

Conversational Success

How many conversations do you go into without an idea of what success will look like? It's like hunting a barrel of fish blind, who knows what you will hit?

We have all done it; we blow in and out of conversations with no clear desired outcome.

Establishing an intention for conversations is often the most underrated concept, yet it is the critical foundational step. I never lead a coaching conversation without an idea of what success looks like at the end of our time together.

Without intention, the meeting limps along without energy or direction. Clarity comes from a well-developed agreement.

With this agreement momentum propels change effortlessly forward. Here are quick easy steps to consider when approaching that next conversation with intention. I use these all the time when coaching on someone's performance, including my husband!

1. Explore the topic – “What do you want to explore/accomplish/work on/talk to about today. Listen for what they are really looking for, what is the real need?
2. Recap for clarity – “I hear you want...” make sure you both are on the same page, aiming for the same target. It might take several attempts for each other to get clear.
3. Narrow the scope – What part of this big goal do you want to accomplish today? Where can we start? What piece is most important for us to focus on now?” If it is too broad the conversation may lack energy and you may get stuck.
4. Check in on the progress of the conversation, is the goal still the same or did it shift? Are you still heading in the right direction?
5. Determine the significance – “What will that do for you? What is the impact of achieving this? How will this change things?” This step helps create buy-in, motivation and discovers what it is we are really looking for.
6. Measure success for the conversation – What was most valuable to you? What are your take-aways.
7. Capture any commitments and by-whens. What follow up needs to happen?

Above all, trust yourself in the conversation. If you script it out too much it will not be authentic. Be agile along the way and always come from a place of curiosity, respect and an open mind.