Working with Kris

The purpose of this document is to provide you with a clear framework for working with me. Use it like a user guide.

User Guide Sections

I Want to Win

I want us to feel like we're winning inside and out. I care deeply about the success of our business and the impact we're making on customers. I care equally about establishing a healthy, equitable, and accountable culture. A winning culture begets a winning business. We'll know we're jamming if our team feels close, safe, and aligned on a shared future.

Hold me accountable for clarity. Everyone on our team should be able to confirm that:

✔ We have a shared vision of our future!

✔ We trust our leaders and each other to get there!

✔ Our goals are clear!

✔ Our standards of work are clear!

✔ The way we measure success is clear!

✔ The organization is designed well!

✔ We behave consistently!

I Practice Foundational Values

1. **Listening**: Active listening is a critical skill for anyone, but for designers is non-negotiable. You know you are actively listening when you're present, focused, taking notes, making eye contact, interacting with the speaker, reflecting, summarizing, and not shouting solutions.
   - ✔ Outcomes of listening include: People feel heard, included, and respected.

2. **Understanding:** Stephen Covey's quote, "Seek to understand, not to be understood," is what I repeat most at work. I'm a broken record about it. Whether you're delivering or receiving, understanding the problem, person, context, conflict, or whatever is critical for efficiency. Equally critical is not pushing your ideas or agenda on everyone else. Seeking to be understood also has a double negative effect of you solving the wrong problems and coming off like an a**hole.
   - ✔ Outcomes of understanding include: People see that you care, are valued, and their ideas matter.

3. **Playback**: Playback can be magical. Nothing illustrates, "Now, I have a partner!" louder than when someone delivers a quick, concise, and elevated summary of something someone else just said. Whether in a group setting or individual conversation, the ability to thoughtfully playback what is being discussed has all the benefits of collaborator, contributor, and valuable multiplier.
   - ✔ Outcomes of playback include being seen as someone who makes others' work better, brings others closer to customers, and makes others more confident in their ideas and output.

4. **Realness**: Honesty, humility, and humor are the three major qualities. These qualities are best served together. They play off each other and keep things in perspective. At work, we strive for direct communication from a place of mutual respect and light-heartedness.
   ✔ Outcomes of realness include active, easy, and focused interactions.

I don't have the patience for…

- **People who lack curiosity**: I don't have the patience for people who presume to have all the answers or aren't open to other people's ideas. For example, I observe a lack of curiosity in people when they ask questions that intimate conversations (as opposed to open questions), when they are defensive or non-responsive when receiving feedback, and when they exhibit a narrow and rigid view of solutions or ways forward (aka my-way-or-the-highway), or when they get quickly frustrated or flustered when working through options with other people.
- **People who lack self-awareness**: I don't have the patience for people who haven't done the work of knowing themselves. For example, I observe a lack of self-awareness in people who don't openly talk about their areas of improvement and don't regularly ask people for feedback, or worse, who receive consistent feedback about something yet refuse to accept or deal with it.
- **People who bulldoze:** I don't have the patience for office bullies. For example, I observe bullying in the office when people speak over, interrupt, speak on behalf of, or speak to others. I see it when people bulldoze other people's opinions, priorities, concerns, and feelings. People who lack curiosity are also people who tend to bully and bulldoze.
- **People who multitask in meetings**: I don't like meetings. Most meetings are a waste of time. I'm also a stickler for meeting etiquette. If we're meeting, it's important. I have no patience for multitasking attendees. If you're too busy to focus on the task, don't attend. I encourage everyone to protect their time and be picky about what meetings they accept.

I communicate best when…

- It is impossible to over-communicate. Do not assume I know what you're up to. If you're ever debating including me in communication, just add me.
- I keep my calendar up to date. If you ever want to Zoom, grab some time!
- Slack is great for quick questions, status updates, reminders, and getting my eyes on your work. Don't wait for an in-person meeting to share work. Fire away on Slack. If you don't @kris in a thread with other people, then I assume I should be looking but that you don't expect a reply from me.

- About meetings, I'd prefer not to have them. But if we need one, then take it seriously. In any meeting invite (no matter the size or duration), please include the following:
    - Purpose: In one sentence, write the purpose of the meeting.
    - Process: In bullet points, list the agenda showing how to use our time.
    - Product: In one sentence, write the ideal result of the meeting.
- Time is a precious commodity. Be punctual. I practice time integrity, and I expect you to do the same. That means we come to meetings on time and we end meetings on time. You are expected to be there if you've accepted a meeting invite. If you're grabbing me for a quick convo, and need 15min, ask for 15min. A pet peeve of mine is when people say, "Do you have a minute?" when they know they need an hour.
- I've bought into the radical candor philosophy of caring deeply so you can challenge directly. The two aspects are correlated. I want to build this communication style with everyone I work with and expect my team to do the same with me.
- Another small but important comms request is that you don't bury your lead — please start with what you need. Be direct. Start with your goal, outcome, or problem. Then, let's digest and diagnose with that need in mind.
- Show me what you're learning and still have to learn. Share your a-ha moments and outstanding questions.

I 🖤 Feedback

I agree that feedback is a gift, but from my experience, the sentiment is mostly lip service. The best advice I ever received is that giving and receiving feedback is an attitude, "If we want to receive feedback well, we need to be curious about what someone is trying to tell us—even when they are doing a terrible job of telling us. We're usually going to have to work to see what our givers are trying to say (Sensemaking)".

Feedback from me to you

- I commit to providing feedback in the flow of work. The faster we address feedback, the faster we can calibrate and move forward.
- I don't always have the perfect words to say it, so please ask me for clarity if my feedback isn't clear.

- At a minimum, you will receive feedback from me weekly in our 1:1. I will also give you more in-depth feedback each quarter. At the end of Q2 and Q4, I will also solicit 360 feedback to help frame the longer-form H1 and H2 reviews.

Feedback from you to me

- Don't worry about finding the right words or the right time. If you have feedback or concerns, please pull me aside, Slack me, write it in a document, or do whatever you feel is right.
- Commit to providing direct and critical feedback if I'm ever blocking your (or the company's) success.
- Consider writing a user guide like this one for yourself, and I will honor it (or tell you if/when I can't).

I'm Emo

Psych safety is non-negotiable.

I enjoy close relationships with others. I find deep satisfaction in working collaboratively to achieve a goal. To that end, you'll notice I prioritize emotional and psychological safety. I do this to build trust. I aim to set an emotional tone to make meeting people where they are easier. You'll notice I also use affect-laden words in my language. For example, I refer to coworkers as "fam." I often start meetings with a "vibe check" or "10 seconds of breathing". I want to feel comfortable at work; I know everyone wants the same, so I work on setting the stage for sharing feelings and preferences. That said, I know this style isn't for everyone. I'm not interested in forcing people into inauthentic experiences. But in general, I see emotions as an essential aspect of our workplace culture — everyone should be set up for a safe, consistent, and emotionally measured workplace.

Source: [No Hard Feelings: Emotions at Work and How They Help Us Succeed](#)

I Have an Empowering Leadership Style

I'm a fan of how IDEO analogizes leadership styles — the leader as Coach, Gardner, and Explorer. Each style has pros and cons, but they aren't static categories. The styles blend into (and enable) each other. The goal is to know when to leverage what style is needed within the workflow.

Coach Leading alongside, staying present and engaged with your team's work.	✔ Being Present ✔ Staying Engaged ✔ Meeting People Where They Are ✔ Developing Team Skills	**50%** Biaeds to lead alongside as a coach
Explorer Leading with a strong POV, setting a course for an inspiring, new direction.	✔ Holding a Strong Vision ✔ Inspiring Others ✔ Taking Risks ✔ Taking Action	**30%** Biaeds to lead ahead with a strong POV
Gardner Leading through culture, setting new norms that support creativity and connection..	✔ Setting Conditions ✔ Making Adjustments ✔ Preparing for Challenges ✔ Generating Enthusiasm	**20%** Biaeds to lead through cultivating culture

Source: [IDEO U, Leading for Creativity](#)

I Am a Human-centered Manager

According to [my DiSC Manager Profile](#), managers like me with an iS style enjoy working with others toward a common goal and helping people succeed professionally. This sentiment resonates with me. I appreciate when management empowers me to help create a collaborative environment where people feel comfortable expressing themselves. In the table here, I included my manager-style iS attributes.

1. Giving Support	2. Valuing Collaboration
People with the Si style tend to be caring and compassionate. It may be upsetting when others are distressed or unhappy. You want	You find it motivating to work on a team. You have a knack for bringing people together and making everyone feel included. You likely

people to find you approachable and always willing to offer help or listen patiently. Because a warm, sympathetic environment is essential to you, you focus on giving support whenever needed.	see the benefit of acknowledging others' opinions and may feel disconnected from people who prefer to work independently.
3. Taking Action: You also highly value swift, immediate progress, a characteristic unusual for the iS style. You probably prefer to get going immediately and may become impatient with obstacles. You're unlikely to be intimidated by rapid change or the need to improvise. Once you've chosen a course of action, stick to it, and keep moving.	**4. Generating Enthusiasm:** You're cheerful and optimistic, even when faced with adversity. You like to appear upbeat and open, and you probably want the people around you to keep a positive outlook. You tend to assume the best in people instead of dwelling on their flaws. Because you need to create a happy and lighthearted environment, you focus on generating enthusiasm.

Source: [DiSC Manager Profile](#)

I Am Conflict Aware

My conflict biases have been consistent throughout my career. In our most heated moments of conflict, you should know that:

- My primary conflict bias is to collaborate
- My secondary conflict bias is to accommodate
- After that, I'm either avoiding, competing, or compromising.

Collaborate "Two heads are better than one."	**Primary** 95% likely to collaborate	**What I've learned about managing my conflict styles:** When faced with someone exhibiting a competitive conflict mode, my primary bias for collaboration doesn't work, and I move quickly into accommodation. I have people-pleaser tendencies. Sometimes, accommodation is practical, especially when the stakes
Accommodate "It would be my pleasure."	**Secondary** 95% likely to accommodate.	
Compete "My way or the highway."	**Tertiary** 30% likely to compete	

Avoid	**Seldom**	are low, but accommodation can also feel like acquiescence.
"I'll deal with it tomorrow."	15% likely to look the other way.	
Compromise	**Rarely**	However, I've learned to dial up my competitive mode in those moments, so I don't submit too quickly.
"Let's make a deal!"	10% likely to compromise	

Source: TKI Conflict Mode Instrument

I Think Assessments Are Fun

One of my top strengths is learning. I love to learn. More than the content or the result, the learning process is most interesting to me. Not surprisingly, I love a good personal assessment. I'm sure you've wanted to (or had to) take a few of these yourself at some point.

Strengths Finder	Achiever, Positivity, Learner, Individualization, Relator
16 Personalities	Turbulent Campainger ENFPT-T
DiSC Manager Style	iS — Influence & Steadiness
TKI Conflict Bias	Collaborator (for better or worse)
PQ Saboteurs	Top 5: Pleaser, Victim, Controller, Avoider & Stickler
Working Genius	Galvanizing and Enablement
Love Languages	Words of Affirmation
Apology Language	Accept Responsibility
Enneagram	"Threes" are tough, competent workers who seek to achieve
Big Five	Open, Conscientious, Agreeable, Extravert w/ low Neurocy

Predictive Index	Operator: Patient, Conscientious, Relaxed, and Cooperative
	I asked Chat GPT to synthesize and summarize my assessment results. Here's a grab of the intersections (which I think is accurate).

I Like to Talk Shop

For example, Product Development

- [SVPG Blog & Books](#) by Marty Cagan and Team
- [Reforge Blog](#) by Brian Balfour and Team
- [Lenny's Newsletter & Podcast](#) by Lenny Ratchitsky
- [Managing for Outcomes](#) by Josh Seiden
- [Obviously Awesome](#) by April Dunford
- [Continuous Discovery Habits](#) by Teresa Torres

For example, Design Development

- [Sensemaking](#) by Christian Madsbjerg
- [Napkin Academy](#) by Dan Roam
- [Resonate](#) by Nancy Duarte
- [Storyworthy](#) by Matthew Dicks
- [Developing Design Sensibilities](#) by Jane Suri and Michael Hendrix
- [IDEO U](#) Create Positive Impact Through Design
- [Intercom Blog](#) by their designers

For example, People Development

- [The Making of a Manager](#) by Julie Zhou
- [From Triggered to Tranquil](#) by Susan Campbell
- [Growth Mindset](#) by Carol Dweck
- [Culture Code](#) by Daniel Coyle
- [No Hard Feelings](#) by Liz Fosslien and Mollie West Duffy

- [Getting to Yes](#) by Uri, Patton, and Fischer

I Like to Stay in Touch

Don't be a stranger.

- [krisandrewsdesign.com](#)
- [linkedin.com/in/krisandrews](#)
- [wellfound.com/u/kris-andrews](#)