

# Quiet Erosion Field Guide

A quick reference for recognizing when decisions are weakening — and what to do next.

# What this is for

Most decisions do not fail all at once. They erode quietly — losing clarity, momentum, and meaning over time.

This guide helps you:

- recognize the pattern early
- name it without blame
- take a small step to restore the decision

# The Five Patterns of Quiet Erosion

# 1. Stall

**What it looks like:** The decision exists, but nothing really starts. First steps are unclear. Ownership is vague. Progress is always about to happen.

**What it's telling you:** The decision was never translated into action.

**Try this:** Name the first visible move and who owns it. Make it happen quickly.



# 2. Soften

**What it looks like:** Firm decisions become flexible. Exceptions multiply. Standards turn into suggestions.

**What it's telling you:** The trade-offs were not fully accepted or sustained.

**Try this:** Restate what must hold. Clarify where flexibility is truly acceptable.



# 3. Reinterpret

**What it looks like:** Different people describe the decision differently. Multiple versions emerge.

**What it's telling you:** The decision was not precise or portable enough to survive handoff.

**Try this:** Create a clear, shared narrative that others can repeat accurately.



# 4. Defer

**What it looks like:** The decision is still “true,” but always later. It keeps getting postponed.

**What it’s telling you:** The decision was never made real against competing priorities.

**Try this:** Make an explicit trade-off. Decide what moves aside so this can proceed.



# 5. Disappear

**What it looks like:** The decision fades from agendas and conversations. It is no longer referenced.

**What it's telling you:** There is no ownership, visibility, or follow-through structure.

**Try this:** Reintroduce the decision and assign a clear owner and next checkpoint.



# A Simple Diagnostic Move

Ask:

**Which erosion pattern is happening here?**

This shifts the conversation from:

- blame → understanding
- frustration → structure

# A Simple Recovery Move

Then ask:

## What part of this decision was never finished?

Often, it is one of:

- clarity (what was actually decided)
- boundaries (what must hold vs flex)
- ownership (who carries it)
- initiation (what happens first)
- pressure (what will test it)
- follow-through (how it is revisited)

## The Closing Question

**Is this decision  
finished — or  
merely agreed  
to?**

If it is only agreed to, you are likely seeing the early signs of erosion.

# What good looks like

A decision with integrity:

- can be explained by someone who wasn't in the room
- holds under pressure without constant reinforcement
- continues to make sense as conditions change



# Decision Integrity:

**A quiet standard for  
decisions that need to  
hold.**

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