Mastering the skill of cleaning up misunderstandings and breakdowns is essential; otherwise, unresolved issues will erode your ability to work together. Mastery of these skills requires deliberate practice - every day. Use the guide below to accelerate your skill enhancement.

INSTRUCTIONS: THIS IS NOT A SCRIPT. Use this tool to prepare for your conversation by filling in your version of each step in a way that feels appropriate to you and the situation. When you have the conversation, ensure that what you say and what they hear aligns with your intent and the intention of each step.

## FIVE STEPS FOR A CLEANUP

1. INITIATE the Cleanup

- ❑ State your support for the other person and your commitment to a powerful working relationship. Call out your intent for this conversation.

Example 1:
"Our relationship is important to me, and I want to work toward having the most powerful working relationship possible."

Example 2:
"We are a team, and working together is critical."

YOUR VERSION:

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- ❑ Request a conversation to clear up what is in the way.

Example 1:
"I have a request. We need to clean something up regarding our conversation yesterday. This is important enough that I would like to do it before this Friday, and we will need a location where we can focus. I think we can do this in ~ 30 minutes or less. When would be a good time for you?"
Example 2:
"I have a request. We need to clear up some things from yesterday. This is important to discuss sometime today. Is now a good time?"

YOUR VERSION:

2. State what happened and your interpretations. This may include an apology if appropriate.

- ❑ Explore each person's view of what happened and their interpretations about what happened. Bring authentic curiosity and appreciation for the other to this exploration.

Example 1:
"To begin, I will share my perspective, and then I want to understand your experience. After we each have shared, we can clarify any misunderstandings.

Example 2:
"I will share my experience, you will share your experience, and then we can clear up any misunderstandings."

YOUR VERSION:

- ❑ Clear up any misunderstandings. It is not necessary to agree. It IS essential to appreciate each other's perspectives and feelings.

Example 1:
"It sounds like the importance of the report being done by yesterday wasn't clear. What exactly did you hear me say?"

Example 2:
"What needed to get done wasn't done. What did you think needed to be done?"

- *Explore each person's view of what happened and their interpretations of it. First, they will Speak Straight about their experience. You will Listen Generously, bringing authentic curiosity and appreciation for the other in this exploration. You will both switch between listening and speaking straight until a mutual understanding of the situation exists.*

YOUR VERSION:

❑ Appreciate the other person's view of the situation and any feelings you notice.

- *Replicate and recreate with a willingness to be influenced. Be curious with an intent to learn. You DO NOT have to agree with them; you need to listen to them and appreciate their perspective and feelings!*

Example 1:
"Thank you for sharing. I can hear how you experienced the conversation and how frustrating it was. I can now see where we got off track."

Example 2:
"Now I understand what you thought needed to happen. I also hear your frustration."

YOUR VERSION:

3. Look for and take responsibility for your participation in the situation. This may include an apology.

- *Call out what you did to contribute to the situation; this may include a sincere apology.*

Example 1:
"I hear that my impact on you was quite frustrating. I can see how I contributed to that. I apologize for this. I can appreciate how that must have been for you."

Example 2:
"I can see that you are frustrated about this. I apologize, as this is partly my fault."

YOUR VERSION:

4. Make requests and commitments to each other that will support your work together in the future.

- *We have been here once; how do we not land here again? Co-create suggestions to deal with this if something like this does occur again.*

Example 1:
"I commit to not having this happen again. I have two requests. First, when we are in these conversations, could you refrain from making assumptions about my intent and ask me what is occurring?" (*elicit a response*).
"Second, please share with me any ways you can see that would help us avoid falling into this place again" (elicit a response). *After they share, share your thoughts.*

Example 2:
"Let's not have this happen again. In the future, I will work to be more clear and more concise. Will you ask questions and speak up about any issues that you see?

YOUR VERSION:

5. Reconfirm your support for the other person and your commitment to a powerful working relationship.

Example 1:
"Thank you for this conversation. As I said at the beginning, our relationship is very important… I want to continue to have these conversations whenever we need to so we can have the most powerful working relationship possible. Let me know what I can do to support this."

Example 2:
"Thank you for taking the time to talk. We will do better going forward if we talk like this more often. Will you let me know when you have a question or see an issue from now on?"

YOUR VERSION:

## Common pitfalls in using this worksheet for a cleanup:

✗ **Following the worksheet like a script.** Use it to prepare, but when you have the conversation, be natural, listen, and stay fully present with the other person.

✗ **Skipping steps too soon.** Each step serves a purpose. Practice all the steps until you understand why they matter. As you become more experienced, you can adapt the process.

✗ **Losing sight of what you're trying to accomplish.** Be intentional with your words and questions. Pay attention to how your message is being received, not just what you're trying to say. Take responsibility for your impact.

✗ **Avoiding what really needs to be said.** Don't soften your message just to avoid discomfort or protect the other person's feelings. Be honest and direct while showing that you care about them and the relationship.

✗ **Letting your fears get in the way.** It's natural to feel uncomfortable having a difficult conversation. Don't let your worries about how the other person might react distract you from what you're there to accomplish.