

Conversation 1:

Making Big Requests

- Are you clear on what you want, by when and to what standard? If not, are you ready to invite others in, in order to get this clear?
- At the end of the conversation, you may be clear but how will you know if others are? (I used to be great at being crystal clear on what I wanted but it never crossed my mind to check whether others were!)
- Are you looking to engage others or just 'communicate at' them? Or at times do you ask them to 'just carve more stone'?
- Similarly, are you seeing this as a one way conversation or a two way dialogue and Co-invention that helps build others' involvement and ownership?
- If you are looking to engage them, is the Relationship big enough to get the job done, or will you need to build it further as a part of this conversation?
- Are you focussed only on Possibilities that excite you? Or are you sparking Possibilities for others so they feel that the 'cathedral' is theirs too?
- Can the Request you're making be delivered within the current ways of working / the current culture? Or are you also asking for new ways of thinking and behaviours? In Leader Mode, at times you will want to and need to make these bigger Requests.
- What human aspects of delivery are needed and are you bringing them? Are you bringing conviction, urgency, passion, enthusiasm, belief that you can do it together?
- Finally, are you also designing Conversation 2 ie how are you going to work together to ensure you all do a great job here?

Of course, you don't need every ingredient present each time you make a request – you may not need to be passionate when you ask 'can you pass me the sugar?' The key is to be conscious and bring what's needed in each instance.

Conversation 2:

Maximising Probability of Delivery

- Echoing the above, are you talking up front on how you'll work together to ensure delivery?
- Are you agreed on how you'll be kept up to date on progress? In what form and how frequently?
- Are you agreed on what you want to know and when after setbacks or missed milestones?
- And are you creating a safe space so that people feel safe to tell you of setbacks and bad news?
- Are you ready to offer appropriate input, support and coaching to help keep others focussed and delivering?
- At the same time, are you also bringing a commitment and resolve that others see and respond to?
- Overall, are you helping others manage their energy towards successful delivery?

I'll always remember a very capable leader announcing "I've just realised, I don't do this Conversation!" And that may be ok with some people some of the time. As a Conscious Leader, however, it's up to you to choose what's needed in each instance.

Conversation 3:

Delivery is Acknowledged

I can't emphasise enough how powerful this Conversation 3 can be at helping people grow and so Deliver More Later. A number of these conversations over time can massively build people's confidence, self-belief and thereby capacity to deliver more. I'm putting so much weight behind this point because I've seen many instances of the power of this confidence-building - but I've met few leaders who are naturally strong in this conversation. It's as if we just don't recognise the power we have to help others feel good about themselves and what they can achieve.

Pause for a second and remember a time when you felt brilliant after someone had acknowledged you for what you'd done or how you'd gone about it. Please take on board as fully as you can that you have the same power to have people around you feeling similarly good about themselves. So...

- Are you free in acknowledging others for a good job done? Or are you closer to the school of 'no, I don't acknowledge a good job done. That's what they get paid for'?
- Potentially more important, are you free in acknowledging the person for what they have contributed to progress? 'Really good job, thanks' from you will help someone feel valued. However, acknowledgement of the person, not just the job done, like 'I want you to know I really appreciate the creativity you brought to this challenge, the way you kept everyone focussed, and the tenacity you showed to get it all done on time. Many thanks' can help someone's confidence grow even more. Whatever you do, don't try and fake being sincere in your feedback. Either mean it or keep quiet!
- With those you are developing as leaders, do you ask what they have learned about themselves and who they could be as a leader?
- Do you pause to extract the learning from this success rather than just bashing on with the next challenge?
- Also do you pause to consider what's possible now that didn't seem possible earlier?
- Overall, do you leave others feeling good about themselves, wanting to grow even further and ready to take on even more?

Conversation 3a:

Non-delivery is Addressed

Here, quality delivery on time is not achieved. This is the conversation many people prefer to avoid or at least dilute. But if you're in touch with what you care about and really want delivered, you'll be less inclined to fudge this conversation.

What can also help is if you speak to others with the mindset of wanting them to succeed and grow. If you want someone to grow and you see them performing poorly in some way, do you keep quiet? Not if you care about them and their progress. Certainly not if you are committed to helping them develop as leaders. So...

- Are you having this conversation as soon as you can or are you putting it off? At worst, with someone who works for you, are you keeping quiet and storing it up till the annual appraisal?
- Are you speaking your truth about what you see and how you feel about it while also listening to their view?
- Are you maximising the learning from the situation?
- Are you making clear the consequences of repeated under-delivery? I can take you to quite a few organisations which could achieve so much more if the leaders were stronger at making just this one aspect of Deliver clearer.
- Are you agreeing a new timeline for delivery?
- Are you bringing commitment and determination to getting the job done? Are you bringing truthfulness and openness helped by wanting others to learn and grow?
- Overall, are you having this conversation in a way that lifts the other's energy – either immediately or soon after – rather than lowering their energy and confidence?

Conversation 4:

The Wrap-up

Here delivery finally happens and in many respects this conversation is similar to 3 in the acknowledgement of a job done. But there is a powerful piece to add here because this is the conversation where you as a leader can help your colleague recognise something vital about themselves. We all sometimes trip up or meet unexpected obstacles and how we engage with difficulties is part of our leadership journey. There may be deeper learning about ourselves available at these times. Consider exploring this deeper territory together – it will certainly help you both develop faster as leaders:

- What beliefs did your player have about themselves when they didn't get it right first time?
- What might they have been tempted to do e.g. avoid, hide, not take responsibility?
- What support did they look for and get in tackling the difficulty faced? Did they turn to their Support Team?
- What qualities did they need to bring to rectify the situation?
- What did they learn from the experience?
- And how have they grown?

In Summary...

Reflect back on what you are like as a leader who delivers:

- What have you noticed about yourself and your Leader's Conversations for Delivery?
- In this space of Robust Dialogue, where are you naturally strong and not so strong?
- Could you be even stronger at delivering by making more explicit the connection with what you care about and what you are leading for?
- Crucially, how do your colleagues see you in these Conversations?
- How could you get more feedback on this aspect of your leadership?
- Which ingredients of which Conversations will you take on as part of your Conscious Practice?
- Who in your Support Team will you ask to give you regular feedback on what you're going to practise?