Leadership Cycle Map™

A guided worksheet for seeing the pattern, practicing connection, and understanding what repeated interactions create.

TWO RELATIONAL CYCLES

Under pressure, leaders may enter a protection cycle that reinforces distance. A secure connection cycle offers a repeatable path toward curiosity, honesty, repair, and renewed engagement.

THE RLH LENS

4	**DOMAINS**	Where leadership takes shape
5	**DYNAMICS**	What shapes connection
6	**MOVEMENTS**	How change takes root

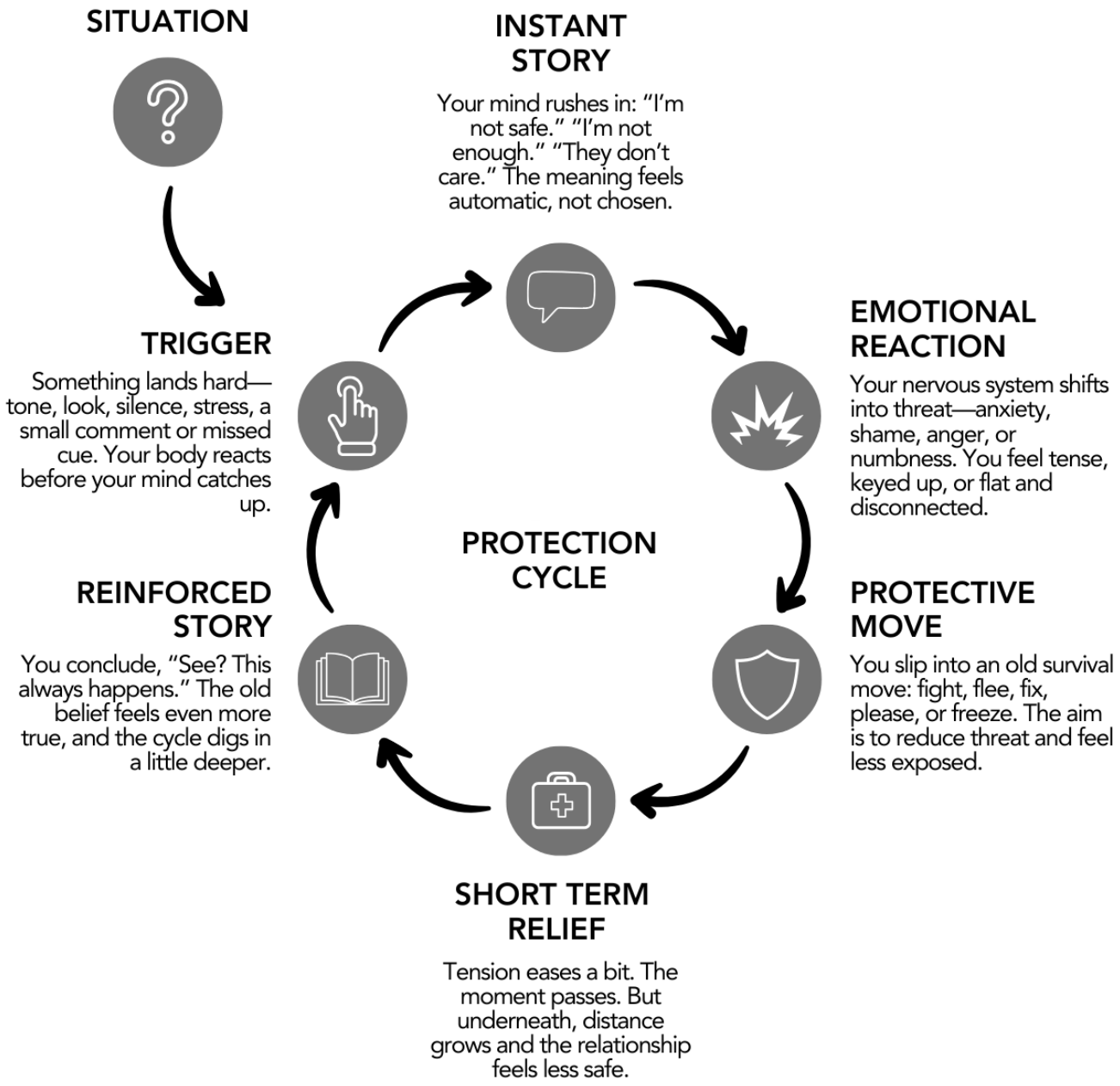
HOW TO USE THIS MAP

Choose one recent leadership interaction. First trace what happened without assigning blame. Then rehearse a secure response to the same moment. Finally, consider how repetition could shape your relationship, team, and culture.

The Protection Cycle

A familiar situation can activate a fast story, bodily reaction, protective move, and reinforcing loop.

LEADERSHIP CYCLE / PROTECTION



LEADERSHIP EXAMPLE

A team member questions a decision. The leader hears "they do not trust me," feels exposed, takes control, and ends discussion. The meeting moves on, but people become less willing to speak up.

Map your protection

Write what you observed and experienced in one specific leadership moment.

WORKSHEET / TRACE THE FIRST LOOP

SITUATION

Who was involved? What happened, using observable facts rather than conclusions?

1

TRIGGER

What tone, look, feedback, silence, demand, or missed cue landed hard?

2

INSTANT STORY

What did you immediately make it mean about yourself or others?

3

EMOTIONAL REACTION

What emotion, body sensation, or urge arose?

4

PROTECTIVE MOVE

How did you respond to reduce threat or exposure?

5

SHORT-TERM RELIEF

What did that move solve for the moment? What did it cost?

6

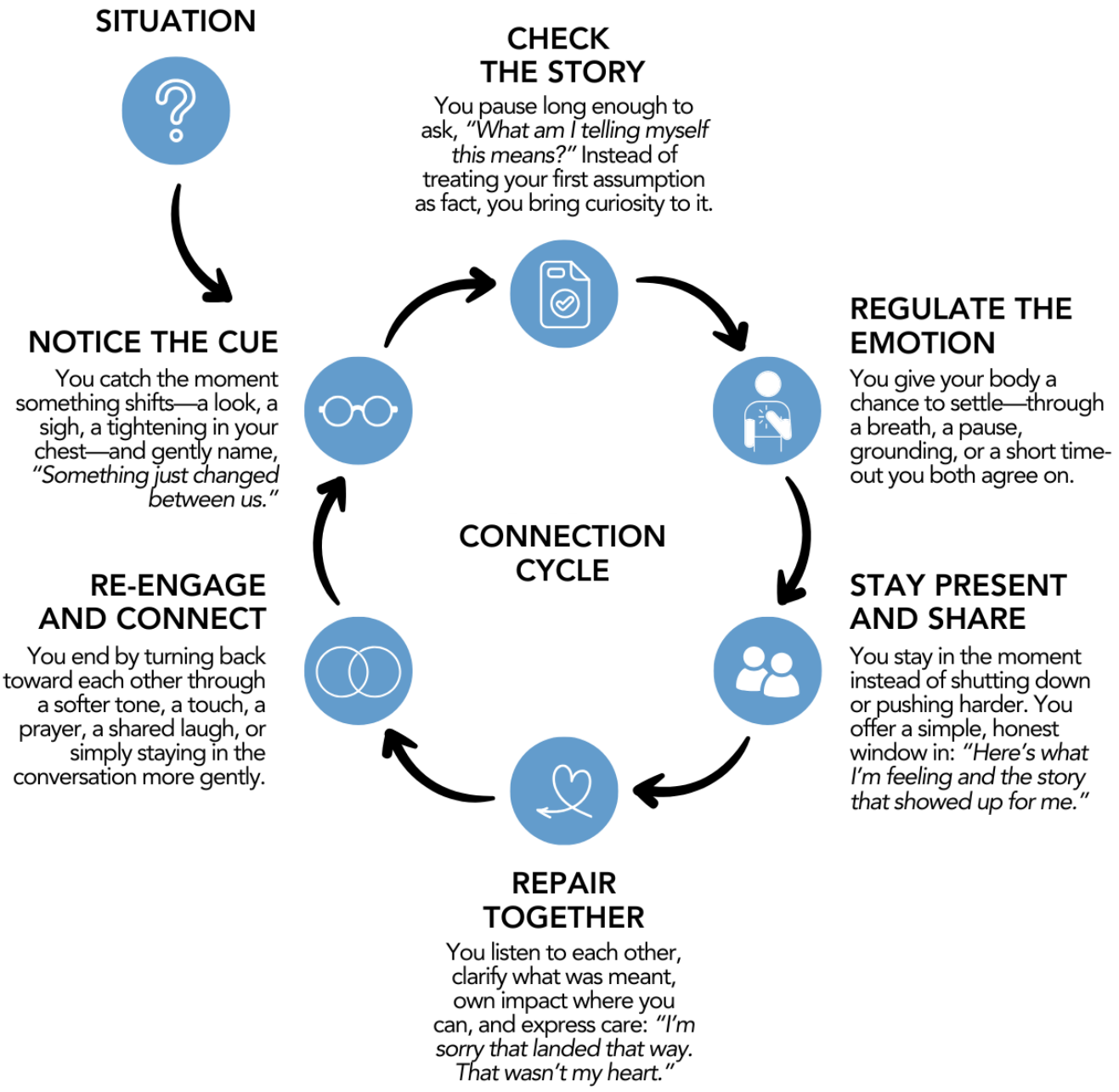
REINFORCED STORY

What belief seemed more true afterward? What could restart this loop?

The Connection Cycle

The same situation can become a repeatable rhythm of curiosity, regulation, honesty, repair, and return.

LEADERSHIP CYCLE / CONNECTION



LEADERSHIP EXAMPLE

The leader notices tension, checks the assumption, pauses, and says, "I felt defensive when my decision was questioned. Help me understand the concern." They own their impact and reopen the conversation.

Practice connection

Return to the same situation. Write the response you want to practice, not a perfect script.

WORKSHEET / REHEARSE A NEW LOOP

SITUATION

Name the moment you mapped on page 3.

1 **NOTICE THE CUE**

What early signal in you or between you could you notice?

2 **CHECK THE STORY**

What assumption needs checking? What else might be true?

3 **REGULATE THE EMOTION**

What pause or grounding practice would let you remain present?

4 **STAY PRESENT AND SHARE**

What could you say honestly, without accusation or retreat?

5 **REPAIR TOGETHER**

What impact could you own? What would you listen for?

6 **RE-ENGAGE AND CONNECT**

What concrete action would help you return with care and clarity?

The relational ripple

A response affects another person; reciprocal responses can become a shared pattern.

FOUR DOMAINS / WHERE LEADERSHIP TAKES SHAPE

MY RESPONSE → THEIR RESPONSE → MY NEXT RESPONSE → REPEAT

Name the cycle without reducing either person to the problem.

THE PATTERN BETWEEN US

When I _____, they tend to _____. When they _____, I tend to _____.

WITHIN ME

Relational self-awareness

What story, emotion, and response formed in me?

BETWEEN US

Relational presence

How did my response affect the other person and our connection?

AMONG US

Relational patterns

If repeated, what would this teach the team to do?

AROUND US

Relational culture

What expectation could eventually feel normal here?

INTERACTIONS → CYCLES → PATTERNS → NORMS → CULTURE

Look beneath behavior

Use these dynamics to understand what was happening across the cycle.

FIVE DYNAMICS / WHAT SHAPES CONNECTION

1

SAFETY

What felt at risk? Could people stay engaged while something difficult happened?

2

STORY

Which assumption felt like fact? What meaning did each person make?

3

RESPONSE

Where did you move toward protection? Where was connection possible?

4

CYCLES

What did each response invite next? What keeps repeating?

5

REPAIR

What rupture needs naming, ownership, listening, or a new experience?

THE RLH THREAD

Safety influences Story. Story shapes Response. Responses create Cycles. Repair interrupts unhealthy cycles and opens a new possibility for connection.

Turn insight into practice

Use the RLH change pathway to carry one secure move into your next leadership interaction.

SIX MOVEMENTS / HOW CHANGE TAKES ROOT

1

REVEAL

What pattern have I now seen?

2

REMEMBER

What earlier experience or expectation may inform my reaction?

3

REFRAME

What fuller or more generous story can I test?

4

REPAIR

What do I need to own, hear, or make right?

5

REHEARSE

What specific secure response will I practice?

6

RENEW

What support or rhythm will help me return to this practice?

MY NEXT LEADERSHIP MOMENT

When _____ happens, I will notice _____ and practice _____.

Return to this map after the interaction. Notice what changed, then practice again.