



In collaboration with



## Authority vs. Approval (Focus: Stepping into Your Authority)

### The Concept: Leading from Authority, Not Need

**Authority** is the legitimate, grounded right to lead, guide, and make decisions based on your role, competence, and integrity. **Approval** is the emotional need to be liked, validated, or seen as the "nice person."

In professional leadership roles - whether coaching or managing - these two forces often conflict. The fear of disappointing, upsetting, or being disliked by a client or team member is the most common reason professionals **hesitate to use their authority**. This hesitation manifests as weak boundaries, unclear direction, or avoiding essential, difficult conversations.

Stepping into your authority requires the mindful separation of your **professional role** (which demands clarity and boundaries) from your **personal emotional needs** (the desire for approval). When you lead from authority, you serve the client or the team's *highest good*, which sometimes involves temporary discomfort or disappointment.

### Exercise: Authority vs. Approval

**Purpose:** To help participants separate the professional role from personal emotional needs and commit to an action of authority.

#### Individual Reflection:

1. **Recall a Moment of Hesitation:** Recall a specific time in your recent past where you hesitated to set a necessary boundary (with a client or subordinate) or give a difficult instruction because you **feared not being liked** or worried about someone's reaction.
  - *Examples: Delaying critical performance feedback, accepting work outside of your hours, or failing to challenge a client's limiting belief.*
2. **Analyze the Cost:** What negative consequence resulted from your hesitation (e.g., wasted time, resentment, confusion for the other party, compromised results)?
3. **Commit to Action:** If you could rewind and address that situation now, what **specific, tangible action** (a statement, a boundary, or an instruction) could you take next time to lead instantly and confidently from your **authority** instead of your need for approval?
  - *Write down the exact sentence or action.*