

COMMUNICATING WITH CLARITY & COMPASSION

Participant Handout

Today's Objectives

- Apply brain science to communicate with greater clarity and compassion.
- Use questions to uncover perspective and create shared understanding.
- Create multiple pathways to help important messages connect and stick.

CLARITY

Did my message make sense?

COMPASSION

Did I make it easier for the other person to receive it?

Key idea: Communicating something is not the same thing as getting it across.

Compassion isn't "being nice." It's taking some responsibility for the cognitive and interpersonal work of communication.

Notes / Ideas I Want to Remember

Strategy #1: ASK Before You Explain

Brain-science takeaway: New information is easier to understand when it connects to something we already know. The communicator's job is to help build that bridge.

**When you explain first, you're guessing.
When you ask first, you're locating.
Once you locate, you can build.**

Practice: Frances

Frances, a director, is rolling out a change to an existing process. The change requires employees to follow a new workflow beginning next month. She has spent weeks discussing it with senior leadership and understands why it is necessary. At the team meeting, she explains what is changing and when, what employees need to do, and why leadership believes it will improve results. She finishes with, “Any questions?” Silence. She assumes everyone is clear and on board.

What might Frances still not know?

- What they already know / don't know
- What concerns they have
- What past experiences are shaping how they hear this
- What they think the problem actually is

Your challenge: Frances is not allowed to explain anything else yet. Design ONE question she could ask that would help her understand how the team is currently thinking about the change.

Our question:

Debate Maker Question Stems

What _____?

What _____?

What _____?

What _____?

Notes

Strategy #2: ENRICH What You Communicate

Questions help us discover where the disconnect is. Then we can decide how best to bridge it. Enriched communication creates more pathways to understanding.

Think GPS: Don't make one pathway do all the work.

Pathway	Ask Yourself
Context	Why does this matter?
Examples	What does this look like?
Visuals	Can I show it?
Stories/analogies	What can I connect it to?
Repetition	Where should they hear it again?
Follow-up	What can they refer back to later?
Check	How will I know what they actually understood?

Frances Activity: Find Your Table

Use your table's TWO assigned pathways to create additional routes to understanding. Explain how Frances could apply each one.

TABLE 1 Context + Visuals	TABLE 2 Examples + Follow-up
TABLE 3 Stories/Analogies + Check	TABLE 4 Repetition + Context
TABLE 5 Visuals + Examples	TABLE 6 Follow-up + Stories/Analogies

How could Frances apply our two pathways?

Notes

My Action Plan

Think of one communication you need to have — with one person or multiple people.

ASK: What question could you ask before you explain?

ENRICH: What additional pathway could you create to help your message connect?

CHOOSE: Which one will make the bigger difference in this situation? ☐ ASK ☐ ENRICH

Between Now and Our Next Workshop

- **ASK:** In one important conversation, ask at least one question before explaining your perspective.
- **ENRICH:** Choose one important message and intentionally add at least one additional pathway to understanding.
- **Be prepared** to share what changed as a result.

Start With Understanding. Then Make it Stick.

ASK before you explain. · ENRICH what you communicate.

Other Notes / Ideas I Want to Try
