

Table 2: Operationalizing the Four Spirits of MI When Meeting with Business Owners	
Spirit of Motivational Interviewing	Examples of How to Model Spirit in a Business Owner Meeting
Partnership	Disclose your background and biases to establish collaboration: “I help business owners plan their exits regularly, so I tend to approach it from a mathematical angle. Sometimes my perspective may not align perfectly with yours, and I invite you to push back when that happens. It’s important to me that this remains a true partnership.”
Acceptance	Emphasize autonomy and respect for the owner’s expertise: “This business is your creation—your risks, your rewards. Throughout our time working together, please know you can challenge any recommendation I make. You know your situation best.”
Compassion	Demonstrate accurate empathy through complex reflection: “Spending time on exit planning, even though it is important, can feel like a step backward when your instinct is to stay focused on the highest-value drivers of the business.”
Evocation	Use owner-led dialogue to spark action: “After reviewing the recommendations I sent, what are your thoughts?” Or help reframe stuck thinking: “Let’s imagine your brother owned multiple businesses and was feeling overwhelmed. Based on what you know, what would you advise him to do?”