



In today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) business landscape, strong leadership isn't just about making the right decisions—it's about mastering the art of communication. Whether you're navigating team dynamics, leading through change, or handling difficult conversations, the key to success lies in how we talk—and how we listen.

Those four words...we need to talk...tend to strike fear in our hearts. If someone (especially the boss!)'needs to talk', we've probably done something wrong. But actually, it's **not talking** that tends to get us in 'trouble.' It's avoiding the difficult conversations that need to occur in order to keep relationships strong and leads to breakdown among our most valuable assets - our team members.

At Design|Build|Leadership, we believe that just like in personal relationships, avoiding tough conversations in the boardroom leads to disconnection and dysfunction. That's why we empower leaders and teams to engage in candid, constructive dialogues that build trust, strengthen culture, and drive results.

What Does VUCA Have to Do with Your Leadership?

The Antidotes to VUCA are Clarity, Empathy, and Action

- **Volatility:** The pace of change can feel overwhelming. The antidote? **Vision.** Clearly articulate your team's shared purpose, and ensure every conversation moves you closer to it.
- **Uncertainty:** You can't predict the future, but you can lead with **Understanding.** Bring empathy and curiosity to the table—make sure everyone feels heard and valued, even when the path forward is unclear.
- **Complexity:** In a world full of interconnected challenges, keep it simple. The antidote? **Clarity.** Make sure your communication is transparent, direct, and aligns with your organization's goals.
- **Ambiguity:** When things are unclear, people fill in the blanks. The antidote? **Agility.** Create a culture where questions are encouraged, and adaptability is celebrated.

Sometimes (often) we aren't aware of what we are communicating, because we aren't completely aware of what we need or which direction to take.

We are reacting to quickly changing circumstances that outpace our best thinking. This may lead us to communicate hastily or to avoid conversations all together while we try to figure it out alone.

Regardless of which option we choose, our **behavior** is communicating volumes to those around us.

WHEN WE ARE EXPERIENCING CONFUSION AND LACK OF COHESION IN OUR TEAMS, WE OFTEN THINK IT'S BECAUSE WE AREN'T COMMUNICATING. BUT REALLY, ALL BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION. WHEN WE'RE SHUTTING OUR OFFICE DOORS...WHEN WE'RE DEFERRING DECISIONS...WHEN WE'RE AVOIDING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS...WHEN WE'RE NOT SAYING ANYTHING AT ALL, WE ARE SPEAKING VOLUMES. TO MOVE FORWARD, WE NEED TO TALK.



To lead effectively in a VUCA world, you need to be comfortable with conversations that challenge, disrupt, and inspire. Whether it's about aligning team goals, giving feedback, or handling conflict, the way you communicate shapes the culture of your organization.

WHAT CONVERSATIONS DO YOU NEED TO HAVE?

ARE YOUR TEAM MEMBERS IN THE ROLES BEST SUITED FOR THEIR STRENGTHS?

IS EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM CLEAR ABOUT A SHARED VISION AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITY EXECUTING IT?

ARE THERE HIGH LEVELS OF TRUST ON YOUR TEAM?

CAN EVERYONE GIVE AND RECEIVE USEFUL FEEDBACK?

WHY DON'T WE TALK?

BECAUSE WHAT WE REALLY NEED TO TALK ABOUT MAKES US FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE

2 QUESTIONS LEADERS NEED TO ASK THEMSELVES

(W/CREDIT TO P. BREGMAN)

- 1) Do I want to get better results?
- 2) Am I willing to feel discomfort?

Because if we can handle feeling everything (frustration, loss, anger), we can accomplish anything. We spend hours avoiding moments of discomfort.

HOW DO WE PREPARE TO TALK?

BY...

- NOTICING AND REGULATING OUR OWN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE.
- RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF TIMING AND CONTEXT AND CHOOSING APPROPRIATELY.
- COMMITTING TO BEING BOTH KIND AND FIRM.
- UNDERSTANDING AND ACKNOWLEDGING YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IN GETTING TO THE CURRENT SITUATION.
- DIFFERENTIATING ASSESSMENTS FROM FACTS.
- GETTING CLEAR ON WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN, WHAT WE CAN CONTRIBUTE, AND WHAT WE NEED FROM THE OTHER PERSON.

TALKING TIPS FOR LEADERS

- START WITH THE END IN MIND: THE WAY YOU BEGIN A CONVERSATION DETERMINES HOW IT WILL END. KNOW YOUR GOAL BEFORE YOU SPEAK.
- PAUSE, DON'T REACT: IF YOUR HEART IS RACING, TAKE A MOMENT. LET YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM SETTLE BEFORE DIVING BACK INTO THE DISCUSSION.
- CURIOSITY AND COMPASSION: BEFORE DEFENDING YOUR POINT, SEEK TO UNDERSTAND THE OTHER PERSON'S PERSPECTIVE. THERE'S OFTEN TRUTH IN BOTH SIDES.

WHY DO WE NEED TO TALK?

Learning to talk in new ways is learning to relate in new ways.

The people in our organizations and the relationships we have with them are the most important of our resources. Building a team and understanding what it takes to help each member thrive is one of the core responsibilities we have as leaders. Teams are systems. And the whole of any system is far greater than the sum of the individual parts. Strengthening relationships across our teams allows us to create results far beyond what any one of us could achieve alone.

We Need To Talk (and Listen)

Because

WE CANNOT NOT COMMUNICATE.

we need to talk!

Hi! I'm Jill Thorngren, and I help leaders design success through building strong relationships. The mission of Design|Build|Leadership is to set you and your team apart by enabling you to turn relational insights into impactful actions. Whether you are interested in monthly one-on-one Executive Coaching, a comprehensive Coaching Intensive, Team Building Retreats, Strategic Planning Sessions, or a refresh of your Organizational Culture, we are here to help you Design & Build your next Leadership Success.

Strong relationships = Solid foundations.

In our VUCA world, clear communication is vital for developing and maintaining good relationships.

We cannot NOT communicate, so We Need To Talk.

I'd love to help you refine and communicate your Vision; create Understanding amidst uncertainty; break complexity into Clarity; and turn ambiguity into the opportunity for Agility.

A BIT ABOUT ME...

- **MY BIGGEST LIFE LESSONS WERE LEARNED GROWING UP ON A FARM AND RANCH IN IDAHO.**
- **I AM A CERTIFIED EXECUTIVE COACH WITH A PASSION FOR LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.**
- **I EARNED A PHD IN COUNSELING & COUNSELOR EDUCATION AND HAVE PRACTICED AS A LICENSED THERAPIST FOR 25+ YEARS.**
- **I WAS FOUNDING DEAN AND LEADER OF A LARGE INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLEGE FOR 10 YEARS.**
- **I HAVE LEARNED FIRSTHAND THAT BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS IS KEY TO SUCCESS IN OUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSION LIVES.**
- **I HAVE TO FUN EVERY DAY. AND WE WILL HAVE FUN TACKLING THE TOUGH CHALLENGES TOGETHER.**



PLEASE CLICK BELOW TO 'TALK' MORE.

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