

CONVERSATIONAL CAPACITY®

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Conversational Capacity

In this session, you will

- Increase your Awareness of the factors that limit your Conversational Capacity and that of your team.
- Cultivate a Conversational Capacity Mindset.
- Learn and practice the Conversational Capacity Skillset.



Awareness

The ability to **recognize**
the powerful emotional
reactions that pull us and
others out of the sweet spot

Challenges for Expressing Candor and Curiosity

Lack of Candor

Share with your partner a time you saw a lack of candor reduce the effectiveness of a meeting or conversation, and its consequences.

Lack of Curiosity

Share with your partner a time you saw a lack of curiosity reduce the effectiveness of a meeting or conversation, and its consequences.

Self-Awareness

Trigger Inventory

- Authority
- Expertise
- Personality
- Disrespect
- Reputation
- Behavior of others
- Fatigue
- Stress
- Time pressure
- _____
- _____
- _____

Raise your awareness of your natural tendencies by answering the questions below.

1. Under what circumstances are you most triggered to Minimize or Win?

2. What about you might trigger others to leave the sweet spot?

3. To help you catch it, name it, and tame it, identify the warning signs that you are being triggered.

Mindset

Learning and making **smart decisions** are **more important** than being **comfortable or right.**

Adopt a Learning-Focused Mindset

Explore diverse perspectives

- Seek out views that expand and improve our thinking

Lean into difference

- Place an emphasis on views that contrast with our own



Toni's Mindset

What was missing from Toni's mindset in this conversation?

How did she respond to Volker's concerns?

Which of the three questions for maintaining a learning-focused mindset should Toni have asked herself?

- What am I seeing that others are missing?
- What are others seeing that I am missing?
- What are we all missing?

Who else should have been in the conversation to share their knowledge and expertise?



Skillset

Specific behaviors that can be used to balance **candor** and **curiosity**



- State Your **Position**
- Explain Your **Thinking**

- **Test** Your View
- **Inquire** into the Views of Others

Candor Skills—State Your Position

How to State Your Position

- State where you currently stand on the issue.
- Be direct and to the point.
- Use one or two sentences.

Why is it important?

- You'll have more influence.
- It's less likely you'll be misunderstood.
- You're more authentic.

Examples

High Candor

- "Option A would dramatically improve our results."
- "I think option B is the best choice."
- "Using an agenda would dramatically improve our weekly meetings."
- "Both ideas have merit. I would like to open a discussion to develop a plan that combines the best of both approaches."

To craft a position statement, ask yourself:

1. What is my main point?
2. Why does it matter? Why do I think it's important?
3. How do I feel about this issue?
4. How can I state this in the most clear, concise and compelling way?
5. If I'm torn between two or more options, how can I clearly communicate that?
6. What if my position is that I don't have a strong point of view on the matter? How can I convey that, explain why, and see if others feel the same way or have a more focused take on the issue?
7. If my position is more an intuitive feeling than a clear thought, how can I best express that and then check to see if others have a clearer idea about where those feelings might be coming from?

Curiosity Skills—Test Your View

Test Your View

- Treat your view like a hypothesis.
- Open the door to contrasting perspectives.
- Encourage disagreement.

Why is it important?

- Sharpens and expands your thinking
- Identifies errors, biases, and blind spots in your perspective

Examples

- I have strong feelings about this issue, so I really need to hear from people who see it differently. I don't want my preconceived notions to get in the way of making the best decision.
- Right now, I feel like my idea makes perfect sense—and that makes me nervous. Are you seeing something I'm missing?
- Help me find the flaws in how I'm looking at this situation.

Respond with Inquiries

For each statement below, write a response that inquires about the point of view being expressed.

Statement	Respond with Inquiries
1. What you're proposing won't meet all the requirements.	<hr/> <hr/>
2. That does not align with the results from the focus group.	<hr/> <hr/>
3. We've tried that before.	<hr/> <hr/>
4. Jackie is definitely not a team player.	<hr/> <hr/>
5. I think your suggestion is impractical and is just asking for trouble.	<hr/> <hr/>
6. Don't blame me. It's your fault.	<hr/> <hr/>
7. I don't think we can realistically expect to launch this project as scheduled.	<hr/> <hr/>
8. I guess we could take a chance and give it a try.	<hr/> <hr/>

Practicing the Discipline

Cultivate Awareness

Catch it, name it, and tame it when Minimize and Win reactions jeopardize your ability to stay in the sweet spot.



Maintain a Learning-Focused Mindset

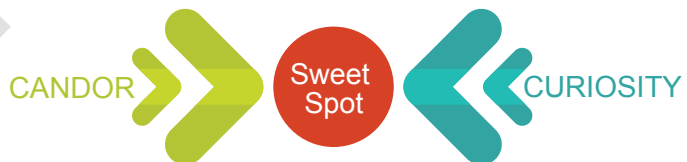
Refocus on learning by asking yourself these three questions:

1. What am I seeing that others are missing?
2. What are others seeing that I am missing?
3. What are we all missing?



Apply the Skillset

Use specific behaviors to help you and others stay in the sweet spot.



■ State Your **Position**

■ **Test** Your View

■ Explain Your **Thinking**

■ **Inquire** into the Views of Others



My Action Plan

What is one thing I will do to increase my awareness of my need to minimize or win?

What is one thing I will do to cultivate a learning-focused mindset?

Which skills will I focus on to increase my conversational capacity?

What important issues will I address, using my new skills?

Next Steps

Your MASTER Assignments

1. Schedule and conduct a challenging conversation with in the next two weeks with someone you work with, using the **Conversational Capacity worksheet**.
2. Maintain a **Trigger Journal** to identify the situations, issues, and behaviors that trigger you out of the sweet spot and overwhelm your best intentions.
3. Use the **At a Glance** booklet and your MASTER tools to share what you learned today with a colleague, friend, or family member.
4. Schedule a time to review and adjust your **Action Plan** so you're continually pushing your conversational capacity to higher and higher levels.

