



# **Effective Communication and Active Listening**


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## Agreements For Our Time Together

- We treat this as a confidential and compassionate space and request that you hold this container as such
- Judgement free zone, both of yourself and others
- Time for reflection and growth, openness to getting uncomfortable
- Being present



# Your Leadership Values

A woman with short grey hair, wearing a black business suit and a headset with a microphone, stands on the left side of the frame. She is gesturing with her hands as if speaking. The background shows a modern office or conference room with large windows and wooden paneling. In the foreground, the blurred backs of several audience members' heads are visible. A large, semi-transparent yellow graphic, resembling a stylized 'X' or a large cross, is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**We cannot  
communicate with  
influence and impact, if  
we don't understand  
ourselves and what we  
(and others) value.**

## Core Values

- Basic and fundamental beliefs that guide or motivate attitudes or actions. What you truly believe at a CORE level.
- Help us determine what is most important to us.
- Form the Foundation for our life.
- Motivate the choices you make and determine the direction that your
- life takes.
- Knowing what drives you allows you to be thoughtful about your actions, instead of living from reaction.



## CORE

The importance of choosing your values and being intentional about how your life + leadership are aligned with them.

## INHERITED

Adopting the values of parents and/or dominant values of society.

## ASPIRATIONAL

Express who you hope to be.

## Head (Masculine) & Heart (Feminine) Values

Head Values are driven by thinking, action and results and the action of doing.

Organizing  
Strategizing  
Problem Solving  
Analyzing

Heart Values are driven by feeling and emotion and the action of simply being.

Connection  
Compassion  
Authenticity  
Intuition





## Reflection 1

What is your definition of success?

## Reflection 2

What drives you to make an impact?

## Reflection 3

What's a time in your life when you felt the most alive?

## Reflection 4

What would you stand for even if it wasn't a popular opinion?

# Breakout Rooms

What did you learn in doing the values assignment about yourself?

Share your core values? Top 3-5 values

How are you presenting these values in your leadership + life?

What value do you feel called to use more of in your leadership communication?



Empathy & Assertiveness



Empathy: The focus on YOU (the other person)



Assertiveness: The focus on ME (my needs) and WE (our needs as a team)

## Here are some examples of statements at an intense level:

*This project is important to you [empathy], but having my say is very important to me also [own needs]. We need to reach some common ground or we will be going nowhere fast. If we can work together on this I think we will present a quality product [resolution].*

*You're quite upset by this poor customer feedback review [empathy]. I'm not very happy about this either, as your shift supervisor [own needs], but I think we can work out some better strategies to help us improve in the future [resolution].*



## Holding Space For Others

Offering opportunities for others to talk, explain and share in a safe and trusting space.

## Understanding Different Perspectives

Seeking to understand as oppose to being understood.

## Seeing others as resourceful

Not trying to fix others, but rather guide them to finding their own solutions.

## Actively listening

Reading between the lines, leveraging our powerful intuition as women.

## Being 100% present

- Showing up for yourself and your wellbeing first
- Minimizing noise and stress so you can be in the present moment.
- Understanding that being present and listening builds trust.



## Listening to all languages

- 55% of how we communicate is done through our body language- paying attention to shifts in posture or eye contact can indicate non verbal communication.
- Being grounded in our own posture- how are we standing in our power and in the essence of our empathy as women.



## Paraphrasing, Summarizing

- Replaying someone's words back to them support them in feeling understood.
- It ensures you're really understanding what's being said too.



## **Assertiveness Can Look Like**



**Communicating Your Capacity**

**Sharing Your Perspectives**

**Holding Others Accountable**

**Setting Healthy Boundaries**

## Healthy Boundaries

While I would love to do that with you/for you, [insert type of priorities] preclude it. Thanks for reaching out.

I am so flattered that you asked but unfortunately I cannot do that. Can I help you brainstorm someone who might be able to help?

Right now, I am saying no to all invitations (on this topic, at this time frame, etc.). Here's why...

I need to decline, but thank you for thinking of me.

I try very hard not to make commitments I will likely need to cancel, and because of the timing here, I can imagine needing to cancel at the last minute, leaving you in a last-minute scramble to find someone else. Because of that, I need to say no.

I sit down with my calendar on Fridays. Would you please send me all of the information I need, and I'll let you know on Monday if it works with my whole schedule?

# Personal Reflection

**What's one healthy boundary I need to create for myself TODAY?**

**What's the scary belief that's holding me back from setting that boundary?**

**Is that belief true? What's the evidence?**

**Based on that, is my scary belief true? What's my next step?**



# Communication Tools

Understanding Self Diminishing Language  
Overcoming the Fear Of Speaking Up  
The Importance Of Communicating To Others Values

## Self Diminishing Language

Sometimes, in an effort to soften our communication—we can diminish our words. Maybe to be liked, to make others happy or even out of our own inner critic or lack of confidence.

1. Inserting **just**: "I just want to check in and see..." "I just think..." Just tends to make us sound a little apologetic and defensive about what we're saying. Think about the difference between the sound of "I just want to check in and see..." and "I want to check in and see..." or the difference between "I just think" and "I think..."
2. Inserting **actually**: "I actually disagree..." "I actually have a question." It *actually* makes us sound surprised that we disagree or have a question—not good!
3. Using **qualifiers**: "I'm no expert in this, but..." or "I know you all have been researching this for a long time, but..." undermines your position before you've even stated your opinion.
4. Asking, "**Does that make sense?**" or "**Am I making sense?**": I used to do this all the time. We do it with good intentions: We want to check in with the other people in the conversation and make sure we've been clear. The problem is, "does that make sense" comes across either as condescending (like your audience can't understand) or it implies you feel you've been incoherent.



A modern office interior with a round table and chairs, featuring a large window and a hanging light fixture.

## **What Self Diminishing Language Are You Removing From Your Leadership Communication Today?**

## Working With The Fear Of Speaking Up

At times, we don't like to rock the boat, make others uncomfortable, or say something that might spark disagreement. We are all on our journey of finding our authentic voice.

1. **Learn to work with your voice.** Does your voice need more power behind it? How do you share your feedback or respectfully interrupt. Where does your voice need more practice?
2. **Practice makes perfect.** Challenge yourself to speak up at least once in every meeting and conversation you're involved in. It can be sharing your insights, making a suggestion or simply recognizing someone else. Overtime, your voice will be friends with your brain and heart.
3. **Not everyone deserves to hear what you have to say.** Choose to share your thoughts and perspectives with others who actively listen and really hear you. While it's not always possible in the boardroom, it can help to practice and confide in other women that understand your goals.
4. **Remember why you want to speak up in the first place.** What is the legacy you want to leave behind? Who is your voice representing? What is the influence you want to make? Why is that important?



## The Importance Of Communicating To Others' Values

Knowing other people's values can help us to deliver information in a way that will resonate with them. Influence in our communication means we can adapt how we deliver information depending on who is receiving it.

1. **What do the people or person in the room value?** For example, sharing how you see what's important to them first, helps them reduce defensiveness by feeling understood.
2. **Hear people's perspectives and communicate that.** For example, 'I know how hard you've worked on this project and the work that you're doing is supporting the value of building for the long-term. My suggest also aligns to building for the long term and I think it can support both of us in achieving success together on this....'
3. **Head and Heart Perspectives?** Does your audience resonate more with data and numbers or storytelling and qualitative information or both?

**Think of someone  
you are in  
communication or  
will be in  
communication  
with.**

- What do they value?
- How will you approach your next conversation based on that?

# Personal Reflection

**What are my top 3 takeaways from today's session?**

**What are my top 3 action steps after today's session?**

**What's a compassion sentence I can say to myself right now?**

**Q&A**





## **Effective Communication and Active Listening Chapter 2**

Storytelling For Impact →

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Personal Reflection →

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Breakout Room Activity →

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Coaching Strategies →

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Coaching Demo →

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Influencing Groups →

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Q&A →

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Wrap Up →

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## Agreements For Our Time Together

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**Key considerations,  
questions,  
epiphanies...**



# Storytelling For Impact

## Why is Storytelling Important?

It's through storytelling that connections, engagement and trust are built, all of which are critical in not only day-to-day operations but also in times of large-scale organizational changes.

It's the art of taking a core message or idea and transforming it into something that resonates with the audience, resulting in them believing in, caring about and acting on the message or idea.

In my experience, Leaders who have had the biggest impact were those who created a strong and clear vision and inspired and motivated their people to follow and execute on the vision.

These leaders had a strong following of employees who trusted, admired and respected them, thus driving alignment and action. Often times, these leaders would share stories about past experiences and life events to influence values, communicate the vision, define corporate culture, transfer knowledge and ultimately resonate and connect at a deeper level with their team.

# DATA+ STORIES= IMPACT

## **Simplicity**

Keeping the message compact helps people learn and remember the core message

## **Unexpectedness**

Incorporating a surprise element promotes curiosity and helps get and hold people's attention

## **Concreteness**

Painting a concrete and mental picture helps people understand new concepts by increasing transparency and vividness of the core message

## **Credibility**

Building credibility around the message or idea through inside or outside channels helps people to trust and buy into the core message

## **Emotions**

Exuding an emotion in the story appeals to the 'What's in it for me?' of the audience and helps people connect with the core message

## **Stories**

Delivering a story helps inspire and motivate people to jump into action and deliver on the core message

## Where to use storytelling?

Applying storytelling in the workplace can be leveraged in many situations including:

- Meetings
- Presentations
- Hallway/casual discussions
- Onboarding
- Training

- Stories can come from anywhere:
  - a. Childhood
  - b. School
  - c. A teacher
  - d. A parent/grandparent
  - e. Your culture
  - f. Your first job

## What is a fire that burns within you?

- Stories can be deeply personal
- They can be powerful as a result of a challenge or obstacle that you overcame
- Your story is your personal and leadership brand

- Marie Forleo- Everything is Figureoutable
- Brene Brown- Having the courage to show up when you can't control the outcome
- Mel Robbins- You can make choices everyday to improve your life.



You all have a story, something that you've been through that can represent the core of who you are.

- Maybe you experienced burnout before and overcame that and now want to promote better workplace wellbeing?
- Possibly you were mistreated in your work and you're now an advocate for safe and respectful workspaces and true leadership development.
- Maybe after many failures and learnings, you discovered what really works for your customers?



## Reflection 1

Where in my leadership could I leverage story telling more? (e.g a specific project, an upcoming meeting, team coaching)

## Reflection 3

When was a time in my life when that take away showed up the most?

## Reflection 2

What do I want that audience to take-away or understand from my story?

## Reflection 4

What emotion do I want to convey in others through my story?

# Breakout Rooms

**Each take 5 minutes to share your stories with each other- don't forget to share the context as to where your story will be shared.**



# Coaching Strategies

ICF (International Coaching Federation) found that 86% of organizations saw an ROI on their coaching engagements (McCullough, 2022). The same article cites other studies indicating positive ROIs as well:

- Improved executive productivity (reported by 53% of executives)
- Improvements in organizational strengths (48%)
- Gains in customer service (39%)
- Increased retention of executives (32%)
- Enhanced direct report/supervisor relationships (>70%)
- Improved teamwork (67%)
- Improved peer-to-peer working relationships (63%)
- Great job satisfaction (52%)

# Leadership Commitment: Understanding The Benefits

1

Building awareness and responsibility is the essence of good coaching and enables the activation of natural learning

2

This prevents you as a leader from always having to solve problems. It gets people to think for themselves, generate awareness and take responsibility for their situations

3

It guides your team in creating their own unique solutions and increasing their impact and your influence.

4

It shows that you believe in them and trust them

5

It will change the culture of your organization forever

# What prevents us from coaching?

If I don't swoop in and save then....

The narrative that I created is ...

The cost of this narrative to my team...

The cost of this narrative to me is....





**Time & Presence**

**Permission & Clarity**

**Open Ended Exploration**

**Refrain From Fixing**

# The Coaching Process

- 1 Start by clarifying exactly what they need to get from the conversation
- 2 Begin by asking open-ended questions that dig into the reality of the current situation
- 3 Ask them to consider what their solutions are or ways forward
- 4 Embrace the pause and let them think
- 5 Explore their ideas by asking more questions- reality test!
- 6 When a full picture of the solution has been painted, ask them to summarise the next steps- SMART goals
- 7 Ask follow up questions to see if they need any additional support from you or anyone else
- 8 Set timelines for check-in to discuss progress and/or blockers



# Influencing Groups

# What Are Your Biggest Challenges in Group Meetings?

## #1 You get interrupted.

Being interrupted happens sometimes in a meeting. Not only is it disrespectful, it also can impact our confidence.

Consider their objective. If it's to change the topic or get you to stop talking, you want to make direct eye contact with the interrupter and say, "Mike, I'm going to finish my point. This is an important topic and I want to make sure that everyone is informed."

I'm curious about your response/idea. I'll finish my point and then you can continue.  
I'm not finished talking (Kamala Harris used this brilliantly during the 2020 VP debates).  
What I'm saying is important...let me finish and then it would be great to hear your POV.

Discourage interruptions before they happen- set the tone for a parking lot if it's a regular occurrence. A parking lot is a way to manage and stay in the agenda. Then you can say 'Mike, thank you for your point but as it's off the topic of what's on the agenda today/is a point that needs further discussion. I'd like to ask the group if they're in agreement to move this to the parking lot?'



## **#2 You feel you have to over explain to get your point across.**

Try to review agendas ahead of time and condense the points you want to make.

Make bullet points you can refer to to keep it short and avoid over explaining.

Have the mindset that your message will be delivered in trust and positive intent.

'How would I deliver this message if I knew the answers were going to be in my favour?'

Decide if you want feedback or questions on your communication. For example, 'what do you all think' can be helpful for brainstorming but not when you're sharing updates or decisions.



## **#3 Something you disagree with gets approved.**

Is it worth your energy and time to follow up on this?

Suggest a decision code of conduct for your team moving forward.

Bring facts and data as opposed to feelings and emotions (feelings are GREAT but in these situations, it doesn't work)

Move the conversation to a 1-1 where you can have enough time to speak and be heard.

# Wrap Up

What are my top 3 takeaways from today's session?

What are my top 3 action steps after today's session?

What's a compassion sentence I can say to myself right now?

**Q&A**

