



# WAYS OF BEING

CULTURE IN ACTION

A toolkit from  stoked

# A CULTURE DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN. *IT'S CREATED.*

People want to be useful, creative, autonomous, and responsive. Most companies have big, bold aspirations they want to bring to life. But let's face it, **many employees find themselves in the gap between aspirations and reality**. The Ways of Being toolkit helps leaders bridge this gap.

From startups to Fortune 100 companies to government agencies and international nonprofits, we've noticed a trend in the 100s of organizations we've worked with.

The bigger and more complex an organization is, the blurrier the "line of sight" between what the company values and how those values come alive for individuals. Yet it is at that individual level, in the privacy of what is prioritized, in the way each meeting is held, in the ping-pong match of email exchanges, when **alignment between values and action matter most**.

## WAYS OF BEING VS VALUES

At Stoked, we prefer the term *Ways of Being* to *Values* because **a culture is only as strong as the actions that make it what it is**. A leader's role is to help find, support, celebrate, and hold teams accountable for those actions.

## HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

Translate your Ways of Being into observable actions. You might find this helpful when you are:

leading a small but growing organization and want to codify what's working as you expand

a new leader and want to create clear language around cultural norms

preparing for or are on the other end of a reorg and want to create a sense of belonging to a newly formed team

assessing the spirit of your organization as uninspired and want to reignite a shared sense of purpose

**Prework:** Identify your organization's Ways of Being/Values and choose one you want to focus on for this exercise. Sketch out this template on a white board (physical or virtual) and invite each team member to participate as an equal during the brainstorming.

# 01

## IDENTIFY ONE WAY OF BEING

Way of Being

# 02

## BRAINSTORM IDEAS INTO EACH CATEGORY

What are observable behaviors that showcase this Way of Being?

Place brainstorm ideas here

# 03

## SELECT THE TOP 1-3 IDEAS

Idea Idea Idea

What questions are crucial to ask?

Place brainstorm ideas here

Idea Idea Idea

What tradeoffs/tensions must be managed?

Place brainstorm ideas here

Idea Idea Idea

What does this solve for?

Place brainstorm ideas here

Idea Idea Idea

Here is an example from our friends at  
**Western Youth Network**

# 01

## SEE THE UNSEEN.

WE PAUSE TO EDUCATE AND UNDERSTAND  
OTHERS ON ROOT CAUSES.

# 02

### What are observable behaviors that showcase this Way of Being?

- meeting people where they are
- tailoring communication to staff, students, or stakeholders based on what is important to them
- approaching others with comparison first
- educating without alienation
- reading and investigating what body language is communicating
- actively listening

### What questions are crucial to ask?

- Who and what are we educating?
- Are we being mindful of how we are educating?
- Why do some kids go through bad things?
- Have we let other staff teams know important educational strategies our group is prioritizing?

### What tradeoffs/tensions must be managed?

- being vulnerable: we must let go of defensiveness
- managing bias: differences in backgrounds and beliefs
- releasing expectations: we won't have cozy "friend" vibes with everyone

### What does this solve for?

- role model openness in a world that needs healthy examples of what non-judgemental care looks like