



Fear Isn't the Enemy:

Lack of clarity is

An introduction to the Victory Leadership CLEAR model

By Earle Airey



www.victoryleadership.com



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The Victory Leadership CLEAR Model

C – Clarify the threat

L – Locate where the ambiguity is coming from

E – Evaluate the impact

A – Act with intention

R – Reflect & reinforce

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People aren't avoiding action because they don't care. They hesitate because something feels off. Something feels wrong...

Uggh!!
Too slippery
Too close
Too fast
Too much risk...
...not worth it
Let's wait and see...

When things don't feel right, the opportunity for **FEAR** to creep in rises **GREATLY!!**

Fear in of itself is not the problem, it's what the fear represents. It represents a signal. A perceived threat, even if that threat isn't fully defined...

Let's wait and see...
If I only had some clue
what to do next...
Some insight.
Some guidance.

A **clue** what to do next when dealing with less-than-ideal information. Something **CLEAR...**

When clarity about the **FEAR** feels hazy, the situation can lead to...



Avoidance

Overthinking

Silence/withdrawal

And on, and on, and on.

FEAR has trouble functioning when clarity exists



Introducing the C.L.E.A.R. model

The Victory Leadership CLEAR Model

- C – Clarify
- L – Locate
- E – Evaluate
- A – Act
- R – Reflect & reinforce



The Victory Leadership C.L.E.A.R. Model



The Victory Leadership C.L.E.A.R. Model

C – Clarify: Low-stress ways to help clear the haze...

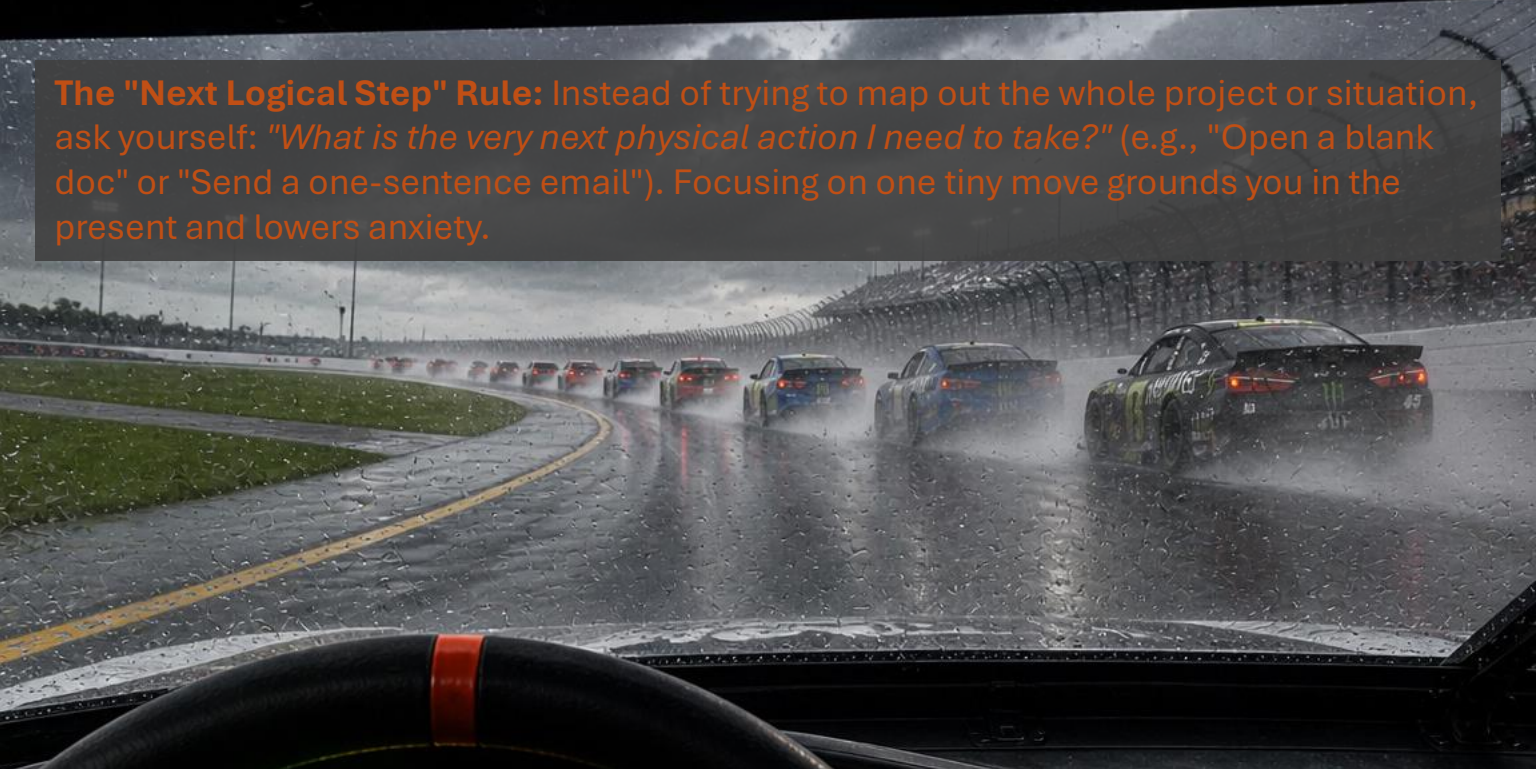


The "Next Logical Step" Rule: Instead of trying to map out the whole project or situation, ask yourself: *"What is the very next physical action I need to take?"* (e.g., "Open a blank doc" or "Send a one-sentence email"). Focusing on one tiny move grounds you in the present and lowers anxiety.

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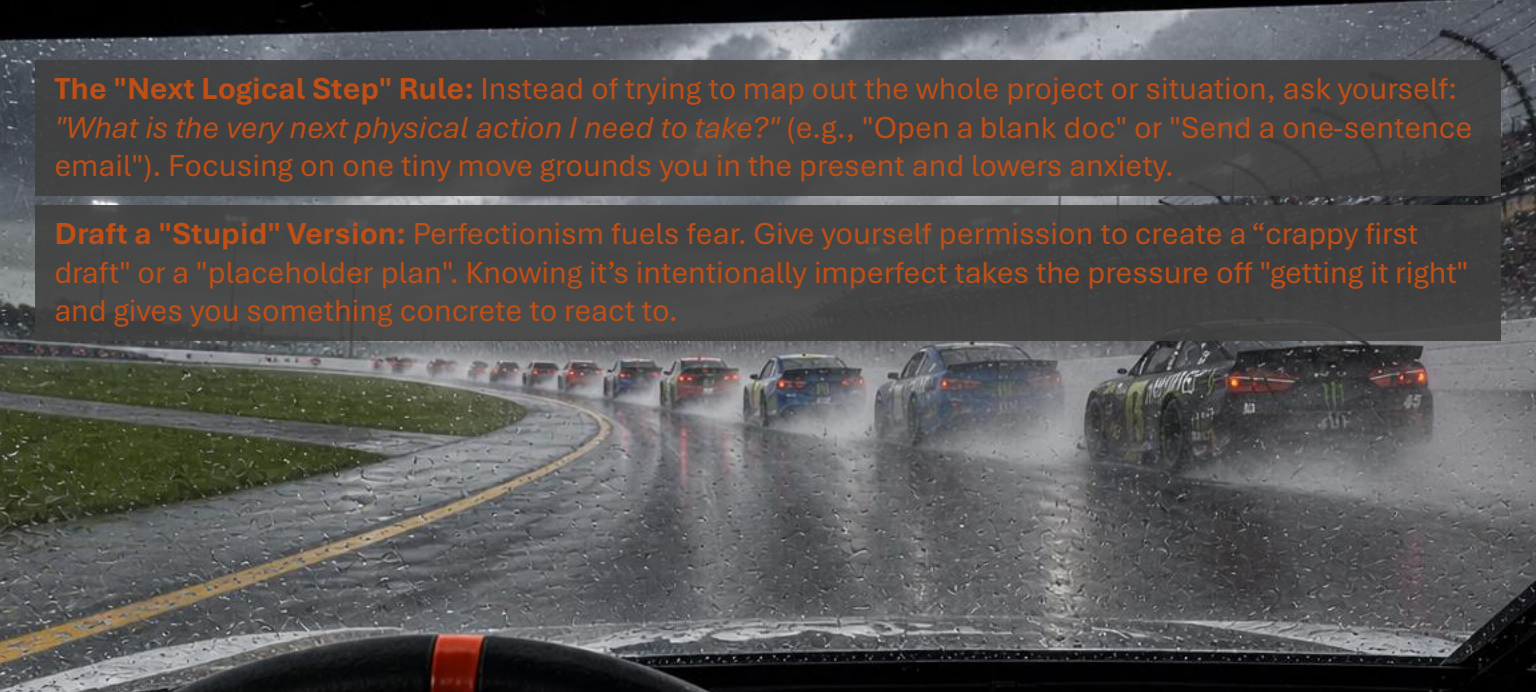
Draft a "Stupid" Version: Perfectionism fuels fear. Give yourself permission to create a "crappy first draft" or a "placeholder plan". Knowing it's intentionally imperfect takes the pressure off "getting it right" and gives you something concrete to react to.

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The "Assume and Verify" Method: If you're waiting on someone else, make a safe assumption and move forward as if it's true. Then, send a quick note: "I'm moving ahead with [X] assumption to keep things rolling—let me know if I should pivot." This shifts you from passive worrying to active leading. It can also share the responsibility to stay motivated.

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Time-Boxed Research: Set a timer for 15 minutes to gather info. When the timer goes off, you must stop. This prevents "analysis paralysis," where searching for clarity actually turns into a source of stress. If 15 minutes is too tight, add 5 minutes or what you feel is reasonable. Remember, the idea is not to solve for everything this time around. Keep moving forward until you lead the pack!!

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Externalize the Mess: Brain-dump everything you *don't* know onto paper. Seeing "The Unknowns" written down usually makes them look much smaller and more manageable than they feel when they're swirling in your head.

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Next, we'll locate the places where the haze/ambiguity may come from.

The Victory Leadership C.L.E.A.R. Model

L – Locate: Where is the ambiguity coming from?



To find the source of the fog, you can look through the lens of **Human Needs**. Often, we feel anxious not because the task is hard, but because the lack of clarity threatens our "inner foundation."

You can locate the source by checking which of these three pillars feels the wobblest:

The Victory Leadership C.L.E.A.R. Model

L – Locate: Where is the ambiguity coming from?



1. The “Lack of Security” Source (The “Safety” Check)

Lack of clarity here feels like a threat to your stability or resources.

The Root: You don't know the "rules of engagement" or the boundaries. You're afraid of making a mistake that has a real-world cost (losing a job, wasting money, or failing a grade).

To gain clarity: Ask, "What is the worst-case (***feasible***) scenario if I get this wrong, and is there a safety net?"

Identifying the actual "floor" of the situation reduces survival-based fear.

The Victory Leadership C.L.E.A.R. Model

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To gain clarity: Ask, “What is the worst-case (*feasible*) scenario if I get this wrong, and is there a safety net?” Identifying the actual “floor” of the situation reduces survival-based fear.

2. The Belonging Level (The “Relational” Check)

Lack of clarity here feels like a threat to your connection with others.

The Root: You’re unsure of your role or how others perceive you. You might wonder, “Am I overstepping?” or “Am I being left out of the loop?” The anxiety comes from the fear of personal or professional social friction or isolation.

To gain clarity: Ask, “Whose expectations am I trying to meet, and have we actually talked about them?” A simple “alignment sync” with a peer or lead usually fixes this level instantly.

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To gain clarity: Ask, "*What is the worst-case (feasible) scenario if I get this wrong, and is there a safety net?*" Identifying the actual "floor" of the situation reduces survival-based fear.

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3. The Esteem Level (The "Competence" Check)

Lack of clarity here feels like a threat to your identity and self-worth.

The Root: You feel like you *should* already know what to do. The ambiguity makes you feel "imposter syndrome" or "stupid." The fear is that the lack of clarity is a reflection of your own inadequacy.

To gain clarity: Ask, "*Is this objectively confusing, or am I judging myself for not being an expert yet?*" Separating the **difficulty of the task** from your **value as a person** lowers the emotional stakes.

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How to use this: Next time you feel that spike of anxiety, ask yourself: "*Does this make me feel unsafe, unwanted, or incapable?*"

Next, we'll look at a way to evaluate the impact of the "*what if's.*"

The Victory Leadership C.L.E.A.R. Model

Evaluate – What are the possible impacts on clarity?



To **evaluate** your impact on psychological safety while seeking clarity, you have to look at the **emotional wake** you leave behind. Whether you address the topic or avoid it, you are sending a signal to the group about what is "safe" to discuss.

Here is how to evaluate that impact based on the two paths:

The Victory Leadership C.L.E.A.R. Model

Evaluate – What are the possible impacts on clarity?

1. If you Address the Topic

The goal here isn't just getting the answer; it's how people feel *after* you ask.

The "Vulnerability" Metric: Did you frame your request as a personal need for help (e.g., *"I'm struggling to see the path here..."*) rather than an accusation (e.g., *"Why isn't this clear?"*)? If people responded by leaning in rather than defending themselves, your impact was positive.

The "Contribution" Signal: Watch the room. If others started sharing their own "I don't knows" after you spoke up, you successfully lowered the barrier for everyone.

The "Tone" Check: Evaluate if you used **"Curiosity over Judgment."** If the conversation focused on solving the puzzle together rather than finding who to blame for the fog, you strengthened the "Esteem" and "Belonging" levels.

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2. If the Topic is Avoided

Avoidance is often a "silent tax" on psychological safety. You can evaluate the negative impact by looking for these symptoms:

The "Whisper" Effect: Do people stop talking about the task in the main meeting but vent about the confusion in private DMs or hallways? This indicates a drop in "Belonging" and "Security."

Artificial Harmony: Does everyone nod in agreement while looking stressed or disengaged? Avoidance creates a "Security" risk because people feel they have to pretend to understand to survive.

Decision Paralysis: If work has stalled because no one wants to admit they are lost, the "Competence/Esteem" level is being damaged. People start feeling "bad at their jobs" simply because they lack information.

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Evaluation Framework: The "Before & After"

To measure your impact in real-time, ask yourself these three questions after an intervention:

Lowered Stakes: Did my attempt to get clarity make it *easier* or *harder* for the next person to admit they are confused?

Shared Reality: Do we now have a common "map" of the unknowns, or is everyone still navigating their own private version of the fog?

Relational Energy: Is the team's energy focused on **solving the task** (High Safety) or **protecting their reputation** (Low Safety)?

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Next, we'll look at ways to **act** with intention. All these efforts lead to nothing until a plan of action is executed.

The Victory Leadership C.L.E.A.R. Model

A – Act with intention

1. Define the "Destination"

Define what a successful outcome looks like in concrete terms. This is your destination. Now you can map it.

The Goal: Use a SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) to name the outcome.

The "Why": Connect the task to your core *why* values to ensure the effort feels meaningful, which helps sustain momentum when things get difficult.

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2. Isolate the "Minimum Viable Action"

Identify the smallest possible unit of progress. The goal is to lower the "barrier to entry" so that fear has less, if anything, to grab onto.

One Conversation: Reach out to one person just to "think out loud." Caroline Adams Coaching suggests that talking to others is often how we *figure out* what we want, rather than something we do after we have it figured out.

One Decision: Commit to one path for a fixed time (e.g., "I will spend 20 minutes on this specific draft today").

One Question: Ask a single clarifying question to reveal the next step.

The Victory Leadership C.L.E.A.R. Model

A – Act with intention

1. Define the "Destination" (Not the Map)

Don't try to plan every turn before you start driving. Instead, define what a successful outcome looks like in concrete terms.

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3. Build "Success Scaffolding"

Create a structure that makes repetition easy and failure less threatening. This helps to develop a repeatable framework of success without starting from scratch.

The Goal Ladder: Write your main goal at the top and the small, actionable steps as "rungs" below it. Checking off these smaller rungs provides a sense of accomplishment that fuels further action.

Visualize Obstacles: Instead of blind optimism, identify what might go wrong and decide on a "checkpoint" response. This builds strategic resilience.

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4. Create a "Success Log"

Because confidence follows action, deliberately acknowledge the action taken.

Record Wins: Track "reps" (attempts) rather than just "wins" (results). For example, focus on the fact that you *sent* the email, not just whether you got the response you wanted.

Iterate Regularly: Check in on your progress to adjust your approach based on the results achieved versus the results desired.

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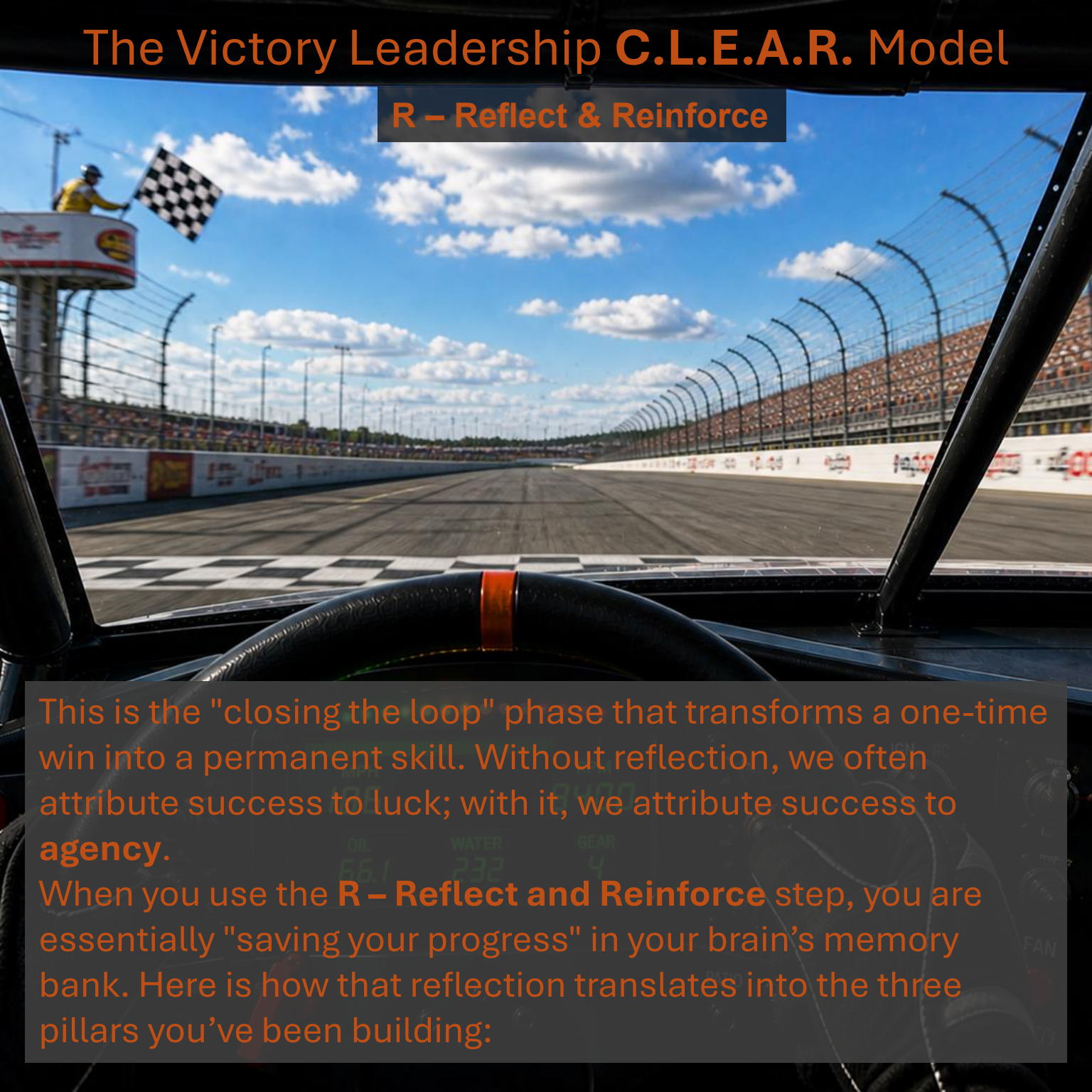
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Finally, we'll look at Reflect & Reinforce.

The Victory Leadership C.L.E.A.R. Model

R – Reflect & Reinforce



This is the "closing the loop" phase that transforms a one-time win into a permanent skill. Without reflection, we often attribute success to luck; with it, we attribute success to **agency**.

When you use the **R – Reflect and Reinforce** step, you are essentially "saving your progress" in your brain's memory bank. Here is how that reflection translates into the three pillars you've been building:

The Victory Leadership C.L.E.A.R. Model

R – Reflect & Reinforce

1. What did I learn? (Clarity)

The Impact: This moves knowledge from "vague feeling" to "usable data." You might realize that the situation wasn't actually complex; it was just poorly defined.

The Reinforcement: By naming exactly what was learned (e.g., "*I learned that John doesn't mind being interrupted for quick questions*"), the fog permanently clears for the next time you face a similar scenario.

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2. What got easier? (Confidence)

The Impact: Confidence grows when you notice the **reduction of friction**. Maybe the pit in your stomach was smaller this time, or you hit "send" on that email without re-reading it five times.

The Reinforcement: Acknowledging that it got easier proves to your nervous system that you are becoming more "competent" (the Esteem level). It validates that the "Minimum Viable Action" strategy actually works.

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3. How do these contribute to growth? (The Pattern)

The Impact: This connects the dots between a single task and your overall trajectory. You start to see yourself as someone who **navigates ambiguity** rather than someone who is a victim of it.

The Reinforcement: This builds your "courage muscles." When you see that taking action led to clarity, you become more willing to step into the next "foggy" situation sooner. You stop waiting to feel ready and start acting to *get* ready.

The Victory Leadership C.L.E.A.R. Model

R – Reflect & Reinforce

1. What did I learn? (Clarity)

The Impact: This moves knowledge from "vague feeling" to "usable data." You might realize that the situation wasn't actually complex; it was just poorly defined.

The Reinforcement: By naming exactly what was learned (e.g., "*I learned that John doesn't mind being interrupted for quick questions*"), the fog permanently clears for the next time you face a similar scenario.

2. What got easier? (Confidence)

The Impact: Confidence grows when you notice the **reduction of friction**. Maybe the pit in your stomach was smaller this time, or you hit "send" on that email without re-reading it five times.

The Reinforcement: Acknowledging that it got easier proves to your nervous system that you are becoming more "competent" (the Esteem level). It validates that the "Minimum Viable Action" strategy actually works.

3. How do these contribute to growth? (The Pattern)

The Impact: This connects the dots between a single task and your overall trajectory. You start to see yourself as someone who **navigates ambiguity** rather than someone who is a victim of it.

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The "Micro-Reflection" Habit

To make this a repeatable framework for excellence, try doing a **2-minute post-game** after any stressful task:

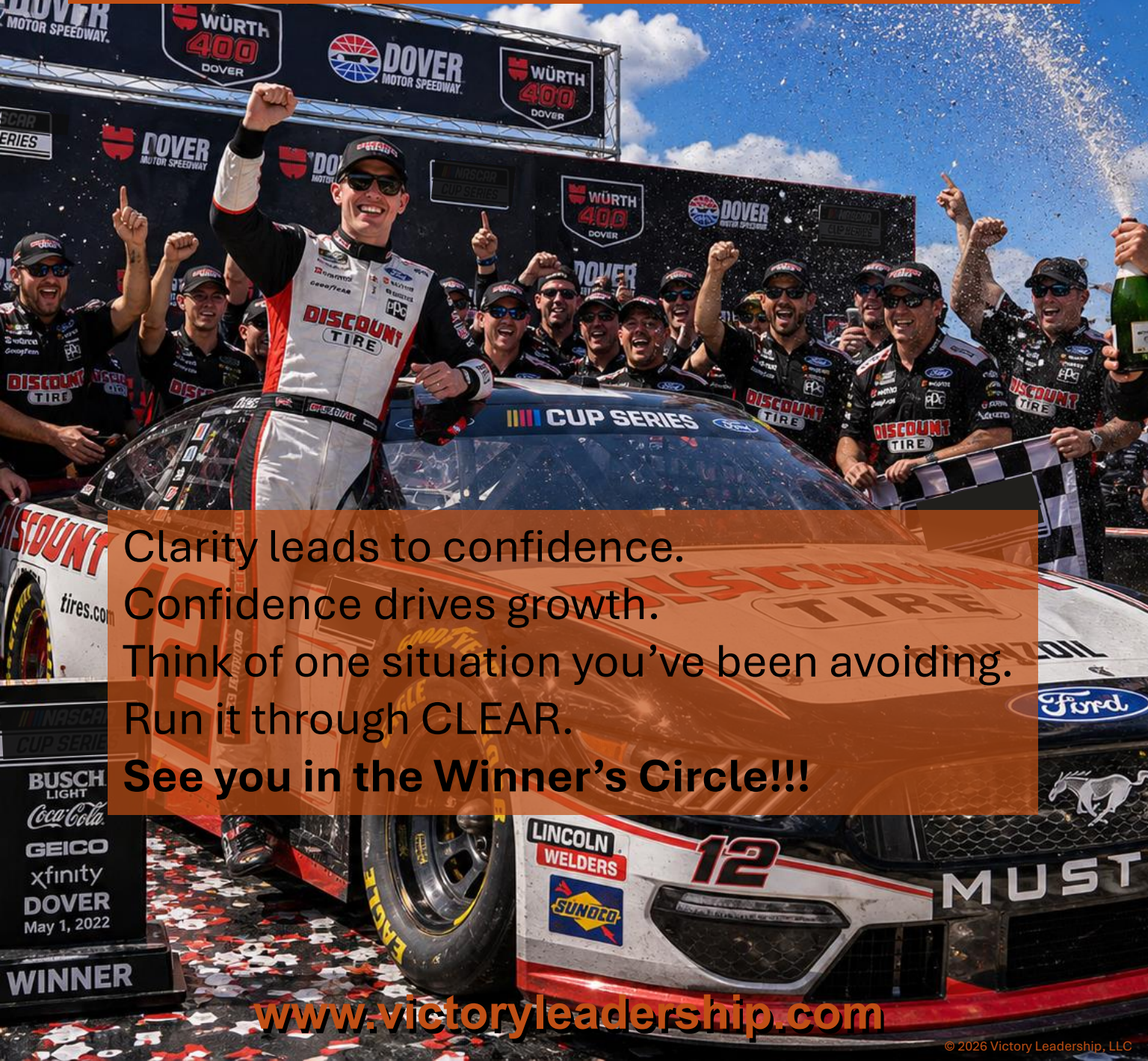
Evidence of Success: "I asked the question I was afraid to ask."

The Shift: "The response wasn't nearly as scary as I thought it would be."

The Carryover: "Next time, I can skip the 20 minutes of worrying and just ask upfront."

If you were to look back at a challenge you tackled recently, what is **one specific thing** that feels even 5% easier now than it did a week ago?

The Victory Leadership C.L.E.A.R. Model



Clarity leads to confidence.
Confidence drives growth.
Think of one situation you've been avoiding.
Run it through CLEAR.
See you in the Winner's Circle!!!

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