050 Reads Underneath

Perspective Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/050-reads-underneath/

Every position the operator encounters in their building has an interest underneath it.

The vendor who won't budge on price is not protecting a number. They are protecting a margin, a relationship, a precedent, or a fear of what giving in signals to the next negotiation. The cast member who pushes back on the new standard is not resisting change. They are protecting their sense of competence, their standing with peers, or their fear that the new standard exposes a gap they don't know how to close. The investor who keeps raising the same concern is not arguing about the P&L line. They are protecting their confidence in the operator's judgment — or their own credibility with the people they answer to.

The position is the surface. The interest is what the surface is protecting. The operator who resolves only positions manages the symptom and wonders why the same conflicts keep recurring. The operator who reads underneath manages the cause.

[Positions vs. Interests] is a Perspective discipline — it changes the frame the operator uses to read every interaction in the building. Not "what is this person saying?" but "what are they protecting?" Not "what do they want?" but "why does this matter to them?" Not "how do I win this argument?" but "what do we both actually need?"

The frame shift is not a negotiation tactic. It is a seeing discipline. The operator who sees interests instead of positions reads their building more accurately — the cast dynamic underneath the visible friction, the vendor relationship underneath the contract dispute, the investor concern underneath the quarterly question. The position is the noise. The interest is the signal. Perspective is the discipline of reading the signal before acting on the noise.

What Changes Tomorrow

Before the next difficult conversation in your building — vendor, cast member, investor, partner — write down the position you expect them to take. Then write down what you think they are protecting underneath it. That second sentence is the one that changes the conversation. The operator who enters a negotiation knowing what the other party is protecting can address the interest directly instead of fighting the position indefinitely. Name the interest before you walk in.

Design the conversation around it.

Cross-fundamental note: connects to 3.X — People (reading positions vs. interests is the foundational discipline of every Lead development conversation — the cast member who resists a standard is protecting something the Lead needs to identify before the coaching conversation can land) and 1.DA.0 — Decision Architecture (the operator who reads interests before deciding has eliminated the most common decision failure mode — acting on the surface position while the underlying interest remains unresolved and resurfaces in the next conflict).