READY-TO-USE TEMPLATE

What Makes Work Worth Staying For?

A voluntary stay conversation with clear boundaries and a credible follow-up.

30 minutes | Stay conversation and follow-through

Use the supplied wording as it is, or change it together. The Word file and Notion template are editable. Keep only notes you need.

Invite without pressure

Explain the purpose and who will see the notes. Do not request a promise to stay or information about job searches.

I would like to understand what makes work here worth doing and what could make it better. This is not a request for a commitment to stay. You can skip a question or answer later. Let’s agree what, if anything, we record and what I may share to act on it.

0-8 minutes · Understand what matters

Begin with their experience, not a list of retention benefits.

What gives you energy or a sense that your work matters here?
What would you miss if it disappeared?
Which relationships or ways of working should we protect?

Notes and changes for our situation

What Makes Work Worth Staying For?

WORKING AGENDA / CONTINUED

8-18 minutes · Understand the cost

Listen without defending the organization. Let them choose how much to share.

What is making it harder to do good work or have a sustainable working life?
Where are you repeatedly working around something?
What feels out of step with what you were led to expect?
What would you like me to understand that I have not asked?

18-25 minutes · Separate possibilities from promises

Name what you control, what needs another decision, and what cannot currently change.

One change within my control:
Something I need to explore with someone else, with your agreement:
A constraint I should explain honestly:
What you would count as a useful improvement:
What you do not want me to share:

Notes and changes for our situation

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WORKING AGENDA / CONTINUED

25-30 minutes · Agree the follow-up

Choose one or two concrete actions. Avoid turning every answer into a task for the colleague.

I will [action] by [date].
I need to check [question] with [person], sharing only [agreed information].
I will come back to you on [date], including if the answer is no.
We will know whether it helped by [observable experience or example].

At the follow-up

Close the loop before asking for more feedback.

Here is what I did, what changed, and what I could not change. What difference did it make to your experience? What did I misunderstand? What should we keep, revise, or stop?

The thinking behind it

People should not have to threaten to leave before a condition becomes discussable. The value of this conversation lives in the response and follow-through, not the information collected.

Read You Have a Culture Problem by Nic Payne

Keep the useful part

A shared record, not a transcript. Agree what belongs here and what should stay private.

Date / people / purpose

What we agreed

Next step / owner / support / date

What remains open

When we will return to it

Am I asking for candor without being willing to change anything?