



COMMUNICATE LIKE A LEADER

A toolkit

WELCOME

As businesses shift to remote work during the coronavirus pandemic, we all need to adjust the way they communicate. The demands of our current reality necessitate communicating at every level in a way that builds trust.

Effective communication is a prerequisite for effective problem solving, for effective relationships, for effective organisations. It's the fundamental skill of leadership.

This toolkit has been designed to help you consider how you can communicate more effectively as a leader - whether you are in a leadership role or not.



“THE MAIN PROBLEM IN COMMUNICATION IS THE
‘TRANSLATION’ PROBLEM: TRANSLATING WHAT WE MEAN
INTO WHAT WE SAY AND TRANSLATING WHAT WE SAY
INTO WHAT WE MEAN. THE FIRST CHALLENGE,
THEREFORE, IS TO LEARN TO **SAY WHAT WE MEAN**; THE
SECOND CHALLENGE IS TO LEARN TO **LISTEN SO THAT
WE UNDERSTAND WHAT OTHERS MEAN.**”

STEPHEN R. COVEY



NAVIGATING THIS TOOLKIT

We have divided this toolkit into four sections:

1	2	3	4
THE BASICS Before communicating with others consider your language and prepare well	LISTEN LIKE A LEADER Listen with the intent to understand, not to reply	TALK LIKE A LEADER Be intentional about how you communicate with your team	MASTER YOUR MESSAGE Learn from communication masters to take your skills further



THE BASICS

BEFORE COMMUNICATING WITH OTHERS, START
WITH YOURSELF

KEY INSIGHT

THE LANGUAGE YOU USE AND THE PREPARATION YOU DO TELLS SOMEONE EVERYTHING THEY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WHETHER YOU ARE A LEADER.

THE POWER OF PROACTIVE LANGUAGE

Not being intentional and aware of your language or self-talk is one of the major challenges of leadership and a blind spot for many leaders.

You wake up on Monday morning thinking “I HAVE TO write that report.” Or “I HAVE TO have that difficult conversation.” In reality, you don’t HAVE to do anything. It all comes down to a choice.

Unless someone ties you up, switches on your webcam, and forcibly opens your mouth, the act of having that difficult conversation (or doing anything for that matter) is a choice you either make or choose not to make.

We call this using Proactive versus Reactive language. Proactive language is the language of potential and possibilities, while Reactive Language is the language of limits, impossibilities, and hopelessness.

Some clues to our current unproductive mindsets around leadership responsibilities could be words or phrases like, it’s painful, it’s hard, it takes so much time, I don’t have enough time etc. However, we can reframe our self-talk and have a profound effect on our mindsets by catching ourselves when we use reactive language.

The solution is to watch your language.

As opposed to thinking or saying, “I have to”... correct yourself by thinking or saying, “I choose to” or “I get to”. Choose phrases like “I’m going to write that report today.” “I’m going to give 100% of myself to my team today and every day.” “I’m prepared and motivated to do what I must to make this conversation a success.”

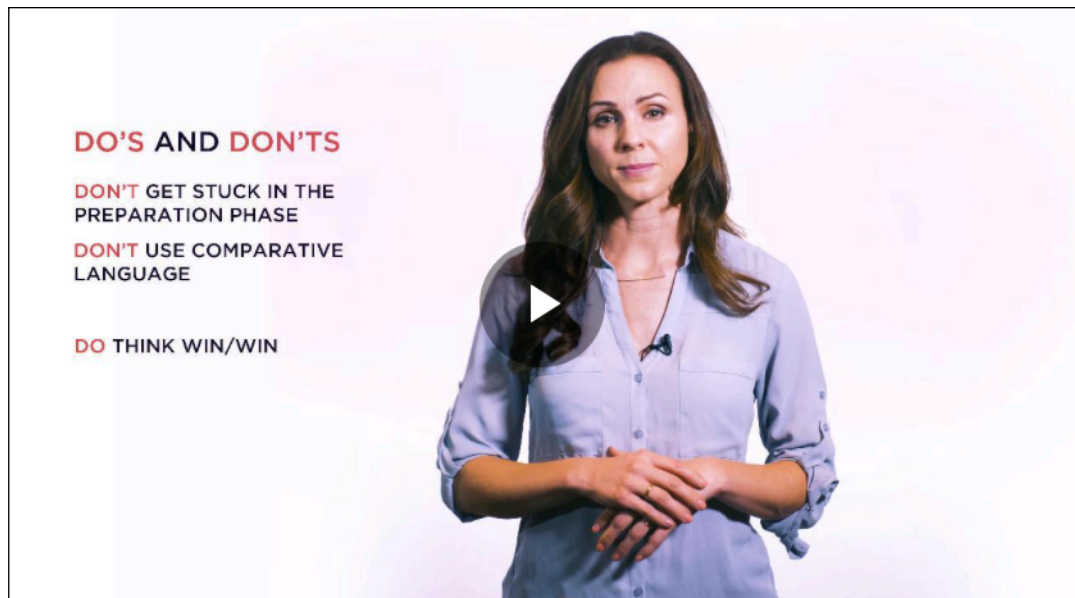
Don’t make the common mistake of letting the simplicity of this technique be indicative of its enormous power to change your mindsets and your life.



CLICK HERE TO
WATCH A VIDEO OF
RAJAN KAICKER
EXPLAINING HOW
PROACTIVE LANGUAGE
AFFECTS THE WAY WE
BEHAVE AND THE
RESULTS WE ACHIEVE



HOW GREAT LEADERS HAVE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS



Click the image to hear from Leena Rinne about the do's and don'ts for making conversations easier.

Leena Rinne is Vice President of Consulting at FranklinCovey. She is responsible for the hiring, operational support, management, and development of the FranklinCovey consultant team, and the ongoing high-quality delivery of FranklinCovey programs and solutions. She is also a co-author of the books *The 5 Choices: The Path to Extraordinary Productivity* and *Leading Loyalty: Cracking the Code to Customer Devotion*.

“LEADERSHIP IS A **CHOICE**, NOT A **POSITION**.”

STEPHEN R. COVEY

2

LISTEN LIKE A LEADER

LISTEN WITH THE INTENT TO UNDERSTAND, NOT
TO REPLY

KEY INSIGHT

AS A LEADER, YOU WILL HAVE MORE INFLUENCE WITH OTHERS IF YOU TRULY UNDERSTAND THEM FIRST.

Has your lack of humility ever limited your perspective or lessened your influence as a leader? Would you even know if it had?

Leaders who fail to demonstrate humility often find themselves leaning toward arrogance and seeking outside validation. They rarely listen to anyone but themselves, and thus miss opportunities to learn and course-correct. They often turn conversations into a competition and feel the need to “one-up” others and have the final say.

In the book *Get Better: 15 Proven Practices to Building Effective Relationships at Work*, Todd Davis writes:

“Those who are humble have a secure sense of self—their validation doesn’t come from something external, but is based on their true nature. To be humble means to shed one’s ego, because the authentic self is much

greater than looking good, needing to have all the answers, or being recognised by one’s peers. As a result, those who have cultivated humility as an attribute have far greater energy to devote to others. They go from being consumed with themselves (an inner focus) to looking for ways to contribute and help others (an outer focus). Humility is the key to building solid character and strong, meaningful connections.”

When you learn to embrace humility, you feel more comfortable because you know who you are. You can let go of the fear of making mistakes or the need to never show weakness. To quote Dr. Stephen R. Covey, “Humble leaders are more concerned with what is right than being right.” Become more comfortable, even confident, in not having all the answers yourself. This a strength, not a weakness.

Pick an initiative you're leading or participating in and apply the following steps to learn more about your leadership approach.

1

Identify someone whose perspective on the initiative is different from yours.

2

Schedule time to listen to their perspective.

3

When their opinion differs substantially to yours, exercise the patience and respect to not just understand, but to genuinely consider their point of view.

4

Ask yourself the following questions:

What did you learn that might measurably improve the initiative?

What did you learn that might measurably improve your relationship?

What did you learn about your leadership style?

DO YOU LISTEN TO OTHERS ONLY WITH THE INTENT TO REPLY?

Actually listening to someone shows you care. Listen first with the intent to understand. With people, slow is fast. Taking the time to help people feel understood gives them the space to solve the problem themselves.

- Identify situations where you need to listen better.
- Seek to understand others' perspectives before sharing your own.
- Take sincere interest in what others have to say.



Talk Less, Listen More

Click here to watch a short video on the power of listening

Habit 5: Seek First To Understand, Then To Be Understood®

Click here to read an article about the Habit of empathic communication, from The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People®

Watch the Video Clip
“It’s Not About the Nail”

Download the Tool
“Listening”

STEP 1

PREPARE: Download the “Listening Tool” to prepare well for your next 121

STEP 2

WATCH, SHARE AND ASK: Share the “It’s not about the nail” video with your team member. Ask them to reflect on any feedback they have about where you have stepped in to solve an issue rather than listened to them.

STEP 3

SEEK TO UNDERSTAND: Focus on listening to your team member’s feedback with empathy, not sharing your ideas or view point.

STEP 4

SEEK TO BE UNDERSTOOD: Only after listening to your team member, share your views, thoughts, ideas and solutions.

Watch episode 4 of **FranklinCovey On Leadership** to understand that the best leaders are genius-makers. Learn the specific behaviours that bring out the creativity, talent, intellect, and passion of your people, with best-selling author Liz Wiseman.



Liz Wiseman is a researcher and executive advisor who teaches leadership to executives around the world. She is the author of New York Times bestseller *Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter*, *The Multiplier Effect: Tapping the Genius Inside Our Schools*, and Wall Street Journal bestseller *Rookie Smarts: Why Learning Beats Knowing in the New Game of Work*. She is the CEO of the Wiseman Group, a leadership research and development firm headquartered in Silicon Valley, California. Some of her recent clients include: Apple, AT&T, Disney, Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Nike, Salesforce, Tesla, and Twitter.

WATCH OR LISTEN TO THE EPISODE

3

TALK LIKE A LEADER

BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT HOW YOU
COMMUNICATE TO YOUR TEAM

KEY INSIGHT

DO YOU WANT YOUR DIRECT REPORTS TO BE POSITIVE TEAM PLAYERS? THEN THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT HOW YOU TALK TO THEM. SOMETIMES EVEN A SLIGHT DIFFERENCE IN YOUR SPEECH CAN SEND THE IMPORTANT MESSAGE THAT "WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER." OR NOT.

1

Instead of saying "I" say "We."

Gone are your days as an individual contributor. You no longer achieve results on your own. You now deliver results with, and through, other people. Your language should reflect that.

2

Instead of saying "You need to fix this." say "Let's figure out how to fix this."

Model the behaviour you want to see in your team. If you truly want them to be positive team players, you need to be one yourself. That means you don't put the burden of an issue solely on them, but you share it with them.

3

Instead of saying "What are you going to do?" say "What do you think we should do?"

Asking your direct reports what they think is an easy way to tap into their potential and engage them at the same time. Instead of making them responsible for something, this way of speaking allows them to take responsibility, which is very different.

4

Instead of saying "Who's responsible for this?" say "What is the best way to resolve this?"

There is a time and place for addressing accountability issues and offering feedback, but until a problem is solved, finding someone to blame is not the top priority. Leaders focus on the big picture beyond the immediate picture. By asking for ways to resolve something, instead of who to blame, you send the message that you are more proactive than reactive.

5

Instead of saying "You're doing it wrong." say "Have you tried this approach?"

As a leader, it's your responsibility to develop your people, to recognise their potential and to help them achieve it. Telling someone they are doing something wrong is not constructive. It's a quick way to get them to shut down, to reserve their best, and to fear to contribute. When you ask them whether they have considered another approach, you subtly engage their talent and expose it to new ways of thinking.

6

Instead of saying "I wouldn't do that." say "Help me understand your thinking."

Truly effective leaders know that their way of doing something isn't the only way. They recognise the multitude of paths that lead to the same result. By asking your team member to help you understand their thinking, you can gain valuable insight into their thought process, while also showing them it's safe to think differently.

7

Instead of saying "That's not good enough." say "We need to do better."

The difference should be clear by now. Instead of placing the burden on your direct report, you share it with them. Although they can be responsible for a large part of a deliverable, as a leader, you are ultimately responsible for it, so act like it.

8

Instead of saying "Do you need help?" say "How can I help?"

It's not easy to ask for help, or admitting you need it. By asking how you can help, you diffuse the emotions connected with the very notion of needing help. In doing so, you can unearth opportunities to be not just the leader you want to be but to be the leader your team deserves.

9

Instead of saying "I don't think you should..." say "Why don't we try..."

One statement is a dead end and the other is an open canvas. Instead of simply shutting someone down, invite them to collaborate. You'll increase engagement and ultimately increase results.

10

Instead of saying "It's about time." say "Well done! Thank you."

Reward the behaviour you want to see and you will see more of it. People like to feel like they are winning and when they receive kudos from their leader, it's like they put points on the board.

Are your people as forthcoming with bad news and negative feedback as they are with good news and positive feedback?

The higher up you get in an organization, the more insulated you are from the truth. The phrase "make it safe to tell the truth" is talking about you, the leader, owning the responsibility to make it safe for others to be truthful. To help make it safe for others to be truthful in your presence:

- Genuinely ask for specific examples.
- Encourage them to give feedback.
- Do not defend or refute.
- Show sincerity in wanting to know their truth. (We say their because not everyone's version is accurate, complete, or helpful.)
- Build their confidence that there is zero downside to speaking up (no retribution, punishment, or risk).
- Convey that you respect their point of view and will be vulnerable (especially to associates junior to you).
- Prove through continued experience that you won't dispute or challenge their position, defend your behaviour, or dismiss their feedback out of hand.
- Perhaps most important, show through your new behaviour that you value their risk-taking enough to improve.
- Don't lure someone to the "safe" side of the pool and then push their head below the surface.
- Show how you valued others who provided you with feedback, and that there was only an upside in them doing so.
- Carefully consider the physical setting. Don't invite someone into your office and sit behind your massive desk and gargoyle-themed garniture expecting courage. Find neutral ground to show you're not above them or anything they have to say.
- Take notes and ask for clarification.

Consider the following questions about your approach

1

What do you do to encourage or discourage others from sharing with you their truth about you?

2

Assess your current organisation or team. Is lying or spinning rewarded? Is truth-telling unsafe?

3

Do you communicate that mistakes are inevitable and candid feedback is welcome?

4

Do you show that you value feedback by changing your behaviour and thanking the giver?

No matter how you answers, above all, when someone does take the risk to provide feedback, don't dismiss it, disregard it, or defend yourself. Listen, show appreciation, then discern on your own whether it's worthy of acting on. Some feedback will be more about the person offering it than about you.

4

MASTER YOUR MESSAGE

LEARN FROM COMMUNICATION MASTERS TO TAKE
YOUR SKILLS FURTHER

In episode 58 of **FranklinCovey On Leadership** join Kim Scott, New York Times bestselling author, as she discusses how to develop real, human relationships at work by caring personally and challenging directly.



Kim Scott is the author of the NYT & WSJ bestseller *Radical Candor: Be a Kickass Boss without Losing your Humanity*. Kim led AdSense, YouTube, and Doubleclick Online Sales and Operations at Google and then joined Apple to develop and teach a leadership seminar. Kim has been a CEO coach at Dropbox, Qualtrics, Twitter, and several other tech companies.

Previously, Kim was the co-founder and CEO of Juice Software, a collaboration start-up, and led business development at Delta Three and Capital Thinking. Earlier in her career, she worked as a senior policy advisor at the FCC, managed a paediatric clinic in Kosovo, started a diamond cutting factory in Moscow, and was an analyst on the Soviet Companies Fund. Kim received her MBA from Harvard Business School and her BA from Princeton University.

WATCH OR LISTEN TO THE EPISODE

In episode 62 of **FranklinCovey On Leadership** join Julian Treasure, one of the top TED speakers of all time, to learn the seven deadly sins of speaking...and the one leaders commit most often.



Julian Treasure is a sound and communication expert. He travels the world training people to listen better and create healthier sound. He is author of the books *How to be Heard* and *Sound Business*.

Julian's five TED talks have been watched more than 80 million times. His latest, *How to speak so that people want to listen*, is in the top 10 TED talks of all time. Julian is regularly featured in the world's media, including TIME Magazine, The Times, The Economist and the BBC.

Julian is also founder of The Sound Agency. The audio-branding company asks and answers the question "How does your brand sound?". The Sound Agency work with some of the world's biggest brands to improve their sound. Their award-winning work has made headlines internationally.

WATCH OR LISTEN TO THE EPISODE



“Changing behavior is one thing.
Changing perceptions of your
behavior is much harder to do.”

—Jim Moore
Founding Member, Marshall Goldsmith Group

As a proven successful executive, Diana Thomas brings decades of experience, expertise and education to her coaching with business executives, teams and learning/talent leaders to increase their impact, inspire committed followership and engagement, and build strong diverse teams that pull together to achieve Winning Results.

In addition to coaching, Diana is a partner and trainer with Clean Language for Coaches Resource Center. She is the co-author of the 2018 strategic leadership book, *Be More Strategic in Business: How to win through Stronger Leadership and Smarter Decisions*.

Diana began her career as a McDonald's restaurant crew member in 1979, and rose to become Vice President of Training, Learning & Development for McDonald's USA. In this role, she led all aspects of training and development including the restaurant training curriculum at Hamburger University, McDonald's global training centre of excellence.

Feedback can be a double-edged sword: the giver usually intends to be helpful but often comes across downright crushing. On the other hand, many leaders are locked in a cycle of making the same mistakes over and over while struggling to get anyone to give them the honest feedback they need to improve. In this episode of **Talent Champions**, Diana Thomas talks with Marshall Goldsmith's own coach, Jim Moore, about how givers and receivers can turn feedback into the vital tool for growth it was always meant to be.

LISTEN TO THE EPISODE



WE HOPE YOU FOUND THIS TOOLKIT USEFUL