

THE SECRET OF
BREAKTHROUGH
CONVERSATION



VIVEK SINGH

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CONVERSATION



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THREE STORIES THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

STORY ONE

I was out of job in the year 2002.

I borrowed money from friends to pay for food and rent.

I tried everything to get a job. Nothing worked. My loan was piling up and hope was diminishing.

So, I decided to give the last shot before I would return to my hometown from Delhi.

I borrowed three thousand seven hundred and fifty rupees from my friend Satyam to put a classified Ad in the Times of India. It was an Ad for call center training interview.

The next day we received more than five hundred calls. On the following Sunday, we conducted an interview with the help of friends and shortlisted ten people for training.

That day Synthesis Consulting was born without money, office, furniture, computer and bank account.



Senior Management Team of Landmark Group. I'm in the red tie, fourth from the left.

In the first month, I earned fifty five thousand six hundred rupees that was three times my last drawn salary, training people for communication. Later, I became head for Training & Development at Landmark Group.

Learning: Every crisis has the potential to alter your life. Look for it!

STORY TWO



My photography agency was shut down. I was completely directionless.

Soon, I ran out of savings. The bills started piling up. I started missing home loan EMIs. The atmosphere at home was stressful.

Despite the top-notch skill set in the learning domain, more than a decade of experience and extra-ordinary network, I felt worthless and hopeless.

My friend Rajeev suggested that I should join an Ad agency as I had a remarkable skill in content and creativity.

I called the CEO of a leading agency. When I met, I was asked, 'What can you do for us?'

I said, 'Let me work with you and later you decide where I fit in.'

The next day I had a job, without a salary. I was reporting to a girl who was a decade younger.

Initially, I was given to do low-skill tasks and was shifted from one department to another to test my calibre.

After a fortnight, I was told, 'We can pay you 50k!'

I said, 'I'm in.'

It was fun to learn and get paid where I had zero experience.

Two months later, I was given a project to manage the Prime Minister's communication.

Now my salary multiplied and I was helping the most powerful man in the country craft his message.

Learning: Stay humble, stay open. Your best might be on the way.

STORY THREE

My travel start up had failed. Our turnover was less than the rent paid.

It was heartbreaking to see a business collapsing that is built around your passion and love. I had already started eating into my FDs and mutual funds.

Finally, we noted: we were doing everything to everybody and getting lost in the crowd.

So, we decided to shut the shop. But, we still loved giving experience around travel. Therefore, we brainstormed to create something that was unique and would get us noticed.

We crafted 'Art of Hope Tour': An experience to see Delhi like a local without getting scammed, especially targeted at foreigners. In the first year of the launch, we ranked Top 10 'Things to Do in Delhi' on Trip Advisor and attracted raving reviews.

Later, we were featured in various publications including

A MONTHLY CITY MAGAZINE

INDIA
TODAY

SIMPLY DELHI



**MUST SEE
MUST DO**

OUR GUIDE TO A SHORT
BREAK IN THE CITY

CLASSIC TRIP GUIDE

the cover page of the most prestigious *India Today* magazine.

Over time, we hosted Hollywood celebrities, were invited by global tour companies and became one of the icons among local tours in India.

Learning: To make more money than others, position yourself uniquely.

Q1: If money is no concern what would you do for free?

It's not fair for me to conceal the truth while millions of people struggle in their career. It's not fair for me to stay mum when thousands of people everyday are losing hope because they cannot get what they want. It's not fair for me sleep peacefully while people are on the verge of committing suicide because all they see is darkness since nobody told them to do things in a right way.

If I don't have to bother about money, I would pack my bags and travel from city to city, country to country, continent to continent educating people how to have powerful conversation and attract more opportunities than ever, be it a career or relationship. A conversation has the power to transcend your condition regardless of your how much money you have in the bank account and how many people you know. It's the easiest gateway to your dreams.

Nothing is more satisfying when you see a manager speaking to the CEO eye-to-eye and reasoning with him without feeling insecure about her job. It turns me on when the person who was never taken seriously becomes a superstar in three months. I feel elated when a coach multiplies her income

three times within sixty days because she is visible and communicates her message to her audience well. I get a thrill when a consultant charges double from the same client because she is able to show him the value that was never explained.

Q2: What qualifies you to do that and what differentiates you from the other mentors?

I don't teach anything that I don't do. I came from a small town and had to carve my own tedious path to high impact communication. Initially, I didn't have resources to hire professionals who I could learn from, so I was forced to find out the unique ways. Later, as I became more resourceful, I invested in training with many of the top icons in the areas of communication, presentation and branding.

I remember when I came to New Delhi in 1997 from my hometown, I was made fun of for my looks and speech. The girls would not pay heed to me. I was there but I was invisible. Soon, I realised that I have to speak well and become useful to stand out. Those days, my friends needed CV to apply for jobs. I created my first CV and got a better job than my friends. Later, my bio data was copied by dozens of friends and I became a CV expert.

Gradually, I developed a knack for identifying the

special traits in people in minutes which left them in awe. Later, I acquired the skill to help people identify their uniqueness and encash it. Now, many of the CXOs seek my advice in shaping their communication and leading with authority.

Eventually, I started an HR consulting company and helped people prepare for interviews. Being a middleman I got to understand the expectations of the employers and aspirations of the individuals. As I dealt with more and more people, I acquired better sense of what works. I helped my candidates showcase in a manner that would appear titillating to the interviewer. A few years down the line while working with HSBC, I worked as a part of recruitment team and interviewed hundreds of people across the country.

Another factor that gives me an edge over others is my exposure. I connect with a street vendor as comfortably as I would do to a CEO just because I have the first hand experience of dealing with them more than most people.

Plus, over a period of time, I have sharpened my graphic and editing skills. A photo clicked in a certain way makes you ordinary while just switching the angle and setting up the lighting changes the entire perception. The graphics has a significant role

in projecting your image and shaping your perception. Over the years, I have developed superbly simple ways to help people stand out in the crowd using the power of the words, imaging and executive presence. One of the most important factors to showcase one in a better light is the content. What you share and how you share leaves an impression in the minds of those around you. Many of my poems and messages have gone viral which is a testimony of my connect with the people.

Q3: How does that make a difference in the lives of others?

I believe every one has many special qualities yet to be deciphered and encashed. Our life runs on autopilot and we barely invest time into self reflection and identifying what really makes us stand out. Those who do that move on an accelerated career path and attract many more opportunities.

When I speak to people it's not just about the number of years spent doing a job. The conversation is very deep and it brings out what constitutes that person. As we talk about life, I focus on psychological, social, academic, interests and family elements. As the conversation proceeds, you can clearly see a pattern of their success history.

Once the pattern is identified and acknowledged, it becomes a cakewalk for them to chalk out the stories that will leave the audience hooked and inspired.

Rarely you get to see a person with professional-level expertise in the area of language, creativity, graphics, editing, content and psychology.

My clients don't have to go to multiple experts to sharpen their communication and establish themselves as a brand. I offer them one stop solution.

Q4: Share a few successful students results even if you have to change the names

I have coached more than two hundred people refine their communication. In the following pages are a few case studies which will give you insight about the coaching journey of my clients.

A black and white photograph of a man in a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is wearing glasses and has a beard. He is looking down at a smartphone in his right hand and has his left hand raised in a fist pump gesture, indicating success or excitement. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and buildings.

CASE STUDY -1

**FROM A
DEMOTIVATED
MID-LEVEL
MANAGER
TO A SUPERSTAR
LEADER**

The Situation

Vikram (name changed) was frustrated doing the same job for the last three and half years and no hope for any new learning or growth in the current company. He was aggressively looking for an opportunity to switch from the current job at a leading IT company, but had only got disappointments in the last six months.

He would never come out and greet his colleagues or bosses or chit chat with anybody beyond transactional conversation. He felt his job was to get the assigned work done well and on time so that nobody questions him. Because of his mediocre communication skills and forgettable presence, he was taken for granted on the operations floor.

Very frequently many of his team members would also dominate him and put unreasonable requests which he acquiesced in.

The Problem

In the first conversation, we figured out self worth, communication and confidence were the major roadblocks to his growth. He also needed to display authority at work and demonstrate highest integrity while dealing with colleagues.

Intervention and Breakthroughs

Although, the structure for delegation existed but it was rarely followed in his team. When the concerned team member missed to complete the assignment, Vikram would do that to meet the timeline and it added extra-weight to his already tight work schedule. So, first Vikram worked on his integrity and the change was sensed in the team. The next week, he called a meeting and reminded the roles to each member and also asked them to add a consequence if they failed to deliver. Now, his job was only to follow up with them and hold them to account. Gradually, his authority was visible and the team felt empowered and accountable while he created time for doing more important tasks. The experience also added to his self worth. He deployed various tools like

context setting, questioning, listening, empathy etc. while working with his team members. The next goal was to acquire super-confidence. Everyday, Vikram was given a task to go out of his comfort zone and do the things that he feared. Some of the tasks included:

be the first to greet a colleague, starting casual conversation with workplace bullies, insisting for an action even when the other person showed reluctance etc. Gradually, he found all his fears were the creation of his own mind.

By end of the second month, he was one of the most sociable managers on the floor, frequently seen chatting with top executives who he feared even greeting a month back. His frequent interactions with senior leaders gave him insights about company's challenges beyond his department. Quality was one of the major concerns for that business unit. He volunteered to take that up a project which was giving nightmares to the unit head. He ran a pilot that raised quality scores from 88 per cent to 97 per cent. The company decided to set up a separate quality department and Vikram was given the responsibility to lead. Now, 27 managers were reporting to him regarding quality matters.

In the next few months, he created structures and processes. He hired people and trained them till the department was run on auto-pilot. Later, a quality specialist was hired to lead that team and Vikram was asked to go back to operations with a promotion. In between, he received many acknowledgments and recognition both from his onshore clients and superiors.

Now, a forgettable employee had turned into an indispensable leader.



CASE STUDY - 2

**HOW A COACH
TRIPLED HER
INCOME &
BECAME THE
TOP BRAND**

The Situation

Surekha is a life coach and therapist. She has produced outstanding results with her clients but was struggling financially as she charges low fees. She has been featured in newspapers but doesn't have the confidence to charge a premium because she fears she would lose the clients. She has a web site and regularly posts on social media but she doesn't get any business through her social media presence. She has a few testimonials but those do not help in persuading the clients to give her business. She has tried working with various content writers and marketers but none of them have helped her generate business up to her expectations. Her schedule is filled with public events where she gets a lot of attention but rarely anybody reaches out to her to become a client. Surekha has also tried changing her title a few times to stand out, but that has not been helpful. She has also done many courses to sharpen her brand presence and using those strategies have only left her confused.

The Problem

Surekha's communication is not targeted. She uses the title 'Life Coach' that doesn't give a clue who she works with and what kind of solution she provides. Her communication is confusing the audience. While her clients wish to visit the specialist, her message doesn't give them confidence to pay premium to her. Her social media posts are random thoughts that only help in her presence recorded. The engagement of posts is poor only limited to her friends and family. The testimonials are not precise and her prospective clients do not have clue how can they be helped. Although she has been featured in leading publications but there is no mention of that on her web site and marketing collaterals. She is afraid that if she starts charging premium she would lose even the current clients.

Interventions & Breakthroughs

We started with data crunching and asked Surekha to make a list of all of the two hundred fifty clients who she had served. Then she was asked to write the concern that each of her clients had e.g. depression, relationship issues, parenting etc. By end of the exercise, she was startled to see that

seventy eight per cent of her clients sought help about depression and relationship. Looking at the data, she was asked to pick one of these two areas so that she gives clear and precise message to the audience and she finally picked depression.

Later we guided her to craft a goal statement, value pyramid and coaching journey. Now she had absolute clarity about who she was serving and how she was adding value to her clients. In her conversations she would clearly show the current level where her client stood in the coaching journey and also a clear cut roadmap to the destination.

As we had clarity about her niche, we decided to refine the content and structure of her web site. All the irrelevant information was removed to avoid confusion to the visitors and a clear 'Call to Action' was placed on the website. The visitors who would just browse the site earlier, now started booking appointments. Since Surekha had created a system and had clarity about how she was helping her clients, now her languaging was sharp. Consequently, her conversion rate shot up.

As she was gaining confidence, now we guided her to craft social media content using our '9-step Irresistible Messaging' system which acknowledged the concerns of her clients

and she would provide a solution where they could get results using those tips. As a result, her message got better traction that led to more targeted audience to her web site resulting in more appointments.

Gradually I advised her to align all her marketing collaterals (both digital and non-digital) and stick to communication around her niche. After three months she had more appointment than she could handle. As she had limited bandwidth, Surekha decided to double her fee. As she was not bothered about losing her existing clients, she demanded the revised fees if the previous clients wanted to continue and they agreed to pay without any resistance.

Within three months, Surekha had doubled the clients and had quadrupled her income by adding power to her personal brand. Later, she was featured on various media platforms like Times of India, CNBC Awaaz, Financial Times, Thrive Global and Medium.

Currently, she is established as one of the top life coaches in the country and a flag bearer for fight against depression in India.



CASE STUDY -3

HOW A TECHIE REGAINED CONFIDENCE AND FAST-TRACKED HIS CAREER

The Situation

Raman works in a global IT company based in Chennai. He leads a team of 15 engineers who serve the client headquartered in the USA. Recently, Raman presented to the onshore partners and he goofed up the presentation that left the entire Indian management red-faced. As a result, the manager put him on 'Personal Development Plan (PDP) which has the reputation of being considered a punishment contrary to its name. Raman has also been restrained from entering any meeting with the overseas partners and has been asked only to focus on his technical job which he is considered good at. Raman has become the talking point on the operations floor. He is an object of sarcasm for rivals and dumping ground for his manager.

Raman is extremely demotivated and frustrated. His lack of motivation reflects in the engagement with team members who frequently cross the hierarchy.

On many occasions, they do not even copy the inter-department emails to Raman despite his multiple reminders. He has become a rubber stamp manager with a set of team members who run their own show. Rating Raman's personal brand equity zero would be overstatement. He is being undermined on all fronts and stripped off the respect and opportunities that he genuinely deserves. He is considered an insignificant business manager who can be dispensed with anytime.

The Problem

Raman was an introvert and he never made an effort to invest in his personal brand. He has been sailing through the corporate ladder as the luck and surroundings directed him. His work is limited to doing the assigned task by the manager and following the routine essentials assigned to him. His aspirations are not defined therefore he doesn't have a roadmap to project a specific image. He never took a stand for anybody be it a team member or a peer and he feels lonely in the time of crisis as nobody is there to stand by him. After the presentation goof up, he did not take any action to reinstate the loss and kept sulking and accepting the browbeats. He feels powerless while his team members disobey him and is clueless about how to handle the situation. He doesn't have the courage

to approach the manager and seek her support to execute 'Personal Development Plan' effectively. He is playing the victim card that gives him an excuse not to take any action.

Interventions & Breakthroughs

As I got to know Raman's story, within minutes I spotted his blind spots. My question was to understand if he wished to stay like a dumping pit or deal powerfully with the situation. His answer was, 'I hate being undermined. The least I deserve is the credit and respect for what I deliver.' He committed to make a difference into his brand image at the workplace and we started working together.

Initially I noticed Raman had problem with expression. He would rather prefer to sulk and crib than to go and discuss the matter and seek a resolution. In order to restore his confidence and give him hope it was pertinent to create a powerful vision. We sat together and designed his dream professional avatar. We listed all the attitude, skills and knowledge required to become that person. We also listed the benefits and consequences after achieving the goal and check his openness and willingness to pursue that.

The most important thing was to restore his confidence. I gave him a set of affirmations and guided him to practice them at a certain frequency. He followed that sincerely and within days, he noticed his space shifting. In the second week we started working on his physiology especially his eye contact, gait, and body part movement in conversations. He was trained to project the non-verbal message powerfully. Gradually he experienced people were paying attention to him and he was able to put forth his case. Later that month we also worked on his commonly mispronounced words and grammatical errors. Now he was dealing powerfully with his colleagues and had been taking steps with restore his lost credibility.

In the following month I trained him for visualisation. In the following weeks we also coached him for effective listening, persuasion, languaging, setting context, asking questions and holding people accountable. As he implemented these concepts, he developed a better control over his team and he started representing as a leader.

Later I also coached him on scheduling and prioritising which helped him optimise his work day.

In one of the coaching conversations he shared the desire of going to the US and working at the headquarters of the company. In between, an Internal Job Posting (IJP) arrived. We pushed him to seek his manager's permission to apply for it which he did. The manager gave her consent for IJP, which was based in the USA. I helped him discover his skills and experience and we matched that to the job requirement. His application was accepted and he passed through the first round successfully.

By now, Raman was seen as a pro-active forthcoming leader who took a stand for his team and had an independent viewpoint. The line manager was impressed with his transformation and was looking upto him for inputs on critical matters. His personal brand equity was completely altered.

Later we trained him on expanding his circle of influence and instilled the power of contribution. Raman could visualise his place in bigger scheme of things and was acting as a valuable contributor.

He underwent three rounds of interview, and surpassed all the candidates. In the final round, he was surprised. In contrary to his expectations, he was offered a position two levels above his current role to which he said 'yes.'

Within 100 days of coaching engagement he was looked upon as a promising leader and was offered to lead a team based in the USA two grades above his current level at seven times his current salary.

Q5: Is there anyone who will not succeed as a result of your proven process, technique, tool or system?

My system has been used over and over and has produced result consistently. The only thing required is commitment. If a person is committed and performs as asked, failing is out of question, though the timelines of result may vary.

Before I teach anything, I put that through rigorous test and implement myself. Once I find it foolproof I share with my clients. Everything in my system is time-tested and proven, so I can't see anybody failing who sincerely implements it.

One can fail only if she deliberately sabotages to prove me wrong.

Q6: Precisely what do you transfer to others that saves them 15-30 years of learning curve?

I lost my father when I was nine years old, so very early I acquired the skill of get my job done independently as I had virtually no option for survival. I started taking responsibility quite early and almost self-funded my entire education. So, my hardships forced me to find out the fastest and extra ordinary ways to solve problems. Therefore, none of the things I share is bookish and theoretical. It's based on real life experience, tested in real time and acquired working with real people.

Secondly, I have experienced unparalleled diversity in my life. From understanding family politics in my village to managing boardroom equations in MNCs, from accelerating my career at unfathomable pace to guiding the Prime Minister to craft his message to the masses, my life is nothing less than a Hollywood blockbuster. It's like ten-normal lives rolled into one.

Lastly, I work on my craft everyday. I make sure my coaching is aligned to the latest world-class tools, systems and processes. That help me stay ahead of the pack and add outstanding value to my clients.

My system offers them three things:

ONE STOP SOLUTION

One of the biggest mistakes people commit to visit many people to find the same solution. That is a time consuming process and you end up wasting a lot of time in experimentation. Since I have committed that mistake, I don't want you to repeat that and lose decades.

I have learnt from the top marketers on the planet and keep updating my toolkit on regular basis. All that you need to do is to follow the system.

FAST TRACK RESULTS

For me theory doesn't work. I'm impatient and can't wait for months for results. Immediate result is important for me and I have planned the course accordingly. You would generate fast result week after week to stay motivated.

SIMPLE ACTIONABLE STEPS

I hate complexity and as our attention span is falling every passing year, we need to simplify the process for them to work for people. I have broken down complex structures into small consumable chunks which can be implemented easily even if you have negligible technical skills. It's as simple as giving you a set of alphabet and asking you to make three letter words.

THE SECRET OF BREAKTHROUGH CONVERSATION



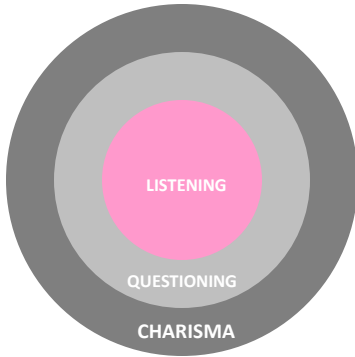
THE CONVERSATION CIRCLE

Does it ever happen that when you are talking and people lose interest? In the middle of your conversation, they start scrolling mobile phones and get distracted. It looks as if they want to run away from you. Did you experience that you are talking and somebody interrupts you frequently and the conversation ends abruptly? Have you ever felt that you are not getting enough space to express your point of view while talking? Do you feel that despite trying hard and doing everything you are unable to get a yes?

If answer to any of these is 'Yes' then you are at the right place.

Let's talk about three most important components of the conversation cycle: listening, questioning and charisma

Listening is the bedrock of any conversation, questioning helps you dive deep inside the mind of your partner and charisma builds authority and directs you to lead a conversation powerfully.



THE CONVERSATION CIRCLE PART 1: LISTENING

Let me ask you: If a tree falls in the forest, will that make a sound when nobody is present? No. Though it will create some waves in the air, for it to be called sound one has to be present. So, listening happens only when you are present.

It's like a dance when you are in tandem with each other at every move while both of you are having fun. It's like exchanging flowers to create a beautiful bouquet together.

3 REASONS YOU MUST LISTEN

1. UNDERSTAND:

To get any result, you first need to understand the person and the situation. Our deepest desire is to be understood and acknowledged. Listening creates a space for that. When you listen in authentic manner, you get to where you want to be much faster and the journey is delightful for both the partners.

2. CONNECT:

It helps us connect as a human being. We get to understand their fears the frustrations, their desires, insecurities, their challenges, aspirations, and temperament. So, when we display authentic listening it gives us access to a whole new world of our partner. We connect to them in unprecedented manner, our bonding deepens, our trust amplifies and we are seen as a person who truly cares about others.

2. PERSUADE:

The biggest factor your success depends on is your ability to persuade. When you listen to people, you get to understand them. You generate trust, you are able to connect with others at the deepest level and that helps you getting a yes effortlessly. Whether you are into sales or you want a promotion or you

want the board of directors to buy your idea or at home you want your children to obey you or you want depth and intimacy with your spouse, listening is going to be the starting point for all of that.

In a world where we are distracted by social media, to do list, phone calls and whatsApp message, we barely listen. If I ask you to think of the time when you had a deep, intimate and meaningful conversation the last time, you will find it difficult to recollect.

Generally we listen to the words or at best the tone. That's the reason our projects are delayed, relationship is fractured and have to follow up many times even to get the smallest things done. So, how can you listen differently?



WORD + TONE

ORDINARY LISTENING



WORD + TONE
BODY LANGUAGE
EMOTIONS
FEELINGS
NEEDS
WANTS
DESIRES
DREAMS
FEARS
INSECURITIES

AUTHENTIC LISTENING

When you practice authentic listening not only you listen to the words and the tone. You dive deep, you go inside the mind of your partner, you try to unravel their fears, their aspirations, dreams, their desires, insecurities. You also take into account the twinkle in their eyes, gestures, postures, change in skin tone and shift in energy.

Here, you not only get what is said, but also the unsaid. And to get further clarity, you bring out the unsaid and come to the same level of understanding.

FOCAL POINT

ME

ORDINARY LISTENING

In the ordinary listening, the focal point of conversation is 'ME' my target...my benefit, my time, my priority, my interest, my engagement

YOU

AUTHENTIC LISTENING

When you display authentic listening, the focal point shifts to your partner. Their priority, their pain, their dreams, their desires and their expectations.

In order to experience an authentic listening and course correct the conversation, you need to switch to helicopter view every few minutes.



HELICOPTER VIEW

The helicopter view is summarised as DATA

D

DETAILS

A

ASSUMPTION

T

TRIGGERS

A

AGENDA



DETAILS

How frequently in the conversation you get lost the details?

You keep sharing what's irrelevant and you flow into the sea of confusion and get yourself clueless. In this case, you need to keep a check and see whether the details are helping you move forward in the conversation towards a goal. If not interrupt the person politely and bring the conversation back on track.



ASSUMPTIONS

Our life is driven by assumptions and judgements. We have assumption for everything including ourselves. Imagine the last time you had not completed the assignment and your boss called to check. Forget listening, you didn't even receive the call assuming it was a reminder while later you realised it was for something else. In the conversation, set aside any kind of assumption. Only when you remove the coloured glasses, you get to see the true picture.



TRIGGERS

When you're talking on sensitive matters or having conversation about something that you dislike possibility is that you will use your mind. I want you to imagine the last time you got triggered and what were the consequences.

On many occasions your opponent is aware of his weakness and he uses a this as a tool to put you down.

Therefore it's important to zoom out of the situation and keep a tab on your triggers. Ask yourself: Are you in your best state of mind or losing your composure?

If someone tries to incite you, be mindful about the verbal cues, notice the patterns and imagine what could be their intention of doing that.



AGENDA

Quite often we start conversation with a hidden agenda and we try hard to direct conversation towards

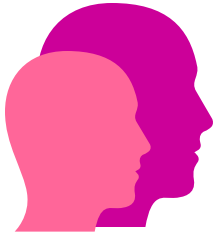
that. We feel restless when our agenda is not accomplished. When we do that, we stop listening. You would have seen inexperienced sales people displaying it frequently. They keep blabbering.

In such a case even if your partner is saying something relevant and important, you tend to ignore. We tend to ignore those factors and drive our agenda. And that leads to unfulfilled expectations and unpleasant endings.

Let's imagine that you are an investment advisor and your friend calls you for guidance in mutual funds.

What happens if you push your agenda? Its likely you will lost trust, maybe a friend too. On the contrary, if you listen without giving priority to your interest, that will build trust. You may not necessarily benefit immediately, but you may get to manage his entire portfolio in the long term, if you win trust. As a coach I have experienced this numerous time. When I set aside my agenda, people come up later and pay for my services.

INTERNAL COMMENTARY



A massive barrier to listening is the internal commentary going on while conversation is in progress. Generally this commentary is about judgement and it clouds our listening. So, whenever this commentary starts, be aware of it pitfalls and shut it down immediately.

EXERCISE

As this happens _____

I will stop _____

I will start _____

Now, I want you to reflect what goes wrong while you listen. Make a note of what you can improve on and write down:

In this situation, I will stop doing this this this and I will start doing that that that.

For example, if you keep scrolling your phone while talking, write down: While in conversation I will stop scrolling my phone and start to give undivided attention to my conversation partner.



THE CONVERSATION CIRCLE PART 2: QUESTIONING

On how many occasions at the end of a conversation you felt empowered, energized and you could see yourself on the way to success. There also must have been the conversations where you felt frustrated, disillusioned, de-motivated and demoralized.

Questions have a key role to play in the experience that would you have after an interaction.

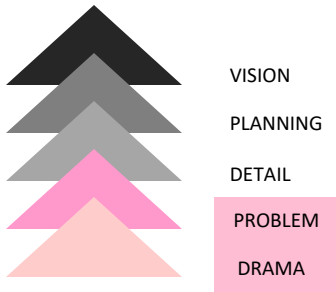
CONVERSATION FOCUS



In his book 'Quiet Leadership' David Rock has talked in depth about the focus in conversation. Broadly the focus of conversation can be divided into five categories: drama, problem, detail, planning and vision



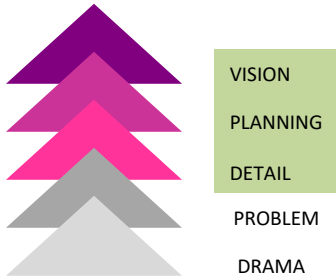
Source: Quiet Leadership by David Rock



I want you to think of an interaction where your partner started shouting, created a scene, blamed everyone else and made you extremely uncomfortable and ended in sour taste. That interaction was drama focused. In these cases, the intention is to attract attention, avoid responsibility, generate sympathy and pass the blame.

The second one is problem focus. I went to a counsellor. She wanted to know what's all wrong in my life. She keep asking spiral of questions around who did what? Whose mistake it was? Focus on the problem was so overwhelming that we ended up getting lost into it with no outcome.

Drama and Problem focus conversations lead to waste of time and drain of energy without achieving any positive outcome. Hence, they are considered inferior quality conversations.



When you focus on vision, that talks about the future setting aside the past. It tells you what you can do to make things better without feeling guilty of things gone wrong. Therefore, focus on vision makes a conversation inspiring.

Here are the examples of questions which focus on vision:

Where do you see yourself when you accomplish this goal?

After you achieve that, what difference that will make to your career?

Could you paint the picture of the ideal outcome?

Now, the next step is taking the conversation forward after clarity of vision. What next would you do? Of course! Planning. Planning talks about the steps you

would take to move towards the vision. You can get to know that by asking these questions:

What plan do you have to achieve those goals?

What can we do to ensure success in this area?

How clear is your plan?

You would notice, these questions are empowering too.

QUESTIONS IN A CONVERSATION

STARTING A CONVERSATION

People are usually clueless about how to start the conversation. What's the first thing that you would ask that would attract interesting response from people, that would empower them, that would make them feel that you care for them plus that will also showcase you as an authority. Let's call it a conversation starter.

What's on your mind?

This question is inspired by Facebook. Ask this question when somebody comes to you seeking help. This brings your partner down to the current moment and prompts them to share their concern. This question is also called a coaching question because you use this to help them get insight into their situation and develop clarity. If you lead a team, this could be the perfect starter of your conversation.

Whatever the answer be, that would fall into one of these three categories project, people or pattern. Your job is to identify which category the response falls in before you move to the next step.



PROJECT

When the question is related to ongoing work



PEOPLE

When the question is related to one of the people you are working with



PATTERN

When the question is related a behaviour pattern

THE AWE QUESTION

Rarely it happens that you ask a question and your partner comes with the perfect response the first time. Before they hit the nail, they need a nudge and when you ask 'and what else' you give them space to think deeper, you offer the opportunity to refine their thinking and the next time they come back to you with more accurate details. It is recommended that you ask AWE question two to three times. If it gets repetitive, you can wrap it by asking: Is there anything else you want to add?

...And what else?

AWE question also comes to the rescue when you feel clueless in the conversation. You don't have the response ready, you need a bit of thinking time, instead of giving a random answer. When you ask them 'and what else' you create time to frame a suitable response without letting your partner know about your struggle.

THE PINPOINT QUESTION

When you ask the pinpoint question, it removes all the

fluff from the conversation and brings objectivity and clarity. It brings to focus to the most pressing problem setting aside all the distractions. The pinpoint question is:

What really matters to you?

THE HELP QUESTION

By now if you haven't given the advice, we usually have the irresistible urge to do so. Hold on!

Quite often you gave an advice but your conversation partner didn't see value in it and she didn't act upon it and you felt devalued and disrespected.

How can I help?

When you ask this, you know exactly how your partner wants to be helped.

THE CAUTION QUESTION

What's your reaction when someone starts a question with 'WHY?' 'Why are you here?' 'Why have you not done it?' 'Why are you delaying?'

You instantly feel challenged and threatened, therefore I call it 'The caution question?'

Stop asking questions with 'Why'

WHY



WHAT



Instead, convert those questions into 'what questions?'

Instead of asking: 'Why haven't you done it?' ask: 'What has caused the delay?'

Another example: 'Why are you standing here?' ask 'What has brought you here?'

EXERCISE

As this happens _____

I will stop _____

I will start _____

Now, write down what goes wrong when you ask question. Make a note of the situation, what you will stop doing and what you will start.

Many of the questions mentioned in this section has been picked from the book 'The Coaching Habit' by Michael Bungay Stanier.



THE CONVERSATION CIRCLE PART 3: CHARISMA

Have you noticed, in parties and social gatherings, few people attract all attention and respect while everyone is hovering around them. They are seen driving the conversations. They are charismatic people. An eclectic combination of authority, warmth and presence is called charisma.

When you are charismatic you have an upper hand in the conversation. You direct the agenda and also the outcome. Therefore 'Charisma' has a pivotal role to play while leading the conversations powerfully.

To understand charisma, let's first understand the science of influence.

THE SCIENCE OF INFLUENCE

There are four pointers that influence how our brain reads a situation. They are summarised as TERA

T

TRIBE

E

EXPECTATIONS

R

RANK

A

AUTONOMY

TRIBE

In an interaction every few minutes human being keep evaluation whether you are 'with me' or 'against me' 'friend' or a 'enemy' That's how our forefathers grew up in the forest and we continue to carry the same tribal mindset.

Once you give them a feeling that you are a friend not a threat, the trust shoots up and connect deepens. This is the reason you like meeting people who make you feel special and valued.

EXPECTATIONS

In a meeting, the next thing that you evaluate is: Whether she can help me? Can I foresee the future in a nice way?

If you get a feeling that your partner can help you, you will get a reason to like that person. I deal with a lot of celebrities and politicians, they have this amazing art of giving you hope that they would stand by you when you need them. Ask for anything to a politician and she never say 'No.'

RANK

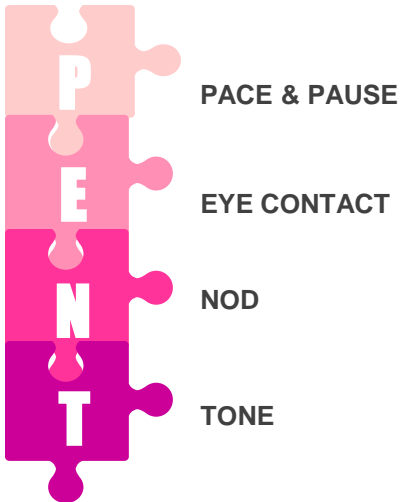
The third thing what people keep evaluating in a conversation is: 'Am I more important or less important?' 'Who is superior' 'Who is inferior' So, if you want to win people, never put them down.

AUTONOMY

And the fourth thing they ask is: Do I have a choice or not? When you feel you have a choice, the place becomes safe for you hence leads to higher engagement.

Keep these four things in mind while having conversation and you will end up creating a band of raving fans wherever you go.

THE CHARISMA PUZZLE



Let's solve the charisma puzzle now. Practising these four things will instantly give you power and display your authority.

PACE & PAUSE



Slow down your pace deliberately. The powerful people have a feeling that the world can wait for them and they don't hesitate in displaying it. When you slow down, you are in better control of your words, body language and response. This gives you and edge over others.

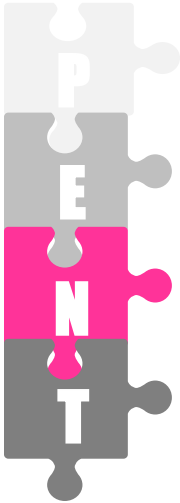
Secondly, after your partner completes, don't be in hurry to respond. Take a two second pause. Make them feel that you have got the point and then respond. The pause gives them a feeling that you value them and take them seriously. Plus it also shows that you have processed the message completely.

EYE CONTACT



Maintain a regular and polite eye contact. Be observant about the twinkle in your partner's eyes. Looking into the eye gives you access to what's going in your partners mind. If they are distracted and confused, you get a clue to course correct.

NOD



The third piece of the puzzle is: Nod.

One of the best ways to display authority is to limit the physical movement including the head. When you nod frequently, it shows you are servile and sycophant. Therefore, reduce your nodding to show your authority.

tone



And finally Tone. I want you to go back to your last air travel and recollect how the flight steward and the pilot spoke. A flight steward's high tone exudes warmth and openness to availability for help. In comparison, a pilot uses falling tone to display his authority.

I want you to think of someone in authority and be mindful about their tone. If you watch television next time, be mindful of the tone of the prime minister or president. You will always see them using falling tone.

THE CHARISMA BOOSTER



Now, let me put a cherry on the cake. If you want to add more power to your charisma, practise mindfulness. It brings you to the present moment, to do that follow the 3 simple steps:

1. Close eyes and practise abdominal breathing. When you inhale your abdomen should expand and when you exhale it must contract. This helps in managing anxiety.
2. Focus on the sounds coming from distance. Now you try to catch every sound close to you. Do this for 15-20 seconds and finally
3. Bring all of your attention to your toes. Wriggle them and feel the movement. Keep your focus there for a while and open the eyes.

This barely takes 2 minutes but brings you back to the present moment. creates a powerful space for your conversation.

EXERCISE

As this happens _____

I will stop _____

I will start _____

Now, write down what goes wrong when you interact with people. Make a note of the situation, also write what you will stop doing and what you will start new.

FINDING A GREAT MENTOR

If you want to be on a fast track to high impact speaking, it's worth considering to work with a mentor.

You would have attended many training programs and you still struggle because, usually after a week you go back to business and hardly remember anything, so you need somebody who holds you accountable and makes sure that you deliver. That saves a lot of time and frustration.

Now the question is: with so many coaches claiming overnight results, how would you know who is the right fit for you. Here are the six standards:

STEP BY STEP SYSTEM

SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY

MINDSET & PERFORMANCE COACHING

CLIENTS TESTIMONIALS

COMPLETE FRAMEWORK

MINDSET & PERFORMANCE COACHING

THE FINAL WORD

The secret of breakthrough result is consistent practice.

All the tools shared in this book are going to be useful only if you practice till you naturalise them. A practical way to start is: Pick a tool, practice it for 21 days before jumping to the next one.

In the process, be ready to stumble and have a plan to course correct on the way.

If you wish to experience a breakthrough in your communication and charisma, you can reach out to me at:

Web site: <https://highimpacttalks.com/>

Email": thevivekspeaks@gmail.com

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/thevivekspeaks