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TOPIC THIS ISSUE: CONVERSATIONAL CONNECTION

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WISDOM TO CONNECT

By: Judith Glaser



"If you're not getting the results you want, maybe it's time to give your conversational intelligence a boost."
— JUDITH E. GLASER, author of *Drive and the 100th Monkey*

Conversational INTELLIGENCE

How Great Leaders BUILD TRUST and Get Extraordinary Results



JUDITH E. GLASER

Too many conversations miss the mark. We talk past each other, over each other and make up things that suit our motivations and needs. We can connect 24/7 from anywhere in the world at any time, but it's not enough to have the tools to connect.

We need to have the wisdom to connect.

We need Conversational Intelligence, a concrete framework for knowing which kinds of conversations trigger lower-level brain activity, such as primitive instincts for fight, flight, freeze and appeasement, versus what sparks higher-level brain activity, such as trust, integrity, strategic thinking, empathy, and the ability to process complex situations.

The more we learn about how our brain really works, and how much of our brain is devoted to social connection, the more we realize how the power to connect with others in healthy and productive ways becomes vital for our mutual success.

These tips can help foster a higher conversational IQ in a number of situations:

I. When you meet someone new –What to do: Say “I’m so glad I met you!” Or “You look familiar!”

Why it works: Our brains are designed to be social. The need to belong is more powerful than the need for safety.



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When we feel rejected it activates our fear networks and increases the levels of cortisol, which move us into protective behavior. A sense of inclusion reduces protective cortisol levels while increasing oxytocin, promoting bonding.

Focus on: Inclusion. This reduces protective cortisol levels while increasing the oxytocin, promoting bonding.

2. When brainstorming with a diverse group—What to do: Give compliments – appreciate others contributions, and say thank you.

Why it works: Appreciation reshapes our neural networks. When we appreciate others, we have a positive impact on their neural networks. Appreciation activates a larger framework of neurons in our brain that enables higher levels of ‘sight, hearing, and perspective-taking.’ Appreciation activates our ability to ‘see broader and think bigger.’ Reaching out to connect and appreciate others’ perspectives even if you don’t agree lowers distrust and elevates trust, or ‘feeling like a friend.’

Focus on: Creating a larger framework for thinking together.

3. When you want to persuade someone—What to do: Put yourself in your listener’s shoes.

Why it works: Empathy activates the ‘mirror neuron’ network located in the prefrontal cortex, or the Executive Brain. When we are mirroring each other, we become capable of ‘seeing and experiencing the world through each other’s eyes’. This activates higher levels of oxytocin production, which has a positive impact on bonding, collaboration and co-creation and elevates the level of trust and openness. We become comfortable sharing more about what is really on our minds.

Focus on: Listening to connect, not reject.

4. When you need to solve a difficult problem—What to do: Say, “Tell me your thoughts.” And listen.

Why it works: Uncertainty activates both distrust and trust. When we are uncertain it means that both the distrust and trust networks are activated at the same time. We can more easily fall into ‘groupthink’ to be safe in the crowd or we close up for fear we will look weak.

Focus on: Making it safe to be transparent about what we are

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uncertain about – don't penalize those who speak up – encourage them to share.

Conversational Intelligence is the ability to master the power of connection to enhance our relationships with others – and in doing so we all become smarter at navigating our social highway. Conversational Intelligence is not about how smart we are, but how open we are to learning new and effective powerful conversational rituals that prime the brain for trust, partnership, and mutual success.

HOW TO DEAL WITH A BOSS WITH ZERO EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

TO WORK WELL WITH PEOPLE WITH LOW EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, YOU NEED TO LEARN HOW TO COMMUNICATE DIFFERENTLY. HERE'S HOW TO MAKE SURE THEY GET IT.

By: DRAKE BAER (Fast Company Article)

You might already know that your emotional intelligence can influence your job success. But what about your callously oblivious boss or your ambiguously rigid colleagues?

Boosting your emotional intelligence might mean you are better at your job--but what can you do if your boss or colleagues don't exhibit anything close to emotional intelligence?

The good news is, the situations more hopeful than you think. The bad news is, you might have to have a difficult conversation. But don't worry, we've got you covered.

WHAT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE REALLY IS

When you say that your boss has low EI, it could mean several things: that she's unconsciously cruel, she's naively stoked about everything, or she doesn't know what her team needs to do their best work.

“IF THEY CAN'T READ YOUR EMOTIONS, THEY WON'T BE GETTING ALL THE INFO YOU'RE NATURALLY SENDING THEM.”

As University of Pennsylvania organizational psychologist Sigal



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Barsade told us, emotional intelligence is thought of in two ways: the mixed model, a holistic approach espoused by EI superstar Daniel Goleman, and the ability model, in which particular emotional competencies are identified. According to the ability model, emotions (and emotional intelligence) help you to make sense of the world.

To that end, someone solid in EI will have four basic skill sets:

- They can accurately read their own emotions:** they can perceive the emotions with their and others experiences
- They can use emotion to facilitate thinking:** if they need quiet to focus, they put themselves in a quiet place
- They understand how emotions progress:** they know how irritation leads to frustration, frustration leads to rage
- They can regulate their emotions:** they don't suppress their emotions, but they don't become overwhelmed, either

BUT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ISN'T GOODNESS

While Martin Luther King demonstrated tremendous EI through the resonance of his speeches, so did Adolf Hitler. It isn't so much about being virtuous: it's more about being able to understand your and others' interior lives and how your actions and environments affect them. To work well with people with low EI, then, you need to accommodate that misapprehension.

"Emotions are information," Barsade says. "In essence, people who are low in EI are lacking the ability to take in, understand, or process a really critical part of the way that we communicate in the world. If they can't read your emotions, they won't be getting all the info you're naturally sending them."

We tend to vilify people with low EI, she continued, but that doesn't make much sense: it's faulting them for a skill set that they don't have.

"They're missing this information," she says, "so you have to clarify."

GAINING CLARITY

Clarity comes in several flavors.

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Let's take the case of sarcasm: if you'd usually use sarcasm to show that what you're saying is different than what you feel, you might want to speak a little more directly, Barsade says. Since they're not going to pick up on the sarcasm, you have to spell it out for them.

Similarly, you can take advantage of *behavioral mimicry*, the phenomenon where the person you're talking with takes on your tone and body language. So if your boss is super stoked about an idea you think is terrible, don't dump a bucket of water on him--just maintain a calm demeanor and he'll calm down, too.

The last suggestion might be the toughest: giving feedback, whether in real time or as a follow-up. To give a constructive critique, you'll need to **sharpen your conversation skills**.

HOW TO DO THE SENSITIVE, INFORMATION-GIVING CONVERSATION

Judith Glaser, author of *Conversational Intelligence* and a consultant to companies like Burberry, American Airlines, and Verizon, says that low emotional intelligence isn't only seen in people blowing their tops off at work or making fun of their employees. It's also in not being able to handle conflict.

Glaser offers this example: It's the first week of a new job. You're in a team meeting and your boss says something that makes you feel excluded, like your opinion isn't valuable to the team--the sort of thing that often goes unchecked.

"People with low EI are often dogmatic," Glaser says. "They don't get that (emotional) feedback, so a dynamic is created."

So what do you do?

You need to give emotionally unintelligent people a fuller sense of the data they are missing. If you can't name the dynamic as it comes up, Glaser says, then immediately after the meeting, book an appointment with your boss. Then you can follow her framework for sensitive conversations:

1. **Prime the conversation:** When you make the appointment, say that you want to have a conversation that will be valuable to



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- your working relationship
2. **Share the story:** Begin the meeting by retelling what happened for each of you
 3. **Listen in:** Attune to the emotions underneath the story
 4. **Unpack the meaning:** Tell the impact that the meeting had on you
 5. **Move forward:** Help each other figure out what you could do differently
 6. **Reach agreements:** Sort out what can be done by everybody to address the situation
 7. **Then end on a high note:** share why it's such a good thing you two had a would-have-been awkward conversation

By taking on the vulnerability of these conversations, Glaser says, you can help people to see that information that's before them.

**BECOME A MORE EFFECTIVE BOSS
BY ALWAYS WORKING AT IT**

By: Daniel Goleman



You don't arrive as a top leader and stay there by osmosis. The best constantly evolve and work to become better. **Communicate through connection!**
Tips:

- **Raise the bar.** Set high expectations for your people, says Julie Straw, lead author of "The Work of Leaders." Followers want bosses who do this. According to Straw, based on her research of 3,574 responders, **86% of leaders who set high expectations were rated as good. For those who set low expectations, just 12% were rated highly.**

"Setting high expectations doesn't make you unlikable; the opposite is true," she told IBD. "For high-expectation leaders, 91% of people said, 'I enjoy working with him/her.' For low-expectation leaders, this number drops to 42%."

- **Share your plan.** Talk and listen to people at all levels of your firm. Explain your reasons for doing things. "People are more likely to



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buy in if they understand where you're going, and they're more likely to contribute if you listen to their ideas, feedback and questions," Straw said.

She has the numbers to back up her claims: **87% of top-rated leaders created a strong vision for their group. Among moderate leaders, this number dropped to 32%; for low-rated leaders, 10%. "You can be an average leader without vision, but you will never be great," she said. "Vision is one of the clearest differentiators between the novice leader and the experienced."**

- **Share it.** Create openings for collective success, suggests Judith Glaser, author of *"Conversational Intelligence."* Then reward everyone when it happens. *"During the Chrysler turnaround (of the early 1980s), Lee Iacocca asked for 'an equality of sacrifice,' ranging from the executive suite to the assembly line," she said. "When the company became profitable, every employee received a generous bonus."*
- **Talk from the heart.** Take it from the 40th president, said Glaser: *"Ronald Reagan never engaged in abstractions."*
- **Educate.** Be a mentor or set up a mentoring program. Straw and her co-authors asked people what experiences had the most value in shaping leadership development. High on the list was having a mentor.
- **Inspire.** Leading is about relationships, Straw said: *"It's worth asking yourself: How often do you deliver five positive messages to every negative?" Fail in this, and employees might leave; worse, "they quit and stay."*
- **Follow the golden rule.** Leaders who respect others' feelings — plus cut slack for another's imperfections and demonstrate patience — are the ones who thrive, Glaser says. The result is trust.