

Flexible Leadership: Using the Matrix to Have Conversations for a Shared Purpose

Steps for identifying a conversation for a shared purpose.

You can use these steps anywhere you interact with a group of people with whom you share some commitment. In the workshop, we focus on groups that are out to cause a particular result (e.g., a business building out a new offering) However, this is applicable to areas where a specific result is not always obvious (e.g., families). Whatever your focus, the first step is to identify the group. **What is the group you are focusing on?**

Identify what matters (Lower Right) and the problem. Engage with the following questions:

1. What is the biggest problem the group is having? This could show up for you as a clear result there is to produce (e.g., we have an annual conference to plan and we must move it online). It may show up as a more general complaint (e.g., “people aren’t communicating what they’re up to,” or “our meetings always end with no clear actions to take.”)
2. What really matters? (Lower Right) You can look at this at a variety of levels. Use the ones that are applicable to the group you are focused on and adjust them to fit your situation. If this group were operating at its highest level/this problem were completely solved, what difference would the group make:
 - a. For the world?
 - b. For the communities it touches?
 - c. For the people it directly serves?
 - d. For each other?
3. If this group were operating at its highest level, what ways of being would be expressed with each other and towards the people the group interacts with (e.g., open, trusting, compassionate, direct, honest)? (Lower Right)

Identify the conversations surrounding the problem (Lower Left)

- **What do people say to each other about the problem?** This may include very negative things (e.g., this is a waste of time... it’ll never change) to more neutral things (e.g., “it is what it is...”) to even hopeful dialogue (e.g., “well let’s look on the bright side...”)
- **Looking behind what people say to each other about the problem, what is the general way of relating to it?** Looking at what people have to say about the problem, what would you say is the fundamental way your group relates to the problem? A useful way of looking at this may be through metaphor. i.e., This problem is like a _____ that _____. (e.g., “This problem is like the brooms in Fantasia that, every time you try to do anything about it, turns into two new headaches...”)
- **What is the general experience of the group?** Frustration? Resignation? Cynicism? Exhaustion? Anger? Etc.

Identify the group behaviors consistent with the conversations (Upper Left)

- What do people do that is consistent with the conversations?

- How do they act in meetings? Are people engaged? Are people on time? Do people participate and share ideas? Do people do other things during meetings? What is the nature of the conversations?
- How do they act outside of meetings? Do people reschedule meetings? Do people procrastinate? Do people do complete work? Are people in full communication? Are they in communication as soon as communication is relevant?
- What other general behavioral patterns are you seeing? Are there justifications and excuses? Is there gossip? What else?

Put it all together (Upper Right)

- Completing this work should give you what there is to say. Connect the conversations people are having (lower left) to the actions and experience of the group (left side).
- Acknowledge that, when engaged in those conversations, the group loses focus on what really matters and that on which you are out to deliver (lower right).
- Share everything you see, including the commitment and the difference you are out to make *AND* make a promise about what you will do and who you will be toward that promise. This can include
 - Individual actions you will take.
 - Support you will give to the group.
 - New conversations you will maintain over time.
 - Ways of being you will bring to the group.

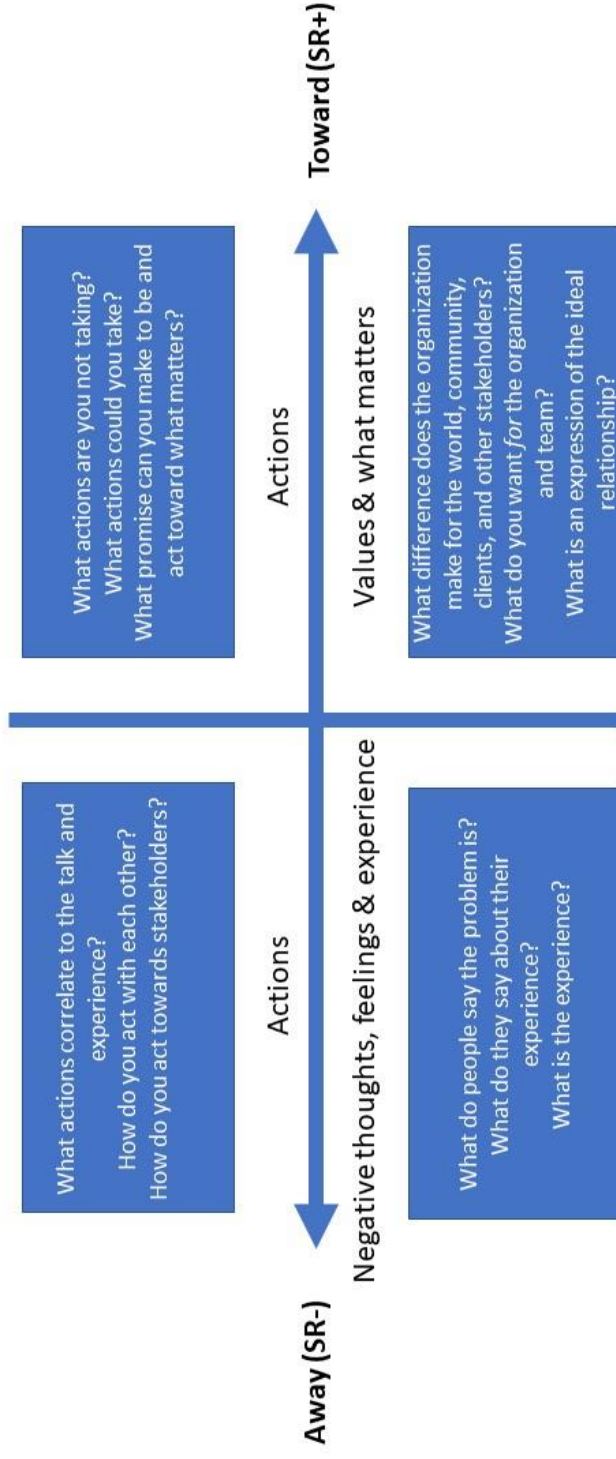
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The Matrix

5 Senses Experiencing (Out Here)



Mental Experiencing (Thoughts and Feelings)

Go visit: DrKevinPolk.com