

### “Engaging Through Conversations”

**Narrator:** You are a leader. You work eight hours—480 minutes, often more—every day. You face the challenge of connecting with the people you lead through your conversations, meetings, texts, emails, calls.

While your conversations may focus on business goals, you can connect with people on a deeper level by acknowledging their feelings and concerns.

Just like you, the people you lead are more than work. They too have families, friends, interests outside of work.

And like you, they feel anxiety, tension, and frustration.

So, when you interact with the people you lead, are you acknowledging the whole person? Are you connecting to their heads while you also touch their hearts? Are you leading with your whole person—connecting your head and heart?

When you do connect, you energize and mobilize people to generate ideas, solve problems, achieve goals.

You work 480 minutes a day. Each minute is an opportunity to engage the heads and hearts of the people you lead—to build trust, strengthen relationships, and work together to accomplish goals.

Great leadership takes place every day in a variety of ways. Is it reflected in the conversations you have?

You can learn the skills and gain the confidence to successfully navigate those “in the moment” conversations—even the tough ones—by connecting to the whole person.

How prepared are you?

### “Maintain Self-Esteem”

**Direct report:** I always meet my production numbers, but sometimes I wait to submit the data reports because I’m busy with other things.

**Leader:** I’m tired of explaining why the data is late. It has to be on time so that other departments can act on the information.

### “Empathy”

**Direct report:** Have you seen these results?

**Leader:** Yes, the customer satisfaction survey ratings are finally improving.

## “Share”

- Leader:** Looks like we're off to a better start with this project than the last one. The way I see it, the best way to stay on track is to make sure all the reps are clear on the timeline.
- Leader:** It might help if I gave you some details on what started this process and why our group needs to have a key role in it. A few months ago, senior leadership looked at...
- Leader:** This new process is a radical change, and it seems like you're struggling with how it will affect us. But whether we like it or not, we have no choice but to implement it.

## “A Tough Conversation”

- Michelle:** Oh, Jon. Can we talk? I feel like there's been some friction between us, and I think the team's starting to notice. Where would you like to start?
- Jon:** Where would I like to start? You're the one bringing up the issue.
- Michelle:** Why are you being so defensive?
- Jon:** I'm sorry. You just caught me off guard. You're right. We probably do need to talk. I'm just a little concerned about what's been going on with the team.

## “Connecting to the Head”

- Sam:** Every day you connect with people in all kinds of conversations—face-to-face, emails, texts, meetings—and they can be tough conversations.
- You know the Key Principles engage the heart and meet people's personal needs. So, how do you engage the head and meet the practical needs?
- Imagine that you're trying to come up with ideas to solve a problem or talk to someone whose work needs to improve. That's when the Interaction Guidelines can help.
- The Interaction Guidelines give you a flexible framework to keep your conversations on track. Here's how they work.
- First, you Open with what the conversation's about and why it's important to have it.
- It might sound like this:
- “I want to talk to you about the new safety campaign and how it will affect the team. I'm relying on you to make it a success.”
- Next is a fact-finding step called Clarify. You ask what they know, share what you know, and uncover issues and concerns.
- Here are a few things you could say to get started:
- “What's your understanding of the situation?”
- “Here's what I know...”
- “What concerns do you have?”
- Oh, and here's a tip: Spend the time in the Clarify step to get as much information as you can. In the long run, it'll save time.
- When you get to Develop, start by asking for their ideas. Then, offer yours.

It might sound like this:

"We want to reduce safety incidents by 15 percent. How do we do that? I'd like to hear everyone's ideas..."

Then you can share:

"Let's build on one of those ideas."

In Agree, you want to make sure everyone understands who will do what and by when, and how you'll know if everyone's doing what they said they'd do.

Check agreement by using words like:

"So, do we agree that by the end of this week, Kim will talk with her team about our new deadline and I'll talk with mine about setting up calls?"

Be sure your words are specific, like:

"Dan will schedule our next update by Friday."

Seems easy, right? But if you don't confirm who's doing what and by when, you won't have a plan—you'll just have confusion. So, be sure to record actions and timelines.

If there is confusion or disagreement, go back to the Clarify step to get everyone aligned.

Also, it's OK to cycle through Clarify, Develop, and Agree a couple of times if you have more than one topic to cover in your conversation.

When you're ready to Close, highlight a few key points. Thank them for their commitment; show your confidence.

Here are some examples of what you might say:

"Can someone summarize?"

"Thank you for taking on this assignment. I'm confident you'll make it happen."

Every workday you have an opportunity to connect with the people you lead—to build trust, strengthen relationships, and accomplish goals.

By using these Interaction Essentials<sup>SM</sup>—the Key Principles and Interaction Guidelines together—you'll meet people's personal and practical needs and engage their heads and hearts.

What will you do to achieve your business results by connecting through your conversations?