

Conflict, Change & Better Meetings

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Prepare: Meetings are the WORK that leaders do

- **Psychological Safety & Trust**
 - Inclusion & Selection
 - Why are *you* here? Better introductions.
 - Anticipate “Imposter Phenomenon”
 - Inspire Motivation and Engagement
 - Create meaning (context)
 - Highlight opportunities for growth
 - Create challenge and divide the mundane
- **Better Agendas: Clarity & Transparency**
 - Objectives & Expectations: what will be accomplished (nouns)
 - Decision/Recommendation/Analysis of X for Y by Z.
 - Priorities: Innovation/Cost/Time/Limitations?
 - Process & method of decision: what will we do (verbs)
- **Clarify your Role**
 - Decision maker? Referee? Convener? Here are the positions I hear.
 - Discover & Remove Obstacles & Difficult (side) Conversations
 - Level of Autonomy
 - Feedback Expectations
- **Self-Awareness**
 - Know your tolerance for conflict and discomfort

Manage Conflict & Stimulate Innovation

- **Invite Divergence**
 - Increase my understanding of the problem/tensions.
 - Actively embrace a diversity of styles and voices
 - Start with individual lists of ideas
 - What other explanations can we generate?
 - What other ideas could we generate?
 - What surprises you about these data?
 - Who has a different perspective?
 - What might we be missing?
- **Initial Assignment**
 - Help me better understand the problem
 - Increase our (the company and my) understanding and the nuance of this problem
 - Challenge my assumptions that this is the right problem to solve

- **Hear & Hold Emotions**
 - Emotions are Information
 - Focus on the feelings: "I get angry at this too"
 - Use pauses and breathing
 - Tell me more...
 - Have the blocker sit next to you!
- **Optimism and Possibility**
 - How might we...
 - Reframe failure: Debriefs & failure funerals
- **Increase Ambiguity**
 - What are the ways these ideas/concerns overlap?
 - What are some things you like/hate about this?
 - What does the dissenter say?
 - What could wrong with this plan?
 - Start with how: Can you articulate the implications of what you are proposing?
- **Be the Model**
 - Do you show the way or get in the way?
 - Your initial response matters most
 - Redirect as necessary
 - Try assigning roles (someone to keep time? Limit individual statements to 2m?)

Overcoming Resistance to New Ideas

- **Anticipate Friction**
 - Even powerful ideas must overcome friction
 - One prototype will always be compared to the status quo
 - Include multiple versions/extreme options (wine lists drive you to the middle)
- **Repetition**
 - Cato the Elder: "Carthage must be destroyed"
- **Start Small**
 - Don't wait to perfect the idea!
- **Emphasize Similarity**
 - Newness can also be repellent
 - Analogies: Computer desktop works like an old desktop; Uber for dogs?
- **Stop Explaining**
 - Become curious and discover the source of resistance
 - Focus on emotions: is this psychological ownership or a competing priority?
 - Ask for input

References and Further Reading

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