

Be Petrov

1. The Stewardship Question: What do we do when something feels wrong but we don't yet know why?

Inspired by Stanislav Petrov, the Soviet officer who, in 1983, questioned an apparent nuclear attack and paused long enough for reality to reveal itself.

From AI-generated summaries and recommendations to automated alerts, dashboards, and predictive systems, we are often expected to react fast. Yet humans often notice before they understand. Before interpretation, before verification, before analysis, sometimes something *feels off*. Be Petrov is the discipline of using intuition as the **first signal in a disciplined process** of judgment.

This is the *first gate* of responsible judgment.

2. The Practice

When a situation feels unusual, incomplete, contradictory, or unexpectedly urgent, consider the following orientations.

Name the anomaly.

What exactly feels wrong, inconsistent, surprising, or incomplete?

Separate the signal from the explanation.

What do I know? What am I assuming?

Beware urgency.

Does this situation truly require immediate action, or does it merely feel urgent?

Slow the interpretation.

What alternative explanations could account for the same signal?

Look for what is missing.

What information would I expect to see if my current interpretation were correct?

Test the ordinary before the extraordinary.

Is there a simpler explanation that fits the facts?

Delay irreversible action.

Can I create enough time for additional information to emerge before committing?

3. What This Practice Preserves

- The space required for judgment.
- Openness to the possibility that the system, the signal, or our first interpretation may be wrong.
- The humility to accept that reality is often richer than the first story we tell ourselves.

4. Closing Reminder

Responsible judgment begins the moment we stop asking "What should I do?" and start asking "What might I be missing?"

5. Optional Bridges to Existing Frameworks

For those who prefer to connect this practice to familiar models, it aligns loosely with:

Andrew Grove - Strategic Inflection Points (weak-signal detection)

Bill George - True North (examining internal signals before acting)