

EisnerAmper, LLP

Leadership Development Program

Session Five:

Building Trusted Relationships

August 9, 2023



Offered by:



THE CENTER FOR
CHARACTER-BASED
LEADERSHIP

Session Five— Build Trusted Relationships

Session One:

August 17th, 2022

Know Your Impact: Leadership Presence

Session Two:

October 19th, 2022

Empowerment: Ownership and Accountability

Session Three:

January 13, 2023

Master the Art of Dialogue

Session Four:

May 3rd, 2023

Disciplined Execution—
Performance Character

Session Five:

August 9th, 2023

Building Trusted Relationships—
Relationship Character



In this session, we invite you to explore the quality of your relationships; and your ability to extend and build trust with others. We'll position this in the context of how you show up in teams— either as a team leader or, equally important, as a teammate. To make our work actionable, we'll ask you to:

- Select one or two important relationships you want to improve
- Identify some actions you can take to strengthen partnerships across the firm—as you build new relationships and expand your network within Eisner Amper.

We'll also revisit our journey together by reviewing the key practices introduced in each of our sessions. We'll ask you to do a self-audit across these practices to celebrate your leadership strengths as well as target next steps on your leadership journey

Objectives:

- Improve the quality of your relations—extend your trust radius: Up and down, left and right, internal and external, home and work.
- Learn practices that extend your capacity for care and to communicate that care in practical, powerful ways.
- Commit to a practice to strengthen empathy—deepen the meta-muscle of connection.
- Understand why psychological safety is critical to engagement and buy-in.
- Learn how to build the vulnerability habit—moments when group members candidly share weakness with one another—and why sharing fallibility is crucial to a strong team.
- Reframe purpose from inspiration to navigation—how great leaders relentlessly over-communicate to their teams what they are about and how to move forward.

The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups



Highlights from our pre-read *The Culture Code* by Daniel Coyle

1. You Are Safe (belonging, connection, and identity)
2. We Share Risk (vulnerability, trust, and cooperation)
3. This Is Our Purpose (stories, goals, and values)

Key lessons...

- being smart is overrated
- showing fallibility is crucial
- being nice is not nearly as important as you might think.

Skill 1—Build Safety—how signals of connection generate bonds of belonging and identity. Being smart is overrated. Groups succeed not because they are smarter; but because they are safer.

Skill 2—Share Vulnerability—how habits of mutual risk drive trusting cooperation. Showing fallibility is crucial

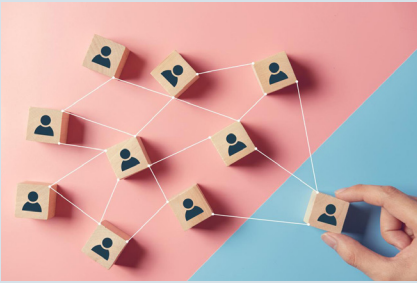
Skill 3—Establish Purpose—how we create shared goals and values.

When you think about the teams you are part of and/or lead—how prevalent are these three conditions? For you? For others? You are safe/you belong • We share risk • We have common goals and values

In this session, we want to challenge you to reflect on how you can help create these conditions in the teams that you are a part of.

As you move into new teams/partnerships within EisnerAmper, how are you being challenged to build new relationships and extend your network? What's helping? What's the best thing about this extended network? How are these new connections enriching your career/leadership?

Skill One—Build Safety



Exerpts from pre-read:

The Culture Code by Daniel Coyle

Actively Signal Your Connection

Buy-in occurs when members of a group feel authentically connected to the group—when they belong. Smart leaders ignite belonging by capitalizing on micro-opportunities to send the clear, unmistakable signal: I see you, I care about what you have to say.

1. Invest energy in each conversation that is occurring • “I care about what you have to say.”
2. Treat the person as unique and valued • Share your appreciation for others frequently and in a way that calls out their individual strengths
3. Signal the relationship will continue • “We have a future together”

Observe the impact of belonging and non-belonging signals at play in your teams

Who are the “Jonathans” in your firm—wellsprings of safety cues? What’s their impact?

Think about the “Nicks” in your firm—the critics, cynics, the disengaged—sending out regular cues of non-belonging. What happens when they show up in a group setting?

How much of the Jonathan is in you? How do you signal connections and belonging to others?

When does the “Nick”—the critic or cynic—come out in you?

“We have a place in our brain that’s always worried about what people think of us, especially higher-ups. We are built to require lots of signaling, over and over. This is why a sense of belonging is easy to destroy and hard to build. .. It’s a narrative—you have to keep it going.”

Skill Two—Vulnerability



To see Daniel Coyle describe the vulnerability loop go to

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFk95hefF_Q

Think of one recent meaningful conversation where the vulnerability loop was active—either one on one or in a team. What did you learn? How did it help build trust?

How about a recent conversation—again one on one or in a group—where vulnerability was needed but absent? What happened?

The vulnerability loop

Moments when group members candidly share weaknesses with one another—like what went wrong and how you might improve next time.

1. Person A sends a signal of vulnerability.
2. Person B detects this signal.
3. Person B responds by signaling their own vulnerability.
4. Person A detects this signal.
5. A norm is established; closeness and trust increase.

“People tend to think of vulnerability in a touchy-feely way, but that’s not what’s happening. It’s about sending a really clear signal that you have weaknesses, that you could use help. And if that behavior becomes a model for others, then you can set the insecurities aside and get to work, start to trust each other and help each other. If you never have that vulnerable moment, on the other hand, then people will try to cover up their weaknesses, and every little microtask becomes a place where insecurities manifest themselves.” —Jeff Polzer

How often do you send a signal vulnerability to others?

How have you seen the vulnerability loop in action in your peer group?

The Receiver is the Key

“How Person B receives the signal is critical. If they don’t catch the signal and respond, the loop is badly broken. If you have ever shared anything personal and not received a response you know how it makes you want to crawl back inside yourself. When someone proposes an idea, shares anxiety or asks for help that person is giving you a little piece of him or herself. You have to catch it. In other words, sending, receiving and responding to vulnerability are equally important when it comes to trust. The loop is a remarkable way to develop sensitivity and respect for another.” — Rachel Botsman

How well are you at receiving signals of vulnerability from others?

How can you practice and extend the vulnerability loop in small ways over the next few months?

Skill Three—Crafting Purpose



Excerpts from our pre-read

The Culture Code by Daniel Coyle

“Purpose is not about inspiration – it’s about navigation. Great leaders relentlessly over-communicate to their teams exactly what they are about, and exactly how to move forward.”

Navigation

Here is where we are and Here is where we want to go. ... This is why we work. This is where you should put your energy.

The Lighthouse Method—Create simple beacons that focus attention and engagement on the shared goal—linking A (where we are) to B (where we want to be).

- Create priorities
- Name keystone behaviors
- Flood the environment with small simple rules that connect the two

Embrace the use of Catch Phrases • Keep them simple, action oriented and forthright Think like a map maker—Define the keystone problems your people face, and then compose simple, vivid catchphrases that define a positive response.

Define, Name and Rank Your Top Priorities • Be Ten Times as Clear About Your Priorities as You Think You Should Be

Highly successful teams have five or fewer and their greatest priority is building and sustaining the group itself. If they get their own relationships right, everything else will follow.

What catch phrases are currently at play in your culture? Can you share a story of how they help you navigate your work together?

If no catch phrase comes immediately to mind—create one. Remember the formula if x ... then y. From here to there ... vivid, memorable rules of thumb



Reflections



Empathy—The Meta-Muscle of Connection



“Think of empathizing more as an original and exhilarating form of travel. Why not be daring and travel into the life of another person and see how it affects who you are and who you want to be? Rather than asking yourself, ‘Where can I go next?’ ask, ‘Whose shoes can I stand in next?’ ”

—Roman Kzrnic

“The greatest gift of human beings, is that we have the power of empathy.”
—Meryl Streep

Not only do you need to hear and understand others, you need to let their world affect you. Empathy is feeling with other people—to feel what they feel.

See RSA Shorts: *The Power of Empathy* with Brene Brown on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mR31333333)

Four qualities of empathy: cognitive and affective empathy

- The ability to take the perspective of others
- Staying out of judgment—keeping curious
- Recognizing emotion in others and then
- Communicating that

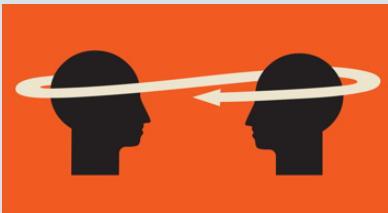
In order to connect with you I have to connect with something in myself that knows that feeling...

Empathy fuels connection...a vulnerable choice to connect. It requires that I connect with something in myself that knows that feeling.

Sympathy drives disconnection...

No silver lining it! In the face of difficult emotions, don't try to make it better. What makes things better is connection.

How to Offer Empathy



Really listen

- Drop the advice
- Recognize and allow emotions
- Ask powerful questions
- Do not reassure
- Be curious

“Sympathy too often comes in its lower form—thinly disguised pity. The result is often that the other person, despite your best intentions, often feels belittled... Empathy, on the other hand, involves trying with great sincerity to understand what the other person is going through. We don’t feel sorry for them, we truly want to take the time to hear them through, and might even end up being in awe of their personal strength.”

—Celeste Chua

Let’s practice—One of you will pick something that is troubling you. The second person will “listen to see” if time permits switching roles—so that you both get time to practice—After each practice round give feedback to the listener on what was particularly effective—or conversely where you felt tempted to shut down.

Listening to See—

It begins with a fundamental desire to understand the unique perspectives of the person across from you.

Inquire—Here you ask questions to get at not the issue itself, but why this issue matters so much to the person. E.g. What is it about this issue that is most important for you? What is hardest for you? What feels most at risk for you? What seems most exciting for you?

Mirror: Mirror back to the other person the heart of what you’ve heard so they can tell that you’ve been trying to see them.

Appreciate—even if you don’t agree. Appreciate the perspective of the other person. Let them know that you see what matters to them, and their concerns are legitimate. (Note: This does not mean that you agree with the other person.

Excerpt from *Unleash Your Complexity Genius* by Jennifer Garvey Berger & Carolyn Coughlin

Can You Develop Empathy?

Yes, You Can



"Our brains have a neurological seesaw such that there is a reciprocal inhibitory relationship between our empathy networks and our analytical task networks. We have to learn to shut one down (or at least muffle it) to let the other strengthen its wiring."

—Daniel Siegel

Start with yourself: Listen to your own emotions

Commit to a practice of mindfulness to increase your awareness of your own emotional life. If you suppress your own emotions, it will be hard to connect with them in others. Go to tarabrach.com/rain.

Practice self-compassion

"Having compassion for oneself is really no different than having compassion for others. Instead of mercilessly judging and criticizing yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings, self-compassion means you are kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings—after all, who ever said you were supposed to be perfect?"

—Kristin Neff; go to self-compassion.org.

Drop judgment • Challenge your prejudices • Explore commonalities

Challenge your own preconceptions and prejudices by searching for what you share with people rather than what divides you. Pick up *The Outward Mindset* by The Arbinger Institute.

Let go of giving advice • Learn to listen without an agenda

"Every week, set aside an hour to listen to somebody who might have something to say that will be of interest. It should be conscious practice in which all of the impulses to argue, inform, judge and straighten out the other person are denied. Every response should be calculated to reflect interest, understanding and seeking for more knowledge."

—Robert Greenleaf

Learn to read non-verbals

Tune into non-verbal communications as you go about your day and pass people on the streets.

Open up • Be vulnerable

"Removing our masks and revealing our feelings to someone is vital for creating a strong empathic bond. Empathy is a two-way street that, at its best, is built upon mutual understanding—an exchange of our most important beliefs and experiences."

—Roman Krznaric, *Empathy: Why It Matters and How to Get It*

Can You Develop Empathy?

Yes, You Can



Set up an evening routine

"I highly recommend that you take a few minutes before you go to bed to reflect upon your day. Think about the people you met and talked to, and how you treated each other. Think about your goal that you stated this morning, to act with compassion towards others. How well did you do? What could you do better? What did you learn from your experiences today?"

—Leo Babauta

Talk with strangers. Be curious...about the people you meet

"People who are highly empathetic are also curious about strangers. The more we encourage our own curiosities, the more likely it is that we will expand our network of acquaintances and, in doing so, acquire a wider understanding of varying perspectives."

—Elizabeth Seward

Act of kindness practice

"...so everyday practice doing something small to help—a smile, let their car cut in front of you, let them move ahead of you in line, text someone something kind, volunteer to do an errand for someone struggling, pick up a piece of trash, quickly forgive a transgression. In time, this will become your way of living."

—David Ji

Read stories

"Books, movies, songs—stories told in any artistic medium can give you an empathy workout. To grow stronger, find stories that are unfamiliar. Focus once a week on the story of someone who seems utterly different from you."

—Martha Beck

Shape shifting

"See that strange man in the orange polyester suit putting 37 packets of sweetener into his extra-grande mochaccino with soy milk? What if—zap!—you suddenly switched bodies with him? What would it be like to wear that suit, that face, that physique? What impulse would lead to sugaring a cup of coffee like that, let alone drinking it?"

—Martha Beck

Practice gratitude

"Look closely and you will find that people are happy because they are grateful. The opposite of gratefulness is just taking everything for granted. People who practice gratitude are more compassionate, less materialistic, and more satisfied with life."

—David Steindl-Ras

Keep a gratitude journal. End each day by taking ten minutes to write down things that made the day meaningful. Things you are grateful for and that bring you joy—big or small. Take time to feel the heart feelings that each event/connection generated.

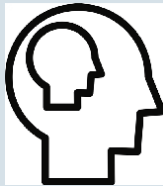
A recap of our journey



To bring our journey to a close, we'll recap some of the core leadership practices introduced in our journey together. We've prepared a short card deck to support this reflection. As we revisit the practices, take a moment to assess your current level of skill in each.

We'll use this self-audit to celebrate your leadership strengths as well as target practices to continue your leadership journey.

- +** A current leadership strength. Central to the way I show up in my personal and professional lives.
- =** Neutral—Neither a strength nor a significant gap.
- Not yet mastered—an opportunity to take my leadership to the next level



As you reflect, be prepared to share:

1. What change did you make, as part of this program, that means the most to you, and that has had the biggest impact on your life and leadership?
2. What practices have you found most supportive to help you navigate change or stress?
3. Where will you focus your development efforts going forward?

"In study after study, researchers find that if people are unclear about where they are going, they'll just default to their old patterns and habits."

—Jennifer Garvey Berger

"Who do you want to be next?"