

Future  
IM/Pact

# Communicating with impact

Frameworks and tools to help you  
communicate with clarity and  
conviction



Early Career



# Welcome

Asking for a pay rise. Pitching a big idea. Challenging other people's positions. Contributing in meetings. Are your palms getting sweaty at the thought?

Communicating your position with confidence is a work in progress for even seasoned professionals. When you're in your early career it can feel like a danger zone that leave us paralysed and wracked with fear.

In this early career leadership lesson, we're providing 3 practical concepts to help you build your confidence, influence others with warmth and competence, and prepare for high stakes comments.

Let's start by confirming the tricky communications challenge you're working with in the session...



What do you need to communicate?

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To whom?

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What's your desired outcome?

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What is concerning you most about this communication?

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# Mindset

## Build your confidence by managing negative thought patterns

This tool comes from our friends at The Conscious Leadership Group and is a wonderful way to unwind the negative thoughts that erode our confidence and undermine our impact.

A cognitive/emotive loop is a repeating pattern where thoughts and beliefs produce feelings that fuel our rightness about our stories, that then further intensify our feelings, repeating the cycle indefinitely.

Sarah's story: [Here's an example of how it works](#)

### Cognitive / Thought:

"I don't know as much as everyone else in the meeting and if I speak up I'll look stupid. I don't really have anything of value to add anyway."

This thought gets loudest in meetings but it recurs regularly.

### Emotive / Feeling:

Fear, which has calcified over time into anxiety.

Here's how this turns into a loop:

She has the thought, "I'm not going to speak up because I don't know as much as everyone else."

She feels fear. The physical manifestations of fear are heart racing, palms sweaty, body retreating.

She doesn't let the feeling complete, but rather she uses the energy of the feeling to fuel her belief (thought) that she's right about not needing to speak up and not being valuable.

She finds evidence to prove she's right, and as a consequence becomes more afraid (feeling) which produces more sweat, more contraction, and a faster heart rate.

Again, she doesn't complete the feeling, and instead funnels the energy back into righteousness (thought) about how she really is inadequate and her views aren't valued, especially because they're only half formed. She solidifies this belief by comparing her experience to others who she believes have more of a right to contribute.

Her fear is now moving in the direction of anxiety (feeling) and she fantasises (thought) about working in a job where she never has to speak up.

## I want to break free! Here's how

Feeling feelings all the way through and investigating thoughts are the two key ways to escape a cognitive emotive loop.

Here's what it looks like step by step:

### Notice when you're in the loop through self-awareness

Begin by identifying some of your existing repetitive loops. Put yourself on alert for when the patterns show up. When they do, then simply say, "Ah, there it is."

## Accept yourself for being in a loop in the moment

Adding self-criticism or judgment to the pattern simply exacerbates the loop. After awareness comes acceptance. One deep breath then, "Oh, there's my pattern again. I'm just being me the way I've always been me."

## Choose to interrupt the pattern

It's always a choice. Stepping into creator where you take 100% responsibility for your feelings, and choosing a new way is taking radical responsibility which is at the heart of self-leadership.

## Stay with the body to break the loop

Feelings are sensations arising in and on the body. To complete a feeling you need stay fully connected to the body until the sensations have moved through. Choose to stop fuelling the sensations with more thinking and keep the focus on the sensations.

## Unwind the thought through inquiry

Once the body has released the energy (emotion and sensations) and comes back to equilibrium, do [The Work](#) on your thought. Choose curiosity over being right and discover all the possible ways that the opposite of your thought could be as true or truer.

Sarah's core belief is that she shouldn't contribute in meetings because other people know more than her. As a meditation she asks the questions:

Is it true that if I speak up, others will think I'm stupid?

Can I know for certain that if I speak up I will look stupid?

When I believe that thought, how do I react?

If I couldn't ever believe that thought, who would I be?

Then she does the "turnarounds" and finds evidence for how the opposites are as true or truer than her belief.

If I speak up, others won't think I'm stupid

If I don't speak up, others will think I'm stupid

I think others are stupid when they speak up

I don't think others are stupid when they speak up

If Sarah does the inquiry with a desire to see the truth fully she will unwind her thought structure and the cognitive/emotive loop will be broken. She might need to choose to break the loop several times, to feel the feeling and examine the thought, but if she does Sarah will be free from this pattern and this particular form of suffering will end. The same is true for you.

# Fact vs story

Let's now apply that to you by unpacking the stories you're making up about your communication challenge.

Step 1: Define the challenge / fears

Step 2: Write down all the facts related to the issue. Facts are what a video camera would record (without music and interpretation of tone)

Step 3: Write down all the stories you have about the facts. These are what you make up about the facts. Look for 'shoulds', judgements, interpretations and emotions.

The thought is \_\_\_\_\_

## Facts

What a video camera records

## Stories

What you make up about the facts

The next step follows [The Work of Byron Katie](#). Katie (as she is known), encourages a meditative approach where we reflect on a limiting belief we're currently holding onto.

Pick one of the stories above that resonates the most and write it down here:

Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths and contemplate that statement. Then ask yourself four questions:

Is it true?

Can you absolutely know it's true?

How do you react, what happens when you believe that thought?

Who would you be if I could erase that thought from your mind?

Once you connect with how much being right is costing you, it becomes easier to see how a whole range of opposites might be equally as true, not necessarily more true, but equally as true. This is where the turnaround comes in. Here's how turnarounds work:

Current belief: Jill is unkind to me. Alternate stories: I am unkind to Jill. Jill is kind to me. I am unkind to me.

Write down all of the opposites of your story and any evidence you can find that supports these alternate views. There won't always be four opposites and sometimes there may be more than four.

**Alternate stories**

**Evidence of alternate stories**

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# Cues

## Influence others with warmth and competence

Extensive research by academic, [Vanessa Van Edwards](#), finds highly influential and charismatic people are magnetic because they have a perfect blend of warmth and competence.

They are signalling likeability, trust, power, capability, collaboration and efficiency. [Susan Fisk's research](#) reveals most of us have an imbalance. If you have too much warmth people don't respect you or take you seriously, and if you have too much confidence people see you as powerful and credible but intimidating or hard to talk to. Competence without warmth leaves people feeling suspicious.

You may have these qualities already but if you aren't **signalling** enough warmth and competence, people don't know how to read you and so distance themselves.

Our cues tell others how to treat us. People who don't have enough cues can be pitied, underestimated, ignored or avoided. Cues help us understanding what the other person thinks and how they want to be treated. This works two ways – they way we decode or interpret others and the signals we send to others (encode).

There is a continuous loop of decoding and encoding happening, cues are contagious as we subconsciously mirror each other. We send hundreds of cues to each other all day.

### The four different categories of cues

<b>Body language</b>	Body language cues makes up a minimum of 60% of how we communicate our message and include non-verbal messages via gestures, facial expression and posture.
<b>Verbal</b>	The words we use including via emails, social profiles, and text messages, as well as in conversation.
<b>Voice Tone</b>	Volume, pace and cadence
<b>Ornaments/visual</b>	This includes the clothes and accessories we wear (style and colour), the car we drive, our Zoom background.

# Body language

## Warmth cues – these cues encourage people to open up

Cue	Description	How and when could you apply these cues
<b>The triple nod</b>	Up and down (yes, agreeance). When people give a triple nod, the other person speaks 60% longer as it signals please tell me more, I'm here, I'm listening.	
<b>The head tilt</b>	When we try to hear or understand something better, we will tilt our head, this signals we are listening.	
<b>The slow saver smile</b>	This is not a smile that's held, (like a psychopath) but a smile that slowly spreads across your face. It signals warmth and compassion.	
<b>The lean</b>	Researchers have found that 'the lean' activates the part of your brain that is 'pre-action'. When we are about to activate one of five senses, we lean in. Very charismatic people will even cue you to lean in when they have an important point or want to share a deep thought by leaning in themselves. Ted talk speakers when they are about to make their most important point will lean in a little.	
<b>Fronting</b>	Non-verbal, angle your entire body (toes, torso, and head) towards the person you are speaking with. When we are on parallel lines with someone else, we are signalling that we are aligned to be on the same track as someone else. When we do this, our brains think 'oh we're aligned there is nothing between us'. We are likely to speak more, and more likely to say yes. It is physically hard for someone to open up, collaborate or connect when you are not being fronted with.	



Note: you can decode who wants to talk to you and who doesn't at a networking event by looking at their feet. If someone is engaged with another and is fronting them and both feet are pointing towards the other person, they don't want to be approached. If one foot is angled to the side, they are open to being approached.

## Competence cues: These cues signal you're in control and calm

Cue	Description	How and when could you apply these cues?
<b>The distance cue</b>	<p>The distance between your ears and your shoulders.</p> <p>When your shoulders are down and away from your ears and your head is held high you're signalling that you are calm and competent.</p>	
<b>The steeple fingers</b>	<p>This is a power pose for your hands.</p> <p>Put the tips of your fingers together (like church steeple) with space between the palms.</p> <p>This position makes you feel calm and collected. Try it!</p>	

## Cues to avoid: These are the danger zone cues (decoding)

Cue	Description	your experience
<b>The lip purse</b>	<p>When we press our lips together it signals a universal withholding gesture.</p> <p>We do this when we're ashamed, anxious, embarrassed, telling a lie, holding back or don't want to communicate.</p>	
<b>Vocal fry</b>	<p>When our voice goes into wavery and croaky tone it signals anxiety, worry, uncertainty.</p> <p>To fix vocal fry, take a deep breath and raise your voice.</p>	

## Verbal cues

Humans can decipher how confident someone is within the first 100 milliseconds of speaking.

Cue	Description	your experience
<b>Up talk/question inflection</b>	This sounds like a questioning tone. When we accidentally use uptalk when making a statement it triggers the other person to think “They’re questioning themselves, should I question them”?	
<b>Down talk</b>	When we want to make a powerful point or be seen as confident, we will sling our words down at the end of the sentence.	
<b>Neutral inflection</b>	When we are confident in our words, we will use a neutral inflection.	

Note: People receive the most push back on price negotiations when they use ‘up talk’ because it signals we’re almost asking for the negotiation.

Pausing is a great way to get people to listen more intently as it creates drama.

## Ornamental cues

These cues typically create neural maps through how they make us, and others feel

Cue	Description	Relevance to you
<b>How you dress</b>	Think about where you fit in, how you dress and how you would dress for the company you want to work at.	
<b>Zoom background</b>	What message does it send to the other person/people on the call?	

# Plan

## Negotiating a pay rise

### Your why

Let's start by asking why you want the pay rise. Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths then respond below.

### Shifting limiting mindsets

Now, let's ditch the baggage! Reframe some of the stories you make up when thinking about asking for a pay rise like, eg "I'll look greedy if I ask for a pay rise". Using the fact v story tool above, how can you see that the opposite of the story is equally as true? What evidence is there to support that opposite?

Story / Unhelpful thought	Opposite of your story and evidence

## Building your argument

Outline your achievements and how you contribute to the company.

Research comparable salaries for similar roles. Write down the company, the role title, and the salary. How does it compare to where you are at now?

Speak to a recruitment consultant that specialises in your field to add weight to your case. Pick a consultant, write down a date to contact them, add the notes here.

**Consultant:**

**Date:**

**Notes:**

## Prepare a script and practice the conversation

Write a script so you're clear on your ask and arguments. Practice the pitch with a valued confidante, ideally someone in the organisation who can provide meaningful feedback. Remember to practice the warmth and competence cues too!

Script:

Practice buddy:

The author [Simon Horton](#) of *Change their mind: 6 steps to persuade anyone anytime* says "You've got to help your boss persuade other people like their boss, HR or the finance director. The more real-life examples you can give them the better."

Don't complain about the cost of living, it's true for everyone that expenses have gone up.

# Providing feedback

## Giving feedback that leads to growth

We know receiving well-timed and clear feedback is essential for performance improvement. Yet studies show that 65% of employees aren't receiving the feedback they need to learn and grow. Here's a simple framework I've adapted from the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute designed to make feedback easier to give in a way that increases trust and improves performance. This can work for positive and development feedback.

Note, feedback triggers our threat responses so it's important to set up feedback conversations rather than spring it on people.

**Context** - provide context for the feedback so people understand the background that has prompted the feedback.

**Observations** - detail the specific behaviours you've observed. Focus on facts. if there are stories getting in the way, be clear about any stories you might be making up about the facts.

**Implications** - Connect the facts to the impact – on them, you, the team, the work and the organisation.

**Alignment** - Check in on their perspective and aim to find some agreement on the observations and implications, as well as what good would look like. This will create a shared understand of the gap ie what needs to change.

**Action** - Agree what steps need to be taken to achieve the shared vision of good. Include a check in at a set time to discuss progress. Now your turn...

Context	
Observations	
Implications	
Alignment	
Actions	

# Pitching ideas

Developing a well-rounded proposal is an artform and a science. We've shared our template for preparing an impactful presentation that:

- connects your ideas to a compelling vision
- articulates a well-rounded argument by capturing diverse problem-solving perspectives ie people, options, outcomes, evidence, risk and process (see below).
- engages diverse stakeholders by reflecting their communication preferences and style.

## Supporting models

### Diversity of approach

Deloitte's diversity of approach model is a great framework to support comprehensive problem solving that engage different thinking preferences.

Read more about that [here](#).



### Personality preferences

Impactful communications require us to connect with our audience based on their preferences. The Clarity 4D personality profiling tool provides a simple framework to assess people's preferences. We've captured the communications impact of these preferences throughout our template.



# Thank you

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