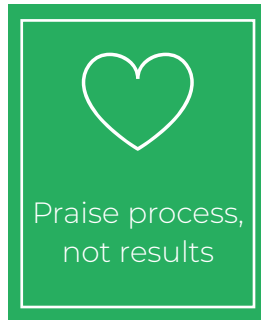Paperclip your Launches and other useful materials here.

See Acton's Launch Builder at:
myjourney.actonacademy.org

REMEMBER:

Don't answer questions	Praise process, not results	Hand over responsibility to Eagles

Guide Handbook

ACTON ACADEMY

The Attitude of a Guide

- Tough minded
- Always looks with fresh eyes
- Never answers a question
- Always listens first
- Warm hearted
- Starts and ends on time, every time
- Armed with Acton tools and processes
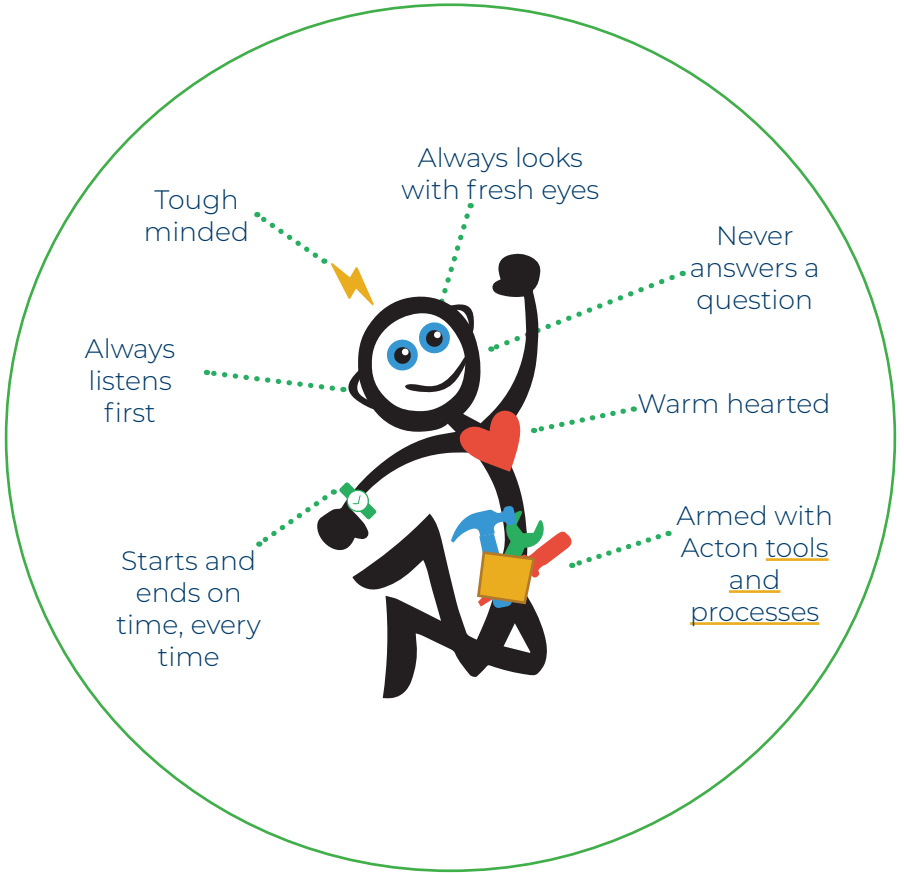
A Guide Is Warm-Hearted and Tough-Minded

♡	⚡
Warm-Hearted	**Tough-Minded**
• Listen with your whole self • Know everyone's name and something about them • Affirms with mindset praise	• Start & end on time, every time • Hold a line • Maintain due process (avoid special cases)
RISK: Friend instead of guide FEAR: Not being loved **Trust the Eagles**	RISK: Disciplinarian instead of Guide FEAR: Losing control **Trust the Process**

**... and always turns to the
Hero's Journey for guidance and inspiration.**

Your Role as a Guide

As a guide, your job is to offer real-world challenges, encouragement, and choices as you hand over leadership to the studio.

> **Start of Day**

Greet each Eagle:
- by name
- with a friendly welcome
- with direct eye contact
- with a firm handshake

> **Launches & Socratic Discussions**

Early, midday and afternoon launches:
- inspire
- offer challenges
- introduce tools or processes
- focus attention on priorities and studio intentionality

Socratic discussions turn analysis and clear thinking into decisions and habits that forge character for a Hero's Journey.
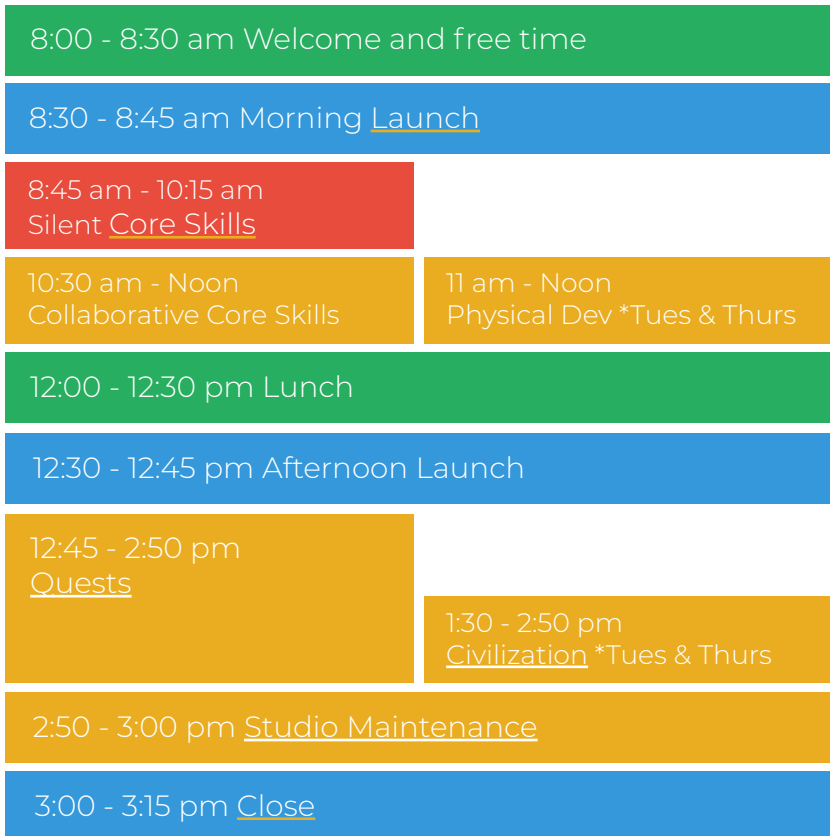
> **Between Launches**

Between launches, interfere as little as possible.

> **Close**

Close with reflection and celebration.

Typical Acton Daily Schedule

Your schedule may vary, but a typical Acton day looks like this:

8:00 - 8:30 am Welcome and free time

8:30 - 8:45 am Morning Launch

8:45 am - 10:15 am Silent Core Skills

10:30 am - Noon Collaborative Core Skills	11 am - Noon Physical Dev *Tues & Thurs

12:00 - 12:30 pm Lunch

12:30 - 12:45 pm Afternoon Launch

12:45 - 2:50 pm Quests	1:30 - 2:50 pm Civilization *Tues & Thurs

2:50 - 3:00 pm Studio Maintenance

3:00 - 3:15 pm Close

(Feel free to tape your schedule over this one.)

- Launches & Closes
- Collaborative work time
- Silent work time
- Free time

Acton Academy Levers of Control

Belief System

A Belief System says: "Dare to be great! We are doing something that matters."

Our Mission
We believe each person who enters Acton Academy will find a calling that changes the world.

Our Promises
We promise through Socratic guiding and experiential learning to encourage each member of our community to:
- Begin a Hero's Journey;
- Discover precious gifts and a commitment to mastery;
- Become a curious, independent, life-long learner;
- Embrace the forging of a strong character;
- Cherish the arts, the physical world, and the mysteries of life; and
- Treasure economic, political, and religious freedom.

Our Beliefs
- We believe each person has a gift that can change the world in a profound way.
- We believe in learning to learn, learning to do, and learning to be.
- We believe in a closely connected family of lifelong learners.
- We believe in economic, political, and religious freedom.

Our Educational Philosophy
We believe clear thinking leads to good decisions, good decisions lead to the right habits, the right habits forge character, and character determines destiny.

Our Economic Model
We believe self-directed, peer-to-peer learner-driven communities built by our young Heroes will deliver transformational learning at a cost all parents can afford.

Boundary System

A Boundary Systems says: "You have a great deal of freedom, as long as you stay between these lines."

1. Momentary failures and real-world consequences are a natural part of 21st century learning, but shame is not. It is never acceptable to intentionally shame a young Hero, parent, or Guide, or expose them to serious harm.
2. Teaching by lecturing or issuing instructions is not acceptable. A guide's role is to model behavior that leads to self-directed learning.
3. Guides do not assign grades or rank students but simply ask: "Is that the best you can do?" and invite a student to try again if the answer is "no."
4. All communications with parents must be transparent to the community so the responsibility for excellence and growth ultimately remains with young Heroes and parents.

Diagnostic System

A Diagnostic Systems says: "These are the numbers you need to hit to be rewarded."

1. We judge our progress through objective, anonymous surveys open to our entire community that show how well we are delivering on our promises.
2. We measure the cost per young hero transformed to see how peer-to-peer learning and paid apprenticeships can drive down costs.

Interactive System

An Interactive Systems says: "You are important as an individual. You deserve to be nurtured and coached to reach your full potential."

We collect and share examples, testimonials, and experiments so each Guide has the tools, skills, and character required to launch an Acton Academy affiliate.

The Hero's Journey

The Hero's Journey is the archetypal series of adventures every human yearns to experience. It describes "life at Acton," and helps Eagles prepare for the challenges, opportunities, and adventures of the real world.

Three Big Questions:

1. Did I accomplish something meaningful?
2. Was I a good person?
3. Whom did I love and who loved me?

Character Traits:

- Self-directed (responsible)
- Warm-hearted (kind)
- Tough-minded (honest)
- Anti-fragile (resilient)

Flow & Joy

MY CALLING

My Gifts

Opportunities & Injustices

Start of Day/
Launches
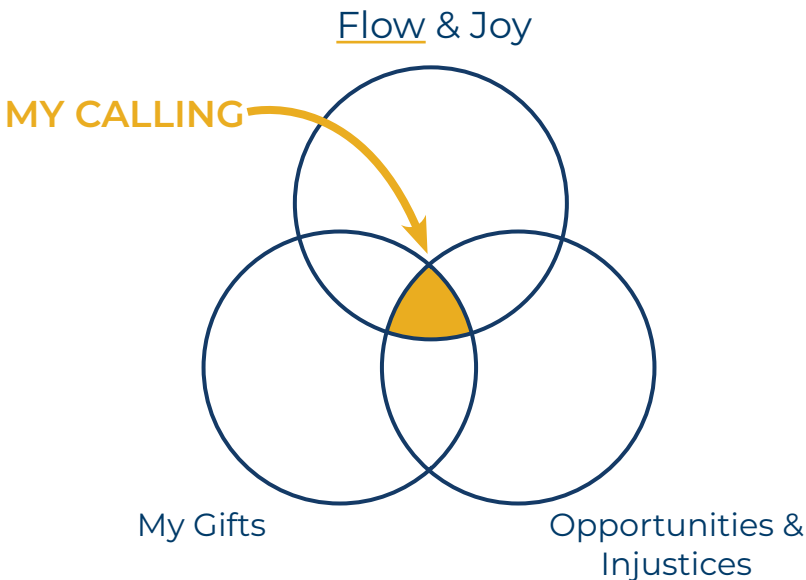
What is a <u>launch?</u>

Launches help you inspire, equip, and focus Eagles for a work sprint — a focused period of individual flow or purposeful collaboration.

Outline for a launch:

1. **Raise energy and inspire** with a quick physical activity, short video, or "imagine this …" story.

2. **Invite focus with three to four <u>Socratic questions</u>** to diagnose or take action:
   a. "Should you focus on _____ or _____ today?"
   b. "Which step in the _____ process is most important for delivering an excellent _____?"
   c. "If we want to raise energy and intentionality in the studio, is _____ or _____ most imporant?"

3. **Call to action or reflection:**
   a. "What do you absolutely have to get done today?"
   b. "How many minutes until we are focused on important work?"
   c. "What is the one thing you promise *not* to do today to make sure you don't get distracted?"

Choosing a Priority for Today's Launches

Who in the studio can be given **Growth Mindset praise**?

Does **energy, intentionality, or rhythm of learning** need attention?

What **process for "getting something done"** should I highlight or demonstrate?

Is there a **hero I can showcase as a role model**?

How can I **turn over more responsibility to Eagles**?

Use the Launch Builder

The Launch Builder* is an online tool with suggestions and sample questions to help you build daily Launch Cards to print and clip to the front of this booklet.

http://myjourney.actonacademy.org/

* Your school will need to be set up on Journey Tracker first.

Goals for Socratic Discussions

Socratic discussions ask Eagles to make and defend difficult real-world decisions, supporting Acton Academy's learning philosophy:

Clear thinking leads to good decisions;
Good decisions lead to the right habits;
The right habits forge character; and
Character determines destiny.

As a Socratic Discussion leader, you have two goals:

Short-Term Goal

Ask each participant to listen, take a **firm stand**, and defend it concisely and with evidence or an example.

Long-Term Goal

Make yourself **obsolete** by equipping Eagles to create and lead their own Socratic discussions.

Socratic How-to

Rules of Engagement

1. Be on time and prepared.
2. Listen intently.
3. Take a stand.
4. Build on previous comments.
5. Be concise.
6. Provide evidence or examples.

*If the studio develops its own ROEs, Eagles will own them.

The Perfect Socratic Discussion

Ask the opening question.

Take a vote and participants are split 50-50.

The opener begins, followed by rigorous and energetic discussion.

Ask for lessons learned at the end.

Take a final vote, and participants are split 50-50, but everyone has changed sides.
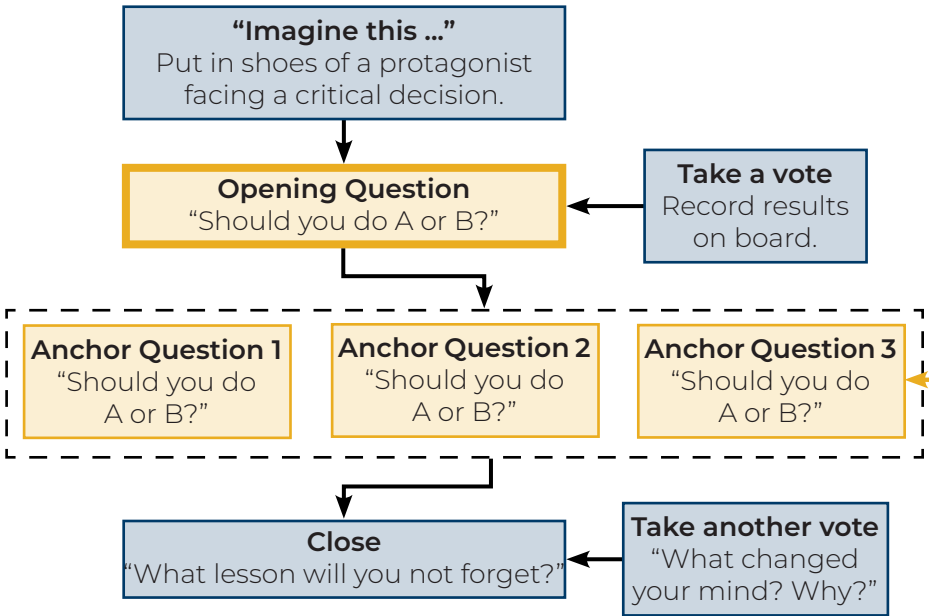
Other than posing the opening question and asking for lessons learned, you were silent.

Leading a Socratic Discussion

1) Pre-Launch

- Set up the **whiteboards** or visuals.
- Ask: "Which **Rules of Engagement** should we focus on in this dicussion?" (A volunteer can help enforce.)

2) The Basic Steps

"Imagine this ..."
Put in shoes of a protagonist facing a critical decision.

↓

Opening Question
"Should you do A or B?"

← **Take a vote**
Record results on board.

Anchor Question 1
"Should you do A or B?"

Anchor Question 2
"Should you do A or B?"

Anchor Question 3
"Should you do A or B?"

Close
"What lesson will you not forget?"

← **Take another vote**
"What changed your mind? Why?"

Launch & Opening Question: Reaffirm the ROEs, set the stage, and introduce a difficult decision where the stakes matter to participants. Take a vote to get all committed.
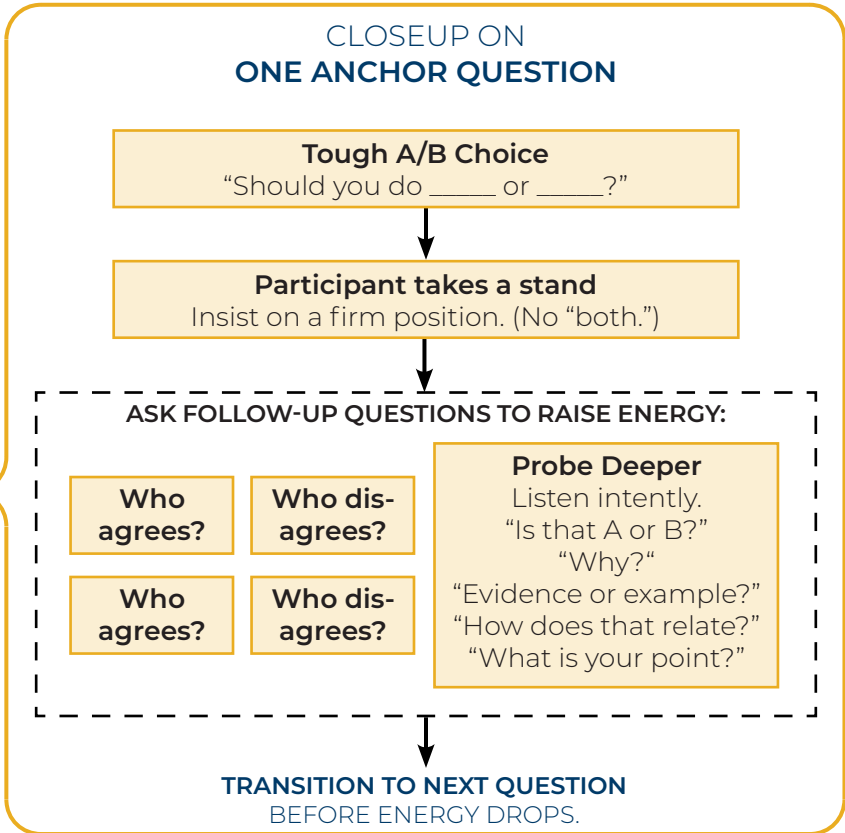
Anchor Questions: Pose major sub-questions that raise the stakes and help decide what to do next, including diagnosing an answer to the dilemma posed in the opening.

Close: Ask participants for "lessons learned" during the dicussion, including specific action items they will do as a

3) Diving into Each Question

Closely monitor energy so that each consecutive anchor and follow-up question **turns up the heat** in the discussion.

Repeat the pattern below for each of the anchor questions:

CLOSEUP ON
ONE ANCHOR QUESTION

Tough A/B Choice
"Should you do _____ or _____?"

Participant takes a stand
Insist on a firm position. (No "both.")

ASK FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS TO RAISE ENERGY:

Who agrees?

Who dis- agrees?

Who agrees?

Who dis- agrees?

Probe Deeper
Listen intently.
"Is that A or B?"
"Why?"
"Evidence or example?"
"How does that relate?"
"What is your point?"

TRANSITION TO NEXT QUESTION
BEFORE ENERGY DROPS.

4) Close

Ask for **"lessons learned."**

Ask for **feedback on how to improve the ROEs** for the next discussion.

Listen, Probe, and Enforce ROEs

- **Listen** with your entire body.
- **"Why?"** (Followed by "Why?," "Why?," and "Why?")
- **"What is your point?"**
- **"How does that relate** to what was just said?"
- "Do you have **evidence or an example**?"
- "How would you **explain that to a six-year-old**?"

IF SOMEONE VIOLATES THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT BY DISTRACT-ING OTHERS, GENTLY BUT FIRMLY ASK HIM OR HER TO LEAVE THE DISCUSSION.

Anchor Questions

Anchor questions focus on important decisions to:

- **Diagnose the problem.**
  "Is _____ or _____ more important?"
- **Prioritize.**
  "What are the three most important _____s and why?"
- **Call to action.**
  "What will you do at 8 am tomorrow morning?"

Shepherding the Energy of the Discussion

Help participants commit fully to the discussion:

- Draw a **clear line between A/B choices**. ("Do you mortgage the house to fund your startup or forever work in a cubicle?")
- Avoid leading or "fill in the blank" questions that sap energy. **If you know the answer, don't ask the question**.
- **Avoid introspective questions** that turn participants inward, instead of deeper into the discussion.

Between
Launches

Deflect Questions

Offer choices.
"Would you like to read or master a Khan skill next?"

Equip the Eagles.
"Where could you look to find an answer?"

Tweak a system.
"Where should this information be posted next time?"

Affirm with growth mindset praise and trust.
"I can see you worked hard."
"I trust you to find the answer."

Disappear as quickly as possible.
Upgrade a process, improve a system, or hand over responsibility to an Eagle so that soon you are not needed.

Growth Mindset Praise

Connect actions to heroic character traits:
"I saw you _____. I'd call that _____."
  - "I saw you try different options. I'd call that ingenuity."
  - "I saw you helping Tom. I'd call that kindness."
  - "I saw you ask Kate for an Eagle Buck. I'd call that courage."

Trust Eagles to Judge Excellence

1. If this is the first time: **"Is this my best work?"**
2. If attempted before: **"Is this better than last time?"**
3. As work quality soars: "How does it **compare to a world-class example?"**
4. Finally: "Have you won a contest or been **approved for public exhibition?"**

Help specifically for struggling Elementary Eagles

If frustrated:
- "Are you in your <u>panic, challenge, or comfort zone</u>?" If panic: "How can you take a step back?"
- "Would it be more helpful to stand up and stretch, or dive back in and focus?"
- "How much time have you worked on this? Do you think you just need more time?"

If stuck:
- "Where could you find an answer?"
- "What strategies have you tried?"
- "Have you face this problem before? What did you do?"
- "Have you seen others do this? What did they do?"
- "Who could help you with this?"

After a breakthrough:
- "How did you do that? … Thank you for sharing!"
- "What would you try differently next time?"
- "How can you document what you did to help you next time?"

Looking for direction/bored:
- "What is you big rock for today?" *(after "<u>Big Rocks</u>" launch)*
- "Would you prefer A, B, or C?"
- "Is this stretching your rubber band?" *(after "<u>Rubber Bands</u>" launch)*
- "Have you checked the schedule/clock/calendar/instructions/etc.?"

Conflict Resolution

Remember:
1. No judgment. You are uninvolved. Your role is to **open lines of communication**, not to resolve the conflict.
2. Must be **voluntary**: Both parties agree to a conflict resolution.
3. **Space**: Set a time, space, and time limit.
4. **Promote process:** Follow the conflict resolution process, not emotions.

Steps:
1. Cool off first.
2. The aggrieved party starts: "I feel _____ when you _____."
3. The second party paraphrases: "I heard you say ..." until the aggrieved party feels heard.
4. The second party states his or her point of view: "I feel _____ when you _____."
5. The aggrieved party paraphrases: "I heard you say ..." until the second party feels heard."
6. The process continues until both sides feel they have been fully heard.
7. Shift to finding solutions. What will make things right? What can be done in the future?

*If the studio develops or adopts its own Conflict Resolution process, with a special space set aside, Eagles will own the process.

Distractions &
Emergencies

What do you do if studio <u>intentionality</u> breaks down?

Step back. Then step back again. Unless it's an emergency, let the Eagles handle it.

Model and praise. Praise every positive action you see. Model the right language, actions, and personal discipline.

During <u>launches</u>, offer ways Eagles can improve intentionality.
- The <u>Hero's Journey</u>
- This session's upcoming <u>Exhibition</u> and <u>Journey Map</u>
- <u>SMART Goals</u>
- Tracker Challenges
- <u>Yacker Tracker</u>
- A new method of tracking through rapid prototyping

If the <u>Guide-Eagle Contract</u> allows, change seating, Eagle Buck consequences, or other systems.

Ask Eagle leaders for suggestions.

As a last resort, hold up the contract as a mirror.
- "Which promises are we doing best/worst at?"
- "Do you prefer to enforce this promise or amend it?"

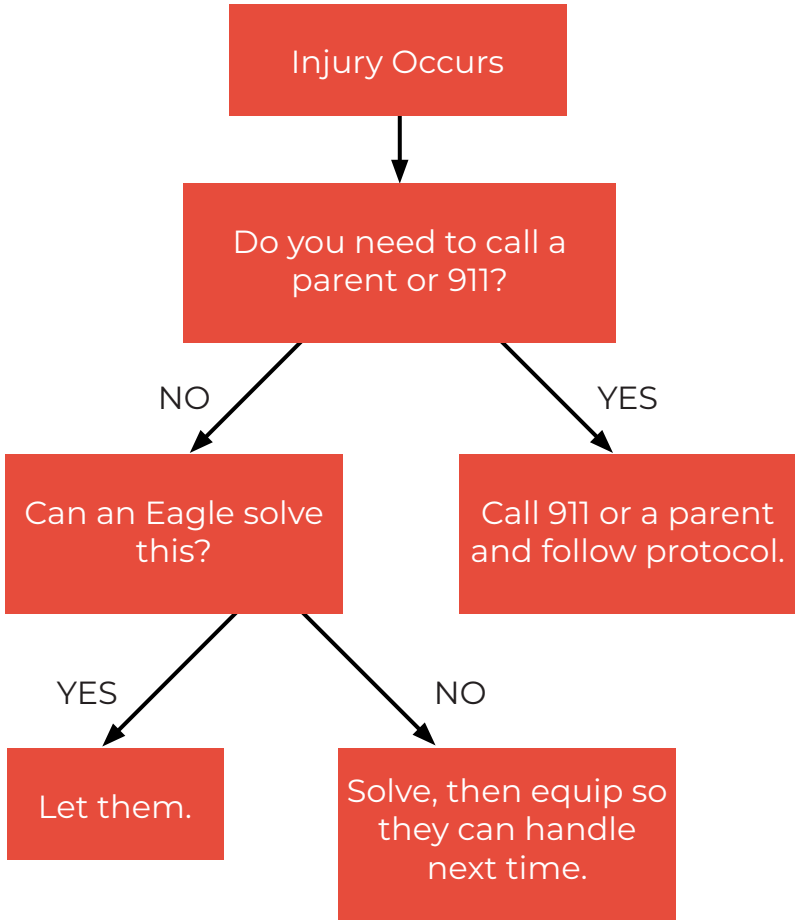# Moment of Truth as a Guide

If the studio becomes unintentional:
1. Allow it, and step back.
2. Unintentionality gets worse. Step back again.
3. One or more studio leaders approach you to "fix it."
   - Hand the problem back to them with choices of action.
   - Suggest they gather a group of like-minded leaders to help implement.

Responding to **Distractions**

Distraction Occurs

Is there a physical risk? Intervene based on the Guide Contract.

Wait 5 mins. If it doesn't stop…

Does it matter? Is it affecting the individual or group? (Or does it just bug you?)

No → **Do nothing.**

Yes

Do the Eagle(s) handle this on their own? Will the Eagle(s) self-correct? Will a leader step up if the community breaks down enough?

No

Yes

Praise courage. Equip leaders with processes, Encourage leaders to find allies.

Are you sure? Wait – at least 5 min, likely a couple days.

Leaders come to you.

Don't intevene: Observe and discuss in Close.

"Which of your promises are being upheld and which aren't?"

"Would it be more helpful to try _____ or _____?"

"Would you like to enforce the contract or change it?"

FOR YOUNGER EAGLES ONLY

Offer choices: Broad at first; Wait; Then narrow.

"Would you like to: a) reset & work; b) sit at desk; or c) take a 15-min break?"

"Would you like to go home or reset by sitting with a guide for the rest of the day?"

What do you do if an injury occurs?

Injury Occurs

Do you need to call a parent or 911?

NO

YES

Can an Eagle solve this?

Call 911 or a parent and follow protocol.

YES

NO

Let them.

Solve, then equip so they can handle next time.

Thoughtful Closings

I. Lessons learned:
  · "What's the most important lesson you learned to-day?"
  · "What will you do differently tomorrow?"

II. Character Callouts
  · "Who deserves to be thanked or lifted up?" (For intentionality, sportsmanship, kindness or another positive act.)

III. What's next?
  · Tomorrow, this week, this session.

IV. A quote, affirmation or challenge.