

# The 4-Step Drill for “Impossible” Problems



## Facilitator Notes — Title Slide

- Open calmly — don't over-sell the topic
- Position it as practical, not theoretical
- Make it clear this is about *working on a real problem they already have*

### Key line to land early:

“Think of a problem you're currently stuck on — you'll be working on that throughout.”

- Briefly signal structure (don't explain yet):  
“We'll go through a simple 4-step drill — and you'll leave with something concrete to try.”
- Set expectation:  
This is not about solving everything today  
It's about *changing how they approach the problem*
- Keep pace — don't linger here
- Move quickly into the first interaction (poll)

# OPENING



## POLL

On a scale of 1–5, how stuck are you right now on a problem that feels impossible to solve?

(Display results live.)

1

2

3

4

5

Not stuck at all

Completely stuck



## FRAMING

This is not about motivation.  
It's a 4-step drill:



DIAGNOSE



DECONSTRUCT



LEVERAGE



TEST



You will leave with one specific action for the next 48 hours.

## Opening – Facilitator Notes

- Ask participants to think of a real, current problem before launching the poll
- Run the poll (1–5 scale) to anchor the session in something concrete
- Don't analyse results in depth — just acknowledge the spread
- Briefly position the session:
  - Not about motivation
  - It's a practical 4-step drill
- Walk through the four steps quickly (no explanation yet):  
Diagnose → Deconstruct → Leverage → Test
- Set expectation clearly:  
Participants leave with **one specific action within 48 hours** (not a full solution)
- Keep this tight and move on quickly to Section 1

## SECTION 1

# Diagnose: Real vs. Self-Imposed



### PURPOSE

Separate real constraints from perceived or ghost constraints (rules you follow that don't actually exist).



### KEY IDEA

Most "impossible" problems feel that way because of unclear ownership, missing information, or self-imposed rules.



### YOUR TURN

In the chat, write one reason your problem feels stuck.



### REAL CONSTRAINT

External limitations you truly can't change. (budget, authority, time)



### INFORMATION GAP

Missing or unknown information you need to move forward. (unknown facts)



### GHOST CONSTRAINT

Rules or processes you believe you must follow but no one enforces. (self-imposed rules)



### NEXT

Now we break the blob into pieces.

## Section 1: Diagnose – What's actually blocking you? (12 min)

- Title on slide: Diagnose: Real vs. Self-Imposed
- Purpose: Separate real constraints from perceived or ghost constraints (rules you follow that don't actually exist).
- Key idea: Most "impossible" problems feel that way because of unclear ownership, missing information, or self-imposed rules.
- Interaction (6 min): Chat waterfall: "Write one reason your problem feels stuck." Host clusters responses into 3 buckets in real time:
  1. Real constraint (budget, authority, time)
  2. Information gap (unknown facts)
  3. Ghost constraint (a rule or process you assume but no one enforces)
- Transition line: "Now we break the blob into pieces."

## SECTION 2

# Deconstruct: Known / Hard / Easy / Unknown



### PURPOSE

Turn one monolithic problem into a list of smaller sub-problems.



### KEY IDEA

Insurmountable = too large to grasp. Deconstruction reveals which pieces are hard, which are easy, and which are simply unknown.



### YOUR TURN

Pick 1-2 sub-problems from your own case and label each as:



**KNOWN / HARD**  
Clear but difficult



**KNOWN / EASY**  
Just needs doing



**UNKNOWN**  
Missing info



### SHARE IN CHAT

Share one example (e.g., "Budget approval – Known/Hard").



### NEXT

Now that you see the pieces, which one moves the needle fastest?

## Section 2: Deconstruct – Map the problem's anatomy (12 min)

- Title on slide: Deconstruct: Known / Hard / Easy / Unknown
- Purpose: Turn one monolithic problem into a list of smaller sub-problems.
- Key idea: Insurmountable = too large to grasp. Deconstruction reveals which pieces are hard, which are easy, and which are simply unknown.
- Interaction (5 min): Participants pick 1-2 sub-problems from their own case and label each as:
  - Known/Hard (clear but difficult)
  - Known/Easy (just needs doing)
  - Unknown (missing info)
  - Share one example in chat (e.g., "Budget approval – Known/Hard").
- Transition line: "Now that you see the pieces, which one moves the needle fastest?"

### SECTION 3

## Leverage: The 5% Pivot



#### PURPOSE

Identify one variable that, if shifted, changes the problem's geometry.



#### KEY IDEA

Forget the full solution. Find a low-drag action that reduces perceived size fastest – a bottleneck, a missing decision, or a ghost rule to kill.



#### POLL

Which leverage type applies to your problem right now?

A

#### ONE BOTTLENECK

Solving this unlocks others.

#### EXAMPLE

Vendor approval is taking weeks – get the right person in the room.

B

#### ONE UNKNOWN

Clarifying this makes everything clearer.

#### EXAMPLE

We don't know the real customer need – run 5 quick user interviews.

C

#### ONE GHOST CONSTRAINT

A self-imposed rule you can simply drop.

#### EXAMPLE

We've always done the monthly review – skip it this once.



#### NEXT

Pick one. Now turn it into a test.

### Section 3: Leverage – Find the smallest point of entry (12 min)

- Title on slide: Leverage: The 5% Pivot
- Purpose: Identify one variable that, if shifted, changes the problem's geometry.
- Key idea: Forget the full solution. Find a low-drag action that reduces perceived size fastest – a bottleneck, a missing decision, or a ghost rule to kill.
- Interaction (5 min): Poll: *"Which leverage type applies to your problem right now?"*
  - A. One bottleneck – solving this unlocks others
  - B. One unknown – clarifying this makes everything clearer
  - C. One ghost constraint – a self-imposed rule you can simply drop
- On screen: For each option, one concrete example (e.g., ghost constraint: *"We've always done the monthly review – skip it this once"*).
- Transition line: *"Pick one. Now turn it into a test."*

## SECTION 4

# Test: 48-Hour Sentence



### PURPOSE

Convert your leverage point into a low-risk, fast, informative action.



### KEY IDEA

"Insurmountable" collapses when you take one small action that costs little but teaches you something.

**Fail cheap, fail forward.**



### YOUR TURN

Write one sentence:

“

In the next 48 hours,  
I will [action] to test if [assumption] is true.

”



### EXAMPLE

*"I will ask my manager if the quarterly report format is actually mandatory, to test if we've been following a ghost rule."*



### OPTIONAL: QUICK FEEDBACK

Private chat to one partner for quick feedback.  
(Nominate via raise hand)



2 MIN

## Section 4: Test – Define a 48-hour safe-to-fail action (12 min)

- Title on slide: Test: 48-Hour Sentence
- Purpose: Convert your leverage point into a low-risk, fast, informative action.
- Key idea: "Insurmountable" collapses when you take one small action that costs little but teaches you something. Fail cheap, fail forward.
- Interaction (7 min): Participants write one sentence:  
*"In the next 48 hours, I will [action] to test if [assumption] is true."*
  - Example: "I will ask my manager if the quarterly report format is actually mandatory, to test if we've been following a ghost rule."
- Optional: Private chat to one partner (nominate via raise hand) for quick feedback (2 min).

# CLOSING



## 1 RECAP

Here's your 4-step checklist.



### 1. DIAGNOSE

Real vs. Ghost?



### 2. DECONSTRUCT

Known / Hard / Easy / Unknown?



### 3. LEVERAGE

Bottleneck / Unknown / Ghost?



### 4. TEST

48-hour sentence written?

## 2 COMMITMENT PROMPT



"Open your calendar.  
Put a 30-minute block  
tomorrow morning to do  
your 48-hour test."

## 3 FINAL POLL

Compared to the start,  
does your problem now feel  
less insurmountable?



## 4 LAST LINE



"You don't solve impossible  
problems – you outlast them  
one test at a time."



You leave with one action. Do it. Learn from it. Repeat.

## Closing (7 min)

- Recap (2 min): Show the 4-step one-page checklist (handout):
  - Diagnose: Real vs. Ghost?
  - Deconstruct: Known/Hard/Easy/Unknown?
  - Leverage: Bottleneck / Unknown / Ghost?
  - Test: 48-hour sentence written?
- Commitment prompt (2 min): "Open your calendar. Put a 30-minute block tomorrow morning to do your 48-hour test."
- Final poll (1 min): "Compared to the start, does your problem now feel less insurmountable?" (Show before/after results.)
- Last line (1 min): "You don't solve impossible problems – you outlast them one test at a time."