

# Advocacy Philosophy Prompts

Module 4.10 — Leadership Capstone: Prompts for Writing Your Personal Advocacy Philosophy

## What a Good Advocacy Philosophy Does

A Good Advocacy Philosophy Does This
States what you actually believe about how change happens — not what sounds right, but what you've observed to be true
Names the ethical lines you will never cross, and explains why those lines are where they are
Acknowledges where you have been wrong, and what changed your mind
Describes what success looks like over a lifetime — not a campaign, a career
Tells the reader something about who you are, not just what you do

## What a Good Advocacy Philosophy Does NOT Do

A Good Advocacy Philosophy Does NOT Do This
Summarize your organization's mission or program model (that's a mission statement)
List your credentials or accomplishments (that's a bio)
Describe tactics or strategies you use (that's a methodology document)
State values you aspire to but haven't yet had to defend under pressure
Position you for an audience — write it as if only you will ever read it

## 12 Reflective Prompts

Use any combination of these to generate your 500-word statement. Not a checklist — choose the ones that provoke:

#	Prompt
1.	What do you believe about how lasting change actually happens — based on what you've observed, not what you were taught?
2.	What is the most important thing you've learned about people through this work — something that surprised you?
3.	Describe a time you were wrong about something important in your advocacy. What changed?
4.	What is the ethical line you will never cross? Have you ever been close to it? What happened?
5.	What kind of advocate do you want to be in 20 years — and how does that inform what you're doing today?
6.	What do you owe to the people who mentored you into this work?
7.	What do you owe to the people coming behind you?

8.	What does winning mean to you — a specific policy, a cultural shift, something else?
9.	What aspect of this work has cost you something — and was it worth it?
10	Whose advocacy do you admire most, and why? What do they do that you're still learning?
11	What would you tell yourself at the beginning of Level 1, before you knew what this work would actually ask of you?
12	What kind of world are you building, and why is that world worth the work?

## Annotated Examples of Strong Philosophy Passages

Theme	Example Passage	What Makes It Strong
On how change happens	I used to believe that if you could just get the facts right and present them clearly, rational people would reach rational conclusions. I don't believe that anymore. What I believe now: change happens when the right story finds the right person at the right moment — and enough of those moments accumulate into permission for a decision-maker to act. Facts don't change minds. Facts give people permission to believe what a good story already made them feel.	Specific belief + honest revision + mechanism named
On ethical lines	I will not lie to move people. I've been in rooms where a small strategic dishonesty would have moved the vote. I've said no every time. Not because honesty is a comfortable policy, but because advocacy built on fabricated urgency eventually collapses — and takes the cause with it. The line is: I will use every tool of persuasion available to me except deception. That's a real constraint. I live with it.	Line stated + tested against a real moment + reasoning that isn't just virtue signaling
On legacy	I'm building something I won't live to finish. I knew this when I started; I know it more clearly now. The work of Level 4 is not to win — it is to build an organization that can win after I'm gone. That is both humbling and clarifying. If the work depends on me being present, I've failed at the most important thing.	Long-horizon framing + honest personal reckoning + design principle implied