

HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY AS A LEADER

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THE ART OF FOCUSED CONVERSATION
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The context

Key leadership styles

**AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO
COMMUNICATION**

Leadership Styles

LEADERSHIP STYLES	KEY CHARACTERISTICS
TRAIT THEORY	Leaders are born. They have certain predetermined characteristics
COMMAND THEORY	The 'heroic' leader. Power, Status, Control & Command
TRANSACTIONAL THEORY	Leadership 'flows down', the focus is on problems & rewards are contingent
VISIONARY LEADER	Creates vision, charismatic, strong role models for values
CONTINGENCY THEORY	Different types of leaders for different situations. Situation & followers are key variables
TRANSFORMATIONAL	The leader is 'in charge' BUT NOT in 'control'. Motivates & engages followers in the process

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONVERSATIONS

- **Communication between people is a key issue in organizations**
- **Colleagues often have hard time communicating with each other**
- **Poor listening skills**
- **Judger frame of mind**
- **Conversations often turning into arguments**

The importance of conversations

Sound bite conversations →

limited communication → limited

**learning → limited self
reflection**

The importance of conversations

“ instead of a conversation which is really an argument where opinions clash with each other, and the best man wins, a good conversation employs a kind of parallel thinking where ideas are laid down alongside each other, without interaction between the contributions. There is no clash, no dispute no true/ false judgment. There is instead a genuine exploration of the subject which conclusions and decisions may then be derived” (de Bono, Parallel Thinking, p36)

Organizational changes and communication

- Organizations change from a “Pyramid”, “top down” structure to a system based on circles
- The organization as a system operates effectively only when information flows in every direction
- The emergence of the “learning organization” where organizations evolve & grow
- The key to learning is the transformation of experience into insight
- For that transformation to happen reflection IS THE KEY

The role of the leader

- Move from a solely decision making role to a “leader as a facilitator role
- The role of a leader as a facilitator requires the ability to ask powerful questions
- Not “talk to them” but rather talk with them → challenges creativity and focuses on participation
- Facilitation is a core leadership & management skill

Key message

Complaining without taking responsibility is NOT participation

The method

WHAT IS THE FOCUSED CONVERSATION METHOD

DISCUSSION IS VIEWED AS.....

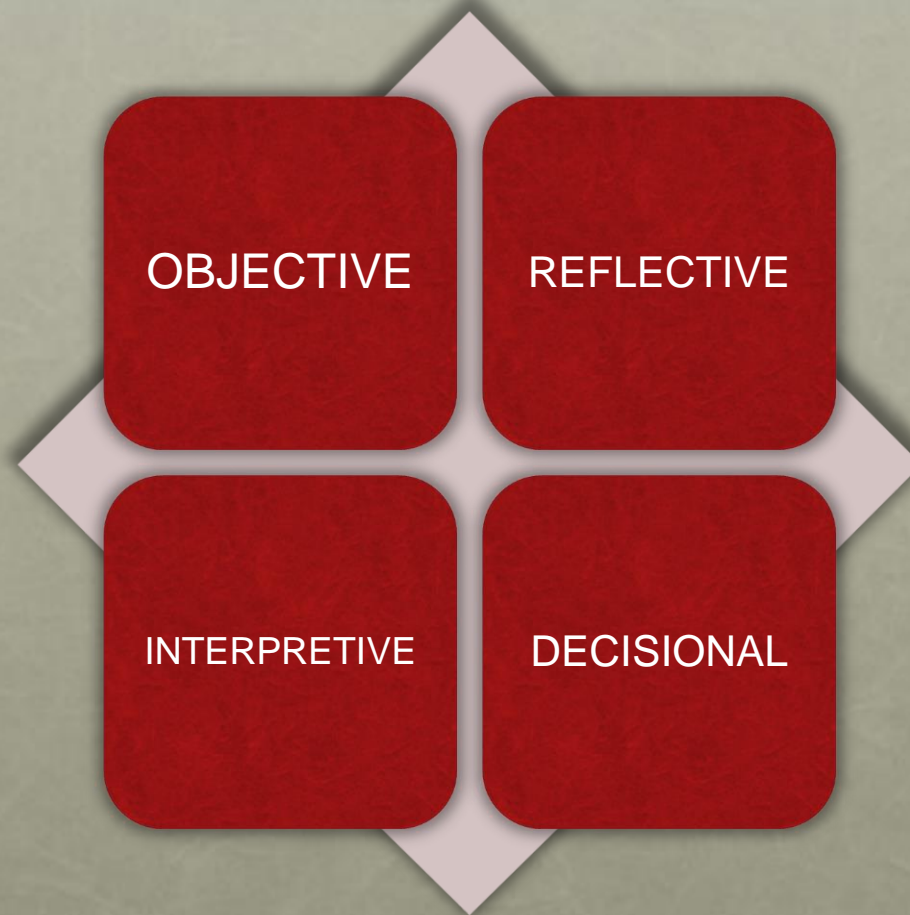
- Open and collaborative
- “dialogue of discovery”
- Active listening & curiosity
- Exchange views but also change your own views
- Developing your understanding

It helps people relate

WHAT IS THE FOCUSED CONVERSATION METHOD

- A “step by step”, four stage process
- Multiple applications
- It is a facilitated conversation
- It focuses on questions that progressively flow from questions about facts, through questions about reactions and significance to questions about resolution.

THE STRUCTURE OF A FOCUSED CONVERSATION O.R.I.D.



THE STRUCTURE OF A FOCUSED CONVERSATION

- THE OBJECTIVE LEVEL

FOCUS	DATA, FACTS , EXTERNAL FOCUS, “ WHAT’S HAPPENING”
QUESTIONS IN RELATED TO...	THE SENSES, SURFACE FACTS, GENERATE A COMMON “POOL OF KNOWLEDGE”
SAMPLE QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What’s happened?• What is the history of the situation?• What do we know about the situation?

THE STRUCTURE OF A FOCUSED CONVERSATION

THE REFLECTIVE LEVEL

FOCUS	INTERNAL : HOW DO YOU RESPOND
QUESTIONS RELATED TO...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EXPLORE FEELINGS, EMOTIONS, PERSONAL CONNECTIONS TO THE SITUATION
SAMPLE QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does reminds you of?• How does it make you feel?• Where did you have difficulty• What energizes you most?

THE STRUCTURE OF A FOCUSED CONVERSATION

THE INTERPRETIVE LEVEL

FOCUS:	ON RELATIONSHIP, MEANING & POSSIBILITY
QUESTIONS RELATED TO...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MAKING SENSE• VALUES• ASSUMPTIONS• SIGNIFICANCE• IMPLICATIONS
SAMPLE QUESTIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the storyline here?• What have you learned so far?• What does it mean for you/us?• What are we learning from this?• How does affect your/our work?

THE STRUCTURE OF A FOCUSED CONVERSATION

THE DECISIONAL LEVEL

FOCUS	NOW WHAT? ACTION FOCUS, RESOLUTION
QUESTIONS RELATED TO...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EXPRESS COMMITMENT TO ACTION• POTENTIAL EXPERIMENTATION• RELEVANT TO THE FUTURE• PILOT PROJECTS
SAMPLE QUESTIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you/we need to do?• How would you prioritize what has to happen first?• What is our decision?• What steps do you/we need to take to make this happen?

HAVING A STRUCTURED CONVERSATION

PREPARATION STEPS....

Preparation steps

- **Focus of the conversation**
- **Write down the objective & aim of the conversation**
- **Make sure that the first objective question is concrete and factual**
- **Brainstorm questions beforehand**
- **Select your questions from the “pool” of questions you have brainstormed**
- **“play” with the order of Qs within each level**
- **Prepare and rehearse the conversation in your head**
- **Prepare the closing**

The practice

KEY CONVERSATIONS

A supervisee who doesn't perform

THE SITUATION

A staff member is not performing well and constantly misses deadlines

Objective/aim of conversation

- To understand the situation
- To listen to the employee's perspective
- To help the employee take responsibility
- To develop an action plan

A supervisee who doesn't perform

THE CONVERSATION

O: what is been happening? What success have had recently? What happened from your point of view

R: how do you feel about the work you do? What has been most difficult for you?

I: what would you say are the underlying issues behind these difficulties? How do you think other people might deal with these difficulties?

D: What can we do to make sure the job is done effectively? What is the first action we need to take?

Conflict between two employees

THE SITUATION

Two members of staff are having a dispute & they have come to you to mediate the situation.

Objective/aim of conversation

- To observe & reflect on the situation so I can formulate my response
- To intervene in a constructive & non-judgmental way
- It is really a conversation within yourself

Conflict between two employees

THE CONVERSATION

- O.** What are the facts about the situation? What is the relevant history? What did each person say?
- R.** How do I feel about this?, What I am most worried about? and why?
- I.** What options do I have as to how to handle this? In what ways can I explore these options? What is my value system?
- D.** How would I move into action? Next Steps?

Bring synergy into a team

THE SITUATION

You are a team leader/ lab Director and you need to help your supervisees understand each others' role better, so they can be more effective & work in a more harmonious manner.

Objective/aim of conversation

- To help them recognize the value in each others' role
- To listen to one another talking about their roles in a non judgmental way
- To increase participation.

Bring synergy into a team

THE CONVERSATION

O What are the roles?, What are the key tasks in each role?, What functions each role serves?

R.
was Were there any surprises for you? What do you feel left out?

I.
gaps/
we What Qs do you have for these roles? Are there any overlaps in our team work? What new challenges are facing that impact on our work?

D.
gaps? What changes do we need to make do deal with the

How can we deal with the overlaps?

Reflection on leadership roles

THE SITUATION

As a lab Director & Supervisor you want to instill in your staff the principles of leadership, to help them work more harmoniously with each other, administrative staff and patients

Objective/Aim of the conversation

- Better understanding of some key leadership qualities
- More effective interpersonal relationships

Reflection on leadership roles

THE CONVERSATION

- O. What is an example (personal) of an effective supervision?, What is your experience of ineffective supervision/leadership?
- R. What feelings did you have after a good supervisory experience? Or after an unsatisfactory supervisory experience?
- I. What is the difference between an effective supervision experience & an ineffective one?, what are the key elements of each? What are the traps? What kind of qualities an effective supervisor has?
- D. What do you see as your next steps to make yourself a better supervisor? What support do you think you might need? What are the next steps in setting this up?

Key points

- In your role as a leader or emerging leader or emerging leader communication is a key to success
- A key element of good communication is the ability to have clear & focused conversations
- The O.R.I.D. method (*ICA, 2000*) provides a framework for focused conversations
- It has 4 levels that they are directional (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive & Decisional)

Key points

- A conversation HAS TO follow each level of questions in the order discussed.
- O.R.I.D. is a set of questions that follows a natural process. The Qs move a conversation from Facts to subjective Experiences and through to Purpose & Meaning finally reaching Qs about Direction and Implications
- There are no right or wrong answers
- The purpose of the conversation is to deepen understanding
- Purpose, Preparation, Practice.

Key references

The ORID method was developed by the Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA).

Key book:

“The Art of Focused Conversation: 100 ways to access group wisdom in the workplace”

Ed. Brian Stanfield (2000)

- Columbia Coaching Certification Program (2012)