotiation. Likewise, don't run it and then behave as though you never heard the answers. Asking someone what drives them and then ignoring it does more damage than never asking. Watch for a Driver who tells you "I'm just here to help you win." That's not a complete answer. It is a real trait and it's why you hired them, but it's not their engine. Keep asking.	Most Drivers can describe their Dreamer's drive in vivid detail and have never once articulated their own. Do Part One slowly. The Unpaid Tell is where you will find what you have built, fixed, or protected that nobody asked you to. Say it out loud. Being able to say what drives you isn't selfish; it is the information your Dreamer needs to keep you. Knowing your Dreamer's drive will also change how you read them. The Dreamer who goes quiet before a major decision is usually not avoiding you; they are working at depth. The Dreamer who changes the plan for the third time this month is usually not disorganized; they are running on the engine that built the business. When you can see the engine, you stop taking the behavior personally. And if your Dreamer never initiates this conversation, initiate it yourself. You do not need permission to ask a good question.