



Yokohama Cortex Session 3: Mastering Healthy Conflict through Appreciation

Pre-work was:

1. Choose a co-worker that you would like to get to connect with. Let them know that part of your leadership program is to get to know someone better and that you chose them.
2. Landing Page - Read Article & Listen to Podcast

10 Rules of Inclusion

1. **We keep in mind our desired outcome.**
2. **We assume good intention from others.**
3. **We turn off all notifications and any distractions from all view to show respect for one another by being fully present.**
4. **We use timed rounding at beginning and end of meeting to be sure all are heard and take breaks for questions and comments.**
5. **Each person sticks to "I" statements.**
6. **We remain curious, especially when we do not agree with someone.**
7. **We strive to appreciate others' strengths and ability to contribute.**
8. **We say it now, with kindness and respect, rather than waiting until later.**
9. **The person leading or in authority of the session honors agreed upon start and stop meeting times.**
10. **We leave the meeting with clearly defined next steps that each person can take action on right away.**

Group round: What rule, when violated, makes you feel the most unappreciated?

About Your Homework: Pair Up Exercise 1

The interview:

- What are your general thoughts / experiences in conducting the interview?
- What emotions did you experience in having the conversation?
- What level of listening did you think you had during the conversation?
- What did you learn about the other person? Did anything surprise you?

The article/podcast:

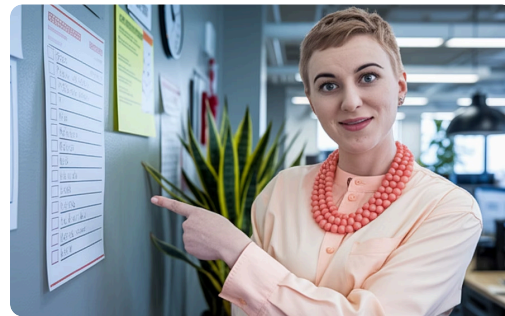
What was your biggest take-a-way? How do you prefer to learn? Reading, listening, having a conversation, trying something?

Conversational Intelligence and Healthy Conflict

3 Levels of Conversation That Builds Trust

LEVEL 1: TRANSACTIONAL

Everyday exchanges focused on tasks and information with low trust-building potential



What It Sounds Like

"Here's what you need to know."

"Do this by tomorrow."

Style of Talk

Telling and Asking

- Closed questions
- Directives with little discussion

What Builds Trust Here

- Showing up on time
- Doing what you say you will do
- Not wasting others' time
- Respecting people's time and work

Watch Out For

- Telling too much, listening too little
- People doing the bare minimum
- Not following through = lost trust

KEY RULE: *Show you care and understand where others are coming from.*

LEVEL 2: POSITIONAL

Conversations focused on opinions and influence with conditional trust



What It Sounds Like

"Here's why I think this matters."

"Let's try to find a win-win."

Style of Talk

Advocating and Inquiring

- Open-ended questions
- Persuasion and negotiation

What Builds Trust

- Asking honest questions
- Listening to understand, not just reply
- Respecting different views
- Following the Cortex Inclusion Rules

Watch Out For

- Interrupting
- Pushing your agenda too hard
- Not owning your mistakes

KEY RULE: *Say what you believe, while respecting others' views.*

LEVEL 3: TRANSFORMATIONAL

The highest level of conversation that builds deep trust and creates breakthrough solutions together.



Co-Creation & Big Ideas

"What do we both see here that could work better?"

"Let's solve this together."

Style: Sharing and discovering through open dialogue with curiosity and creative problem-solving together

KEY RULE: *Be honest, respectful, and solve things together—in person when it matters.*



Building High Trust

- Being open, real, and respectful
- Listening actively and without judgment
- Creating space for everyone to contribute
- Using cameras and face-to-face talks for important topics



Watch Out For

- Letting one person dominate
- Side conversations about people instead of with them
- Not holding everyone to the same behavior standard

Pair Up Exercise 2:

Discuss in your pair:

- In Level 1 (transactional) conversation, what violates your trust the most?
- What builds your trust in Level 1 the fastest?
- In Level 2 (positional) conversation, what violates your trust the most?
- What builds your trust the most in Level 2?
- Can you think of a conversation recently or in the last year that you felt like was transformative to you or the other person? If so, what was the result of that transformation?
- How could you build trust more effectively in Level 1 (transactional) so that when conflict arises in Level 2 you would assume good intention from the other person?
- What could you do differently using the 10 healthy conflict methods, during Level 2 conversations that could lead to Level 3 (transformative) ones?

10 Effective Techniques of Healthy Conflict

1. **Active Listening** • Truly listen to the other person without interrupting. • Show you're listening: nod, paraphrase what they said, ask clarifying questions. • Example: "What I hear you saying is... Is that right?"
2. **Stay Calm & Emotionally Regulated** • Manage your own emotions before responding. • Take a pause or deep breath if needed. • Avoid escalating with reactive language or tone.
3. **Focus on Interests, Not Positions** • Dig into why someone feels a certain way, not just what they want. • Example: Instead of "I need Fridays off," explore the reason—maybe it's childcare or burnout.
4. **Use "I" Statements** • Express how you feel without blaming. • Example: "I feel concerned when deadlines are missed because it impacts the whole team."
5. **Find Common Ground** • Identify shared goals or values. • Start with agreement: "We both care about delivering quality work."
6. **Collaborate on Solutions** • Co-create options rather than imposing your own. • Use brainstorming or "What if..." conversations to explore possibilities.
7. **Establish Ground Rules for Discussions** • Agree on respectful communication (e.g., no interrupting, no name-calling). • Stick to one issue at a time.
8. **Know When to Bring in a Mediator** • For complex or emotionally charged conflicts, a neutral third party (manager, coach, HR) can help.
9. **Set Clear Follow-Up** • Confirm any agreements in writing or in a recap. • Set a time to check back **in: "Let's revisit how this is going in two weeks."**
10. **Build a Culture of Feedback** • Normalize open communication and early conflict resolution. • Encourage people to speak up before issues escalate.

3 Forms of Feedback

Understanding different types of feedback helps us communicate more effectively with our teams.



Evaluation

Purpose: To rate or assess performance against a standard.

Use When: You need to clarify where someone stands or make decisions.

Examples:

- "You met your production goal this month."
- "Your safety score was below standard; we'll need to talk."



Appreciation

Purpose: To show that someone's efforts or presence is valued.

Use When: You want to boost morale, motivation, or reinforce positive behavior.

Examples:

- "Thanks for staying late to finish that job."
- "I really appreciate your positive attitude."



Coaching

Purpose: To help someone improve, grow, or develop a skill.

Use When: You see a chance for someone to do better or learn something new.

Examples:

- "Next time, try tightening the bolts in this order."
- "Can I show you a faster way to log your timesheet?"

Be clear about what kind of feedback you're giving—so the other person knows whether you're showing appreciation, helping them grow, or evaluating their performance.

5 Forms of Appreciation of Work

Everyone values appreciation differently. Knowing someone's preferred language makes your praise more meaningful and effective.



Words of Affirmation

Using spoken or written words to express appreciation.

- "Great job on that project."
- "I appreciate your reliability."



Quality Time

Giving someone your full attention.

- One-on-one check-ins
- Listening without distractions
- Spending time problem-solving together



Acts of Service

Helping someone with a task to lighten their load.

- Pitching in on a tough job
- Running an errand to save them time
- Offering support during a deadline



Tangible Gifts

Giving a small, thoughtful item to show appreciation.

- A favorite snack or coffee
- Gift card or team lunch
- Handwritten thank-you note



Physical Touch (appropriate and consensual)

Positive physical connection in workplace settings.

- A handshake
- A high five
- A pat on the back

Pair-up Exercise 3:

Favorite Appreciation

- What form of appreciation makes you feel valued?

Consistent Appreciation

- What appreciation do you consistently give to your team?

Commitment to Change

- What is something you will commit to doing differently to appreciate your co-workers more?

Appreciation SMART Goal

- What is your appreciation SMART goal?

Homework

Pick a person who you would like to have a better relationship with and find out how they would like to be appreciated?



**Cortex Leadership
Consulting**