



The Pause Language Guide

What to say at the seven moments when slowing down for thirty seconds saves the day

A pause isn't a delay — it's a leadership tool. The difference between a team that runs on autopilot and one that catches problems early is usually a handful of thirty-second moments, and the words you use to open them. Here's the language for each one. Adjust the words until they sound like you; the pause is the point.

1. Morning huddle

Instead of rushing through the schedule:

*"Let's take a moment to set ourselves up for success."
"What should we all know about today?"*

When: start of day or shift · team gathering · setting priorities

2. Before the case (or the big task)

Instead of assuming readiness:

*"Before we move forward, let's make sure we're aligned."
"What would make this go smoothly?"*

When: before starting · new procedure · complex situation · team transition

3. Between cases

Instead of rushing to the next thing:

*"Let's take a quick moment to reset."
"What worked well? What should we adjust?"*

When: turnover · shift in pace · team changes · after challenges

4. Handoffs

Instead of information dumps:

*"Help me understand what you're seeing."
"What's the most important thing I should know?"*

When: patient transfers · shift changes · department transitions · critical information

5. Challenge moments

Instead of quick reactions:

*"Can we pause to understand this together?"
"What are you seeing that I might be missing?"*

When: problems arising · tension building · patterns emerging

6. End of day

Instead of quick goodbyes:

"What should we carry forward?"

"What made today work well?"

When: shift ending · after challenges · completing goals

7. One-on-one moments

Instead of "got a minute?" while still typing:

"I'd love your perspective on..."

"Could we think about this together?"

When: seeking input · addressing concerns · building connection

Making it work

- **Choose words that feel natural to you** — borrowed language that doesn't fit your mouth won't survive a busy Tuesday
- **Tone, eye contact, and follow-through** carry more than the words do
- **Consistency beats intensity:** one pause point practiced daily outperforms all seven attempted once

Want this as a session for your team or conference? This guide comes from Heather's work on pause points and intentional culture — and pairs with "Coaching & Difficult Conversations."
heatherlambert.speaker@gmail.com · 615.434.5180