

LEADING POWERFUL CONVERSATIONS



Communication Defined

COMMUNICATION

(n.) the imparting or exchanging of information or news

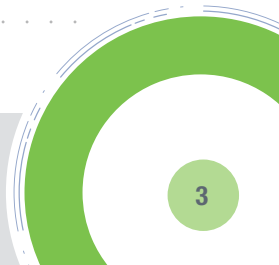
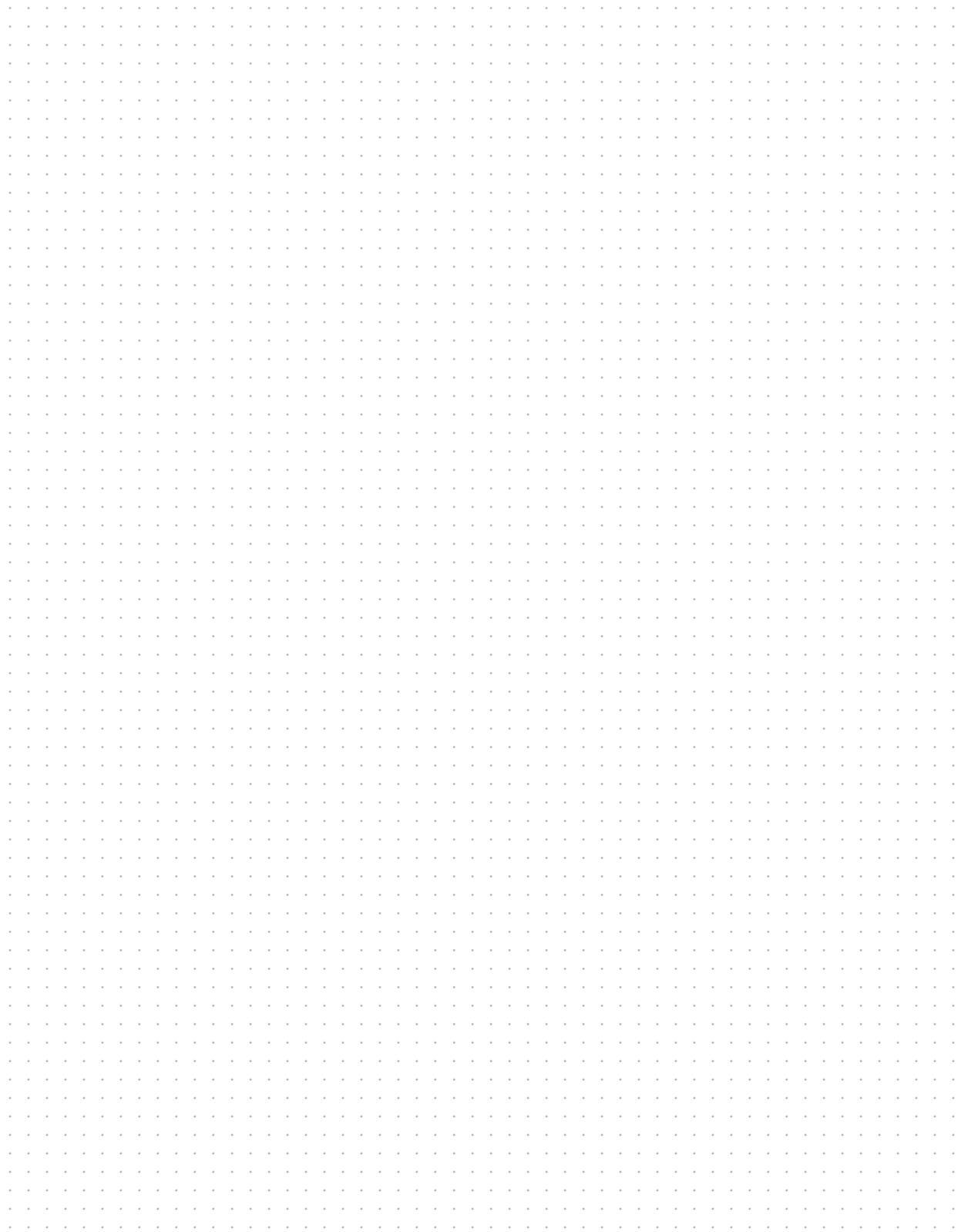
- Expressing ideas, information, knowledge, thoughts, feelings
- Understanding what is expressed by others
- Verbal (spoken word) and non-verbal (tone, body language, emotion)

WHY COMMUNICATION MATTERS

- Improving communication skills is one of the most valuable ways we can develop ourselves.
- Developing ourselves and developing others is based on great communication.
- Sharing ideas and solutions for your organization are only helpful if you can communicate them to others.
- Only 7% of information is conveyed by the words used (with 55% communicated non-verbally and 38% impacted by tone of voice).

COMMON BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

- Being distracted
- Lack of curiosity
- Preparing a response or advice



Listening Defined

LISTENING

(v.) To fully concentrate, understand, remember, and respond to what is being said

THE THREE TYPES OF LISTENING

1. **Subjective** – Listening in a self-centered manner with the intent to respond.
2. **Objective** – Listening focused on the facts or head-centered message without the intent to understand the meaning behind the words.
3. **Intuitive** – Listening that incorporates your “gut” with a focus on both what and how things are being said, enabling you to hear facts along with the intent, emotions, and messages behind them.

Techniques For Listening

- **Read body language** – Understand the non-verbal communication used to express information:
- **Read the speaker's energy level** – Understand the energy level based on what the speaker is saying.
- Remember the speaker's motivations, desires, or values.
- Focus on what the person is/isn't saying.
- Disconnect from ego, judgement, or logic.
- Be open to your intuition.
- Respond to feelings that were not said verbally.
- Listen to tone of voice.

Empowering Questions Defined

EMPOWERING QUESTIONS

(n.) Questions that cause a person to search for answers or new possibilities

- They create deeper understanding, insight, and connection for all participants in a conversation.
- They assume people have the answers within – meaning our goal is to help them uncover, rather than give, answers.
- Empowering Questions help us to get deeper, beyond the shallow issues or responses in a conversation.

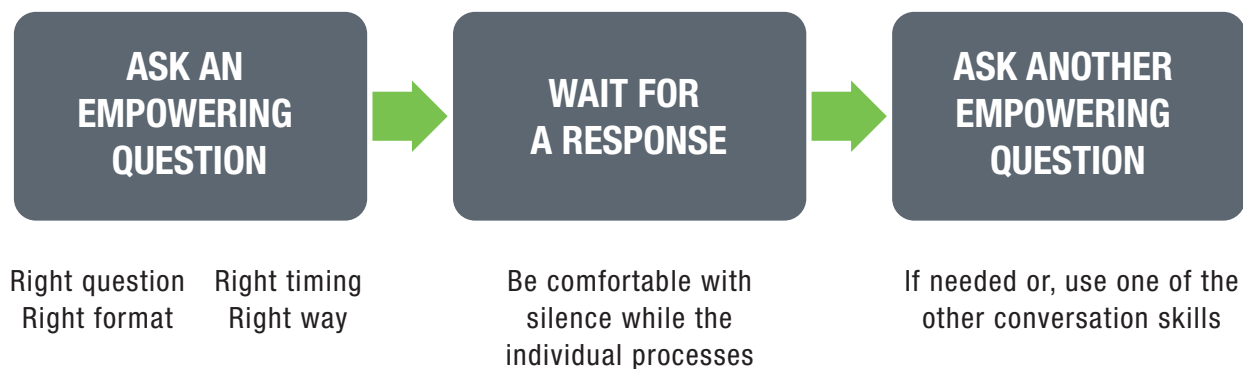
EMPOWERING QUESTIONS:

- Leverage open-ended format
- Search for clarification
- Guide to introspection
- Challenge existing perspective
- Provoke thought
- Ask something new
- Focus on the future

BENEFITS OF EMPOWERING QUESTIONS:

- Empower individuals to develop their own solutions
- Foster innovation
- Clarify feelings, thoughts, or goals
- Develop solutions to repetitive problems or issues
- Create clarity through discussion of what people are truly thinking, as opposed to letting your own story and assumptions influence how you interpret what they're saying
- Generate deeper conversations and improve relationships

Asking Empowering Questions



QUESTION STARTERS

Empowering questions starters:

- What...
- How...

Avoid questions that start with “Why...” or “Who...” as they can imply blame or judgement.

Ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered with “Yes” or “No.”

- Example: “Do you like this?” > “What do you like about this and how could we make it better?”

Empowering Questions Examples

QUESTION STARTERS

- What can you do about that?
- What about that makes it work?
- What other choices can you make?
- What's another way to look at that?
- What's your next step?
- What did you learn from that?
- What will you do the next time?
- What worked well?
- What is really bothering you about this?
- What do you think the main challenge is?
- What is stopping you?
- What do you want to experience?
- How will you demonstrate...?
- How would you be able to live with that?
- What would that cost you?
- What do you need to be successful?
- How can you find out more?
- How do you think it will work out?

NON-STARTERS

Avoid

- “Filling the void”
- Stacking questions (asking another question before previous question has been answered)
- Leading and manipulation by curbing beliefs and assumptions
- Long-winded and complex questions
- Asking “why” questions (they can cause a person to become defensive)
- “Closed” question starters:
 - » Do you...
 - » Is that...
 - » Can you...
 - » Will you...
 - » Could you...
 - » Would you...
 - » Have you ever...
 - » Should you...
 - » Are you...

Evaluating Empowering Questions

Determine if the following questions are or not empowering. Circle the word that corresponds with your response and explain your decision

1. What does success look like in this area?

Empowering or

Non-Empowering

WHY?

2. Do you have a set of goals?

Empowering or

Non-Empowering

WHY?

3. What would be the best way you could choose a new thought?

Empowering or

Non-Empowering

WHY?

4. Is there a way you could turn your challenge into an opportunity?

Empowering or

Non-Empowering

WHY?

5. If you won the lottery, what in your life would change?

Empowering or

Non-Empowering

WHY?

6. Why do you feel that way?

Empowering or

Non-Empowering

WHY?

7. What is one way you could motivate yourself? Based on what you said earlier, it's obvious you care very much for your peers and their success, so how might you consider that in your planning?

Empowering or

Non-Empowering

WHY?

What impact would the non-empowering questions have had on the conversation?

For the non-empowering questions, how could you re-write them to become Empowering Questions?

CLARIFYING

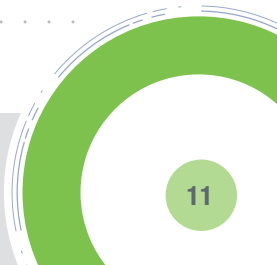
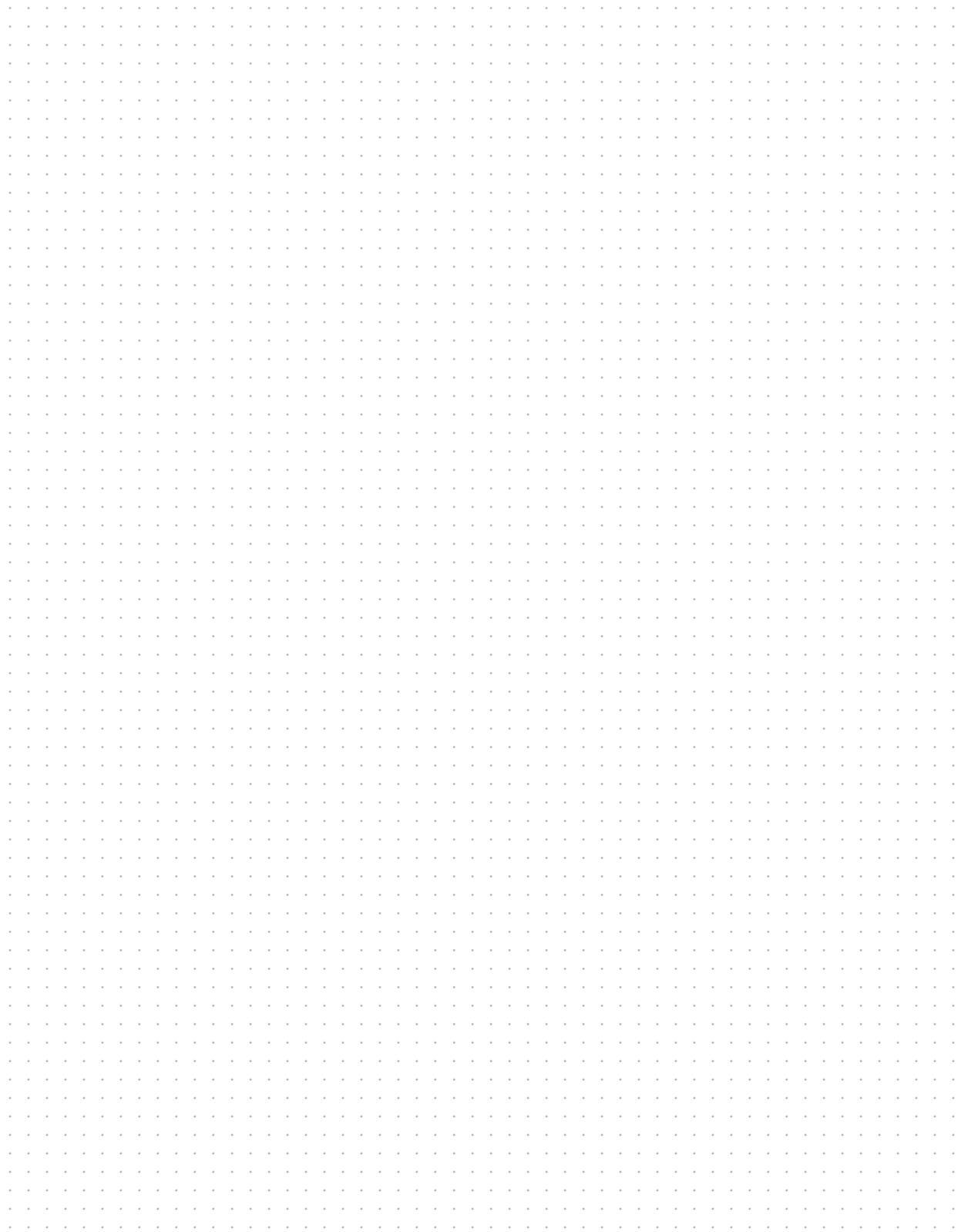
Clarifying Defined

CLARIFYING

(v.) To make a statement or situation less confused and more comprehensible

CLARIFYING STARTERS

- What else?
- Tell me more...
- Help me understand better...
- Trying to go deeper, ...



Acknowledging Defined

ACKNOWLEDGING

(v.) To let a person know that you truly listened and care about what they've said

WHY ACKNOWLEDGE?

- Focus the conversation on what the person says
 - » Clarify what you heard the person say
- Continue building the connection
- Understand WHY the person is telling you what they are telling you
- Develop a common understanding

Techniques For Acknowledging

GOAL:

- Summarize, paraphrase, reiterate, or mirror what was said
- Encourage, accept, or explore and reinforce the person's emotions/perceptions/concerns/beliefs
- Bottom-line or restate the essence of what the person is communicating

ACKNOWLEDGING STARTERS:

- So when you ____, ____ happens.
- To check my understanding...
- What I'm hearing you say is...
- Let me play that back to you, to be sure I got it.
- In other words...
- So...

Validating Defined

VALIDATING

(v.) To recognize or affirm worth and normalcy of feelings

- The process of validation is about letting people understand that what they're experiencing emotionally matters.

WHY VALIDATE?

- It allows a person to release some energy so they can move forward toward a solution
- It creates a connection
- It helps the person know that what they are feeling is normal
 - » People often feel guilty or unsure about how they're feeling
 - » People second guess themselves
- It emphasizes that their experience matters
- It allows a person to feel heard

Techniques For Validating

GOAL:

- Validate their emotions
- Focus on normalizing how they're feeling in response to the situation
- Avoid judging their actions as right or wrong (or agreeing/disagreeing)

VALIDATING STARTERS:

- It's understandable you feel that way because...
- You have every right to feel that way because...
- That's perfectly normal/natural...
- Based on your values, it makes sense you feel that way...
- Based on your experience...
- Given your situation...
- From your perspective...
- Yes, and...

TIPS FOR CREATING POWERFUL CONVERSATIONS

Creating powerful conversations requires leveraging multiple communication skills at the right time. Below is a summary of the skills practiced in the Leading Powerful Conversations workshop.

SKILL	WHAT IS IT?	SOUNDS/LOOKS LIKE...
EMPOWERING QUESTIONS	Ask open-ended questions that generate new ideas and help people develop their own solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What can you do about that?• How can you find out more?
LISTENING	Be aware of the three levels of listening. To listen intuitively, focus on both what is being said, as well as how things are being said.	Keep in mind while you listen: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speaker's body language and tone of voice• Speaker's motivations, desires, values• Disconnect from your ego, judgement, or logic
CLARIFYING	Use clarifying questions to get details about situations, understand what the speaker means, and gather more context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What else?• Tell me more...
ACKNOWLEDGING	Play back what you heard to acknowledge, while providing more information. This lets the listener know you heard them, that you care about what they said, and helps you understand the 'why' behind their statement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I'm hearing you say...• In other words...
VALIDATING	Validate to normalize the person's emotions. It helps them open lines of communication by letting the speaker know it's safe to share thoughts that their inner self told them not to share.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It's understandable you feel that way because...• Given your situation...

