

# AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

## Working Well



- Create your own stakeholder map and identify which of your relationships need more work? With whom do you connect well? Why do you think this is so? With whom could your relationships be more productive or trusting? How can you change your approach – attitude, behaviour or mood? How can you build trust, or more psychological proximity?
  - Give your colleagues the benefit of the doubt and as a rule, assume their intentions are good. Catch yourself taking things personally and reframe.
  - Pay more attention to the effect of your actions and remember that others can't read your mind or intentions. Set aside some time each day (on the way to/from work works well) to think about how others may be experiencing you. Try to empathise with their needs and perspectives.
  - Limit your complaints and criticisms, practice courtesy always, generously express your appreciation, encouragement and support.
  - Listen by seeking to understand where your colleagues are coming from, not merely hearing them. Ask more open questions with an enquiring and interested tone. Listen twice as much as you speak.
  - Before jumping into business, invest a moment to ask how your colleagues are doing, and what's happening for them generally. It's respectful, it's friendly and it's appreciated. But you must listen and genuinely be interested in their responses, do not go through the motions.
  - Ensure your words, tone and actions are in congruence (essential to trust, rapport and authenticity).
  - Check your motives and intentions before speaking out. Focus on what you have in common and what outcome is desirable; and craft your words, body language and tone to achieve these outcomes.
- “LISTEN BY SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND WHERE YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE COMING FROM...”
- Check your confidence, skills and humility ratio – an imbalance can adversely impact your credibility or create a perception risk of arrogance. Remember that some vulnerability, providing it is sincere and not a critical derailer, is a highly attractive leadership quality.
  - Find constructive ways to release tension (not taking it out on others) e.g. breathe to relax, excuse yourself from the meeting, detach yourself, count to ten, think of something positive that matters more, be conscious of not becoming 'triggered', clench your muscles and hold for as long as you can and then release in a rush. When the moment has passed, think about whether it matters enough to have a calm conversation, or whether it is better to 'let it go'.
  - If you experience conflict with colleagues or tend to shy away from conflict, ensure you work on being appropriately assertive, rather than aggressive or avoidant. Seek out help as required.
  - It is a universally human condition to want to feel respected, valued and appreciated. You want it and so do your colleagues. When it's a shared experience, good outcomes are possible and likely.
  - Look for opportunities to celebrate success in your team – this doesn't have to be driven by the team leader all the time. Call out good work and make this public, encourage an attitude of reflecting on the good.
  - If you are feeling under-appreciated or unsure about your contribution or performance, could you be asking for more feedback? Don't just sit back and wait for others to deliver this – seek it out!
  - Watch out for the dangers of heavily relying on the validation and feedback from others. Where this isn't forthcoming, despite seeking it out, create your own goals and give yourself some feedback.