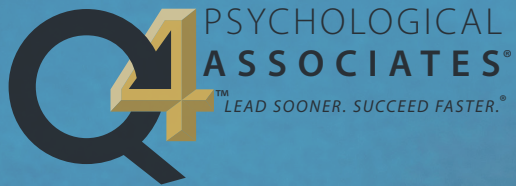


Q4 LEADERSHIP

THE PEOPLE SKILLS ADVANTAGE

GETTING READY
FOR THE PROGRAM



Q4 LEADERSHIP: THE PEOPLE SKILLS ADVANTAGE

Prework

Your Prework consists of two parts:

PART 1:

WATCH “JOAN’S DAY: A MODEL OF LEADERSHIP”

You can find this short video on the same page where you downloaded this document. “Joan’s Day” sets the stage for the rest of your prework, as well as the workshop. **Make sure you watch the video first.**

PART 2:

GETTING READY FOR THE PROGRAM

The information in the next few pages provides the foundational knowledge you’ll need to participate in the program.

“NOBODY CARES WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY...UNTIL YOU GIVE THEM A REASON”

When we communicate, we often assume the other person is listening. But the competition for attention is intense. We're bombarded by messages from every direction: Managers, peers, direct reports, customers, vendors, and staff — each with something to say in meetings, reports, e-mail, discussions, presentations, and more.

When you're trying to communicate, you'll have to cut through the interference — not just from competing sources, but from people's built-in resistance as well.

NO ONE IS ALWAYS READY TO LISTEN

How attentive are you if you are angry? How much of a conversation really registers right after a phone call about a loved one's illness? Is your focus at 100% when you think a meeting is pointless?

People are more attentive and willing to think about a discussion when they have a relevant and personal stake in the communication.

Pay attention to “relevant and personal.” You have to earn the other person's interest.

ARE THEY READY TO PARTICIPATE?

To earn interest, we try to raise and maintain people's receptivity.

Receptivity is the willingness to listen to and work with someone else to make an interaction productive.

Receptivity isn't static. Sometimes, the other person is highly

involved; sometimes, not at all. It can change from moment to moment.

Effective communication depends on raising receptivity as high as possible. Without it, we lose the lively interplay of ideas, insights, debate, and weighing of options that characterize quality discussion.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM?

Pleading, badgering, and threatening can gain a certain momentary level of receptivity. But you can only say, “this is really important” so many times before losing credibility (and interest).

It's more effective to create interest by appealing to people's self-interest. What will they gain from engaging with you?

Create interest by answering their question, “What's in it for me?” with a benefit statement.

An example: *“Tracy, I'm glad I caught you. I did an inventory check at the warehouse. I want to talk about it because I think we can solve your shortage problem.”*

If the topic is unpleasant, keep looking for the benefit.

Suppose you're a team leader who must talk to a member who monopolizes discussions and runs roughshod over the views of others.

“Jamie, I'm concerned about the way you approach our team discussions. If everyone were allowed a chance to contribute, your ideas would be better received and have a greater chance of being adopted.”

Stating a positive outcome as a reward for Jamie's willingness to work out the problem will raise receptivity more pointing out the issue alone.

INTERFERING EMOTIONS

Even if we can show what's in it for them, interfering emotions can be a barrier to raising receptivity.

Two kinds of interfering emotions can occur.

1. Personal circumstances outside of work generate the emotions. Financial difficulties, troubled relationships, or health problems can cause interfering emotions that are difficult to manage but can't be ignored.
2. Interfering emotions are created at the workplace itself. We may be able to intervene and change a situation that creates turmoil. Be aware: **We** may be the source of the interfering emotions! Our own behavior could be causing anxiety, anger, or frustration.

Fortunately, we can help reduce tension by venting the other person's emotions. **V**enting means letting the person express a strong feeling. The very act of venting serves as a safety valve; reducing interfering emotions allows receptivity to rise by enabling the other person to concentrate and engage.

PROBING — A POWERFUL TECHNIQUE

Probing is a verbal technique for finding out what another person knows, thinks, or feels. Similar to questioning, probing is much more than asking questions; it raises receptivity and increases involvement.

Applying a probing strategy can improve your work encounters, from dealing with the worst problems to engaging in the most stimulating dialogue.

When using probes to give the other person a chance to speak, get things off their mind, and be involved, you're acknowledging their worth.

Probes are effective because they force us to put ourselves in the other person's place. Probes work to ensure that they are heard, and their point of view is truly represented.

Probes can:

- ❖ Encourage the other person to open up (start the flow of conversation)
- ❖ Encourage the other person to keep talking (continue the flow)
- ❖ Confirm or check understanding.

PROBE FOR ENGAGEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING

Combining probes is an effective strategy. Probing is the only way to make sure that participation happens when the subject of the meeting doesn't have the power to demand it.

Despite its effectiveness, probing is a surprisingly underused technique. Even in a study where successful leaders were primed to use this skill set, most used probes sparingly and a handful didn't use any probes at all in their meeting.

In real life, which employee would be more likely to try solving their people skills problems and work toward a brighter future at their company — the one who is acknowledged and invited to share in mapping out a strategy for success, or the one who isn't?

EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES

OPEN-END PROBES Most people already understand the intuitive concepts of open- and closed-end questioning. To draw someone out, use open-end probes such as, *"How would you go about solving this problem?"* or *"What is your reaction to the plan?"* To focus someone on specific facts or to limit the conversation, ask closed-end questions that require few words to answer. *"What day do you want to start?"* *"Do you prefer plan A or plan B?"*

The other three underused probes are not intuitive, and we have to train ourselves to use them:

REFLECTIVE STATEMENTS These allow the other person to vent emotions.

Examples are:

- ❖ *"It's obvious you are concerned about this."*
- ❖ *"You find the new rule a real burden; I can tell."*
- ❖ *"It seems our budget discussions are frustrating to you."*

A reflective statement may seem awkward; it doesn't feel natural to

talk about someone else's emotional state during a business conversation. However, if you don't allow people to let off steam, receptivity for whatever comes next in the conversation will be low.

This doesn't mean the other person will join your side. A reflective statement makes sure emotions aren't getting in the way of the give-and-take of ideas.

SUMMARY STATEMENTS Briefly rephrase or sum up what the other person has said, checking that you've understood clearly and correctly. For example:

"You're saying we should not back this merger — the timing is wrong and the conditions are not favorable."

Summary statements are worth it, even when uncomfortable, because they do more than verify you've understood the other person. Summaries acknowledge the other person, saying in effect, *"I'm paying attention to you, whether I agree with you or not. Your thoughts and feelings count."*

Summary statements work to raise receptivity. They're useful in sorting out the points made and considering them one at a time. With someone who rambles, summaries can help crystallize their thoughts and get the discussion back on track.

Even during the smoothest conversation, it's good to check that you understand what you've heard. In summarizing someone else, be sure you don't simply play back their exact words.

PAUSING In a normal conversation, we may pause at times. But a pause used as a probe is a planned silence. Use it to allow the other person to collect their thoughts or think over what has been said.

The purposeful pause effectively slows down an interaction so the other person doesn't feel pressured. At the same time, if the other person is reluctant to speak, a long pause creates an awkward silence that often compels them to say something. That's why it's considered a probe.

Deliberate pauses promote dialogue, and can be very effective if you have the discipline to wait long enough for the other person to respond.

PROBES THAT ENCOURAGE THE OTHER PERSON TO OPEN UP

PROBE	DEFINITION	OBJECTIVES	CHARACTERISTICS	EXAMPLES
OPEN-END PROBE	Question or statement that invites a wide-ranging response; asks for ideas, opinions, or views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opens up discussion • Invites broad response • Gives other person freedom to talk • Gets involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't be answered "yes" or "no" • Gets at feelings, opinions, thoughts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "What do you think about...?" • "Tell me about..." • "Why do you feel...?" • "What's your opinion?"

PROBES THAT ENCOURAGE THE OTHER PERSON TO KEEP TALKING

PROBE	DEFINITION	OBJECTIVES	CHARACTERISTICS	EXAMPLES
PAUSE	Intentional, purposeful period of silence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives other person a chance to think and respond • Slows down pace • Draws out the other person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually follows open-end probe • Deliberate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Why do you say that?" (silence) • "Tell me more." (silence)
REFLECTIVE STATEMENT	Statement that describes and reflects a feeling or emotion (without implying agreement or disagreement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies emotions • Shows you understand • Vents interfering emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names a feeling or emotion • Generally uses the word "you" or "you're" • May state cause of the emotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "You're pretty mad about it." • "You seem reluctant to talk about it." • "Sounds like you're excited."
NEUTRAL PHRASE OR QUESTION	Question or statement that encourages the other person to elaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gets other person to tell more about a subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses few words • Pertains to the subject under discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Tell me more." • "Please elaborate." • "Explain that." • "Amplify on that."
BRIEF ASSERTION	Short statement, sound, or gesture that shows involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages other person to continue • Increases receptivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elicits additional information • Occurs automatically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Oh, okay." • "I see." • (Nodding your head)

PROBES THAT HELP CONFIRM YOUR UNDERSTANDING

PROBE	DEFINITION	OBJECTIVES	CHARACTERISTICS	EXAMPLES
CLOSED-END QUESTION	Question that limits the answer by requesting specific facts — or a “yes” or “no” answer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finds out details, specifics • Checks understanding • Directs the discussion • Gets other person to take a stand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often starts with “Who,” “Which,” “When,” “Where,” “How many,” etc. • Sometimes answered with a “yes” or “no” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Who is...?” • “Which order...?” • “When will you...?” • “Do you think...?”
LEADING QUESTION	Question that implies only one answer — or a rhetorical question to which no answer is needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pins down positions or agreements • Verifies assumptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a question that gives the answer • No answer is required • Can be threatening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Shouldn’t we discuss...?” • “This is the best way to go, isn’t it?”
SUMMARY STATEMENT	Brief statement, in your own words, of what was said	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checks understanding • Proves you’re listening • Gives structure and direction • Helps other person clarify thinking • Invites other person to comment or expand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizes content, not feelings • Restates essential ideas • Uses your own words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “So you disagree about....” • “The way you see it is....” • “You prefer working overtime....” • “Let me summarize how I....”

PROBING STRATEGIES

A true probing strategy is about more than just probing frequently during a conversation. It's strategic to give thought ahead of time to both the other person and the purpose of the communication, then pick appropriate probes.

A probing strategy is an effective way to create high receptivity and a commitment to action in a difficult conversation. Open-end probes can help get an accurate picture of the other person's reaction and thoughts. Reflective statements vent anger and frustration. Additional open-end probes can gain participation in developing a plan for the future. Summary statements along the way not only maintain receptivity, but also bring on a lively or even impassioned discussion of the issues.

Strategy With Q1 Behavior

Being open brings high receptivity and commitment to an interaction. Reflective and summary statements let someone with dominant Q1 behavior talk and express themselves by supporting their ego and keeping the spotlight on them. Avoid closed-end probes and leading questions; these might signal you're trying to box in or manipulate the other person's thinking.

People with Q1 behavior may have equal or more power than you. Developing a probing strategy makes sense because you can't **make** them participate. Your probing strategy helps give them a reason to engage.

Strategy With Q4 Behavior

Q4 behavior is already collaborative and participative. So skillful probing elicits quality thinking and creative problem solving; gets the most out of communication; and leads to productive results.

Vary your probes. Open-end probes and summary statements promote the free flow of ideas. But don't ask endless open-end probes; if the other person feels the conversation isn't leading anywhere, they'll lose interest or question your motives. Too many closed-end and leading questions may be seen as restrictive or manipulative. Summarizing too frequently can seem manipulative, as if you're repeating the other person's words to trip them up. Combining probes appropriate to the other person's behavior can tap into the best they have to offer.

Strategy With Q2 Behavior

Q2's reserve has nothing to do with their intelligence, creativity, or knowledge. They're not likely to bring their ideas to your attention, so if you don't strategize how to probe effectively, you may miss the benefit of this person's thinking.

Maintain a low-key, low-risk environment for your conversation. Slow probes to a comfortable pace. Draw out this person and invite a response with open-end probes, and downplay closed-end questions. Avoid doing all the talking when there's silence. If you get no response from an open-end probe, try purposeful pausing to make the other person want to say something to break the awkward silence. Reflective and summary statements also appeal to Q2's security needs.

Strategy With Q3 Behavior

Because of a strong need to be accepted and liked, Q3 behavior tends to talk a lot, although not always on topic. Be cordial to make the other person comfortable, but use probes that channel discussion so this person doesn't drift from the topic. Closed-end probes and summary statements help keep the conversation on course and productive. Open-end probes usually aren't needed and tend to exacerbate meandering.

STRUCTURING A CONVERSATION

“TRY DISCUSSING IT ONE STEP AT A TIME”

One way to deal more effectively with behavioral obstacles — including your own — is to structure your conversation along a logical path. We call it the FIVE-STEP FORMAT.

STEP 1: GAIN INTEREST AND TEST RECEPTIVITY

Begin with an appropriate degree of socializing. State the purpose for meeting and offer *benefits to the other person* for collaborating with you. This should create interest — very effective for having a meaningful conversation. Check the other person's readiness to proceed. If it's still low, try to raise interest or consider postponing the meeting until a better time.

STEP 2: RAISE RECEPTIVITY AND GET OTHER'S VIEWS

When we start a conversation, we're tempted to give our opinions first. It's more effective, though, to get the other person's views first and gather valuable information. Ask questions and really listen to understand what the other person has to say. By showing interest and encouraging participation, you should increase the other person's interest in your conversation.

STEP 3: PRESENT YOUR VIEWS — AGREEMENTS FIRST, THEN DISAGREEMENTS

Since you've already acknowledged the other's views in Step 2, the other person is now likely to be more open to your views about what they've said. Briefly state where you agree, disagree, and why.

STEP 4: VENT EMOTIONS AND RESOLVE DISAGREEMENTS

With both viewpoints on the table, discuss where you disagree, try to fully understand and attempt to resolve any arguments. Since discussions can become impassioned, emotions that interfere with discussion may need to be expressed and acknowledged.

STEP 5: WORK OUT A FINAL RESOLUTION

Once differences are worked out, you can now discuss an action plan for mutually accomplishing your goal or solution. Talk over the benefits of carrying out this plan, bolstering the high level of commitment you should both have at this point. Work out the details and check for understanding.

PRACTICE THE STEPS

As you practice planning a Five-Step conversation, you'll find the logic of each step makes the format easy to remember. It will help you have more focused and collaborative conversations that get things accomplished.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. Imagine if people simply told us whether their receptivity was high or low. Since they don't, we must observe carefully. What outward signs tell us about receptivity? How do you signal your level of interest to others?
2. Receptivity can drop if someone is experiencing a strong emotion. Q1 anger, Q2 fears and frustration, even Q3 delight, can be obstacles to listening and giving full attention to your words. What's the value of using Reflective Statements to help overcome these obstacles? Why do you think people are reluctant to use them?
3. While any one probe may be a useful communication tool, the real power lies in effectively combining probes to deal with specific behaviors. What's an effective probing strategy for: Working with Q1 dominance? Handling Q2 reluctance? Focusing Q3 on the issues and stating disagreements?

