

# What Are We Optimizing For?

**A reset for busy but misaligned teams**



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Making Work Flow

# Use this tool when:

- Work feels busy but progress feels uneven
- Teams are making reasonable decisions that still conflict
- Tradeoffs feel political or personal
- Everything is urgent, but nothing is clear

This tool helps teams align before effort turns into friction.

# Teams are always optimizing for something.

*They just haven't always agreed on what it is.*

*Misalignment here quietly slows everything down.*

**When this is unclear, people optimize for different things:**

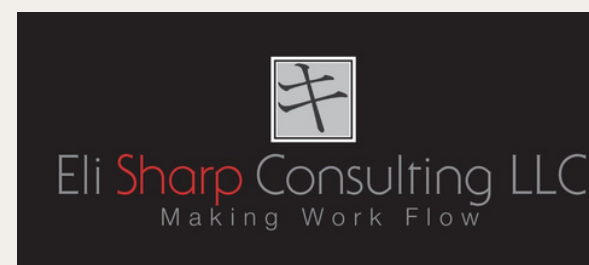
- Speed
- Risk avoidance
- Cost
- Quality
- Visibility
- Personal workload
- Approval

# The Optimization Reset

This reset is a short conversation built around four questions.

It works best when answered together, out loud.

Time needed: 15–20 minutes



# 1. What are we optimizing for right now?

*Not long-term. Not ideally. Right now.*

## Examples:

- Speed to market
- Stability
- Learning
- Cost containment
- Customer trust
- Team capacity

Name the real goal driving decisions today.

## 2. What are we not optimizing for?

*This question creates relief.*

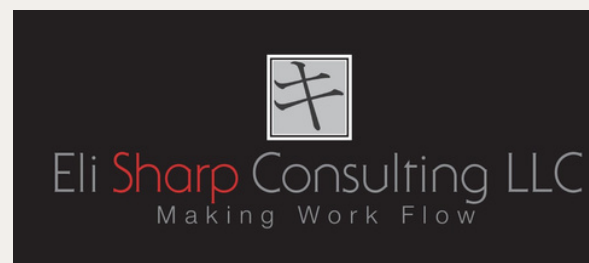
Ask:

- What are we intentionally deprioritizing?
- What tradeoffs are we accepting?

Examples:

- “We are not optimizing for perfection.”
- “We are not optimizing for speed at all costs.”
- “We are not optimizing for consensus.”

*Clarity here removes defensiveness.*

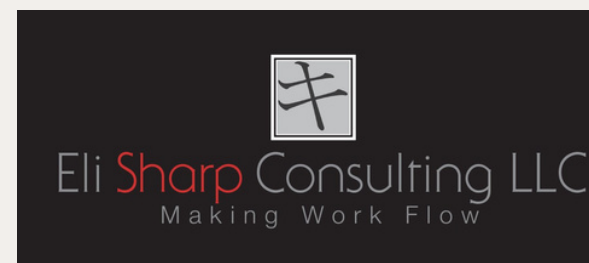


### 3. Where should this show up in decisions?

*Make it concrete.*

- What decisions should get easier now?
- Where should this show up in priorities, scope, or timelines?
- What decision has been stuck because this wasn't named?

*This turns alignment into action.*



## 4. How will we know when this is no longer working?

*This prevents over-optimization.*

- What signal tells us it's time to revisit this?
- What would tell us we've gone too far?

*Momentum stays healthy when it's revisited.*

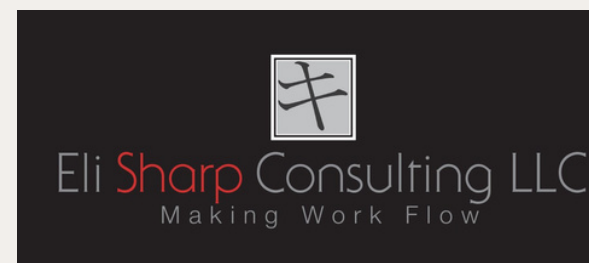
# How to Use This Tool

Best used in:

- Leadership meetings
- Project resets
- Quarterly planning check-ins
- Moments of tension or disagreement

*Tip: Capture the answers live and share them afterward.*

That alone creates alignment.



# What This Unlocks

After this conversation:

- Decisions move faster
- Tradeoffs feel cleaner
- Fewer things feel personal
- Teams stop debating symptoms and align on direction

This often sets teams up for deeper work.

**Alignment doesn't come from  
working harder.**

**It comes from agreeing on what matters right now.**

