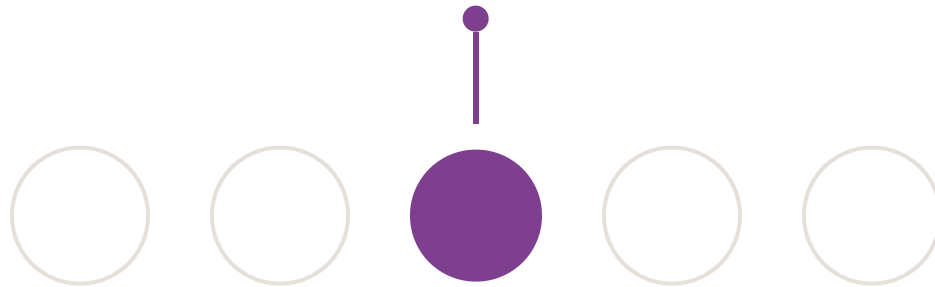


ONE

Sometimes it starts
with *a question.*



An ordinary meeting. An ordinary question.

What *drives* the behavior?

NOT VISIBLE FROM THE OUTSIDE

Curiosity

Responsibility

Learning

Discernment

Excellence

Clarity

THREE

Afterward, the room *makes sense of it.*

"They ask a lot of questions."

"They notice everything."

"They challenge things."

FOUR

Behavior becomes *interpretation.*

Asks questions → **Challenging**

Identifies gaps → **Critical**

Seeks clarity → **Difficult**

FIVE

Interpretation becomes *reputation*.

Intense

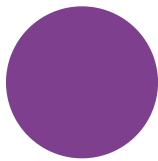


The labels arrive before the person speaks.

Critical

Challenging

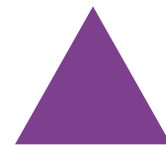
And reputation shapes *what we see next.*



**An ordinary
question**

WHAT WAS ASKED

WHAT WE ALREADY BELIEVE



**Heard as
a challenge**

WHAT WAS RECEIVED

Development requires conversation, *not* *characterization.*



Behavior

Context

Impact

Conversation

Are we responding to
what someone *actually*
did — or to the story
we have developed
about *why they did it?*

TALK WITH PEOPLE, NOT ONLY ABOUT PEOPLE.

WHAT PROMPTED THIS QUESTION

Research on excellencism and perfectionism *prompted it — it did not study it.*

That research suggests similar high-striving behaviors can involve **different underlying psychological needs and motivations.**

It did **not** study workplace reputation, labeling, bias, or organizational conflict. The cycle on the previous cards is a question the research raised — not a finding it reported.

If behavior does not automatically reveal motivation, how careful should leaders be when assigning meaning to someone else's behavior?

Andrade, G., Pétrin-Pomerleau, P., & Gaudreau, P. (2025). The basic psychological needs in excellencism and perfectionism: A dual perspective with the need-as-motives and the need-as-nutriments frameworks. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 245, 113286. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2025.113286>