

# “THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GIVING UP: WHEN TO PUSH, WHEN TO PIVOT”

## PURPOSE

Use this quick guide to tell the difference between healthy persistence and costly burnout – and to help your team disengage strategically, not emotionally.

### Ask the 5 Key Questions

At your next 1:1 or project review, run this Action-Crisis Check:

1. Is progress real or just effort? → Look at measurable results, not just hard work.
2. What's the emotional tone? → Is energy curious or exhausted? Chronic frustration signals burnout.
3. Is the goal still relevant? → Markets, tech, or priorities may have shifted.
4. What are we missing by staying the course? → Identify opportunity costs.
5. Do we have a clear pivot option? → Always name at least one viable alternative goal.

## DECIDE: PERSIST OR PIVOT

Progress visible, motivation stable

✓ Persist intelligently – clarify next milestone, celebrate micro-wins

No progress + mounting stress

⚙️ Pause & diagnose – data gap, skill gap, or wrong goal?

Goal obsolete or impossible

🔄 Strategic redeployment – exit gracefully, reassign resources

Team burned out, identity tied to goal

💬 Normalize quitting – reframe as resource optimization

### 1. Embed Resilient Habits - Replace “Don't give up” with “Pause, evaluate, redeploy.”

- Track **process metrics** (learning, iteration rate) alongside outcomes.
- Run **monthly reflection sessions** – “What should we quit, keep, or tweak?”
- Build **self-compassion rituals** post-failure – 10-min debrief focused on learning, not blame.
- Use **Goal Adjustment Scale** or simple “Pivot Pulse” surveys to assess morale and reengagement readiness.

### 2. Watch for Red Flags

- Progress talk replaces data with “hope” or “maybe.”
- Team members express guilt at the thought of stopping.
- Emotional exhaustion is treated as “grit.”
- External validation becomes the only reason to continue.

### 3. Build a Culture That Supports Smart Quitting

- Celebrate **intelligent pivots** in retrospectives.
- Publicly debrief “strategic stops” to model adaptive thinking.
- Recognize quitting as a leadership skill, not moral weakness.