

The Discomfort Map

Some forms of discomfort stay vague for years. That vagueness is often what gives them power. Once you can see where discomfort actually shows up, you can work with it more deliberately.

1 · RATE EACH SITUATION

1 is little discomfort. 5 is significant discomfort, I regularly avoid or delay this.

1	2	3	4	5
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Asking a question in a meeting with more senior people

Disagreeing with a colleague in front of others

Disagreeing with a senior person

Delivering work that is not yet fully finished

Admitting I do not know something

Asking for feedback, especially from someone senior

Initiating a conversation with someone I do not know well

Sending an email I suspect may not be well received

Raising a concern about a decision I disagree with

Asking for something I want: a role, project, pay review

Having a conversation that feels overdue

Presenting to an audience I do not fully feel comfortable with

2 · LOOK AT YOUR FOURS AND FIVES

What do they have in common? Most discomfort clusters around one or two of these.

Exposure

seen failing, wrong, or not knowing

Uncertainty

acting without full preparation

Conflict

disagreement, pushback, tension

3 · THE ONE QUESTION

When discomfort appears, is my first response protecting the work, or protecting me from the room?

Protecting the work

Protecting me from the room

It depends, and I can tell when

4 · ONE SITUATION, ONE MOVE

Pick one four or five, small enough to practise on this week. Preferably not the easiest.

The situation

My Move *one specific thing, in one named situation, this week*