

THE DISCERNMENT LADDER TOOLKIT

Pre-Decision Preparation

Identify the core decision or challenge
Acknowledge current emotional state
Set intention for wise discernment

Level 1: Pause and Ground

Questions for Reflection:

What am I feeling right now about this situation?
How might my emotional state be influencing my perception?
What assumptions am I bringing to this discussion?

Practice: Take three conscious breaths before responding

Level 2: Expand Perspective

Questions for Reflection:

Whose voices are represented in this discussion?
Whose perspectives might be missing?
How would different stakeholder groups view this situation?

Practice: Explicitly name 3-5 stakeholder groups affected

Level 3: Question Assumptions

Questions for Reflection:

What would have to be true for our current approach to be inadequate?
What beliefs are we taking for granted?
Where might we be wrong?

Practice: Challenge one core assumption explicitly

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Level 4: Generate Options

Questions for Reflection:

What possibilities exist that we haven't yet considered?

How can we move beyond either/or thinking?

What would a completely different approach look like?

Practice: Generate at least three alternative approaches

Level 5: Choose with Wisdom Questions for Reflection

Which path serves both immediate needs and long-term flourishing?

How does this choice align with our deepest values?

What would we want to be remembered for?

Practice: Articulate the wisdom principle guiding the decision

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Monthly Assumption Audit Template

Month: _____
Assumption to examine: _____
Evidence supporting: _____
Evidence challenging: _____
Alternative perspectives: _____
Revised understanding: _____

Implementation Tracking (Yes/No)

Discernment Ladder used in last major decision	_____
Stakeholder perspectives explicitly considered	_____
Assumptions questioned before finalizing choices	_____
Wisdom principles articulated in decision rationale	_____

Based on research from King & Badham (2019) "Mindfulness at work: A critical re-view"; King, Norbury & Rooney (2020) "Coaching for Leadership Wisdom"; and King & Murdoch (2021) "Mindful Board Assessment Survey."

Download additional resources at:
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