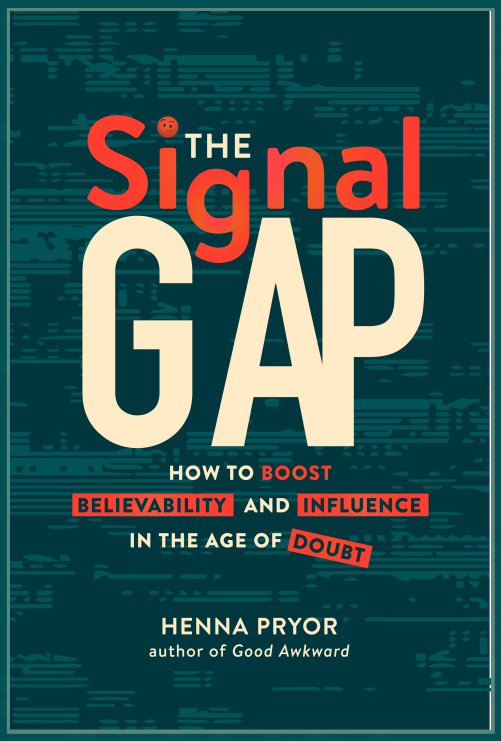
FOR BOOK CLUBS, TEAMS, AND CLASSROOMS

THE SIGNAL GAP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Chapter-by-chapter questions, two activities you can run from the couch, and the prompts that make a good argument a great one. For readers who'd rather **be believed** than be impressive.



HENNA PRYOR, CSP

Author of *The Signal Gap* and *Good Awkward* · thesignalgap.com

BOOK CLUB EDITION

THE SIGNAL GAP · BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE

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A NOTE ON PAGE NUMBERS

Chapter page numbers in this guide follow the hardcover edition. Reading on Kindle or listening to the audiobook? Go by chapter title; every question names the story it points to.

BEFORE YOU START

How to Use This Guide

You're holding a discussion guide for a book about being believed. Which means the first thing your group gets to argue about is **whether you believe me.** Good. That's the whole point.

The Signal Gap makes one argument: We've moved from trust-then-verify to verify-then-trust, and most of us are still running the old playbook. These questions drag that argument off the page and into your actual life: your Slack threads, your pitches, your dinner table. Expect to squirm a little. I did, writing it.

01 **Pick three, not twenty-one.** There are three questions per chapter. A good meeting covers two chapters and goes deep rather than wide. No one has ever left a book club wishing it had covered more ground.

02 **Bring a real example.** Every question asks for a moment from your own life, not a theory. The group that shows up with the actual screenshot wins.

03 **Run one activity.** **Page 15** has two you can do without leaving your seat. Each takes about ten minutes and gets quieter people talking.

04 **Then tell me what happened.** **Page 17** has three prompts for posting what your group found. Tag me. I read every one.



A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR

Scan to watch a short welcome video from me before your first meeting. (Think of it as the disarm. You'll get that joke by Chapter Two.) The page also has the latest version of this guide.

— Henna

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If You Want a Plan: Four Meetings

MEETING	READ	TALK ABOUT
One	Chapters One and Two	The Verification Era and Skill Zero. Everyone brings their cherry-red-blazer moment.
Two	Chapters Three and Four	Words and reasoning. Run the Fingers-Up Bar Chart.
Three	Chapters Five and Six	Rooms you can't see and the promises you didn't know you were making. Run the Screenshot Test.
Four	The Conclusion	The boat tour, the quiet room, and the one signal each of you is changing. Then post about it.

PART I

The Verification Era

A woman in a cherry-red blazer, a misquoted stat, and a phone. The room that used to meet you halfway now runs a background check while you're still talking. **The rules didn't change. The price we pay for breaking them did.**

THE IDEA

A signal gap is the distance between the message you intended to send and the one they actually received. Credibility gets you in the room; believability decides whether anything lands once you're in it.

CHAPTER ONE **The Signal Gap**

The rules didn't change—the price we pay for breaking them did. · p. 1

"People aren't just listening anymore. They're verifying."

THE SIGNAL GAP · FRONT FLAP

CHAPTER ONE · PAGE 1

The Signal Gap

The rules didn't change—the price we pay for breaking them did.

1 Henna opens with the woman in the cherry-red blazer, who fact-checked a stat from her seat in about ten seconds. **When was the last time you were verified in real time**, by a client, a colleague, or your kid mid-bite at dinner? How did it change what you said next?

2 Eight shifts moved us from trust-then-verify to verify-then-trust: the bigger comparison set, messages that don't stay put, the lost hallway read, cheap (and suspicious) polish, costly signals, your past self in the group chat, the kids' new believability test, and the benefit of the doubt getting too expensive. **Which one has changed your world the most?** Which one did you not notice until you read it?

3 "Credibility gets you in the room; believability decides whether anything lands." Think of someone you find credible on paper but don't fully believe. **What signal is off?** Now flip it: who's in your Observant Middle right now, quietly running an audit on you?

THE TOOLKIT · WHAT THIS CHAPTER HANDS YOU

01 **The Signal Gap** — the distance between the message you intended and the one they received.

02 **The Verification Era** — eight shifts that turned trust-then-verify into verify-then-trust.

03 **Congruence → Signal Integrity** — four layers (Communication, Belief, Contextual, Character); the work and what it earns you.

04 **The Observant Middle** — the only audience still deciding whether to believe you.

"Giving someone the benefit of the doubt takes energy. Suspicion is free."

FROM CHAPTER ONE

PART II

Skill Zero

A tattooed ex-dealer sits down in front of a Senate committee and lists every reason they shouldn't believe him. **The room leans in.** Before any other skill in this book can land, the wall has to come down.

THE IDEA

Your audience walks in with a wall: the cognitive one (what they're skeptical about) and the emotional one (what they need to feel first). The disarm is naming that wall out loud, in your own voice, before you make your case.

CHAPTER TWO **Always Disarm Before You Deliver**
You no longer get a second chance to start. · p. 35

"You no longer get a second chance to start."

CHAPTER TWO

CHAPTER TWO · PAGE 35

Always Disarm Before You Deliver

You no longer get a second chance to start.

1 Jelly Roll opened his Senate testimony by listing every reason the room shouldn't believe him, and the room leaned in. **Why does naming the wall work better** than projecting confidence, competence, and composure? Have you watched someone do the opposite and lose a room?

2 Henna separates the cognitive wall (what people are skeptical about) from the emotional wall (what they need to feel first). Think about a conversation you're dreading. **Which wall is higher**, and which one have you actually been preparing for?

3 The disarm has to be in your voice: Jelly Roll's was raw, Henna's is cheeky, Bill Burr's is an industrial-grade flamethrower. **What does your disarm voice sound like?** Which cheap signal ("I know some of you may see this differently") do you reach for instead?

THE TOOLKIT · WHAT THIS CHAPTER HANDS YOU

01 **Two walls** — cognitive (the "yeah, but") and emotional (what they need to feel first).

02 **Move 1: Identify the wall** — what were they promised before? what's the real "yeah, but"? what does this ask them to let go of? do you have skin in this? what's the history between you and this room?

03 **Move 2: Say it out loud** — the named, specific doubt, in your voice. Warmth is optional. Specificity isn't.

"Before you make your case, name the wall."

FROM CHAPTER TWO

PART III

The Four Layers of Congruence

Most signal gaps don't announce themselves with a tiny trumpet. They hide in four layers, and each one tests a different part of your signal. **Congruence is the work; signal integrity is what the work earns you.**

CHAPTER THREE **Say the Awkward Part Out Loud**
Communication Congruence · They'll find it anyway. · p. 65

CHAPTER FOUR **Let Them Watch You Think**
Belief Congruence · The era of "trust me" is over. · p. 93

CHAPTER FIVE **Choose Words That Travel Without You**
Contextual Congruence · Your words don't stay where you put them. · p. 127

CHAPTER SIX **Audit the Promises You Didn't Even Know You Were Making**
Character Congruence · Everyone can see both of you now. · p. 157

"Most signal gaps don't announce themselves with a tiny trumpet."

CHAPTER ONE

CHAPTER THREE · PAGE 65 · COMMUNICATION CONGRUENCE

Say the Awkward Part Out Loud

They'll find it anyway.

1 "It's just going to ask you a question." **Where in your life do you hear, or deliver, a softened script** like the tip-screen line? What would the coffee-shop-sign version sound like ("Tipping is optional. Here's how to skip it.")?

2 Principal Reeves sent a caring, four-paragraph reply in eleven minutes and got caught by the time stamp. Henna calls this intent smuggling: hiding your real priority (speed) inside a message that looks like something nobler. **Where have you smuggled intent recently?** What was your real P0, and would your message have survived admitting it?

3 The four-step repair: acknowledge the gap, provide the missing context, admit where the first signal fell short, send a corrected signal. **Which step do you usually stop at?** Have you ever been on the receiving end of a repair that ended at "sorry if that came off harsh"?

THE TOOLKIT · WHAT THIS CHAPTER HANDS YOU

01 **Practice 1: Figure Out Your P0** — the one thing that actually comes first, so the intent you name is true.

02 **Practice 2: Define the Edge** — name what you won't do, the limit of the commitment, the condition it holds under, the scope.

03 **Practice 3: Name the Emotional Weight of the Moment** — no Executive Beige for life-altering news.

04 **After the misfire: the four-step repair** — acknowledge the gap, provide the context, admit the shortfall, send a corrected signal.

"They hear it, plus the fact that you were hiding it. Hiding it is always more expensive."

FROM CHAPTER THREE

CHAPTER FOUR · PAGE 93 · BELIEF CONGRUENCE

Let Them Watch You Think

The era of "trust me" is over.

1 Terrence rolled out a comp plan in fourteen minutes; his team rebuilt the math in five. "Invisible reasoning and absent reasoning look exactly the same from the outside." **When have you handed someone a conclusion and skipped the path?** What did they fill the gap with?

2 Play Human Bar Chart as a group: one wall is a 1, the other is a 10. "You can't build a strong culture with a fully remote team." Stand where you land, then try to show your path. **Which beliefs in your life are a paint job, and which are a full remodel?** (Seated version on page 15.)

3 Lead with the con. Cialdini's salesperson earns trust by *not* selling the platinum package. **What's the question you're dreading someone asking** about your current project or pitch? What would happen if you named it first?

THE TOOLKIT · WHAT THIS CHAPTER HANDS YOU

01 **Practice 1: Start with a Shared, Already-Held Belief** — "The thing we already agree on is ___."

02 **Practice 2: Lead with the Con** — name your strongest drawback before anyone else does. Don't fake it, bury it, or apologize for it.

03 **Practice 3: Show the Paths Not Taken** — the options you seriously considered, and why you moved past each.

04 **Practice 4: Conduct an Internal Audit** — "The part of my reasoning I'm least sure about is ___."

"When you only show people the answer, you're asking them to trust you. When you show them the maze, you're letting them trust themselves."

FROM CHAPTER FOUR

CHAPTER FIVE · PAGE 127 · CONTEXTUAL CONGRUENCE

Choose Words That Travel Without You

Your words don't stay where you put them.

1 "Acceptable loss ratio." "Geriatric pregnancy." "Rightsizing." Every word has a home room, and the CEO who said "rightsize" a hundred times in strategy meetings had stopped hearing it. **What's a word from your industry you can't hear anymore?** Has one of yours ever traveled to a room it wasn't built for?

2 "Picking Slack instead of a phone call is a values statement." **Describe a time the channel sent a louder message than the words** (a reorg on Slack, hard news by text, a thumbs-up emoji). What did the channel say that the words didn't?

3 Henna sent a long, careful email and got back "Got it, thanks!" Then she spent a day stewing before learning her colleague had read it with one hand on the car door. "Find out before you flip out." **Share a time you read a message through the wrong room.** What was actually happening on the other end?

THE TOOLKIT · WHAT THIS CHAPTER HANDS YOU

01 **Pick the Right Channel** — when in doubt, pick the one that costs you more.

02 **Choose Words That Survive the Trip** — watch for the words you can't hear anymore; avoid reflexive absolutes.

03 **Pack the Context** — state your intent, remove the assumptions only your room would make, time-stamp it.

04 **Run It Through a Skepticism Filter** — read it as a screenshot, stripped of tone, history, and good faith.

05 **Recover the Room You Lost** and **Slow Down** — the repair has to travel as far as the misread did; most contextual gaps are speed gaps.

"The channel is already talking before your words get a turn."

FROM CHAPTER FIVE

CHAPTER SIX · PAGE 157 · CHARACTER CONGRUENCE

Audit the Promises You Didn't Even Know You Were Making

Everyone can see both of you now.

1 Benji preached "no shortcuts" and got caught using AI to write his replies. He cut 5% of corners; his followers discounted 100% of his advice. **Why does a small, visible gap cost so much more than its size?** Who's a public figure, or a boss, where one leak made you re-read everything else?

2 Every post, share, bio line, and "great point" in a meeting is a micro-claim about your character. If a stranger scrolled your feed for ten minutes, **what are the five biggest claims it makes about you?** Which ones did the likes choose for you? Could you hold them on a bad week?

3 Non-negotiables: What would you refuse to do even if no one would ever find out? Even if your boss asked? What would you do anyway if it cost you a promotion? **Can you get your list under five**, each with an operating rule attached? (Henna's: the family calendar gets looked at before the fee does.)

THE TOOLKIT · WHAT THIS CHAPTER HANDS YOU

01 **Practice 1: Find Your Character Signal Gap** — read your feed like a stranger, catch yourself in the act, measure the distance.

02 **Practice 2: Make the Behavior Match the Claim** — a corrected signal that is a behavior, and that costs you something.

03 **Practice 3: Make the Claim Match the Behavior** — your nonnegotiables: the value (why) plus an operating rule (what). Keep it under five.

04 **Practice 4: Build a Detection System** — the Trajectory Check and the Costly Signal Audit.

"Never curate faster than you can live."

FROM CHAPTER SIX

IV

PART IV

Signal Integrity

A five-thousand-dollar boat tour, a ChatGPT quote for a floating happy hour, and a kitchen counter where the person who wrote the book watched her husband do the thing the book is about, better than she could describe it. **Nothing left to catch.**

THE IDEA

When all four layers line up, with Skill Zero opening the door first, you reach signal integrity: the state where the distance between who you are and what people experience has narrowed to almost nothing. The audit still runs. It just comes back clean.

CONCLUSION **Signal Integrity**
Nothing left to catch. · p. 191

“Become someone the room can check.”

THE CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION · PAGE 191

Signal Integrity

Nothing left to catch.

1 Ian's client ran a $5,000 boat tour past ChatGPT, which priced a sixty-person floating happy hour as the same thing. Luisa dropped her price because the AI's number came with a source and hers didn't. **Where is your work being checked against a version that's "easier to find"?** What page would you add to your welcome packet?

2 "The room doesn't get mad. It gets quiet." **Have you ever realized too late that a room had finished its audit on you**, or watched it happen to someone else? What was the early warning sign no one said out loud?

3 Mitch Joel's answer to what survives every technology shift: *commune*, as a verb. Think of the person whose name you'd put next to your own. What did they do, unglamorously and repeatedly, to earn that? Then the closing question: Henna says she wouldn't change her material, she'd change her signal. **What's one signal you're changing before the week is out?**

THE TOOLKIT · WHAT THIS CHAPTER HANDS YOU

01 **What it costs to skip the work** — gaps add up and don't wipe clean; the people who see it won't tell you; the room doesn't get mad, it gets quiet.

02 **Abandon the old playbook even if no one else does** — you can't fix your boss with this book; run it on yourself first. Resist "Bro! You have a signal gap!"

03 **Become someone the room can check** — the same person on a regular Tuesday as on a stage. The audit still runs; it just comes back clean.

"The audience has been doing its job all along. Now it's my turn to do mine."

FROM THE CONCLUSION

DO THIS AT YOUR MEETING

Two Activities, No Standing Required

Catching a signal gap in your own text messages, in front of your friends, beats reading about one. **Each takes about ten minutes**, on a couch, at a conference table, or on a Zoom grid.

ACTIVITY ONE · FROM CHAPTER FIVE

The Screenshot Test

10 MINUTES · PHONES OUT · WORKS ON VIDEO CALLS

Every message you send now travels to rooms you didn't write it for. This is what that trip feels like.

1. Everyone finds a work message they sent this week. Email, Slack, text: anything with a real recipient. Don't cherry-pick your best one.
2. Pass your phone to the person on your left. (On Zoom: screen-share it, with names blurred.)
3. The reader has zero context and reads it as the most skeptical person in the building: What's the tone? What's the sender hiding? What's the "yeah, but"?
4. Then the sender says what they actually meant. Count the gap between the two.

Host prompt: "Read it like a stranger who already doesn't like this person. What would you assume?"

Debrief: Whose message survived the trip? What one word or missing line would have closed the gap? Someone probably owes the group a drink.

ACTIVITY TWO · FROM CHAPTER FOUR

The Fingers-Up Bar Chart

10 MINUTES · NO PROPS · GETS LOUD

Henna's Human Bar Chart, minus the walking. Find out which beliefs have a reasoning path behind them and which ones you just... have.

1. The host reads a belief. Everyone holds up fingers at once: 1 means "don't believe it at all," 10 means "I'd bet my career on it." No peeking at your neighbor first.
2. Warm up with the easy ones: "Cold calling is dead." "The customer is always right."
3. Now the remodel: "You can't build a strong culture with a fully remote team." Watch the fingers hesitate.
4. The host picks the lowest and highest hands and asks each for their path, not their conclusion. Start from something the other person already believes. Then everyone re-votes.

Host prompt: "Don't tell us what you think. Walk us to it. Where did it start?"

Debrief: Who moved, and what moved them? Who realized, mid-sentence, that they'd never thought about *why* they believe it? (That was Bianca in the book. It'll be someone at your table too.)

THE BOOK IN TWELVE LINES

Key Takeaways

01 **The rules didn't change. The price we pay for breaking them did.** The world shifted from trust-then-verify to verify-then-trust, and most of us are still running the old playbook.

02 **Credibility gets you in the room; believability decides whether anything lands** once you're in it.

03 **Polish got cheap, so polish got suspicious.** When every edge is buffed smooth, people start looking for the machine underneath.

04 **Giving someone the benefit of the doubt takes energy. Suspicion is free.** A tired, overloaded audience defaults to "I doubt it" instead of "I don't know yet."

05 **Communicate for the Observant Middle.** Not your fans, not your haters: the undecided people quietly auditing you right now.

06 **Skill Zero: before you make your case, name the wall.** "Some of you may see this differently" is a cheap signal. The named, specific doubt costs you something, which is exactly why it works.

07 **Say what you mean, out loud.** Vagueness used to read as polite. Now it reads as cagey, and the hiding is always more expensive than the thing you're hiding.

08 **Lead with the con, and show the paths not taken.** The thing you didn't sell them is proof you're not just selling. When you show the maze, you let people trust themselves.

09 **Every word has a home room.** Context is cargo: it won't travel with your message unless you pack it, and a skeptic rarely fills the blank with a generous story.

10 **Never curate faster than you can live.** A small, visible character gap costs far more than its size, because the question becomes "What else isn't real?"

11 **A claim can't close a character gap. Only behavior can**, and it has to cost you something.

12 **Run your own audit first, before the room does it for you.** Signal integrity: nothing left to catch.

Mind the gap!

HOW HENNA SIGNS EVERY COPY

AFTER YOUR MEETING

#YourSignalsAreShowing

Your group just spent an evening catching signal gaps. **Post one.** Pick a prompt, tag **@hennapryor**, and use the hashtag so other clubs can find yours. Henna reads every single one (and occasionally replies with receipts).

PROMPT ONE · THE WORD YOU CAN'T HEAR ANYMORE

Post the phrase from your industry that sounds precise inside the room and terrible outside it. Bonus points for the honest translation.

#YourSignalsAreShowing @hennapryor

PROMPT TWO · SCREENSHOT TEST CASUALTIES

"Our book club ran the Screenshot Test on our own messages. Survivors: ___. Casualties: ___. Worst offender has to buy the next round."

#YourSignalsAreShowing @hennapryor

PROMPT THREE · ONE NON-NEGOTIABLE

Post the thing you'd refuse to do even if no one would ever find out. Then tag the person who'd hold you to it.

#YourSignalsAreShowing @hennapryor

PASS IT ON

Know a club, a team, or a classroom that should be arguing about this book? Send them to **thesignalgap.com/bookclub** for the guide, the welcome video, and the bulk-order bonuses (20+ copies adds a companion workbook; 100+ adds a live Fireside Chat with Henna).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Meet Henna Pryor

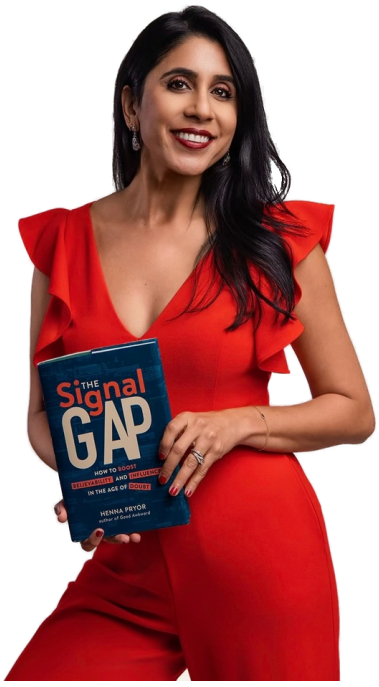
Henna Pryor, CSP is a dynamic Workplace Performance Expert who speaks and writes about performance mindset, interpersonal dynamics, high-impact communication, and embracing bumps in a world that keeps optimizing for smoothness.

She's a regular Expert Columnist for *Inc.* Magazine, 18x award-winning author, and an in-demand global keynote speaker. Her playful personality and insightful talks blend two decades of working with corporate leaders and teams with a fresh, science-based approach to taking more strategic risks and boosting social and mental fitness for success at work.

She's been invited to speak twice for TEDx in NYC and Wilmington, DE, and brings her expertise to a variety of global organizations, including Google, Workday, Johnson & Johnson, and JPMorganChase. She's frequently sought after for her insights by top media outlets like *Forbes*, *WSJ*, *Business Insider*, NBC, *The Washington Post*, *Fast Company*, Business.com, *HuffPost*, and more.

Henna founded Pryority Group, a fast-growing performance growth firm, to expand on her belief that the key to most people's success is learning to strengthen mental and social muscles in order to boost risk-taking, maximize influence, and be braver in the work that we do.

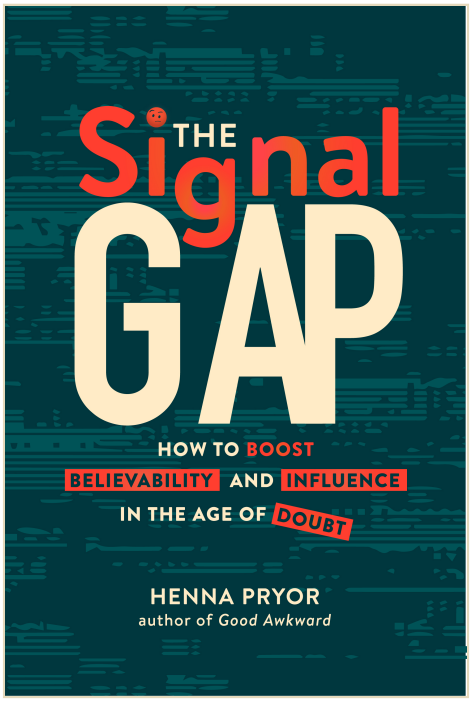
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BOOKING HENNA FOR YOUR CLUB OR TEAM

Reading this at work? Henna speaks to leadership teams, sales organizations, and conferences about believability and influence in the age of doubt. Find her at **pryoritygroup.com** or **team@pryoritygroup.com**.

ONE SMALL FAVOR



If The Signal Gap gave your group something to argue about, I'd be so grateful if you'd take 60 seconds to leave a review.

Reviews are the costliest signal a reader can send, and the one that gets this book into the hands of the people who need it most. Scan, or visit the link below.

WWW.THESIGNALGAP.COM/REVIEW

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