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EMPOWERED SUCCESS



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Companion Notes to the Video  
“Keys to Attract and Retain Talent  
in Today’s Era of Relentless  
Change and Disruption”



A Manager’s Discussion Guide

This discussion guide is designed to help you, as a team leader, have better conversations about the major points discussed in the video “Keys to Attract and Retain Talent in an Era of Relentless Change and Disruption.” The quality of your conversations with your team is a major contributing factor to the team culture you create. A healthy team culture is one of the most important keys to attract and retain talent.

Recall in the video, Laura outlined three fundamental mindset and skillset changes leaders and teams must make now if they are to thrive in this time of accelerated change and disruption.



Use the following questions as conversation prompts and as a way to gauge the current state of your team’s culture. This is not intended to be a survey so much as a tool to assess where you need to focus your efforts to improve team effectiveness.

## 1 Creating an Environment (Culture) of Psychological Safety, Trust, and Transparency

I am comfortable **asking a “stupid” question** or revealing my ignorance about a topic in front of my team members.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I feel safe enough to occasionally **pose an “out-of-the-box” solution** to the team when it’s relevant.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

It is okay for me to **challenge the status quo** and/or the position of the team leader when it makes sense to do so from a business standpoint.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I consistently make sure I am **seeking input and feedback** from all of the impacted, relevant parties at all levels in order to promote true collaboration and teamwork.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## 2 Becoming a Leader as Facilitator and Coach

I am aware of my **personality** and **leadership style** and its impact on others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I am able to **flex my style** to the needs of the situation.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I am able to flex my style to the **differing personalities involved as needed**.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I am able to **facilitate skillful, coaching conversations** based upon a healthy balance of advocacy and inquiry.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## 3 Developing High-Trust, High-Performance, Truly Cohesive Teams

I can be my **authentic self at work** and bring the full range of my skills and talents to the team.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I trust my team members enough to **confront another team member’s “dysfunctional” behavior** when it serves the team as a whole.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Members of our team can talk about **mistakes and problems** as well as successes.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Everyone on our team **takes responsibility** for what we do and is committed to achieving our agreed upon collective goals and results.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

# Setting the Stage

You, as a leader, set the tone for the culture of your team. Culture is nothing more than “how things are done around here” based upon the predominant values, beliefs, and behaviors of a team. Self-awareness and self-reflection are essential precursors to helping yourself, your team, and your organization become more cohesive and therefore more effective, high-performing, and fun to be on.

Most leaders are trustworthy but are baffled by the fact that not everyone on their team perceives them as such. At Laura A. Davis & Associates, Inc., we use the original Wiley Everything DiSC® set of solutions to help leaders become more emotionally intelligent, teams to become more cohesive, and organizations to create thriving cultures that attract and retain the best fit talent for their organization.

Intégro Learning Institute has researched the elements of trust and distilled their findings into 4 Essential Behaviors that create a trusting environment. Use the questions below as prompts for your ongoing discussions to gauge how you and your team members are doing on these four behaviors that build trust.

## Acceptance

I accept people for who they are.

- How accepting are you of the people on your team?
- Do you accept people for who they are and the gifts they bring to the team?
- Do you show that you care about people by taking a genuine interest in what they do as well as express your appreciation for their contribution to the team?

## Openness

I share information openly and I am receptive to others' input.

- How well do you understand the essence of what each of your team members are doing and what they might need from you in order to be most effective?
- Are you open to new ideas, encouraging people to stretch and grow into their fullest potential?
- Do you provide both reinforcing and developmental feedback on a regular basis to every member of your team regardless of whether they are a peer or not?

## Straightforwardness

I say what I mean and mean what I say.

- Can you also be counted on to be direct with your team in a respectful, but honest way?
- Can your team members rely on your word and trust that you are always going to share what you know in a kind but forthcoming way?

## Reliability

I do what I say I'm going to do.

- Finally, do you deliver on your promises and do what you say you are going to do on a consistent basis?
- Do your team members know that you have their back and will go to bat for them if necessary to support their individual and collective interests and results?

**Based upon your primary DiSC style, you have strengths and limitations in each of the 4 Behaviors that Build Trust. While the relationship between DiSC style and the strengths and limitations of each of these four trust-building behaviors is beyond the scope of this Companion Discussion Guide, please contact us if you would like to delve into this more deeply.**

# During Team Conversation

Provide a framework for considerate and open dialogue, ensuring all team members feel safe and respected. Having a set of agreed-upon rules up front creates a social contract that you can point to during times of heightened tension. You don't need a lot of rules, and they don't have to be worded perfectly. Use what feels right for your group, and invite modifications throughout the discussion.

1. **Confidentiality.** We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange.
2. **Our primary commitment is to learn from each other.** We will listen to each other and not talk at each other. We acknowledge differences amongst us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values. We realize that it is these very differences that will increase our collective problem-solving and effectiveness.
3. **We will not demean, devalue, or put down people** for asking “stupid” questions, posing “out-of-the-box” ideas, or expressing unique perspectives
4. **We will trust that people are always doing the best they can.**
5. **Challenge the idea and not the person.** If we wish to challenge something that has been said, we will challenge the idea or the practice referred to, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.
6. **Speak your discomfort.** If something is bothering you, please share with the group. Often our emotional reactions offer the most valuable learning opportunities.
7. **Step Up, Step Back.** Be mindful of taking up much more space than others. On the same note, empower yourself to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.
8. **Maintain a safe atmosphere.**
9. **Use I-statements** such as “I feel, I believe, I think, I read, I learned in school,” and so on. I-statements help you avoid portraying what you think, feel, and do as the only or best thoughts, feelings, and actions. This bit of humility opens our minds to others while also making others feel more comfortable sharing. Make sure to provide space for others to speak. If you are more talkative, ensure you provide air time for others to contribute.





## Tips/Skills for Facilitating Dialogue

Below is a short list of things to keep in mind when facilitating team conversation. By focusing on these and trying to successfully behave in these ways, team members will feel more comfortable and willing to participate fully. By creating that atmosphere, conversations will reach new depths. Some of these tips/skills are more difficult to do than others, and some take lots of practice to perfect.

1. **Encourage trust and respect among team members.** Be aware that everyone has the right to a voice and to be treated with respect. Also, encourage openness and honesty. Some ways of doing this are being supportive of members, acknowledging contributions of members, and respecting each member's way of "being" in the group.
2. **Recognize the limits of your role.** You are not responsible for everything that takes place in your group.
3. **"Set the stage,"** go over ground rules, go over goals, and go over expectations.
4. **Encourage group members to listen to one another.**
5. **Be observant of what is happening** in the group and for each individual group member. This may be hard. Try to key into what is being said, what is not being said, who is saying certain things, silences, underlying reasons for certain statements, etc. Be aware of what is going on between, and within, the total group.
6. **Clarify the role of feelings in the learning process.** Feelings may happen in this process and you will have to deal with them. Feelings can be an important source of information for people and an avenue of learning.
7. **Find a reasonable balance of challenge and support.** Be willing to push, so that risks can be taken. Also, support people in this process, as this can be scary for some people.
8. **Be aware of the tensions people experience** between "individual needs" and "group needs." It is helpful to acknowledge that both are present and look for similarities/differences, etc. Key into the impact this has on the total group process.

# Having Skillful Discussions or Dialogue

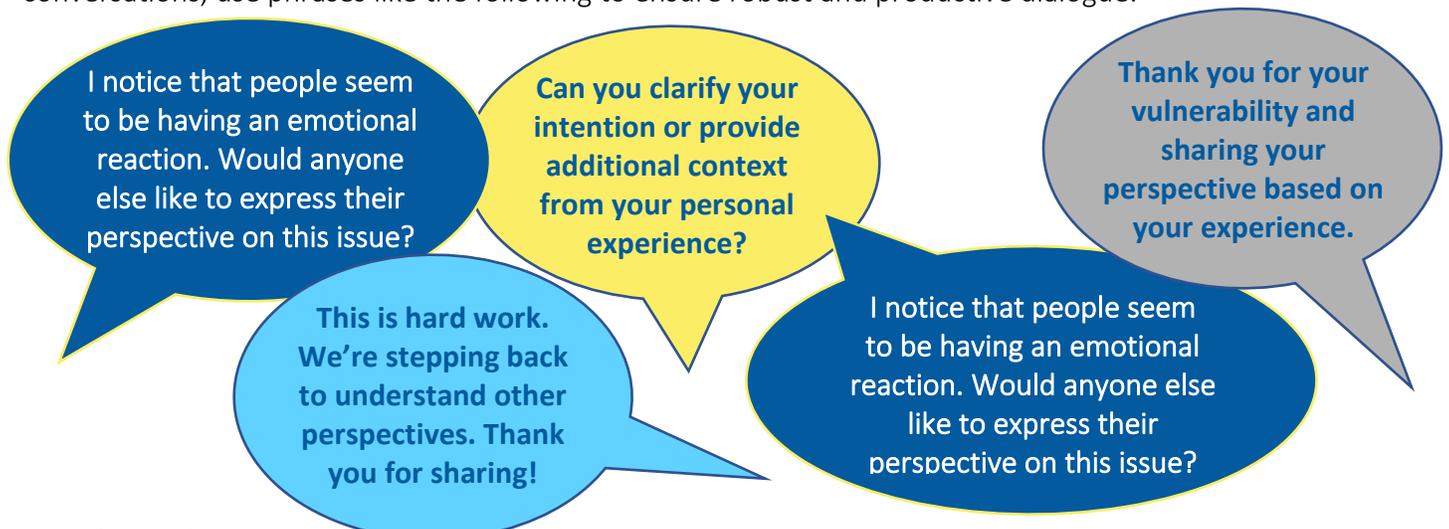
When discussing topics people are passionate about, it can be easy for a conversation to escalate into an unhealthy debate. That is not the objective here. Our objective with the Companion Discussion Guide is to help you and your team members unlock your collective intelligence by learning and thinking more effectively together. When the conversation has become more about personalities and personal opinions than what's best for the team, these distinctions can help keep you on track. Productive conflict is essential, but remember that dialogue is about the issues at hand and not the personalities and perspectives of individual team members

Debate	Dialogue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assuming that there is one right answer and that you have it</li><li>• Combative: participants attempt to prove the other side wrong</li><li>• About winning</li><li>• Listening to find flaws and make counterarguments</li><li>• Defending assumptions as truth</li><li>• Critiquing the other side's position</li><li>• Defending one's own views against those of others</li><li>• Searching for flaws and weaknesses in other positions</li><li>• Seeking a conclusion or vote that ratifies your position</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assuming that many people have pieces of the answer and that only together can they craft a solution</li><li>• Collaborative: participants work together toward common understanding</li><li>• About learning</li><li>• Listening to understand and find meaning</li><li>• Revealing assumptions for reevaluation</li><li>• Reexamining all positions</li><li>• Admitting that others' thinking can improve one's own</li><li>• Searching for strengths and value in others' positions</li><li>• Discovering new opinions, not seeking closure</li></ul>

*Adapted from "What makes dialogue unique" in The Magic of Dialogue by Daniel Yankelovich, pp. 39-40*

## Redirect

If you find the conversation heading in an unproductive direction, firmly redirect. As you have these conversations, use phrases like the following to ensure robust and productive dialogue:



# Continuing the Conversation

Use the ACT Conversation framework to guide the team’:

## A Acknowledge:

- Here are a few things I heard. Is that accurate?
- Is there anything else you would add or change?

## C Collaborate:

- Based upon this discussion, what one thing should we focus on over the next few weeks?
- What should we NOT focus on over the next few weeks?
- What’s one thing we can each do to support our top focus area?

## T Take One Step Forward:

- Throughout the coming weeks, share what’s been done or has changed as a result of your team’s conversation(s) during this time—even if it’s small. This could be as simple as instituting a daily huddle to help the team feel more connected.
- When action has been taken and tied back to the team's feedback, they will feel their voice has been heard, and be more willing to share open and honest dialogue in the future.

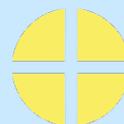


**We’d love to support your team’s ongoing efforts to become more cohesive and high-performing. At Laura A. Davis & Associates, Inc. we also help leaders become more emotionally intelligent and effective.**

**For the full range of our capabilities, [click here.](#)**

**Give us a call at 678-637-8977 or email [laura@lauraadavis.com](mailto:laura@lauraadavis.com) to schedule a conversation.**

**Connect with us.**



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