The Trust Builder

5 Conversations Every Leader Should Have

A practical conversation guide for managers who want to strengthen trust through what people consistently experience.

How to use this guide

Choose one person and one conversation to begin. Set aside 15–20 minutes, ask open questions, and listen without defending or rushing to solve. Use the space provided to capture what you learn. End by agreeing on one specific next step and a date to revisit it.

These are conversations, not a survey or a performance rating. Adapt the wording to your relationship and the situation. Invite honest feedback without pressuring anyone to share more than they are comfortable sharing.

The five conversations

1	**CLARITY**	Do people understand what is expected?
2	**EMPLOYEE VOICE**	Do people feel comfortable speaking honestly?
3	**SUPPORT**	Are people getting what they need?
4	**ACCOUNTABILITY**	Are expectations applied fairly?
5	**GROWTH**	Are you helping people develop?

Before you begin

Person / team _____ Date _____

Conversation I will start with:

☐ 1 Clarity ☐ 2 Employee Voice ☐ 3 Support ☐ 4 Accountability ☐ 5 Growth

MY INTENTION

I want to understand their experience, not simply explain my intentions.

1 CLARITY

Do people understand what is expected?

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. What feels clear about your priorities and responsibilities right now?
2. Where are expectations, decisions, or measures of success unclear?
3. What could I communicate differently to make your work easier?

What I heard

One action I can take

Follow-up date

2 EMPLOYEE VOICE

Do people feel comfortable speaking honestly?

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. How comfortable do you feel raising a concern or disagreeing with me?
2. When have you felt heard, and when have you held back?
3. What could I do to make it easier to speak openly?

What I heard

One action I can take

Follow-up date

3 SUPPORT

Are people getting what they need?

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. What is getting in the way of doing your best work?
2. Where do you need more resources, decisions, feedback, or support?
3. What am I doing that helps, and what might unintentionally make your work harder?

What I heard

One action I can take

Follow-up date

4 ACCOUNTABILITY

Are expectations applied fairly?

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. Do our team standards feel clear and consistently applied?
2. Where do you see an issue we have been slow to address?
3. How could I address problems more fairly and constructively?

What I heard

One action I can take

Follow-up date

5 GROWTH

Are you helping people develop?

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. What would you like to learn or become better at over the next few months?
2. Where would more ownership, coaching, or feedback help you grow?
3. What opportunity or support could I provide to help you take a next step?

What I heard

One action I can take

Follow-up date

Turn the conversation into action

Trust grows when people see you act on what you heard. Use this simple follow-through process.

1 Confirm

Summarize what you heard and ask, “Did I understand that correctly?”

2 Commit

Choose one realistic action you can take. Be specific about what you will do and when.

3 Communicate

If a request cannot be met, explain why and discuss another option. Do not leave the person guessing.

4 Revisit

Check back on the agreed date. Ask whether the change helped and what else is needed.

My commitment

The one thing I heard that matters most:

What I will do differently:

By when: _____

How we will know it helped:

A final reflection

What do people consistently experience from me that builds trust?

What might be weakening it?

What behavior will I practice differently this week?

Trust is not built simply by good intentions.
It is built through what people consistently experience from you.