



**Authentic  
Leadership  
Conversations**

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## **Preparation**

### **1. Conversation:**

Identify one or two specific areas in your life where you feel stuck (professional or personal). A conversation needs to take place but it has become difficult and has not taken place. The situation causes you discomfort and you are not sure how the other party will react. This is important for you and you would like to resolve it with good outcomes. Eg. Conversation to family member, team member or peer about repeated bad behavior (Do NOT choose a situation where you are simply announcing bad news.)

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## **Conversation Meter Exercise (Accuracy & Authenticity)**

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**Respondent** takes a 5m break

### **Initiator**

- Ask respondent an opening question – “could you help me understand your situation better”
- Let respondent speak and then ask the reporter questions: what, when, who, how. Avoid asking “why” at this stage.
- Listen out for “facts” and “explanations” and how these can be confused by the speaker
- Only ask questions and DO NOT offer advice
- Avoid “advice disguised as questions” like “don’t you think...” or “have you considered...”

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## Conversation Meter Exercise (Accuracy & Authenticity)

- Continue to understand purpose, challenges and feelings
- You are trying to understand why this matter is really important or why he is very bothered by it ie. the root of the matter Ask some of the questions below and have a free flowing conversation keeping in mind the purpose:
  - "What is it that is really important for you here?"
  - "What are you really concerned about?"
  - "What I'm hearing is that you are really bothered with ....."
  - "Am I right to say that it's really important that .... "
  - "You have done this because you feel strongly that ....."
- Time allocated is 10m

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## Conversation Meter Exercise

### **Accuracy**

- ask the reporter questions: what, when, who, how. Avoid asking "why" at this stage.

### **Authenticity**

Ask some of the questions below and have a free flowing conversation keeping in mind that you are trying to understand the root cause of the issue:

- "What is it that is really important for you here?"
- "What are you really concerned about?"
- "What I'm hearing is that you are really bothered with ....."
- "Am I right to say that it's really important that .... "
- "You have done this because you feel strongly that ....."
- Time allocated is 10m each way

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## *Peer Coaching*

*In groups of four,  
take turns in coaching one of the members*

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The coachee takes maximum *4 minutes* to explain the issue or business challenge they are facing.

Coaches use *8 minutes* to ask accuracy and authentic questions.

The coaches offer ideas and possibilities, building on one another  
*for 3 minutes*

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## *Preparation*

### *2. Business Challenge:*

Identify a specific business challenge that you are currently facing. It could be issues about team dynamics, change management, stakeholder management or project challenges. It is a real situation that you are facing.

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### ***The Complainer***

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*You believe a nurse you work with regularly isn't being assertive enough during discussions with doctors.*

You attended the last 3 meetings and she didn't speak up during these meetings—even when she had concerns or questions. She allows doctors to overrule her even in areas where she is in charge – like inventory for the ward. She seems to think her role is to smile and agree to whatever the doctor says. However, at break time in the rest area, she airs her concerns to those around. You've dropped in for a cup of coffee and she's complaining about a doctor who "bossed her around" earlier in the day. You are her team leader.

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### ***The Problematic Peer (talking difficult issues)***

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*A peer who is not carrying his weight.*

You are the head of the business development team which is the life blood of the organisation. The team has always taken pride to rise to challenges well and exceed business targets. Things have been moving very smoothly till 6 months ago when a new head of engineering arrived. Your team needs the inputs and specifications from the engineering team to put your proposal together and the agreed turnaround time for this process is 3 days. However, since the arrival of the new head, the turnaround times have been erratic and the last 5 proposals were very late and taken at least 7days. This caused your team to work extended hours to meet deadlines for clients. Unfortunately, 2 deadlines were not met and you lost the deal. It is causing a lot of unhappiness with your team and you will have to resolve this with the head of engineering who is your peer.

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### ***The Dominant Boss (sharing alternative views)***

*A friendly boss who tends to be overbearing and pushy during team meetings.*

You work in a team of 3 engineers and your team leader gets along well socially with you. You enjoy his company and you often go for lunch together. However, when it comes to work the situation is somewhat different. During meetings, he can be rather overbearing and pushy to get his way on things. You have seen it happen a few times and have been hesitant to speak up. You now feel it is rather unhealthy to go on in this manner. Furthermore, an important initiative is now being tabled where the wrong decision would mean a delay in 6 months. He says at a meeting, "I want the team to develop a solution in-house as we know our needs best and can have full control over the implementation." However, each team member has at least 2 other projects running simultaneously. Furthermore, the team does not have the design expertise to implement such a solution. You feel the risks are too great and prefer to work with an experienced vendor. How do you express a difference of opinion during the meeting without jeopardising your good relationship?

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### ***The Dominant Boss 2 (sharing views positively)***

*A friendly boss who tends to be overbearing and pushy during team meetings.*

You work in a team of 3 engineers and your team leader gets along well socially with you. You enjoy his company and you often go for lunch together. However, when it comes to work the situation is somewhat different. During meetings, he can be rather overbearing and pushy to get his way on things. You have seen it happen a few times and this makes the whole team hesitant to speak up.

At the last strategy meeting, your colleague, Colin, spoke up to share an idea. Your boss shook his head while your colleague was speaking and at the end said, "Thanks but I don't think that will work well in our situation." Just at the last meeting when you said "I see things a little differently," he abruptly interrupted by saying "I don't want a different approach." You now feel it is rather unhealthy to go on in this manner. How will you have a candid and respectful conversation with your boss about this?

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